

Stamford Art Association's 'Cultural Identities' show kicks off with Latino art

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Since day one, this country has been a melting pot of different cultures, people emigrating to this country to put their unique stamp on a plate of food, a medley of music or a work of art. Celebrating the myriad of cultural diversity in art is the Stamford Art Association's new three-part series, "Cultural Identities." The first of these juried shows, "Strokes and Rhythms of Central and Latin America," begins Saturday and will run through July 8.



Jose Acosta
"Patriot"

"This is the first time we've done something like this," says [Christine Irvin](#), co-president of SAA. "We thought it would be interesting to see how we view different cultures."

In their search for submissions for the show, SAA cast a wide net. Using local publications and the Internet, they put out a "Call to Artists" about a month ago. Irvin says the response has been good. The show expects to include painters, sculptors and photographers.

"We've had artists from New Jersey, New York and Connecticut submit work. It's so exciting to discover new artists in the area," says Irvin. "We hope a good cross swatch of artists will be represented." Artists don't have to be SAA members to get in the show, Irvin adds.

Artists were asked to hand deliver their pieces to SAA where they will be juried by [Tatiana Mori](#), Curator for the [Greenwich Arts Council](#). Mori, who has juried numerous shows throughout Fairfield County, will select 50 to 60 pieces for the show; some will be awarded cash prizes.

Rosa Colon, SAA chairwoman of the Cultural Identities series, says Latin American art shows how Latinos have impacted American culture. "We've just seen a Latino woman, [Sonia Sotomayor](#), be appointed to the [Supreme Court](#). Artists and Latinos are important and controversial."

Colon said that artists entering work to be considered for the show could be from anywhere, not just from Latin America. "The work could be about anything -- people, food, animals, any representing Latin America."



Rosa Colon
"Master Flower"

So far, paintings vying to get on SAA's gallery walls are vibrantly colorful and evocative of Latino life. [Hernan Restrepo](#), a Stamford resident from Colombia, submitted an oil painting entitled "Like Honey." A woman angularly eyes a mango while behind her a man coos into a harmonica, a guitar at the wait. Heat from the southern hemisphere seems to raise right off the canvas. [Susan Frey](#) of Stamford submitted a mixed media piece, "Enrique's Cha, Cha, Cha," a boldly lined, jaunty, rock and roll piece that rumbles directly into our inner ear. [Jose Acosta](#) of Poughkeepsie, New York, originally from Cuba, entered a painting called "Patriot," a lathery, representational piece with an emotive serpentine shedding a tear. A man leans under the weight of a rainbow of flowers, colorfully spanning over his back in Rosa Colon's "Master Flower," seems somehow weightless, about to become airborne.



Susan Frey
"Enrique's Cha, Cha, Cha"

"Veracruzana" by Rita Castillo of Stamford gives us a young, pretty Latino lady gazing at us, replete with a fan and flower in her hair.

"We're very proud of this endeavor," says Irvin. "It's an important step in bringing people together through the impact of art and raising awareness of our connections with the international community.



Hernan Restrepo
"Like Honey"

The second and third series will feature Africa (2011) and The Middle East in (2012).

"Strokes and Rhythms of Central and Latin America begins Saturday, June 19 and will run through July 8, 2010; gallery hours are Thursday and Friday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday noon to 3:00 p.m. An opening reception will take place on the first day of the exhibit, from 4:00 p.m. -- 6:00 p.m. at the [Stamford Art Association Gallery](#), 39 Franklin Street in Stamford, Conn. The event is free and open to the public.

203.325.1139 or visit www.stamfordartassociation.org.



Rita Castillo
"Veracruzana"