



PHOTOS BY MARC CAMPOS / INLAND VALLEY VOICE

Claremont artist Dawn Grimes Myers paints a portrait of a house on a large rock. Myers' work will soon be featured in the show "Sketched In Stone" at the Claremont Community Foundation.

# Houses turn rocks into gems

Artist gains a following by capturing the essence of people's homes on painted stones.

**Pam Noles**  
Inland Valley Voice

**D**awn Grimes Myers was walking to her home in Claremont one day a few years ago when she glanced down and noticed a rock that looked like a building. Intrigued, she took it home. Not long after, she found herself painting a building on her rock.

In an instant, Myers knew she had found her calling, but decided to run a test. She got 15 more rocks, meticulously painted houses on them and took them to an Upland craft fair. They all sold. Someone asked if she'd come over and paint a portrait of a house.

That was about five years ago. Since then, Myers' miniature creations have earned fans near and far, strictly by word of mouth.

"I've never been one to paint on canvas because I didn't feel a canvas," said Myers, who worked as an office manager although she has a degree in design from UCLA. "But



Myers uses acrylics and paints freehand.

a rock, it feels so right, and that a house is on it, something that means so much, that feels right."

Myers has painted the Claremont Police Department, a condominium building in St. Croix, a courthouse in Washington, D.C., the Red Hill Country Club, a yacht, a home in a Florida swamp and houses throughout the Inland

## FYI

- **What:** "Sketched In Stone," rock paintings by Dawn Grimes Myers
- **When:** Feb. 3-28, artist reception 5:30-7 p.m. Feb. 6
- **Where:** Claremont Community Foundation, 205 Yale Ave., Claremont
- **For information:** 624-7925 or [sketchedinstone@hotmail.com](mailto:sketchedinstone@hotmail.com)

See ROCKS, Page A4

# ROCKS

Continued from A1

Empire, to name a few.

"I don't paint people. I don't paint animals. I paint houses," she said. "In Claremont, look at all these houses. Every architectural style is here. I drive around, I drool. I want to paint every house I see."

Myers is preparing for her first official show, "Sketched In Stone," at Claremont Community Foundation.

Laurie Cotter saw her first Grimes work in the late 1990s while shopping in downtown Claremont. Eventually she commissioned a painting of her first home. Myers was meticulous in her research, taking photos and talking with Cotter, her husband, Kevin, and their family about the house.

A few weeks later, a rock arrived.

"I was shocked at how gorgeous it was," Cotter said. "I have loved her work ever since. It's unique and unusual, something to hold on to and treasure, to pass along to our children who were raised in that home."

Cotter, a member of the Rancho Cucamonga Library Foundation, showcases that painting on the fireplace of her current home, which she also plans to have immortalized on stone.

Myers said taking photos and talking with the family is important. It's not about layout and color and proper placement of trees, but the essence of the home.

"When I talk to people about their home, I start to feel things to emphasize," she said. "They tell me the history of their home, they tell me what they love."

Myers is a native of Queens, N.Y. Her family moved to Los Angeles when she was a child. After college she eventually

settled in Claremont, drawn by her sister and the setting. She works part time with the Claremont College Consortium, but her goal is to become a full-time artist. She has a daughter, Camille, 20. Husband Michael is a licensed massage therapist and owner of Balanced Therapies.

It can take a month to create a house portrait, which she sells for \$350 to \$600.

Sometimes it takes several weeks to find the right rock. Myers often finds them at Lytle

Creek. Sometimes friends dig up good rocks in their backyards. When the 210 Freeway was being built, people called to tell her where the good piles were being dumped.

Once the preliminary research is done, Myers will "just sit here and stare at it a while" before beginning to paint freehand with acrylics.

"I don't trace, I don't measure anything," she said.

While her early works featured just the building, her

later works show bright blue skies and clouds above. Often, there is a festive cluster of balloons or a kite flying free.

"It seems joyful," she said.

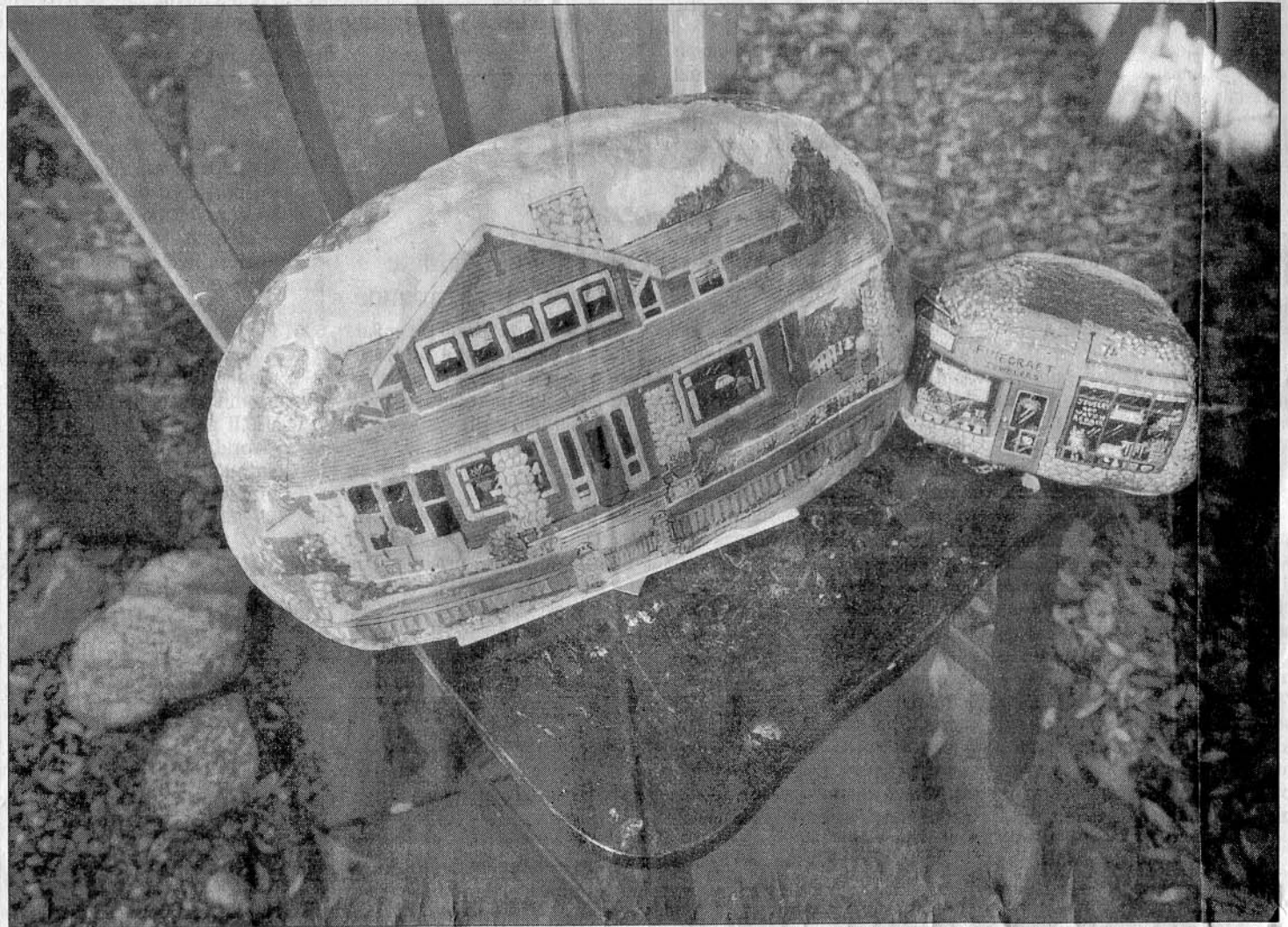
Cindy Schlig of Upland saw her first Myers rock at Village Venture, an annual arts festival in downtown Claremont.

Thrilled, she commissioned a work on the spot. When it arrived in November, she was floored. Everything was there, from the koi pond to the porch chimes to the stained glass window in the bathroom.

"It just amazed me on the detail she could get on it," Schlig said.

That's especially important for the family, which includes a husband and four children, because their home is "like our dream house," said Schlig, who works as an accountant for the Glendora Unified School District.

"I don't think it's something that's ever going to go away from our family. When we both pass away, one of the kids is going to get it."



MARC CAMPOS / INLAND VALLEY VOICE

Artist Dawn Grimes Myers' works include a friend's home in Claremont, left, and a shop in the Claremont Village.