

Ivan Reyes

“My greatest influences come from the musical rhythm of drums, as well as the sound and motion I find in graffiti and propaganda.”

Ivan Reyes was born in Havana, Cuba in June of 1971. Like most of the country at that time, Ivan grew up in a family with scarce economic resources. His most acute childhood memories are of the constant, outspoken graffiti on the city walls around him, exclaiming messages in harsh opposition to the widespread political propaganda of the government. This is where his interest in free, public, and creative expression.

Despite the dire economic conditions of his society, Ivan soon discovered both spiritual and economic respite in the world of music. He began by playing the congas merely as a hobby, but was soon able to support himself playing the instrument, while teaching others to find their own personal expression in music as well.

The pivotal experience in Ivan’s life came from a trip he made to the United States with a touring musical group. Traveling through Los Angeles, New York and Florida gave him a tangible perception of how artists could flourish when freed from political oppression and economic hardship. Granted political asylum in 1999, Ivan was inspired by his newfound freedom to explore a variety of resources in both his artistic and musical creations. Upon arriving in the United States, Ivan’s fairly conservative, traditional training in art flourished into a style of expression as vivid and unique as his music.

Working on large-scale canvases, Ivan applies collage techniques and spontaneous drawing to rich hues of paint. His compositions are unified by a single source out of which experimental lines and forms emerge. His artistic abstractions convey both sides of his upbringing: the energy and anger of graffiti, as well as the fractured propaganda of the authority. Behind everything else, however, there lie vast, empty and contemplative spaces that suggest an imagination and freedom not yet explored.

Ivan’s work is received with great enthusiasm across the United States. It is exhibited and collected on a regular basis.