

Interview questions by Imogen McCready

1. Tell me about yourself, where you grew up, what has inspired your artistic journey so far and how you came to the current point of your career.

My story starts in the Cuban countryside of the Pinar Del Rio Province. From a family full of traditional values, I grew up to find love in the visual arts. I became a professional artist and educator, graduated from the School of Art (Instructores de Arte) in Cuba. In 2007 I immigrated to the United States and began introducing my work in Naples, FL, collaborating with the Artis-Naples, The Baker Museum. In 2012 Oxford America recognized me as one of the "New Superstars of Southern Art." Working with distinct institutions and museums helped me to reach different communities and explore art techniques. In 2017 I was awarded an Artist in Residency at Northwestern State University of Louisiana, followed by my solo show, Marble Trace. Some of my works have become part of permanent collections nationwide: The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, and others. My artistic developments come from traditional academic training and experimenting with new mediums like coffee and mixed media applications. The topics in my works have a strong folkloric character directly connected with the Cuban landscape, often portrayed with a magical lens of new interpretations. Conceptually, my works have focused on the dynamics of narrative and the forging of fables and allegories. The incidental details have given way to reformulations of settings and images, which are faithful to the gist of each tale that I present. For the years to come, I would continue to work with institutions and communities. A series of projects focused on exploring the diverse sides of human nature and my exploration of art mediums and techniques. As great artists inspired me, I aim to encourage and inspire others to create and pursue a visual arts career. I will support the new generations and continue creating a door to express the inexpressible with my art.

2. What do you enjoy in life? Is there anything specific that inspires you artistically?

Music, Poetry and other arts inspire me to create. A good morning with a cup of coffee and good music can inspire me to create new compositions and play with the colors. My most significant influence has always been Joaquin Sorolla, a Spanish painter primarily known for the use of light. When I had the opportunity to watch his works, it was surreal to me. I suddenly became a child again. I strive to share this experience with others throughout my pieces. Painters like Alberto Pla y Rubio and Julio Romero de Torres, that followed his painting style have been called sorrollistas. My Style is contemporary but highly influenced by the "sorrollista" approach.

3. How did you develop your style?

I never stopped creating and experimenting new mediums. In my case I experimented with coffee because of a mistake that happened, and I saw an opportunity to create something new. Researching and learning new skills, when possible, was the key to my style. Styles change as we learn and try new things, don't be afraid to explore.

4. Among your works, which is your favorite? Why?

As an artist, I have created countless pieces of art throughout my career. Each of them holds a special place in my heart, as they represent different stages of my artistic journey. Some pieces are more challenging than others, either because of the emotional significance they hold, or the technical difficulty involved in creating them. Despite these challenges, I cherish each piece equally, as they are all a part of my story.

I believe that art reflects the soul, and each piece I create is a part of me. They are a testament to the experiences I have had and the emotions I have felt. Some pieces hold a deep emotional significance for me, reminding me of a specific time or person in my life. Others represent a technical achievement, pushing the boundaries of what I thought was possible in my art.

5. Are you a detail oriented person?

Yes, I try to let go on the beginning and explore all the sparks of inspiration. After, I will set all the details of the composition to the canvas.

6. Explain your workflow

I approach every piece with the idea to reflect my surroundings and the changes happening in our society. My work contains many metaphors that touch topics such as understanding relationships, climate change, psychology, political views, etc. I will use an adaptation of techniques in oil, watercolors, drawings, and coffee on paper. Trying to express the inexpressible, the fables I tell through my paintings are the dialogues that I experience opening doors to parallel dimensions. Every brush stroke of brighter colors awakens new knowledge about their stories and mine. I will focus on using my ideas and incorporate concepts such as color theory and camera angles.

7. What are some of the biggest lessons in the business of photography you have learnt along the way?

In the business of being a visual artist, either a painter or photographer, there are 3 important things to accomplish. First to be creative and go out of your comfort zone by doing so. Second networking, talk to everyone, assist to exhibitions, events, fundraising, and make great connections for future collaborations. Third is to establish a "brand" of sorts, become professional, be on time, accomplish all your agreements and establish your brand as someone creative and capable to continue the line of success that you are hopping to archive.

8. What does photography and/or art in general mean to you?

What is Art? To anyone can mean different things, from something with vibrant colors to something that changes your thoughts. In my case, art is the label for something that moves you to create, connect with others, and express your authenticity.

9. What motivates you to continue with photography (economically, politically, intellectually or emotionally)

My passion to explore the world and express myself through art, doing what I love motivates me to continue working in the visual arts.

10. What is the most challenging part of being a photographer for you?

This path is not without its challenges. One of the most difficult aspects of being a visual artist is keeping up with the ideas in my mind. Sometimes, my thoughts are already ten steps ahead of what I'm creating now, and it can be a struggle to keep up.

11. Lastly, what is the greatest part of being a photographer for you, what keeps you in the field?

Despite the challenges, the best part of being a visual artist is the joy of living my life doing what I love. And to be able to share that joy with others is truly a wonderful thing.