

Entertain

LOCAL ARTISTS



Special photo

Local Artist Lleras Set for NY Exhibition

By JASON HALCOMBE

The clouds dipped even lower, looking like a dark bucket waiting to douse the outskirts of town with an afternoon shower.

And while the work-a-day traffic shuffled in between stops, Juan Lleras and his brother-in-law Jose Archila chuckled occasionally between sips of late-day coffee.

Lleras is at home with family. After fleeing the tumultuous political and social issues of his native land of Colombia, Lleras has also found a home in Dublin for his family, and his art work.

Strolling through the doors of the gallery/office, Lleras' color choices jump off the canvas and quickly turn the dull mood that waits just outside the door.

Described as an artist known for his warm pieces that "emanates from the vividness and complexity of his paintings," Lleras is preparing to display several of his pieces at an upcoming show Oct. 25 at the Agora Gallery in New York.



LLERAS



Special photo

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happened to them. Hopefully I may start back one day.

3. Describe your art? I notice a lot of hidden symbolism in your paintings, from color palates to the fluid nature of some of your work. would you consider that a style of purpose or one that has evolved over time?

My art is figurative, mythical and symbolic. I try to express my feelings and perception of the world. I've expended a lot of time trying to develop my own artistic language, and probably that drifts in a particular style. I've tried to be different, and to get a unique style with plenty of conceptual contents.

4. How was your work selected for the upcoming Agora Gallery exhibition? And does it fall into any particular category for the show?

I wanted to exhibit my work in an important place, and immediately I thought about NY, so I began to look for galleries there. Agora raised my attention because it is an International Gallery, and immediately I submitted an application. I sent my art resume, pictures of my art work and my biography. Two weeks later they replied: "I feel that the color saturated oil paintings will resonate well in New York and with our international audience". In the same letter they offered me their representation. They have several categories including origin and style of the

"I try to express my feelings and perception of the world."

1. I guess this is the easiest place to start: What led you into painting?

Definitely was my Grandfather. My Grandfather introduced me to painting. He taught me at a very early age, and I got from him a book called "Treaty of the Painting" written by Leonardo Da Vinci, that I used to read every night in my childhood. My Mother also played a big roll as well. I drew trains and clowns with her. When I was in Middle and High School I received several prizes in contests, and I sold my paintings to some of the parents of my fellows classmates.

2. Had you ever experimented with other forms of art?

Sure. Music is one of the most important things in my life. My favorite instrument is the guitar and I still play guitar at least two days a week.

Also, I used to work in sculpture. Unfortunately I had to leave all pieces in Colombia, and I have no idea what hap-

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artists. I fall into this category, "Figuratively speaking", because my art is still figurative even with abstract or conceptual content.

5. Obviously, the opportunity to display your works and have them appreciated in galleries is important, but what do you hope people gain from viewing your work at this upcoming show?

I think art is a two-way street. I share my perception of the world thru my paintings and I receive a feedback from the observers. Also I have the opportunity to see my art works in a different scenario and share experiences with many different people. Art is an experience as well.

6. Coming from Bogotá, describe how your life and times in Colombia influenced your artwork, particularly your use of vibrant colors in Colombian Diaspora? I noticed the colors of the flag, were the people 'blue' for any particular reason?

Colombia is beautiful. Colombia is a very happy tropical country that had to live under violence for more than 40 years. I remember during my last two years there hearing in the news about hundreds of people being killed by guerrillas. People become cold and numb when confronted with so much violence. Blue in my "Colombia Diaspora" painting represents these cold and numb people. I am probably one of them.

About the Flag, you are

right. Yellow, blue and red are the colors of the Colombian Flag and in my painting you can see a hot yellow atmosphere where blue people walk away over red blood and despoliation of the war. It is very painful to have to leave everything, but many of us had to make that decision to assure a better future for our children.

7. Since moving to America, have your experiences in Georgia had any impact on your approach to artwork, or spawned any new projects?

Of course my life in Georgia impacted highly on my approach to artwork and, spawned many new projects. I have met people that have changed significantly my way to see the things in my work place, of Dublin Construction Co, and in our local artist guild. In fact, I've participated in some social artist projects here in Dublin, such as "the Nutcracker back drop."

8. Talk about growing up in Colombia?

Colombia is the happiest country in the world, in spite of the conditions of violence that the Country have to live in. Growing up there was great to me. It used to be a different time. Bogota is a very nice, big city with populations of 8 or 9 millions. It could be hazardous, extreme, some times dangerous, but never boring.

9. With America shifting to a multilingual society, how excited are you, as a person from a spanish-speaking nation, to see the

U.S. broaden its multicultural horizons?

The cultural aspect has been perhaps the most impressive and interesting to me. In fact, my upcoming art exhibition in New York is a significant step in this direction, and

I am very excited for that.

10. What role has your family played in your life, and more particularly your artwork?

It has been definitive, very important, especially Juan

David, Daniel and Diana, my children. My children, my wife, my parents and my brother and sisters have been my strength on my way. They have been supportive and a source of inspiration. In fact, it is because of my Grandfather that I have chosen this path.

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