

Go-Go's Jane Wiedlin performs next week at Fort Myers exhibit with Miami artist Monteavaro

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The Go-Go's have been recurring characters in the pop-culture-inspired work of Miami artist Beatriz Monteavaro. (Photo: Special to The News-Press)

The zombies are coming, and Adam Ant, Bela Legosi and Gary Numan are trapped in the Notre Dame cathedral.

The pop-culture stars look utterly doomed.

But then: Look! On water skis!

It's ... [The Go-Go's](http://www.gogos.com/)!

And just like that, the '80s New Wave band swoops in and saves the day. They scoop up Adam Ant and his famous friends and whisk everyone away to their mystical vacation island.

Welcome to the wonderful, oddball world of [Miami artist Beatriz Monteavaro](https://www.bmonteavaro.com/) — a world populated by rock stars, movie monsters, spaceships, superheroes, He-Man and other pop-culture icons.



How does Monteavaro describe those drawings to people? "I don't know," she says. "I usually tell 'em it's really weird."

Monteavaro loves telling stories in her acclaimed work, which has been displayed in museums and galleries all over the world. The storyline involving The Go-Gos, for example, went on for about three or four years, with each piece functioning as the next panel in a sort of comic book.

But Monteavaro never saw this big twist coming. After drawing The Go-Gos for years and adoring their music most of her life, she finally gets to meet one of her heroes next week at FSW's Rauschenberg Gallery (<http://www.rauschenberggallery.com/>) in Fort Myers: Go-Go's guitarist and co-founder Jane Wiedlin.

And better still: She'll be playing the drums and performing a concert with her.

Monteavaro can't quite believe her luck. "This is really pretty incredible," she says

The once-in-a-lifetime get-together was arranged by gallery director Jade Dellinger for the Thursday, Jan. 16, opening of the new exhibit "Beatriz Monteavaro: Vacation."

"I thought: Wouldn't it be amazing to have one of her characters, one of her childhood heroes, walk off the page, essentially?" Dellinger says. "The fantasy becomes reality."

Wiedlin admits she and the other Go-Gos knew nothing about Monteavaro's work before Dellinger contacted her. "Jade invited me to be part of the opening night festivities," Wiedlin said in an interview conducted via email. "And I, being a curious cat, accepted!"

She's seen Monteavaro's work since then, of course.

"I was happily shocked by how much I loved her art," Wiedlin said. "It is gorgeous and weird. It is thrilling to be someone's long-distance muse. That definitely fulfilled a lifetime fantasy!"

Monteavaro feels the same way. She's loved The Go-Go's since childhood.

She and her friends once lip-synced to Go-Go's songs at a Halloween party. Then, about eight years ago, she got pulled onstage during a Go-Go's concert and danced with the band while they performed "Cool Jerk."

Up until now, she says, that was her favorite Go-Gos memory.

"It was like some old dream I had when I was 12," she says. "So this is ridiculous! ... This is like coming full circle with my life."

"I'm sure I should brush up on the songs," she says. "But I have been playing these songs since way back when I was 12. I'm very familiar with them."



Jane Wiedlin of The Go-Go's (Photo: Kevin Winter/Getty Images)

Aside from the concert, there's the art exhibit, of course. It features about 200 of Monteavaro's drawings, designs for concert fliers and more, Dellinger says. The retrospective gets its name from The Go-Go's 1982 album "Vacation."

This is the second time Dellinger has curated a Monteavaro exhibit.

"I'm always blown away by how identifiable Betty's work is," he says. "She has this drawing style and this sense of color. And the graphic style, the way she makes the work, has always been something that's thoroughly impressed me."

Wiedlin says she's looking forward to seeing that work in person instead of just on a computer screen.

"As a creative person, I really love and am inspired by all kinds of art," she says. I am so excited to be there opening night. ... I am looking forward to a fantastic night of art, music and fun!"

And if any zombies attack, well, she'll be there for that, too.

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What: Opening night for Beatriz Monteavaro art exhibit with The Go-Gos' Jane Wiedlin

When: 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16. The exhibit continues through March 28

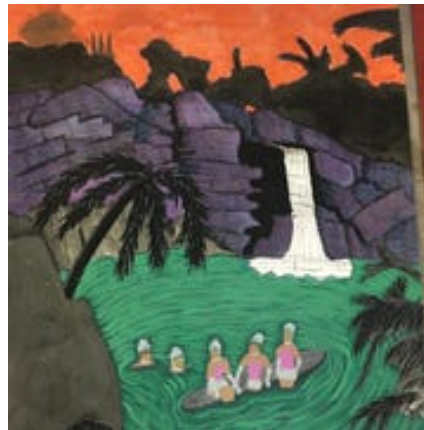
Where: Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at Florida SouthWestern State College, 8099 College Parkway S.W., Building L, south Fort Myers

Admission: Free

Info: 489-9313 or rauschenberggallery.com



Beatriz Monteavaro draws inspiration from pop culture, including Disney icons such as Space Mountain and Snow White. (Photo: Special to The News-Press)



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