

## Museum art talk is out of this world

by **Christian Shepherd, Dorothy Gartsman** on [February 23, 2018](#) in **Arts, Etc., Fine Art**



**Christian Shepard**  
Staff Writer

The Inland Empire Museum of Arts filled its reception hall for the “Moon of Many Petals” artist talk on Saturday.

The talk was named after artist and author Cindy Rinne’s new book of poetry.

The walls of the venue were filled with the work of four different artists.

IEMA hosts an artist talk each month, but this was the first time that the talk included live performance.

The first performance was a piece set only to the sounds of a ticking clock and numerous cell phone rings.

Penny McElroy, professor of art at the University of Redlands, shared a collection of poetry she said was inspired by real life experiences and observations.

“I know she said the poetry was about her story,” Arcadia resident Margareta Thorsen said.

“I can visualize it in my own life as well. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but seeing this poetry live has been really great.”



**Snezana Saraswati Petrovic performs at the Inland Empire Museum of Art for the “Moon of Many Petals” exhibition Saturday. During this performance, Petrovic wanted to portray the life of an artist and how one can be easily distracted by having a phone ring at random moments during the performance. Petrovic was one of four artists whose work was in the gallery for the exhibition. / photo by Dorothy Gartsman**

The poem, titled “Moving Day,” was written in response to a progressive illness McElroy’s mother had been suffering from.

McElroy’s poetry was followed by a musical duo by the name of Plum Nelly, featuring two guitars and vocals.

“We originally had a set list that we were going to go off of,” said Wendy Hunt, lead vocalist of the duo, making final adjustments to her guitar straps and microphone. “But we are letting the room speak to us and are going to change it up a bit.”

The stage was located directly in front of a multi-layered painting that featured a bevy of swans.

The first song Plum Nelly played, “12 is the Tree,” referenced a wedge of 12 swans flying freely through the sky.

Hunt said that, while music has been a lifelong passion of hers, it was not until she hit her mid-life crisis in 2008 that she began to find her voice and have something to say to the world.

At the end of their set list, the audience joined Hunt in singing the words to one of Plum Nelly’s songs, “Fly Away.”

Rinne, who curated the “Moon of Many Petals” exhibition, ended the night with samples of her poetry sourced from three of her published collections. Her poetry was read set to background guitar melodies played by Plum Nelly.

Gene Sasse, founder of IEMA, said that the museum plans on doing many more events similar to this one.

Sasse founded the museum in 2013 to promote the arts within the Inland Empire.

“It was a desert out here when it came to the arts,” Sasse said.

IEMA has over 800 pieces of artwork in their collection, sourced from countless countries like South Korea, New Guinea, Mexico and Romania.

The oldest painting in the collection dates back to the 17th century Spain.

The museum reaches out to neighboring schools and organizations to help educated students and the public on different mediums of art.

Their next event, “Shared Vision,” curated by Bill Catling and Nery Lemus, will have its opening reception March 4, with art talks on March 17 and April 21.

The collection will focus on creating a spiritual connection between the past and the present.

*Christian Shepherd can be reached at [christian.shepherd@laverne.edu](mailto:christian.shepherd@laverne.edu).*



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### Campus Times

University of La Verne  
1950 Third Street  
La Verne, CA 91750

**E-mail:** [ctimes@laverne.edu](mailto:ctimes@laverne.edu)

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