



Virgen #5 (1992), by Leonel Gonzalez, with its wormy shapes in metallic pigments, is one of the artworks

on display in the "LatinArt '90s" show at the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood.

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New generation of Latin artists make strong show

— remains a persistent point of view.

Many of the artists in the show create intense expressionist images through vibrant colors and aggressive paint application. Rodrigo Pimentel from Mexico, for example, dramatically combines reds, pinks and blues for the writhing human torso in *Hombre de Maiz* (*The Corn Man*).

Since most Latin American countries were born from imperialist struggles and nurtured on intense political intrigues, it is natural that artworks by native painters show dramatic forms in flux and vividly energized hues.

Consider the violent images created by the severed limbs in *Scene Games* by Brazil's Antonio H. Amaral.

The savagery of *Perro Rojo* (*Red Dog*) by Cesar Menendez from El Salvador also hits a strident chord of political and social unrest.

Other pieces are quaintly tranquil. *Animales Misticos* (*Mystical Animals*) by Guatemala's Elmar Rojas and *Arbusto en Zona Calida* (*Bush in Warm Zone*) by Ecuador's Enrique Tabara reveal sources drawn from magical myths and legends.

Somewhere in between is the lyrical *Paisaje* (*Landscape*) by Peru's Ramiro Llona. It is abstract but only mildly expressionistic.

Glimpses from the show

Cuba's Emilio Sanchez, who lives in Manhattan, is well known nationally and has established a reputation for bright architecturally inspired motifs. His *Casa con Torre Amarilla* (*House with Yellow Tower*) is a highlight of the Hollywood show.

Superb is the classically rooted *Ausencia* (*Absence*) clever savvy Cuban

painter Gory. Examine this canvas closely; airbrush work is not present, just a meticulous handling of pigments with the brush.

Also fine are Puerto Rican Wilfredo Chiesa's *Giotto*, a segmented abstraction with subtle protractor shapes, and Costa Rican Leonel Gonzalez's mixed-media *Virgen 5*, with its wormy shapes in metallic pigments.

An appreciation of so-called "art brut"—the crude art created by children and the insane—was popularized in France in the late 1940s by artist Jean DuBuffet.

In "LatinArt '90s" the art brut spirit is resurrected in the slashing and drippy *Lolita Whispering*, conceived by Gina Pellon, a Cuban who has a studio in Paris.

For devotees of precisely painted surrealist themes, check out the oil by Miguel Padura of Cuba. Titled *Timeless Sleep* (a homage to Salvador Dali?), it depicts a graphically rendered seed pod hovering above a super-realistic glittering salmon.

Although the Hollywood exhibit resounds in ably produced pieces, with nary a visual clinker, viewers will remember one picture best.

That is *La Virgen del Sordo* (*The Virgin of the Deaf*) by Brooke Alfaro of Panama. Like a fascinating ship of fools, the singular throng of characters that inhabit Alfaro's bobbing dory are an exotic bunch worthy of the crazy populace created in 16th-century Flanders by Hieronymous Bosch.

Passengers are the ample-breasted, feeble-minded, topsy-turvy and just plain odd. Alfaro's boat people are beautifully painted and enlivened by delicately knitted strokes of pigment. Tough to pass by this gem.

Regardless of new directions and changes in the face of Latin American paintings, a flame of unrest burns — or at least flickers. The fiery, lapping shapes in Cuban-born Mario Bencomo's *On Tropical Thoughts II* are a reminder.