

# NEOLatino

January 13–February 24, 2007

## Ana Luisa Sanchez

Ms. Sanchez is one of Ohio's brightest and newest painters and among a growing group of Latin artists making an impact on art in Ohio. Her abstract paintings in acrylic feature bold colors and unique textures. Their strength reflects her closeness to the earth—indicative of her upbringing in mountainous Central Mexico—and their brightness reflects the spirit of human endeavor and accomplishment. She is a self-taught artist after being challenged to "just get some paint and canvas and start." Her first exhibition was a spring garden party where she sold her first painting; over the summer she sold several more. By year's end Ms. Sanchez opened her own gallery, Arte Mexicano, in Columbus, Ohio's Short North arts district. Ms. Sanchez moved to Cleveland in 2005 and lives with her daughter and husband in Cleveland's Edgewater neighborhood.

## Angelica Pozo

A nationally recognized ceramic artist, Pozo is author of "Making and Installing Handmade Tile," published by Lark Books in April of 2005. A New York City native, born of Cuban and Puerto Rican parents, Angelica came to Cleveland in 1984 seeking affordable studio space in a culturally active and ethnically diverse setting that gave her a sense of her old home 'town.' She holds an MFA from the University of Michigan and a BFA from SUNY College of Ceramics in Alfred, NY. In her spacious Tremont studio she has worked on numerous public art commissions, including those for RTA Air-

port rapid station and the 'Marketplace' bench outside of the "Q" Arena. Her work has been widely exhibited, most notably in 2003 when she was included in a North American survey exhibition "21st Century Ceramics in the United States & Canada," and in 1998 when she was juried into the "International Ceramic Public Art Exhibition" in Tapei, Taiwan. Among her awards are an Ohio Arts Council and an NEA Regional Arts Midwest Individual Artist Fellowship. She also has work in the permanent collection of the American Craft Museum in New York City.

*Artist statement:* For the past two decades my work has dealt with the natural world, landscape, plant forms, and the environment. In that time my studio work has cycled through various different forms: from tile/mosaic temples and shrines, dinnerware installations to handbuilt sculptures and back again. Through these themes and formats, my work also speaks of femininity, sensuality and spiritual awareness. With my handbuilt sculptures, the natural forms I explore are of my own invention, hybrids of the plant and protozoan forms that inspire me. The sculptures' lush sensuous colors and spiky textures make them simultaneously inviting and forbidding, seductive yet dangerous.

Orchids possess this quality. That is perhaps why they have currently seduced my fascination. However, I find myself unable or unwilling to alter or derive their forms into an invented sculptural form of my own. I've chosen, for now, to explore and understand their complex sensual forms through a series of painted and relief representations.

## Gallery Hours

Wednesday through Saturday noon to 9 p.m., Sunday 1 to 5

## Rafael Valdivieso

Born in Quito, Ecuador, he specialized in painting in high school, and studied print making, graphic art design, and painting in Ecuador.

*Artist Statement:*  
*Narrator of the romantic,*  
*Characters of old,*  
*in images of human qualities*  
*in a spiritual aura*  
*In a world that invites one to decipher*  
*the codes presented by life.*  
*Always in movement, in search of the*  
*line, of the trace of natural detail*  
*of the instinct of the ink or the water*  
*color,*  
*It is this transparency that changes the*  
*atmosphere,*  
*In order to allow the image to set the*  
*rhythm in the drawing all by itself -*  
*This is how it is born naturally and*  
*spontaneously.*  
*A work in a world of fantasy of rich*  
*symbols- rebellious and erotic,*  
*figures of spaces that safeguard secrets,*  
*of dark spaces that search for the light*  
*or color*  
*Although timid, they make their presence*  
*known in a transparency*  
*that manages to give volume to the*  
*piece.*  
*I look for the interpretative power of the*  
*line, taking it to another dimension -*  
*Stain, transparency, watercolor, ink.....*  
*these are my sisters.*

## Hector Castellanos Lara

Born in Ciudad Guatemala, Guatemala, he studied art in Guatemala, New York, and Cleveland. Gathering images from the majestic volcanoes surrounding Ciudad Guatemala in his youth, Castel-

lanos Lara brings forth a lament of sorrow, exile and joy of Central America. His early influences include his father, a commercial painter in Guatemala for his advertising murals and giant political retratos during the 1950s through the 1970s—as well as his mother, who drew inspiration from folk art of Guatemala as a dressmaker, including images of daily life. From this enchanted environment of art and joy Castellanos Lara's work flows. In Long Island, New York, during the 1980s he developed his talents as a commercial designer working for El Greco Footwear, Inc. At the same time, Castellanos Lara was drawn to explore and develop his work in the fine arts. A resident of Cleveland, Castellanos Lara has held numerous exhibitions and taught in Cleveland Museum of Art education department, Playhouse Square Foundation, Outreach Programs Young Audiences of Greater Cleveland, Outreach Programs Beck Center for the Arts, Immigrant Workers Project, International Community Council, the Art House, and International House of Blues Foundation. (Jeff Stewart) *Artist Statement* Nothing fascinates me more than emerging images that appear one by one. The unfolding secrets of a surface, the progression, the ritual of painting. From chromatic landscapes, phantasmagoric figures, geometric shapes, soft washes build, traditional bold latin shades explode. This is a manifestation of my unlimited expression and my urgency to paint various themes depending how I feel during that particular moment. The real and the surreal fuse within my work. At the heart of my struggle is an effort to defeat classification, and effort to express the infinite.

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## Gloria Ritter

The art of Gloria Ritter expresses a vivid blending of the literary and visual arts which would also be an accurate description of the soul of the artist. Gloria was born into a family of gifted writers and artists, with a rich myriad of ethnic backgrounds. Like many talented artists, Gloria has wrestled with these strong influences, which at times both intimidated and drove her. As a result, when viewers look at her work, they see Celtic, Hispanic, African, Asian, and Middle Eastern themes, often depending on what their individual background happens to be. Throughout her life, Gloria has possessed a special sensitivity and passion for words. In her hands, words and passages assume a life and vitality of their own. In her art work, she has discovered a way to express this life form both verbally and visually. She calls her artwork "Word Inspired Design." Her art conveys not only the written word, but the emotions, colors, and images the passage evokes.

## Salvador Gonzalez

*Artist statement:* I grew up in Mexico as an indigenous person with strong beliefs rooted in the pre-Columbian culture. Many of those beliefs, symbolism, folklore and cosmogonic view of the world manifest themselves in my work—I cannot avoid it. My artistic inspiration comes from these early symbols, natural forces, deities and spirits that through ritual and ceremony bring a positive energy and healing power.

Through the practice and discipline of ritual, a deity will manifest itself and provide guidance during a particular moment—either to help you heal or to control natural forces that bring light into darkness. My art comes from the depths of my spiritual consciousness, which manifests itself through different imagery and symbolism. The force and subject matter of my paintings do not exist in the real world but rather in the spiritual realm of the shaman.

## Mario Kujawski

Mario Kujawski was born in Argentina. While in high school, he emigrated to New York and subsequently studied art at Brown University, in Spain, and at Berkeley with Peter Voukos.

*Artist statement:* I started building things from simple wooden blocks when I was a child in Argentina and I have never stopped. I am still building things, but today I use natural materials that I find in my environment: branches, vines, roots, bark, wasps nests, stones, seeds and so on. These found objects are tied together with jute into free standing forms, hanging shapes, and wall pieces. Many of the pieces have messages and prayers attached to them resembling fetishes as well as Milagros (objects hung in church to celebrate a healing). Some works are cast in bronze. Modest in size, these works are not meant to be monuments, but personal devotional objects. They are made with the belief that nature, when accessed as a source of healing, can have a beneficial effect on the maker as well as on the community.

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The Latino community in the U.S. has experienced tremendous growth within the past several years. Latino influences now are prevalent in food, music, language, and art. These popular influences have played an important role in deepening understanding of the Latino culture. Frequently overlooked, however, is the fact that although Latinos speak the same language, Spanish, their countries and cultures are each very distinctive.

An exotic mosaic—composed of diverse races and cultures, distinctive food and music, and unique expressions of language and art—infuses the rich cultural heritage of the NEO Latino exhibition through its seven Latino artists. Each artist is known throughout the Cleveland community, and several are known beyond Ohio and even internationally. Although their names and work are familiar to many, the specifics of their cultural background may be somewhat of a mystery to most of the viewing public. This exhibition explores those roots while celebrating the increasingly vibrant Latino community of Northeast Ohio. Using sculpture, ceramics and paintings as their mode of expression, these artists invite us to transcend cultural barriers and enter their world. In so doing, art becomes the universal language.

*Salvador Gonzalez, organizer*

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