

Estate sale draws crowd

Crisp-Ellert collection being sold to help 'give smaller artists a chance'

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Seventy-five people were waiting when doors opened for the estate sale Thursday morning at the former home of Dr. JoAnn Crisp-Ellert and her husband, Robert Ellert, on Sevilla Street.

Both were members of the President's Council at Flagler College; the Crisp-Ellert Museum was opened on campus in 2007.

"She was very well-loved around here," said Jena Baker, proprietress of Great Expectations Auction Co., which is in charge of the estate sale.

Before Crisp-Ellert, an artist and author, and her husband died in 2007, they completed their wills, leaving their home next to the Proctor Library to the college.

Everything in it is to be sold during the auction, which runs through Saturday. The money raised will go to the "Dr. JoAnn Crisp-Ellert Fund" within The Community Foundation to support art in St. Augustine.

"To do whatever they need to make art possible," Baker said. "To give smaller artists a chance."

The collection includes pens used by former U.S. presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Gerald R. Ford. Collectibles such as those will be auctioned online.

The big sellers so far are at least 100 of Crisp-Ellert's big, multi-colored paintings, Baker said.

Inside the cottage it's as colorful as the outfits Crisp-Ellert was known for.

Bright green carpeting covers the floors, walls and antique-covered stairs snaking up at the right of the entrance.

New items will be brought out each day.

Locals and tourists eye the hundreds of candy-colored trinkets, furniture and artwork. Everything's for sale.

"They're having a blast," Baker said. "They love the colorful, artsy way she dressed and lived."

Sydney Rainville-Thomson thumbed the titles of books with a few already cupped in her arm. She said she was a child she met Crisp-Ellert.

Rainville-Thomson said her parents must've known her, and it's her "pretty incredible" outfits that she remembers.

But none of Crisp-Ellert's outfits are up for sale because her husband had them destroyed when she died, Baker said.

That's OK for Rainville-Thomson, who wants the book collection the artist built up while she lived and traveled internationally.

"She has every book I would probably like to own in all my life," she said. "You don't find many French books in St. Augustine."

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