

MUSIC by Poncho

The Art of Larry “Poncho” Brown
Curatorial Statement

June is African American Music Appreciation Month. “In 2009, the commemoration was given its current name by President Barack Obama. In his 2016 proclamation, Obama noted that African American music and musicians have helped the country ‘to dance, to express faith through song, to march against injustice, and to defend the country's enduring promise of freedom and opportunity for all’”. As time marches into the month of June and all the way through the month of July, please enjoy the amazing show entitled ***MUSIC by Poncho***.

MUSIC by Poncho is a vital and visionary solo exhibition that showcases the artistry of Larry “Poncho” Brown who is known nationwide for, among other things, his work on canvas. The big picture is that this exhibition acts as an extension of that enduring promise of freedom that President Obama talked about. Take a look. The images on the gallery walls are a dedicated and symbolic effort to celebrate the notes of the harmonic Blackness and melodic composition that occur in everyday African American life. Interaction with each image will exceed the notion that the works seen are limited to painted beauty. Look deeply. Each picture serves as a record in history. The images easily become the portal of time travel to the jazzy and big band sounds of Cab, Dizzy, Miles, Duke, Coltrane, and Thelonious. One can pause and peruse the melodious and sometimes sultry notes of Billie, Ella, Eartha, and Lena. Or, stand within a unique time signature and relished communiqué with the more recent Herbie, Aretha, Ray, Stevie, Luther, and Gregory. The ***MUSIC by Poncho*** collection rhythmically and enterically imparts knowledge of worth, as well as messages of freedom.

For these reasons and more, I love Poncho deeply! I love the man. I love the work. I love the way in which his artistry is all at once intuitive, inventive, ingenious, imaginative, and inspirational. Poncho *is* music, and with every brush stroke, he is the musical composer that uses color and hue as notes and timing. Vivacious and decisive reds, oranges, yellows, greens, indigos, and violets blend, flow, and mix across the spectrum to become his personal synchronization of visual art and sound on a backdrop. Poncho is a savant who creates magic with the guidance of his brush and the stroke of his palette knife. As an image maker and with all things, Poncho works deeply and masterfully. Each work starts with a rudimentary rough sketch on paper to delineate the direction of the work at hand, and then it must be brought to scale and often embodied in acrylic as the medium of choice. ***MUSIC by Poncho*** is, without a doubt, harmony on canvas.

As an example, “Mood Indigo” is a large work on canvas recently introduced in Baltimore Poncho’s ***Soundscape*** exhibition at Baltimore’s City Hall. It is my great honor to bring this painting into existence within the ***MUSIC by Poncho*** exhibition. Through the artist’s vision a full ensemble is masterfully brought to life. Orchestrated sound springs forth through the layering of images... tickling the keys... blowing the notes... strumming the cords... with tunes embellished by vocal sounds... sweet, sweet music! Just as a seventh chord creates a much fuller jazz sound rich with harmonic progressions, Poncho’s harmonic artistry imbues pigment to canvas for the excitement, energy, and depth of sound to be felt in the intensity of the color and the images.

The creativity of ***MUSIC by Poncho*** speaks with unblemished vibrancy. It is the soundtrack, background and palette of artistic energy that collectively engulf Larry “Poncho” Brown as he works. His spiritual connection to rhythm and flow literally dance across each and every background. These paintings truly epitomize the energy, environment, and scenery of Larry “Poncho” Brown’s studio existence. He absolutely loves music! And, his connection to musical variety, especially jazz, jazz contemporary, and blues, can be seen with clarity in this body of work. His connection to music is divinely mystical and consequently, Poncho’s artistry transcends the norm. The work is by no means mundane. It is a deep dive and a journey into a place that flows like a melody on a breeze. “Let the music play!”, “Let the music play!”

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