

La Galleria de MARGO MERCEDES RIVERA-WEISS

La Galleria's mission is to highlight a Latina artist every issue. La Galleria is set to target snap shots of culture.

Born in Miami, Margo Mercedes Rivera-Weiss is a tropically-influenced cultural creator. Margo draws on her ethnic heritage (Peruvian and Jewish), family background and artistic energy to create an eclectic body of work that includes recycled and bottle cap creations, Hebrew Calligraphy and illuminations with a Latin sense of pattern and design, and a world of fruit - made primarily in the mediums of watercolor and India ink. She also has self-portraits that explore her racial and gender identities.

Margo's watercolor paintings are loose and bold, capturing the essence of the subjects that range from papayas to kiwis to strawberries. She can get pleasantly lost for hours trying to follow and depict the calligraphic and mystical paths meandering through the skin of a cantaloupe. The compositions show the relations of the fruits and vegetables to one another or explore the juicy interiors of the produce. Her collectors have said that they feel as if they can actually smell the fruit being portrayed in the paintings. One art lover even repainted her kitchen to match the three works she purchased from Margo.

Margo is self-taught in the use of recycled materials, pen and ink and acrylic painting although she has taken community classes at La Raza Graphics, Lehrhaus Judaica, and the Japanese Cultural Center. She has studied watercolor painting with Wendy Yoshimura and Hebrew Calligraphy with Alan Leon.

Margo has exhibited her work widely throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, including the "Reversing Vandalism" show at the SF Public Library, La Peña Gallery, the Japanese Cultural Center, SomArts Gallery, ProArts Gallery, Studio Gallery, East Bay M.U.D. gallery and the Jewish Community Library. Her artwork has been published in Fireweed and Bridges.

Margo takes delight in making art and feels that her creativity came directly from her parents. Her mother, Elsie, won a scholarship to an art college after she graduated from high school, but because of the Depression had to go to work in her aunt's store instead. Her father, Jaime, uses his hands to build and fix things and has become a watercolor painter himself in the last decade. Margo enjoys making art with her friends and with her beloved, Hadas.

Margo enjoys being an artist in community and enjoys working with other artists and arts organizations. In 1998 Margo initiated an art gallery at the Women's Cancer Resource Center in Oakland that she continues to curate. She has given workshops about preparing for and publicizing art shows at ProArts and for the Art of Living Black. Margo is the Secretary of the Board of Directors at the Richmond Art Center and is on the Día de los Muertos Committee at the Oakland Museum. She has been very involved in local Latino art, making ofrendas for Day of the dead in Fruitvale street fairs and in several local libraries.

Margo is looking forward to curating a Latino art show in the Fall and participating in several shows this summer including Girlistock, ProArts Open Studios, and the Giorgio Gallery. More images may be seen on her webpage <http://www.geocities.com/incajew> or you may contact her at incajew@rocketmail.com.

