

Orlando Leyba

COMMENTS

Orlando Leyba was raised in Chimayo, New Mexico. He received a BFA from University of New Mexico and holds two MFA degrees, one in teaching and one in painting from the Maryland Institute at the College of Art in Baltimore. His paintings and works on paper are inspired by the history and landscapes of Northern New Mexico and the mythology of Aztlan, the ancestral birthplace of the Aztecs. The abstract images incorporate vibrant colors, rich textures and evocative shapes, rendered using plaster on board and applying a combination of acrylics, encaustic and casein to the surface. Leyba uses the same mixture of materials when creating his works on paper.

Leyba's intent is to build a bridge between the ancient culture of the Aztecs and the various historical stages of the Spanish arriving in New Mexico:

“My work is the result of overlapping cultures, languages, and mores. These influences and experiences are distilled into shape, color, emotion and movement. At times they are neither solid nor fluid; they are ephemeral and rooted in human experiences – well-intentioned, cyclical, and inherently flawed. My paintings are derived from nature – my grandfather’s land, ancestral land grants, irrigated fields, acequias that my family has maintained for generations, etc. These paintings meld the contradictions and dichotomies that I have witnessed in my own culture and within my hometown, as well as concepts about time, the spirit world, human interaction and the diversity of factors that influence change that we witness in the world from day to day. I see these compositions as intermediaries between what is seen and what is assumed, what is plausible and what relies on faith. They are a human effort to bridge the gap between the material and the spiritual.”