

unity



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

Hispanic Heritage Month
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Famed chef helps to place Mexico 'at the culinary global table'

INSIDE:

Songs in the key of creativity and change
Challenge accepted. Passion realized

Unity is published in February (Black History Month), March (Women's History Month), May (Asian Pacific American Heritage Month), June (Pride Month), September (Hispanic Heritage Month) and November (Native American Heritage Month).

Realism, in paintings and photographs

The innovative artworks of these Latinx artists - with roots in Mexico, Nicaragua, Spain and Venezuela - represent the vast diversity of their cultures.

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TONY ARMENDARIZ

In "The Liar Returns," the cloudy but piercing eyes of an older gentleman hold the viewer's attention. The artist, Tony Armendariz, uses tight brushstrokes of watercolors to bring the man's vibrant skin, long white beard and red cap to life. The social realist painter portrays real people, like the elderly face in this portrait, that he meets during his travels as an homage to a lesson his mother taught him. "Through my mother," says Armendariz, "I learned that art surrounded us every day and that it was a normal part of life to be involved with it."

Born in Chicago, Tony Armendariz grew up in a Mexican and Nicaraguan family of graphic artists. While his mother taught him the intrinsic value of art, his father taught him "the more technical aspects of art that involved working with people and architecture. Things like composing and design and editing."

The artist continued his education at the American Academy of Art in Chicago and studied under acclaimed watercolor instructor Irving Shapiro. During this period, Armendariz began working professionally as a graphic artist, illustrator and web designer. Throughout his decades-long career, he created pieces for clients and had his work published in magazines like American Art Collector.

In 2020, Armendariz painted "Modern Man," another watercolor inspired by a Black man. The artist copies the tightly wound expression on the man's



"The Liar Returns"
by Tony Armendariz



"Modern Man"
by Tony Armendariz



"Havana Pharmacy" by Tony Armendariz

face in washes of brown to depict the deep thought Armendariz's subject must have been in when they met. The man's coiled locs spiral toward the sky with the help of a camo scarf.

Another painting, "Havana Pharmacy," takes a wider view than "Modern Man" and "The Liar Returns." The artist saw this quaint scene, of employees working inside a drugstore as a woman walked out, while in Cuba. "The building seemed to emote a personality of its own. The features of the building were incredible, and the scenes of life with the people inside was just a part of the story," professes the Latinx artist.

MARIA MIJARES

"My work as a contemporary realist painter began with an unconscious intent to understand and hold on to personal experience," explains Maria Mijares. Born in New York City, Mijares grew up traveling between urban New Jersey and her ancestral homeland, Santander, Spain - near the Altamira caves in a pueblo with her last name. "I'm not saying I am related to the cave painters," the artist declares, "but I certainly share the instinct - I am an artist compelled to document my experience!"

Living between urban New Jersey and the Spanish countryside left Mijares feeling like a stranger in both lands. Ultimately, this proved to be an advantage



"Casino Nocturne III"
by Maria Mijares