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Nyack sketch artist brings tribunals home

BY KHURRAM SAEED • KSAEED@LOHUD.COM • DECEMBER 12, 2009

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Janet Hamlin felt her Park Slope home in Brooklyn shudder when the World Trade Center was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001.



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Ashes and documents from the crippled towers fell on her home. She saw stunned workers stagger across the Brooklyn Bridge.

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Seven years later, Hamlin, who was now living in Nyack, found herself in the same room with the man accused of being the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks.

Hamlin, 48, a freelance court artist, was attending Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's military tribunal at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to sketch him for media outlets.

During the past four years, many of her 30 sketches of the Guantánamo detainees — no photography is allowed in the hearing rooms, and she was the only court artist there — have appeared on newspaper front pages and TV screens worldwide.

Starting Saturday, 10 of Hamlin's original drawings from Guantánamo will be publicly displayed for the first time at the Edward Hopper House Art Center in Nyack. The exhibition will run until Jan. 10.

Hamlin, the daughter of an United States Air Force major who grew up on military bases in



Janet Hamlin of Nyack is a freelance courtroom sketch artist who has documented the proceedings at the Guantánamo Bay tribunals for the media. Here she prepares for an exhibit of her work at the Hopper House Art Center in Nyack. (Mark Vergari/The Journal News)

IF YOU GO

What: Sketches from Guantánamo by court illustrator and Nyack resident Janet Hamlin

Where: Edward Hopper House Art Center, 82 N. Broadway, Nyack

When: The opening reception is from 5 to 7 p.m. today. The show runs until Jan. 10. Gallery hours are 1 to 5 p.m., Thursday to Sunday.

What else: The exhibit will also feature photographs and sketches Hamlin took at the Guantánamo Bay military facility.

Cost: \$2 suggested donation; free for children and center members

Information: Call 845-358-0774 or visit www.hopperhouse.org

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Germany, England, California, Texas and Washington, said she felt her 9/11 experience had come "full circle" when she sketched the co-

conspirators.

It was the only time that she felt "taken aback" doing her job.

"You try to set that stuff aside and just get to work and try to draw true and honest," Hamlin said recently from Hopper House. "My job is to get the work done and put my feelings aside."

Carole Perry, executive director of Hopper House, said showing the sketches of detainees was timely, especially since the federal government is planning to hold its "terror trials" in Manhattan.

"It's intense. It's palpable. The drawings really show emotion and set the scene," Perry said.

Hamlin oversees figure drawing sessions at Hopper House, the birthplace and childhood home of the legendary painter.

1 | 2 | 3 Next Page

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