

ART X CONTEMPORARY

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FULGENCIO LAZO

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Fulgencio Lazo is an internationally recognized artist whose vibrant abstract paintings and sculptures are an exploration of cultural identity and the power of community.

Iconographic motifs and symbolic representations that are characteristic of his Zapotec heritage, like masks, candles, toys, and musical instruments, are symbols for the shared experiences that strengthen and define a culture that celebrates family and community.

“My work expresses my Oaxacan Zapotec heritage and history. I take these experiences in and with my brush, I transform them into a symbolic language and render them universal”, says Lazo. “I aim to create warm, vibrant images that celebrate family and community. Whether at a wedding, at an outdoor market, or on the street corner where neighbors gather, these shared experiences strengthen and define a culture”

In paintings like *Viajando con la Cultura* [Traveling with Culture] Lazo addresses the universal migration of families from one place to another - with a special focus on children’s experiences. Using synthesized lines and symbols, he aims to highlight the elements of his culture and reveal the essence of what migrants carry within when embarking on their journeys.

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In 1995 Carlos Contreras, an artist and staff member at the Seattle Art Museum invited Fulgencio Lazo to create a tapete (sand painting) to accompany his traditional altar for Dia de los Muertos. What began 25 years ago as an effort to share a Oaxacan-style installation in Seattle turned out to be a much-revered tradition at SAM, spreading throughout the city and beyond. This beautiful installation launched a

partnership that has continued for the past 27 years, inviting thousands of visitors to experience these remarkable pieces and what they represent.



Dia de los Muertos 2018 at SAM. Photo: Robert Wade

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Fulgencio Lazo works between his studios in Seattle, WA, and his hometown of Oaxaca, Mexico. Having immigrated to the United States in his mid-twenties, Lazo has used his creative practice to preserve the cultural traditions that sustain his identity as a member of Mexico's indigenous Zapotec people, with a particular focus on its traditional music and communal practices. The experience of immigrating profoundly affected his artwork, as well as his commitment to social issues and community.

Over the last three decades, Lazo has worked to promote and grow the Latine artistic and cultural scene in Seattle. He has been an integral part of some of the region's most iconic Latine traditions, including the Day of the Dead celebrations at Tieton, Seattle Art Museum, and Tacoma Art Museum. Lazo was the recipient of the 2018 Mayor's Arts Award, and has exhibited his work in more than 50 solo exhibitions throughout the United States, Mexico, France, and Japan.