

# The Royal Gazette

## Having art in Bermuda is ‘so satisfying’ for New York artist

Heather Wood

Updated: Apr 06, 2024 08:10 AM

That there is beauty in Tamara Gonzales’s art is likely evident to everyone who has recently visited The Loren. Her work there takes the form of a 30-foot mosaic she designed for the walls of The Pink Beach Club, a largely open-air restaurant at the Hamilton Parish hotel.

Most amazing is that Ms Gonzales was in her thirties before she felt confident enough to fully commit to being an artist.

“Living in New York City as an artist, that means you’re going to wear many hats. I’ve worked in web design, I worked selling Christmas trees, for friends ... it’s just a lot of hats to keep a studio practice going in New York City – sort of an artistic feat in and of itself.”

Ms Gonzales started out as an installation artist but in recent years has been more focused on paintings and two-dimensional drawings that are pattern-based.

“I lean towards abstraction, which I think is [not unexpected for someone who] came of age as an artist in New York on the shoulders of the abstract and pop art of the Fifties and Sixties,” she said.

Ms Gonzales, who lives in Brooklyn and is represented by Klaus Von Nichtssagend Gallery, was a well known artist by the time Penny Aaron, a consultant developing the collections of The Loren Hotels, proposed her for the mosaic in Bermuda.

“From repetitive showings here in New York, I would



say Penny was aware of my work. I’m Mexican and Italian and maybe that’s where the embellishment, the attraction to Baroque and, sort of excessiveness comes up in my work. But for whatever reason she was paying attention and it was really through her that I got the introduction to The Loren.”

The project, which started about a year ago, was a bit more involved than Ms Gonzales initially anticipated.

“The first concept was I was just going to go there and paint a mural on the wall myself, with an assistant. But we realised the paint wouldn’t really hold up there because it’s exposed to the elements. And so then the original idea for a mural got translated into this mosaic which is a much more permanent architectural feature.”

She put together three proposals; The Loren picked the one that’s there today.

Ms Gonzales’s work was then “realised in mosaic form” by Stephen Miotto.

# KLAUS VON NICHTSSAGEND GALLERY

87 Franklin Street, New York, NY 10013  
Tel 212-777-7756 [www.klausgallery.com](http://www.klausgallery.com)

“Miotto Mosaics translated the design. It’s really dead-on, they don’t interpret and yet they use their expertise; knowing how the tiles are going to flow for the most interest in the most authentic beauty is their craft,” she said.

“So my drawing is [comprised of] lines and that line is displayed with these tiny pixels of glass or ceramic. I could do something like that, I could be creative with ceramics, but I can’t do that.

“That’s where I’m talking about their artistry of craft – they translate the drawing as closely as possible.

“So they won’t change the colour because they think it will look better, or make a line thicker or something. That’s the artistry of craftsmanship they’re in service of translating this piece.”

The glass and ceramic tiles were bought in New York and sent to Spilimbergo, Italy, where the mosaic was fabricated and then shipped to Bermuda to be installed.

“There was a huge scale change. I watched a 30-inch drawing go to a 3ft mural – the moving pieces to actually make this come to life is the collaboration of all this energy and I am so excited about it. In my life to see something realised like this is really a good feeling.”

Ms Gonzales was born in California, but moved to New York as a teenager with her family.

“My mother owned a bakery. So I was a cake decorator when I was a teenager and all that rolled up into having exposure to painters and people that had studio practices,” she said.

Teachers at Parsons School of Design steered her away from graphic design in to fine arts, but she considered becoming an artist impractical.

“It’s a different path. But I think over the course of my journey, one thing that has been very satisfying is, once you do find your hat, wherever it is in the creative field, things just feel right-sized, your life just starts to flow in a direction that’s satisfying because you’re connect-

ed with your heart’s desire. So, maybe I have humbler surroundings but I’m happy,” she said.

“I used to think it came from the outside: OK I’m an artist; the outside world says I’m an artist. But, at least in my journey, it had to come from the inside first.”

It’s a journey that led her to Bermuda, a place she’d never been before.

“My first trip was to view this art piece which, at this point, is like mine, but it feels like something else.

“A lot of times when art leaves the studio, for me, the artist, I feel like I don’t own it any more. It’s got its life in the larger community or world that receives it. So I don’t quite identify like that’s mine any more.

“[But] I had a piece in having this thing come to life. So it was a real thrill for me as an artist. There’s a lot of excitement to see it in place. My art is now in Bermuda, it’s like a little piece of me is there. It’s satisfying on a lot of levels.”