

Virginia Ayress

Artist Statement

I am an artist and a Latin American woman, a product of the history and times of my continent and country, Chile. I am part of a great family; I owe who I am to them. My learning comprises universal values like solidarity, respect for humanity, freedom of religion and justice; these are my credentials. The art I create is a reflection of my personal experiences, my happiness, fears, successes and failures.

I treasure the unique accents of the different cultures that have touched me. I come from the timeless Andes. I grew up in the warm colors of the Caribbean, loving the ancestral sounds of the drums. My experiences in Europe enriched my art, strengthening it and making me conscious of my actions. As an artist I cannot remain detached from society's problems. My work in New York tries to reflect the community where I live, where women have to live daily with domestic violence and young people and children are often exposed to danger. I offer my art and my creativity as relief to those who need it.

Experience and nature have given me the opportunity to experiment with diverse materials like iron, sand, cardboard, fabric, cement etc. The main thing is not to limit my ability of expression. The more possibilities that exist, the more opportunities I have to recreate reality and to enrich my perception of the world. It becomes a challenge to look for alternatives to an esthetic problem. For example, I choose murals for their large dimensions and their relationship to social issues. The public exposed to a mural has a chance to reflect on the theme and find its own relationship to it. I use the gentle, organic wood in woodcuts and xylography to portray ancestral themes such as religious syncretism. I use clay to create works of art that speak of the diversity of marine life. I use mannequins to depict three-dimensional human forms that show women as elements givers of life. Mixing traditional and experimental materials give new expression to my art and my own interpretation of the world.

My function as an artist is to protect through images the human creative power, not its destruction or oppression, to articulate the relationship between nature, creativity and us.

New York City 1/2002

Virginia Ayress

Education

- 1989 – 1991 Scuola Internazionale della Grafica, Venezia, Italy
1980 – 1984 Instituto Superior de Arte, La Habana, Cuba
1974 – 1979 Escuela Nacional de Arte, La Habana, Cuba
1970 – 1973 Escuela Experimental de Arte, Santiago, Chile

Solo Exhibitions

- 2002
- *September 11th Mural*, School District 6, PS 4 (NYC) 32x28 feet mural
 - *Flight 587 Mural*, School District 6, PS 4 (NYC) 32x28 feet mural
 - *International Women's Day Show*, Vamos a la Peña Cultural Center (NYC) mixed media installation on women's theme
- 2001
- *Returns*, Galeria la Bicicleta, Habana, Cuba, 10 etchings, 20 woodcuts
 - *The Three Kings*, Casa de la Cultura Dominicana (NYC) mixed media installation, a mural and 10 watercolors
 - *Tribute to Dorothy Day*, Rio Gallery (NYC) commissioned work by Broadway Housing, 12 murals in acrylic
- 2000
- *Dorothy Day*, Dorothy Day Apartments (NYC) 12 murals in acrylic and 10 etchings
- 1999
- *The Three Kings: A Christmas Exhibit*, Rio Gallery (NYC) altar installation, 18 mixed media paintings
 - *Hispanic Heritage Month*, Marymount Manhattan College, NY, 4 oil paintings and 11 acrylics
- 1992
- *Encounter of Continents*, Pittsburgh University, PN, 40 mixed media works: etchings, oils, acrylics and pastels
- 1987
- *Religious Syncretism*, Culture House Gallery, Cuba, mixed media installation, 12 collages
- 1984
- *Chilean Memories*, Galeria L, Cuba, mixed media installation

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2001
- *3rd Biennial "Identidad"*, Casa de la Poesía, Cuba, 4 etchings
- 2000
- *Color Latino*, Mount Vernon City Hall, NY, 5 oil paintings and ceramics
 - *Colectiva*, Colombian Consulate Gallery (NYC) 4 mixed media paintings
 - *Religious Art*, Catholic Archdiocese of New York (NYC) 1 mixed media painting
- 1998
- *9th Annual Latino Month Celebration Show*, DC 37 Gallery (NYC) 3 oil paintings
 - *Latino Artists Show*, Oller Campeche Gallery (NYC) 4 mixed media paintings
 - *Latino Heritage Month*, Hunter College Gallery (NYC) 2 mixed media paintings

- *Latino Artists Show*, The Deep South Gallery (NYC) 4 mixed media paintings
1995
- *Biennial Exhibition of Works on Paper by 30 Contemporary Latin American Artists*, Connecticut Museum, CT, 6 mobiles made of etchings
1994
- *Collective Exhibition of Latin American Artists*, Longwood Gallery (NYC) 5 mixed media paintings
1992
- *Atelier Aperto Group Show*, Galleria Centro Internazionale della Grafica di Venezia, Italy, 8 etchings
- *Artisti Contemporani*, Sala Consiliare, Italy, 4 woodcuts
- *Artisti Veneziani Show*, Segno Aperto Galleria, Italy, 2 metal engravings and 2 woodcuts
- *Premio Internazionale di Grafica Do Forni Show*, Do Forni Galleria, Italy, 2 woodcuts
1991
- *Atelier Aperto Group Show*, Galleria Segno Grafico, Italy, 3 woodcuts and 2 metal engravings
- *Collectiva dei Maestri della Scuola Internazionale della Grafica*, Cafe Notegen Galleria, Italy, 4 mobiles made of etchings, 4 woodcuts
1990
- *Artisti Veneziani Show*, Galleria Venezia Viva, Italy, 3 woodcuts
1989
- *Atelier Aperto Group Show*, Segno Grafico Galleria, Italy, 2 metal engravings and 2 woodcuts
1986
- *Chilean Female Painters*, Galleria Trastevere, Italy, 6 mixed media paintings
- *Conquest of America*, Galleria La Chiave, Italy, 1 kinetic sculpture
1985
- *Chilean Artists Around the World*, City Hall Gallery, Spain, 3 mixed media paintings
- *500 Years Since Discovering the World is Round*, Amagotis Gallery, Spain, 12 mixed media paintings
- *Chilean Artists*, Union Gallery, Germany, mixed media installation
1984
- *Simon Bolivar Show*, Talia Gallery, Cuba, mixed media installation
- *School of Fine Arts Graduating Students Exhibition*, House of Culture Gallery, Cuba, mixed media installation

Fellowships 1989 – 1991 Scuola Internazionale della Grafica, Venezia, Italy

Collections Xylographic Museum of the City of Carpi, Italy