



5-7-2011

Bueno Silva Interview

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Recommended Citation

Andino, Bianca, "Bueno Silva Interview" (2011). *Asian American Art Oral History Project*. Paper 44.
http://via.library.depaul.edu/oral_his_series/44

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Interviewer: Bianca Andino

Artist: Bueno Silva

Location: Facebook Messenger/Email Interview: Chicago, IL

Date: May 7, 2011

*Note: The following interview was conducted by a DePaul University undergraduate student enrolled in AAS 201: Asian American Arts & Culture during the 2011 Spring quarter as part of the **Asian American Oral History Research Project** conducted by Laura Kina, Associate Professor Art, Media & Design.*

Bueno Silva Statement:

If anything ‘transitional’ is a vague word for describing a modern artist, but that is precisely what my art has become in terms and vision, ideas and drive. I have gone from the visual pleasure and hedonism of Impressionism towards more Abstract Expressionist mode of depicting a more realistic view of Life: Passionate & Chaotic. I have become obsessed with the compendium of expressionistic values and the appreciation of one's vulnerability that is one's modernity in Art.
- <http://www.buenosilva.com/>

Bio: [by Biana Andino] Bueno Silva is the second child and oldest son in a family of 14. During WWII, Silva fled from the Japanese Army in Manila, Philippines. In 1946 his parents migrated to Gen. Santoso City, South Cotabato, Philippines and where he earned his Elementary and High School education from Notre Dame of Dadiangas. In College, he studied at the University of the East, taking courses in Accounting in 1961. There he met his future wife Patria Raterta Fabie, who at the same time was taking up medicine. Silva received his bachelor's degree in Business and Administration from the University of the East in 1965. At the age of twenty-four, he began to pursue his dream of becoming an artist. His first major recognition, was during the late sixties when Silva put a Portrait Gallery in Makati. In 1979, he and his family moved to San Francisco where he held his first solo exhibition in the United States. In 1987, he moved to Chicago because of the better opportunities a big city could provide for an artist. Silva is a self-taught artist that paints bright, colorful, and classical artwork. He and his family came to the United States in October 1979, and is now a permanent resident.

Bueno Silva provided me with links that provided me a lot of information about his life, and his start as an artist:

<http://convergenceinternationale.com/buenosilva.html>

http://mnnetherlands.com/dir/_page/100019/

<http://en.epochtimes.com/news/7-8-23/58884.html>

Transcription Note: *The following interview is an edited compilation of an interview I conducted via Facebook Messenger with follow up e-mails.*

Bianca Andino: Tell me a bit about yourself ?

Bueno Silva: Well, my full name is EULALIO “BUENO SILVA”, JR. Was born in Baguio City, Mt. Province, Philippines in August 20, 1941. My Parents are Eulalio de Jose Ramos Silva,

Sr. & Macedonia Aragon Narcida Bueno; thus: I got my full Brush Name “BUENO SILVA.” I speak a little Spanish the so called (Castilian Spanish), we deem to mix some words in Spanish with our National Language, Tagalog. The Philippines were under Spain's Colonization for more than 300 years and thus our names were Hispanicized. My great grandfather was Juan de Silva (Spanish, Portuguese, Mexican roots) who was once the Tariff Officer during the Spanish period of 1800 in the Philippines. I have four grown up children. Fabie de Silva, married to Roseanne Rasmussen with a son Michael Patrick. Mary Jane married to William Tam with three children Christian, Matthew & Katie, Joanne married to Hector Arreola with one child coming, and Patrick married to Brenda Diaz. Fabie de Silva is also an Artist-Painter; his son Michael Patrick follows our foot-steps. Won five categories in art competition in Illinois at age 4 and now is 14 years old, and is in 8th grade and joining us in Group Art Exhibitions in Chicago; his website is <http://www.fabiedesilva.com>. MJ Silva-Tam is a founder of the website <http://www.chicagonistalive.com>, and is a blogger. Joanne Silva-Arreola, is a Chicago Police Officer, and Patrick Silva is a part-time Cartoonist Artists.

BA: Tell me how the transition from moving to the United States? What influences your artwork?

BS: Before I came to the United States in 1979, in 1965 I started in the Traditional / Realism of paintings, reading all about Andrew Wyeth (the Family of Artists), and others. The Philippine old Masters that I've learned were Juan Luna, Don Fernando Amorsolo and others. Glad to tell you, here in the United States we have great museums, galleries and lot of art books, and the least have met lots of artist's friends. I enjoyed a lot being an artist, and I was so much exposed and have accepted great influences in the realm of the arts. My family and I came to Chicago, Illinois in 1987 from Virginia. As artist, love to paint outdoors in Chicago so much, learning from the works of Monet as Impressionist and also it did not take long, I have learned about the works of the modern artists of all time such as, Paul Cézanne known as the father of modern arts. Well to summarize, I learned about the works of Matisse, Bonnard, Van Gogh, Renoir, Gauguin, Picasso, Roualt, Modigliani, Vlaminck, Segonzac, Derain, Friesz, Gleizes, De la Fresnaye, Lhotc, Brauque, Soutine, Dufy, Delaunay, Dufresne, Gromaire, Pascin, Utrillo, Hofer, Kokoschka and others. Thus, when I came too realized in the real world I am an artist.

BA: You are a portrait painter, tell me why you focus on painting portraits?

BS: I have been a portrait artist, since I have migrated to the USA, I have been specializing in the Art of Portraiture, and why I focus on it? Well, not all artists can paint portrait. I was so interested to capture the likeness of human facial anatomy for me if you know how to paint portrait, you know some other compositions in paintings, such as Still Life, Landscapes, Seascapes, Human Interests, etc. In the world of Art, likewise, an artist should know all the principles and facts about what you see in nature, so as doing the portrait you should know the human anatomy, etc. Also, as part of the studies, an artist should know how to handle the tools needed to accomplish your creations. More importantly, mixing the right colors for, Asians, Americans, Europeans, etc. Likewise, in general terms of painting portraits are the treatments in painting the background, etc. My influences were, the European Old Masters like: Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velasquez, Goya, Rembrandt Van Rjn, Joaquin Bastida y Sorolla, etc.

In addition I would like to introduce Professor Teresa J. Parker, Director, Crown Center Gallery at Loyola University Chicago writes:

January 19, 2001: ...Eulalio Bueno Silva, Jr. can be ranked among the premiere portrait painters working in Chicago Today. Considering that he is self-trained artist, this is a notable achievement. For over twenty -five years, numerous portrait clients, from local businessmen to foreign dignitaries to religious figures, have commissioned Silva. They are a testament to his talent and prominence in the Art Field.

[You can find this article of Bueno Silva, and also the painting of Gen. Paulino Torres Santos, unveiled and now hanging in his named museum in Gen. Santos City, South Cotabato in the Philippines in Feb. 2003 in the following link:

<http://www.notredamegensan.org/images/Silva.jpg>

Also, you can look at a portrait done by Bueno Silva of the former Mayor of San Francisco, CA and now the current U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, and it was done in Oct. 1978 and was Bueno's first Art Exhibit in the USA; he barely 36 years old to date.

<http://www.notredamegensan.org/imgaes/Silva-Feinstein.jpg>

BA: How would you categorize your art work?

BS: As of now, being professional in wide term, I am more on EXPRESSIONISM. I define myself, with great discipline of my own. Because my principle as an artist, "You can use any COLOR IN PAINTING," I attack the canvas with full self-determinations and attention in order to create the real art of your own. "The paintings evoke another worldly sensation of passion under the surface" (Statement by Prof. Teresa J. Parker, Curator for Elmhurst, Art Museum, Elmhurst, IL). THE RED TABLE, SER. # 1 this certain piece of my painting was my very first work on my transition period towards Expressionism. This became the invitational card of my one man Exhibit "Passionate and Chaotic" at the Renaissance Court Gallery of the Chicago Cultural Center; from January 31 through March 6, 1997. I have not sold this piece at all. It is now in our Family's Collection. THE RED TABLE, SER. # 3, this certain piece became the Invitational Card of my one man show "COLORS OF THE MIND" January 27 thru February 25, 1995 at the GALLERY AT WORK, EAST & WEST, Fine Arts Bldg...now the GALLERY WALSH, Michigan Ave. Chicago, Illinois. I didn't sale this piece and it's our Family's Collection.

BA: How does your identity translate to your artwork?

BS: Through my identity, I really don't find any identifying segments to my works as a artists, because when I paint, I put myself into trance with full meditations about creating my works. My long years of experiences in my creations, I have my normal attention what my process will be, yet until now am still learning.

BA: Have you ever been included in an exhibition that was contextualized as Asian or Asian American or have you ever been labeled as an Asian or Asian American artist?

BS: Yes, I was included in a group of exhibitions and had been contextualized as Asian artists because of my ethnicity as Filipino-American and Filipino by race.

The following are Group Exhibitions I have joined:

1996: *Asia Undercover: Personal Identity in Search of Culture*
Gallery 700, Chicago, IL

1995: *A MOSAIC OF ART: Asian / American Expressions*
Gahlberg Gallery, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois
Curated by Prof. Teresa Parker

1994: *Asian American Heritage Month*
Harold Washington College, Public Library, Chicago, IL.

1994: *Facing Forward: Portraits of Asian America*
Presented by DestinAsian, an Asian American Cultural Arts and Education Association
Lakeside Cultural Center; The Chicago Cultural Center; The South Shore Cultural Center,
Chicago, Illinois

Paintings included in this show:

“In My Solitude” ... Using my myself as the subject of my painting gives me a feeling of freedom. My use of textures and geometric patterns of color is based on how I react and see nature’s formations in time and space. I depart from traditional forms through simplifying the negative and positive spaces and through omitting laborious identification of objects.

Painting has given me a sense of reality and self-confidence. My painting is a search for a universal language. In my own efforts to construct an artistic approach, I’m learning a great deal in this transformation.

“Maceonia, That Sweet Lay” - This is my Mother, who labored with love. As one and second child of her nineteen children, I admire her patience, thoughtfulness and understanding. For this painting, I employed a broad, brushy technique that monumentalized the space within the figure, infusing abstract values into every part of the surroundings.

1992: *Philippine Impressions*
Filipino-American Historical Society, The Somism Foundation, Chicago, IL

1992: *Kindred Spirit - Waves Apart*
Filipino-American Historical Society, Westin Hotel, Chicago, IL

1993: *DestinAsian – Chicago’s first pan-Asian American Emerging Artists Touring Exhibition*
Chicago Park District’s South Shore Cultural Center

“DESTINAsian” is a play on words 'destination' and the wave design represents the characteristic, historical waves of Asian immigration across the Pacific, a prevalent theme of the Asian American experience.

32 emerging contemporary visual artists in Chicago, representing various Asian Immigrants, refugees and American-born citizens, have come together for the rare opportunity to exhibit their works in 2-D, photography, and sculpture in Chicago's first Pan-Asian American Emerging Artists Touring Exhibit. Note: Previous venues for the tour have included North Lakeside Cultural Center; from May, 1 to June, 8 in the Chicago Cultural Center, and from July 10 to August 28.

This project is partially supported by the grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Community Arts Assistance Program, and the National Endowment of the Arts and by many supportive members of Chicago's Asian American and business Communities. The citywide touring program helps city neighborhoods communicate through the Arts.

BA: If so, was identifying as Asian/Asian American something that was also important to you personally?

BS: Yes, to me identifying Asian/ Asian American is also very important to me because just my looks or my features already identify me due to my race and culture. I am so grateful being me as Asian, the fact that it can give some references about how we create our own language through arts. How we manifest our own creations showing our limitations in our processes. I am so grateful too that the Lord has gifted me my kind of discipline.

BA: What are you currently working on? What are its influences?

BS: As of the present time, I'm still learning my processes from where I have started. Every day I am learning about my Negative and Positive Spaces in painting. It has developed me to create my own original way of undertakings. Aside from developing my processes in my own compositions I still continue to accept and paint commission works of portraits. My most possible influences in my works nowadays is my studies of the works of the Expressionists (References to European and American Artists) to devout my knowledge and spending my time studying more to be able to have my own identity of my own.

BA: Tell me about your upcoming show, *The Father and Son* show with Fabie Bueno Silva, Mike and David Tanimura, and what inspired you to do this show?

BS: Glad to tell you about our coming show. The Father and Son Tandem (Silva and Tanimura) BUENO SILVA & FABIE DE SILVA & MICHAEL & DAVID TANIMURA - Opening July 29th, 2011

Well, this is a very exciting show informing the Chicago Community about Asian Artists from Japan and the Philippines. In general, this is a conceptual collaborations amongst us exhibitors living in Chicago, IL. This is to enhance the beauty how we both acquired the knowledge in our own art experiences and presentations from our deep understanding of our own derived culture

and tradition from our both owned countries, thus mixing our long concepts and experiences to America and now here in Chicago.

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