

Miguel A. Saludes

Artist Statement

My artistic ideology is especially influenced by my life story as a Cuban-born immigrant, coerced to desert to the United States in search for a better life. After arriving in Miami, Florida, as a teenager with my family, I quickly learned to love and appreciate life in my adopting nation. This love has prompted me to portray in many of my works a vivid and tangible vision of the American landscape, inspired by a similar susceptibility and attention to detail, which has driven generations of other Cuban artists before me to paint our native homeland. An obsession with American art history has prompted me to seek further inspiration from the works of painters such as Georgia O'Keefe, Andrew Wyeth, Grant Wood, Wayne Thiebaud, and photographer Ansel Adams, whom individually sought to illustrate their own idyllic and pastoral views of the American landscape. I am additionally inspired by the work and life's story of Scottish-American naturalist John Muir, considered by many as "The Father of National Parks". An immigrant like myself, Muir came to love and appreciate the natural beauty of his adopted homeland and dedicated his whole life to preserve it for generations to come.

Following in their footsteps, I have set out to capture the natural spirit of this nation, which I have called home since 2005. The paintings included in this application, created between 2016 and 2020, were inspired by my experiences of the landscape of my home state of Florida. Some of the works introduce close-up, intimate depictions of wildflowers blossoming in highway medians and unattended lawns, as well as views of vast prairies, woodlands, in addition to other natural settings. The incandescent South Florida sunlight, has inspired warm tonalities and polychromatic color schemes in many of my paintings. I frequently apply viscous, undissolved oil paint, to create physical and multi-layered compositions and to also record the daunting and labor-intensive task that is to paint the complexities of nature. Additionally, I use glazing techniques to create atmosphere and to communicate emotional undertones.

Traveling is essential to my current practice. Within the past couple years, I've begun exploring sites outside of Florida. So far, I have reached the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, and gone out west, to Utah and Arizona. I would like, with the right amount of time and resources, to be able to get to know this land more. I feel like as I get to experience more of this country and learn about its history, I also get to learn more about myself. In 2005 I was lucky to escape an island-prison, where most people get to grow old without experiencing another sight of this great world we live in. I am appreciative of this nation, because it granted me the opportunity to grow up as a free-thinking and creative individual. I feel bonded to this land. So, I will to grow old dedicating every heartbeat and brushstroke to it.