



The Corner of the Arts | August 2018

Elisa Pritzker presents Julio Valdez

Julio Valdez: Dreams and Reflections

Born in the Dominican Republic, Julio Valdez has lived in New York since 1993. He is the recipient of numerous awards including: a fellowship from the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, New York, 1994; Artist in Residence, Studio Museum Harlem, New York, 1998; Silver Palette, Festival International de la Peinture, Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France, 1998; Grand Prize, XVII E. Leon Jimenes Bienal, Dominican Republic, 2000; a Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, New York, 2003; and a National Academy of Arts Fellowship, New York, 2007. His work is in numerous public collections, including: The Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Santa Barbara Museum of Art and El Museo del Barrio, New York. More about my career and my works can be seen in these web pages:

www.juliovaldez.com

http://www.latinamericanmasters.com/english_artist_valdez.php

<http://junekellygallery.com/valdez/index.html>

EP: When and where did you start your career in the arts?

JV: I grew up in the Dominican Republic, absorbing the poetic and baroque aspects of the Caribbean culture. I started participating in group shows and contests in 1986 and my first professional exhibition was in 1988. That same year we also exhibited at the Museo Rayo in Colombia. My first individual show was presented in 1989.

EP: Do your Santo Domingo roots influence your work of art?

JV: Yes, always! Since I relocated to New York City, another island and home to one of the largest concentrations of Dominican people outside of the Dominican Republic, my work is rooted in aspects of a culture that is defined and surrounded by water in both its native and adopted islands.

EP: Tell me about the theme of your work and the médiums you use for its realization.

My most recent exhibition, *Dreams and Reflections*, takes its title from Carl Jung's memoir *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. My use of "reflection" has multiple meanings. These works explore observable phenomena, such as the reflection of light on water, while simultaneously reflecting an inner world informed by my personal and collective history. Through mixed media drawings, prints and paintings, my work explore this oceanic landscape that is both illusory and dreamlike. I have been examining images of water beyond its physical characteristics, as a metaphor for consciousness and the creative process. I propose a fluid space where dreams of transit and fantasies coexist with nature, and the sensuality of the tropics create a sense of belonging to a new milieu that is neither here, nor there -- a third space that is in a state of flux.

EP: How is your work rythm in your studio?

I work on multiple large oil paintings at the same time, since they take a lot of time to complete. I also divide my time between two studios, in New York City and Washington DC. In between, I also work on print p[rojects and teach printmaking. Ocassionally, I create installations, mostly site-specific projects.

EP: What project/s do you have in the near future?

At the end of September, I will be exhibiting again at the Affordable Art Fair and in December at the Pinta Fair in Miami. I am also getting ready for individual shows in Washington and in Los Angeles and possibly in New York in 2019.

Photo credits

Portrait of artist Julio Valdez by Irene Carlos

Photos of Julio Valdez artworks by Ezequiel Taveras

"The Corner of the Arts" [La Esquina de las Artes] ©Elisa Pritzker, a renowned Argentinian-American visual artist and independent curator. Questions and/or comments contact her through her website: www.elisapritzker.com