

ALERT TOP STORY

OVERTURE CENTER | LATINO ART FAIR

Latino Art Fair returns to Overture Center on Saturday

Gayle Worland | Wisconsin State Journal

May 7, 2022



Chele Ramos taught herself how to paint just five years ago, and already her work is in demand.

She'll be showing her portraits — done in watercolor, oil paints and even with diluted coffee — this weekend at a local business on Monroe Street as part of Friday's MMOCA Spring Gallery Night.



Portrait painter Chele Ramos talks about her work, including the self-portrait in front of her titled "Soul Soup," at Lauer Realty Group on Monroe Street, where she has a one-woman show. On Saturday, Ramos will be among more than a dozen artists exhibiting at the Latino Art Fair.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

She's also creating art for a Forward Madison poster this soccer season, and this fall will have shows at Mother Fool's coffee shop and Yahara Bay Distillery.

And on Saturday, Ramos will be one of more than a dozen artists exhibiting at the Latino Art Fair, or "amArte," a lively, two-hour event at the **Overture Center**.

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A painting depicting Madison glass artist Terry King by watercolorist Chele Ramos is part of an exhibit of her work currently on display at Lauer Realty. Ramos will also exhibit work at Saturday's Latino Art Fair at the Overture Center.

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This will be the eighth annual, free-admission “amArte,” featuring artwork for sale, art activities, face painting for youngsters, and music by a youth mariachi group from Milwaukee, the Latino Arts Strings Program. Later in the evening, the Latin Grammy-nominated band Mariachi Herencia de Mexico performs a ticketed show in Capitol Theater.

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The Latino Art Fair has always been designed “to celebrate that there’s a lot of art and a lot of talent in town,” said Oscar Mireles of LOUD, Latinos Organizing for Understanding and Development, which is partnering with the Latino Chamber of Commerce to present this year’s art fair.

For LOUD, “this is just the beginning,” Mireles said. “We’re excited to connect with other groups and other people, and share our culture.”

Issis Macias calls the chance to exhibit at the Latino Art Fair “an honor.”

“I’m so excited to be invited to showcase my work with the other talented Latino artists who will be there,” said Macias, who will be showing her colorful abstract paintings and some collaborative work. “And I’m excited for the chance to connect with the Latino community.”

Born and raised in Los Angeles by her Mexican-born parents, Macias first pursued a career in water resources management. But when she moved to



Madison artist Issis Macias created her acrylic and oil pastel painting "Seaside" in 2021.

ISSIS MACIAS

Madison in 2016 with her partner, she dove further into painting, and now does art — and parenting — full time.

Along with the Latino Art Fair, Macias has exhibited at Art Fair on the Square and **MMOCA Gallery Night**. Earlier this spring, she was in Los Angeles and collaborated with artist Eric Escobar, who added his figurative pen-and-ink drawings to her abstract paintings. Twenty-eight of their 35 joint artworks quickly sold at an LA pop-up, and Macias sold three more at last Sunday's Marquette-Atwood Neighborhood Art Walk in Madison. She'll be bringing at least one more to the Latino Art Fair.

The project with Escobar “actually sparked an interest in me, to take my abstract work and collaborate with other artists and build on each other’s strengths,” she said.

While water is a frequent theme in Macias’ works, artist Rolando Cruz uses his photographs to make bold statements about life in the U.S. He often uses male nudes in his work.

“I’m not afraid of expressing myself through my artwork and everything I symbolize,” said Cruz, a longtime Madison artist and ultra-marathoner who moved to Wisconsin from Mexico in 1994. “I think the beauty of art is that it provokes difficult conversations.”

He is bringing a new work titled “Democracy” to the Latino Art Fair, although it might be deemed “controversial” enough that he might not be able to display it, he said.



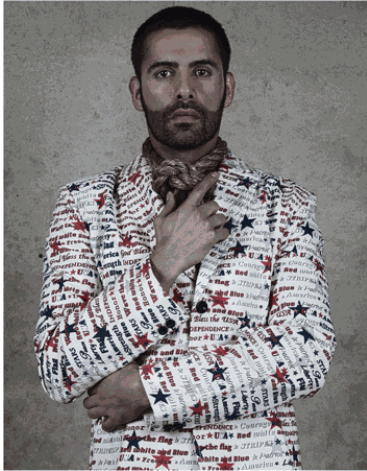
Madison painter Issis Macias is one of more than a dozen artists exhibiting at the 2022 Latino Art Fair.

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Madison artist Rolando Cruz uses his work, such as the photograph "Veiled Nation," to "provoke a

Still, “I think the Latino Art Fair is very important” and gives the community a chance “to see just how rich our



“I’m not afraid of expressing myself through my artwork and everything I symbolize,” says artist Rolando Cruz.

ROLANDO CRUZ

Whenever her large family gets together, they celebrate her grandfather’s Mexican heritage by making his fried taco recipes, said Ramos, a Madison native. Saturday will mark her first Latino Art Fair, and she will be bringing many examples of her varied portrait work.

“I’ve always been fascinated with faces,” she said, “and with people.”

conversation,” he said.

ROLANDO CRUZ

cultures are,” said

Cruz, who has exhibited at the show for many years.

“It gives a platform to a lot of people out there who have to push themselves. I am not afraid to put myself out there.”

Ramos is another artist stretching what she can do. In her watercolor portrait series “Artists and Artisans,” which is on display at Lauer Realty Group, 2526 Monroe St., the watercolor painter depicts well-known Madison creatives at work on their art. She has experimented with self-portraiture, and recently began painting still lifes using coffee diluted at various levels to create different shades of brown.



Watercolor artist Chele Ramos talks about her work, including the painting behind her rendered in paints made from coffee.

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If you go

What: 2022 Latino Art Fair, “amArte,” featuring local art in a broad range of media, plus art activities and a performance by the Latino Arts Strings Program

When: 4 to 6 p.m. Saturday

Where: Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St.

● Opt-Out Signal Honored

Artists exhibiting: Chele Ramos, Issis Macias, Rolando Cruz Pina, Dana Maya, Alexander Punguil, Nuria Vega Moffat, Nabdil Hamdan, William del Moral, Manuel Munoz, Gianna Nieves, Zeus Corona, Heidi Figueroa Velez, Carlos Mireles, Tomy Tepepa, Javier Guerrero

Admission: Free

Performance: Following the art fair, the Chicago group Mariachi Herencia de Mexico will perform at 7:30 p.m. in Capitol Theater. Tickets are \$25 to \$35 at **overture.org**, the Overture box office, or by phone at 608-258-4141.

More information: **overture.org**

By Gayle Worland | Wisconsin State Journal
