

“The ideas in my head all say, ‘Me, me, me’”

Yolanda Calvet de Hayden’s magical realism find expression on canvas

By Dana Slowiak
The Northside News

Painting across two very different cultures brings vibrant life to artist Yolanda Calvet de Hayden’s work.

“As an artist, I am fascinated by the interplay of color, light and form,” she writes in her artist statement. “I share my personal vision of the enchantment of form, light and beauty in the natural world.”

Many paintings carry significant meaning for her, and she incorporates



subtle messages and elements of symbolism in her work. People and nature are often the main subjects.

Originally from Panama, Yolanda created art as a child and attended the Academia de Bellas Artes (Academy of Fine Arts) in her home country. After graduation, she was told her work “was pretty good, but you’re a woman.” In a time where women held different roles in society and when she was shy, Yolanda kept her art to herself.

She worked in the school system in Panama until marrying her husband, Lee Hayden. She moved to Wisconsin with Lee and continued to work in schools. It wasn’t until she retired 5 years ago that she “really” started to paint and further develop her skill and style.

Yolanda now paints exclusively with acrylic paint. Her original medium was oil paint, but the chemical nature of oils affected her allergies. She doesn’t regret the switch to acrylic, however.

She values the pure, brighter hues of acrylics, and her paintings portray an intense luminous quality as vibrant colors leap off her canvas to viewers.

Magic realism is how Yolanda describes her imagery. While her work is based in reality, she often weaves in elements of impossibility.

In one painting, two Panamanian children knock nuts out of a tree, but a

closer look reveals that many of the tree leaves are actually part of the children.

Another piece leaves interpretation to the viewer. In *Esperando (Waiting)*, pictured at the right, a Panamanian Indian woman sits at a bus stop with a small child at her side. The viewer is asked to ponder if the woman is waiting for the bus, waiting for a better life, or waiting for something else.

“I have a lot of ideas in my head,” she says. “They all say, ‘Me, me, me!’ and want to come out, but I can’t do all of them at once.” She often sees images that remain with her until they manifest on canvases.

Her art reflects her life in both Panama and Wisconsin, weaving a body of work representative of two very different parts of her life.

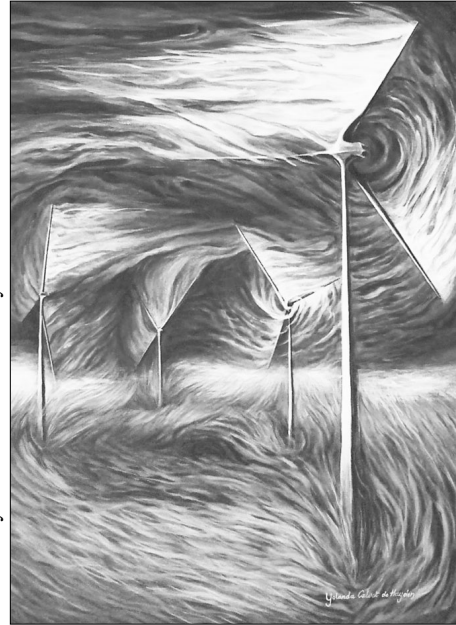
She titles work stemming from Panama in her native Spanish, and work from Wisconsin gains English titles. Most of her work is more about the feelings, emotions or “life theme” behind the image instead of the literal image.

Yolanda paints purely for the joy of painting. She does not want to feel pressured or rushed while painting. Most of her work is extremely detailed, so it may take her months to finish a painting to her satisfaction.



Artwork by Yolanda Calvet de Hayden

Yolanda Calvet de Hayden brings intense emotion and feeling to her work with her brush strokes and use of color. Left: The painting “Wind” reflects the emotion and intensity of nature. Above: The woman in “Esperando” waits for many things, but what is she waiting for?



Artwork by Yolanda Calvet de Hayden

She only chooses to exhibit when it feels right to her.

Yolanda’s work does not go unnoticed. In 2005, she won the James A. Schwalbach Creativity Award for painting from the Wisconsin Regional Artists Association.

She also exhibited in 2004 in the Municipal Building under Madison CitiARTS (now the Madison Arts Commission).

View her artwork (in color!) on her website at my.execpc.com/~lhayden.

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