

MAY 28 - JUNE 10, 2013

Collage artist Erika King tells Miami Heat's story on canvas

BY REBECCA SHARP

From having her art celebrated on the floor of the AmericanAirlines Arena during a Miami Heat game to shaking hands with presidents, Erika King creates classic South Florida treasures.

Originally from Philadelphia and educated in Europe, King conjures collage creations that document and embrace life on her vast canvases of "still videos."

"I'm just really happy doing it and creating the pieces I'm creating," King said from her Coconut Grove-based studio.

Photos of the famous — like President Bill Clinton, Gloria Estefan, and world championship racecar driver Emerson Fittipaldi — adorn the creative space.

"It is an honor to be in the flow of having calls come in from people who are interested and have connection with the work somehow."

Today her flow of work often centers on local and national athletic legends. Two-time NBA champions, the Miami Heat, have worked with Erika for 15 years on her unique larger-than-life pieces.

It all started in 1998 for the first annual Heat Family Festival, the team's charity event.

"The artists were invited to create for the benefit at Marty Margulies' Grand Bay Towers on Key Biscayne," King said. "I took my easel, paints and collage images, and was painting away when Pat Riley came over."

The well-known Miami Heat president and former coach loved the work and a unique relationship began whereby the



Collage artist Erika King is pictured in her studio.

artist became exclusively commissioned to tell the Heat's story through her distinctive trademark collages.

Retirement celebration pieces for stars like Alonzo Mourning, Tim Hardaway, the 2006 and 2012 NBA Championship collages, and the two pieces she currently is working on for Heat owner Micky Arison and team president Riley's corporate offices keep her busy.

Sports themes have been a part of Erika's work going back to a collage she did for the Miami Dolphins in the 1970s. The action and energy of the visuals inspire her to create these dynamic —

often four- by six-foot pieces and larger — representing a visual symphony of motion and expression.

Beyond the sports, works for the Miami Centennial Celebration, 75th Anniversary of the University of Miami, and commemorative pieces for Miami City Ballet, Blockbuster Video, United Way, and Estefan Enterprises, distinguish her varied internationally exhibited body of work.

Inspired by a generation of artists in her own family, Erika received the nurturing and support at a young age to pursue the profession of her dreams.