HABLAMOS JUNTOS together we speak

Luis de las Flores II, colored linocut, 12”x18” 2006

JUAN FUENTES

Contemporary Latin@ Broadsides Project
Museo Eduardo Carrillo & Pajaro Valley Arts
Supported by the City of Santa Cruz
Let’s Get Personal

Cultural Heritage: I was born in New Mexico but grew up just outside of Watsonville, in Las Lomas. Everyone participated with work. We all picked raspberries, cucumbers, radishes, prunes, apples and of course strawberries. I’m one of eleven children and the only one to graduate from a University. My parents could not read or write in English; they only spoke Spanish. For this reason I understand the hardships of working in the fields and I have a lot of love for those who toil in the fields. Cesar Chaves and the United Farmworkers have always been an inspiration to me for what they have done for farmworkers. Thus, my art reflects how I feel; we are Chicanos.

We grew up poor but well taken care of by my parents and older siblings. My mother always supported us and made sure we were in school. My older brothers and sisters always encouraged me to stay in school even though they did not have the opportunity.

Mentored by: My mentor was professor Ralph Putzker who opened up my heart and eyes to the beauty in the world. It was up to me to translate that into images. Another valuable teacher was professor and Chicano artist, Rupert Garcia. From him I learned about making images for the Chicano movement and other international struggles. I also learned from my teacher, Malaquias Montoya. Now I have become a mentor to many young artists

Education/Training: I graduated from Watsonville High in 1969 and was recruited by the Educational Opportunity Program and ended up at San Francisco State University. It was at the University that I fell in love with art and started learning to make art for the first time.

Tell Young Artists: If you want to follow in our footsteps you must study hard, get as much knowledge as you can about the world, and draw something everyday. Get your high school diploma and continue your studies as far as you can and be open to others ideas.

Here’s the Artwork

Art Medium: I’m a print maker and I do prints on paper. I also screen print and do relief printing and sometimes I combine both mediums. I love paper and the smell of inks. I like to draw, carve and print. This medium requires all of this. It is exciting to see what new creation you can come up with; that is the challenge that keeps me hungry for more.

Intent of the Work: My image “Luis de las Flores” was done as a tribute to my older brother Luis. Though he never picked flowers in the fields he did arrange flowers into beautiful decorations. He did do a lot of work in the fields like others in the family. The person carrying the flowers represents the hard work and beauty in the human condition and nature. This image was also a part of other images I have done of people carrying things on their shoulders or back. This is a metaphor for the hard work we do and the things we carry in order to survive.

Art Impacts Life: I had my first exhibit back in the mid 1970’s at the Galleria de La Raza in the Mission District of San Francisco. It was here that I really felt a positive reaction from those that came into the gallery and saw my work. It was then that I felt like a real artist. It was around this time that I sold my first art to some friends.

While enrolled in college I worked in the evenings as a janitor at the Presidio Army base. After graduation I worked in a print shop. I taught art at the college level and in the San Francisco county jails. I was the Director of Mission Graphica at the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts. Recently I retired from teaching relief printmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute. Now I work out of my studio, Pajaro Editions.

Let’s Look Closely

Look: It is important to look at the composition of the work; how do the colors that I use make the work more dynamic? What kind of feeling do the colors represent in the image? Why is his face not shown? How do the shadows that I used make the image more interesting? Does it make you wonder who is the person carrying the flowers?

Notice: Every image tells it own story. Think about something that you really feel passionate about and think about how you would translate this into a drawing. All of my images stem from this and then I work hard to make them come true on the paper.

Get a Fuller Picture

Art is a powerful influence in our lives. We could not live without art. We are surrounded by it in the clothes we choose to wear, what we eat, the music we choose to listen to, the movies we watch. It is through art that we have a chance to experience how it feels to be human.

For the full transcript visit http://museoeduardocarrillo.org/  
http://www.pajarovalleyartsCouncil.org/