

## **VLADIMIR CORA**

Vladimir Cora (born 1951, Acaponeta, Nayarit) is a Mexican painter and sculptor based in the state of Nayarit, whose work has been recognized by various awards and membership in the Salón de la Plástica Mexicana. He discovered art at age fifteen, after deciding that he could not be a musician. He received training in Tijuana and Mexico City, with his first success in the 1980s. His style has been described as neo-figurative, minimalist and coarse, and he creates his works in series usually related to the apostles, flowers, birds and women, especially those related to Nayarit. He has had over 150 individual exhibitions both in Mexico and abroad and continues to work from his home state.

Cora has had over 150 individual exhibitions and has participated in many more collective ones. He had his very first exhibition in 1974 in Nayarit. He began to be able to live off his art around 1981, when he had an exhibition in Puerto Vallarta, where all thirty three pieces sold in one night. He used the money to buy a car. In 1982 he entered two pieces at the first Rufino Tamayo biennale in Oaxaca. One received a prize which allowed him to meet the famous Oaxacan painter. Since then he has had his work exhibited in a wide variety of galleries and cultural centers in Mexico such as the Museo Regional de Nayarit, the Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes in Mazatlan, the Ex-Convento del Carmen in Guadalajara, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Culiacán and the Galería HB in Mexico City. In 2004, he created a series of pieces such as paintings, graphic work and sculpture with fellow Mexican artist Jazzamoart and exhibited them. The series Los Apóstoles was on display in front of the Palacio de Bellas Artes in 2010. In 2013, he exhibited a series called “Reminiscencias” at the Salón de la Plástica Mexicana, of which he is a member. Outside of Mexico he has had exhibitions in Palm Springs, CA, Havana, Lima and Miami.<sup>[9]</sup> He exhibited at the Kodak Gallery in the SoHo section of New York in 2008. Cora has spent most of his professional life working from his native Nayarit, rather than in Mexico City like most Mexican artists although he has a workshop in California. Much of his work has a relationship to this state, such as Danza de pájaros (Bird Dance) painted for the International Festival of Migratory Birds in San

Blas. For this series, he built a cabin on the Palmar de Cuautla beach to observe the birds there.

In 2010, Cora donated a work called *El Corazón más grande del Mundo* to the city of Guanajuato and the Festival Internacional Cervantino. The piece was vandalized with graffiti and the removal of several parts. The bronze sculpture is in the shape of a human heart, which represents Nayarit, with twenty niches that represent the state's twenty municipalities. The piece was taken out of Guanajuato because the city could not guarantee its security.

He received an honorary mention at the first Rufino Tamayo Biennial, the Gran Premio de Confraternidad de Cuatro Cultural at the first Iberoamerican Painting Biennial of the Instituto Andino de Artes Populares in Miami and the Fine Arts Prize of the government of Nayarit.

Cora is a painter and a sculptor. He began painting with oils on canvas and then began to work with acrylics and enamels. Today he mixes the mediums, for example enamels over previously painted oil and sometimes adding texture and volume to paintings, but prefers acrylics because they dry faster. His paintings are medium-sized but some are large, and his work, especially the addition of enamel, has been described by Mexican art critic Teresa del Conde as giving a Northern Mexican or Chicano look. Later he began sculpting, starting with wood, then plaster and bronze.<sup>[5]</sup> His sculptures tend to be either small scale with a popular art character or sculptures of medium or large size. Many of his sculptures are made modifying natural formations such as tree roots or twisted tree trunks. His bronze works show influence from Alberto Castro Leñero, which whom he has worked.

Much of his work is classified as neo-figurative. His work has been described as a "... skillful exercise of composition and color, of the transformation of color to a primordial form..." He often paints without sketching first once he has a theme as he likes to be spontaneous. Cora believes that art should relate to "ancestral memory" and old myths applied to modern reality. His development as an artist has not experienced serious changes in direction or jumps from one style to another. He has maintained a consistent identity, using rich colors in a minimalist style. His painting technique is not sophisticated or elegant but rather expressionist, coarse and spontaneous. His use of light and color shows influence from Rufino Tamayo.

Northern Mexican influence in his work comes from classes in Tijuana as well as exhibitions and work done in Laguna Beach and other cities in California.

Almost all of his work is done in series, based on a theme. Recurring themes in his work are the Twelve Apostles, flowers, fruit, birds and female nudes. His depictions of women are often related to the concepts of desire and devotion, often with the body partially hidden to give a sense of looking onto a private scene. When the woman is completely shown, she often assumes monumental proportions with a solid anatomy.

Female themes have included a series on “Señorita Tecuala,” a stereotype of tropical women from Nayarit and his wife, who was the inspiration for the series, “Natura: Flores para Mary” which was exhibited at the José Luis Cuevas Museum . His more recent work often gives the sense of looking onto a private moment.

## **Casa Museo Vladimir Cora**

The Casa Museo Vladimir Cora was founded by the artist in 1999. It contains a collection of his works from the 1980s to the present as well as pieces from the Castro Leñero brothers, Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo, Sebastián, Manuel Felguérez, Vicente Rojo and Gabriel Macotela. It also holds between two and four temporary exhibitions each year in of paintings, graphic work and sculpture. The building dates from the 19th century.