

Jorge Santos

Biography

Jorge Santos was born in 1959, and spent his childhood in Luanda, Angola on the coast of Africa. In 1975, Angola exploded in the violent political turmoil of decolonization forcing Santos' family to flee the country. At the formative age of 16, Santos found himself thrust into the equally turbulent and unknown culture of Lisbon, Portugal as that country slid into its own revolution. The national struggle paralleled Santos' own personal one and fueled his passion for drawing. At this early stage, pencil drawing, the most simple and direct form of expression, perfectly suited his complicated and dramatic images and expressed his unique vision.

Though of Portuguese descent, the following years brought the artist no sense of belonging, so in 1982, Santos moved to the United States. It was here that his work evolved beyond drawing. His illusory, dreamlike images that hint at bizarre secrets leapt from the drawing board to the full realization of paint and canvas.

In 1990, the self-taught Santos began adding color to his images and in this second period black and white figures stand out in stark contrast to their colored environments. Though the techniques combine acrylic and pencil on board, or oil and acrylic on canvas, a balance of opposites continued to be the focus of his work. With every painting, a stage of ambiguous illusion is created.

Suddenly, at the end of the millennium, Santos' paintings burst into full color showing a mature command of his artistry. They are still surreal allegorical works but now tempered with the irony and humor of an eccentric yet adventurous mind.

Figures are frequently fragmented, boxed within rooms, cardboard containers, or trompe l'oeil frames. An unusual icon will repeat itself with humorous frequency: a fish, a plane, a train... His characters seem alienated, odd, socially awkward and disconnected; disconnected also from their backgrounds by texture and technique. The overall impact of the work is disturbing and yet endearingly funny.

While one could spend hours psychoanalyzing Santos' imagery, perhaps the best path to understanding his work is of that of a master set designer who creates an emotional landscape and populates it with characters to be animated in the imaginations of his viewers. Santos sets the stage and creates the cast, but each individual who sees the work writes his or her own internal play, making Santos' work a unique, almost interactive, experience.

Curriculum Vitae

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 101/Exhibit, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010 101 Exhibit, Miami, FL
George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2009 The Nicolaysen Museum, Casper WY
Evan Lurie Gallery, Carmel IN
- 2008 Klaudia Marr Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
- 2007 George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2006 Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2005 Gallery Saint Germain, W. Hollywood, CA
- 2004 Glass Garage Gallery, West Hollywood, CA
Lurie Fine Art Gallery, Boca Raton, FL
- 2003 Glass Garage Gallery, West Hollywood, CA
- 2002 Mendenhall Gallery, Pasadena, CA
- 2001 Glass Garage Fine Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1999 Mendenhall Gallery, Pasadena, CA
- 1998 Modernism Show, Santa Monica, CA
Miami Art Fair, FL
Mendenhall Gallery, Pasadena, CA
- 1997 Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
MB Modern, New York, NY
- 1996 Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Horwitch/Newman Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
- 1995 Koplín Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1994 Horwitch Newman Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
Louis Newman Galleries, Beverly Hills, CA
- 1993 Artspace Gallery, Woodland Hills, CA
Joslyn Art Center, Torrance, CA
- 1992 South Bay Contemporary Museum of Art
LA Art Core, Los Angeles, CA
- 1991 Joslyn Art Center Gallery, Torrance, CA
- 1990 Harris Fine Art Center, Provo, UT
- 1989 Orlando Gallery, Sherman Oaks, CA
- 1988 International Art Show, Olympic Games, Seoul, Korea
- 1986 Joslyn Art Center Gallery, Torrance, CA

101 / EXHIBIT

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 Scope Art Fair, with 101/exhibit, Miami, FL
- 2009 George Billis Gallery, New York, NY
- 2008 George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Evan Lurie Gallery, Carmel, IN
Laguna Beach Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA
LA Art Fair, Los Angeles, CA
- 2007 Lurie Galleries, Miami, FL
Klaudia Marr Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
Evan Lurie Gallery, Carmel, IN
Naomi Silva Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2006 Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
7-0-7 Contemporary Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
SOHO Fine Art Galleries, Studio City, CA
Art Chicago, Chicago, IL
Lurie Galleries, Miami, FL.
- 2005 Gallery Saint Germain, W. Hollywood, CA
LA Art Fair, Los Angeles, CA
Kent Gallery, Key West, FL
Mendenhall Sobieski Gallery, Pasadena, CA
- 2004 Kent Gallery, Key West, FL
Broadway Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, FL
- 2003 Glass Garage Gallery, West Hollywood, CA
- 2002 Soho Gallery, Studio City, CA
Greenwood Chebithes Gallery, Laguna Beach, CA
Glass Garage Fine Art Gallery
- 1999 Mendenhall Gallery, Pasadena, CA
- 1992 Louis Newman Galleries, Beverly Hills, CA
- 1993 Art of Hands Gallery, Costa Mesa, CA
MRL Gallery, Long Beach, CA

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Arkansas Art Center Little Rock, AR
- Reading Public Museum and Art Gallery, Reading, PA

AWARDS

- 1990 Outstanding Contribution in the Visual Arts from the City of Torrance
- 1989 Honorable mention, Drawing Competition, Provo, Utah
- 1988 Excellence Award from the Art

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

JUXTAPOZ Magazine Cover and write-up. June 2006
Selected Bibliography, ---Gallery guide editorial September 2004
Daniella Walsh. "Review", Orange County Register, December 2002
Editor's Profile "Jorge Santos" latimes.com Oct/99
Rick Gilbert. "Enigmatism". Juxtapoz, Sept/Octo, 1999
J. Rosenberg, LA Times.com Sept'99
J. Rosenberg, Art Connoisseur Magazine Sept/Oct'99
Rick Gilbert, Juxtapose Magazine Sept/Oct'99
John Verdugo, "Profile: Jorge Santos". NoMoPoMo, Winter/Spring, 1997
Todd Baron, "Jorge Santos, Robert Van Vracken, Paton Miller". Art Scene, July/August'95
Sylvia Townsend, "Brush with anger". Life/Arts, Daily Breeze, June 5, 1991 Touched By An Angel.
October 2000 - Mr. Santos' artwork was featured in an episode of the television series