

## “THE ART OF YUROS” ... A Biography

In the art of Yuroz, lovers embrace each other with such passionate intimacy that it is hard to tell where one ends and the other one begins. They offer roses, exchange fruit, or dance in celebration of their togetherness. In all of them you can see – you can hear – Yuroz’ appreciation of the rhythms of the inner self. In all his works, the people assume the postures of the poetry in their souls.

The language of this poetry needs no translation. It is common to us all. His paintings have been acquired by collectors around the globe. Because the name Yuroz denotes no ethnicity, the art communities of a diverse array of cultures have declared him one of their own. Through his art, Yuroz speaks a multitude of languages – and people listen.

The inspiration for Yuroz’ vision as an artist can be traced back to his youth in Soviet Armenia. Born Yuri Gevorgian on March 30, 1956, he dreamed of the artistic freedom that exceeded his grasp. He played his recorder on a hillside and observed the pomegranate bushes that flourished despite the desolate scrubland around them. If these luscious, life – giving fruits could sustain themselves in that environment, then so could he.

Determined in his relentless passion to create great art, Yuroz distinguished himself as one of the youngest students ever accepted in the esteemed Akop Kodjoyan School of Art in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. He was only ten years old. Four years later, he graduated with honors. At the age of 17, he entered the Yerevan University of Art and Architecture. His attitudes as an artist were maturing. The Soviets and their views on self-expression, however, were not. Though he excelled in the architecture component of his education, only his impassioned pleas to his art teacher kept him from expulsion.

Yuroz’ aptitude for architecture is obvious even today in the exacting compositions of his paintings. In Armenia that aptitude allowed him to build architectural models and to work as an interior designer. Hounded by the Soviets because of his political views, Yuroz turned to the only work he could find, designing women’s fashions. He met a woman named Rose, and by combining their names, they created the label Yuroz. The artist kept the name in homage to their friendship. In many of his current works, he paints the blue rose as a symbol of love, tenderness and compassion.

Yuroz has said that art thrives only in a free society. For that reason, among others related to his politics, he realized he must escape Armenia for his artistic dreams to bear fruit. He married a woman who, along her family, gained entrance to the U. S. Yuroz himself was not allowed to emigrate for six years. When the couple reunited, they found they no longer had anything in common. After hardly a month in America, Yuroz was cast out by his wife and in laws. Seeking comfort in the strong Armenian community in Fresno, he found only rejection. Religious leaders condemned him for his shattered marriage. Without a wife, a family, a home, or even the consolation of friendship, Yuroz found himself utterly alone.

Discouraged, he wandered a bus terminal until he met “Tom,” who was homeless. Together they picked the best spots for shelter and scrounged for odd jobs until they settled in an abandoned house for a time. Even as devastated as his life had become, though, Yuroz was compelled to create art, scribbling with discarded pens on napkins and pieces of cardboard – anything to bring the images of his head and into the world.

After venturing south, Yuroz swathe other homeless people in Los Angeles as a gallery of portraits waiting to be painted. Pitied by some, ignored by most, these people were regal survivors in a society that cast them aside like tin cans. Yuroz saw in their haunting eyes a reflection of himself. They lived on the fringes of society. He had been living on the edges of a dream as an artist in America. Even though they were as penniless as he was, they were rich with courage to survive. He knew their despair, but he felt their hope in that the next day would bring some tiny pleasure to make the day worth waiting for.

For Yuroz the waiting was over. His early “Hollywood Boulevard” series depicted the homeless as beautiful and elegant despite the squalor around them. Again, he had returned to the lifelong metaphor of the pomegranate. For him the fruit would be succulent. By chance he ran into Aram Alajajyan, a friend from his university days in Armenia. Yuroz landed a job building models for an architectural firm by day and slept on the office couch by night. After a few months, he had saved enough money to rent his own studio in Hollywood. In his lonelier moments, he would hang his paintings of his friends on the wall for company.

This exhibit would draw other admirers – Huston Curtis who agreed to store

his paintings for him; Mae Babitz, then director of the Los Angeles Art Association – before arriving at the gallery of Deborah Murry. Murry was impressed by the originality and style of the unknown artist, but most particularly by the passion he felt for his subjects and his art – so passionate, in fact, that he was at first hesitant to display his paintings for sale. When his work was reviewed by “The Los Angeles Times” in 1988, a great number of original works had been sold within four months.

Murry soon became Yuroz’ agent and personal manager. Since the founding of that partnership, Yuroz has become a worldwide influence in the art community. Other artists write to him about his technique. Because there are more Yuroz collectors than Yuroz originals, his company, Stygian Publishing Inc., produces limited editions serigraphs of his oils, pastels, and line drawings.

Even show business seeks him out. In 1993, Yuroz was selected as the official artist of the “Grammy Awards,” which honor outstanding achievement in the recording industry. In 1995, his art was featured prominently in an episode of “Baywatch,” the most-watched television program in the world, with a global audience of 1 billion. He has been the official artist of the “Rock n Roll” Marathon in Sand Diego for 11 years running, ever since the event was established, as well as official artist of the “Film Festival of Festivals” at Cine Vegas and “Las Vegas Odyssey” – A Celebration of Food, Wine, and Art.” His image “Taste My Wine” was used on the labels of “Benevolence,” a Cabernet Franc from a 199 California vintage, in a limited edition of two-bottle sets produced by Cosentino Winery in conjunction with Las Vegas Odyssey.

Yuroz also created a mural for the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, to be displayed in Geneva, for a series of collector-edition stamps in worldwide circulation. The project focuses on the plight of refugees everywhere and helps to raise money to assist them in their struggle for freedom.

Moreover, Audi recently selected Yuroz as the official artist for an automobile that will travel the country. The artist will paint the car in



his unique style, with his distinctive images, and art lovers will have a chance to view this “artwork on wheels”.

Still, Yuroz’ passion forces him to paint and the subject of his more recent work is, of course, passion. Romantic love; the pleasure of music, a treasured moment, pressed in our minds like a four-leaf clover in a book, which we take out and reminisce over in our private moments – these are the subjects of Yuroz’ mounting body of work. To him, the pomegranates of his youth are seductive as sensual images, because they must be separated with caring hands, and their juicy seeds plucked by sensitive fingers; and so the pomegranate recurs throughout his work as a symbol of love and sexuality.

Yuroz is still reluctant to part with originals especially meaningful to his own insights and experiences. He has been offered a quarter of a million dollars for his “Harmony in Red.” The painting remains on the wall in the main studio of Stygian Publishing Inc.

Yuroz continues to be an innovator of fine art. His experiments with ceramic plates and vases are painstaking in their preparation and breathtaking in their display. He has admitted that the works out of his own selfish desire to create, but more important to him is that collectors appreciate their own lives through the universal them of hope, passion, and love inherent in all his work. He also is a successful sculptor in bronze and recently created a limited edition of life sized versions of his smaller bronze, “ A Delicate Balance,” based on the oil/pastel and serigraph of the same name.

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Yuroz is also passionate about remembering where he came from – and those who were with him . He donates the proceeds from a variety of originals and limited editions to foundations for the homeless and other worthy causes: “Comic Relief”, whose most visible supporters include thousands of comedians and comic actors who perform tirelessly to alert audiences to the growing number of homeless people in America, the CLARE Foundation of Santa Monica, Camp Good Times in L.A., The Pacific Center of Counseling and Psychotherapy in L.A., St. Stephen’s Shelter in Minneapolis, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry’s Outreach Program, and Boston’s Pine Street Inn, one of the largest homes foundations in the U.S., to name only a few.

Some people might think that Yuroz has reached the dreamlike state of one of the figures in his canvases, their heads tilted as if in peaceful slumber, but he continues to surge forward because art is, in his words, a “relentless commitment to duty.” He creates simply because he must.

Only Yuroz knows why he is so driven to inspire the unimpassioned, to impassion the unromantic, to romanticize what he sees as a marvelous journey through this world’s lives, loves and hopes. To ask him, all you have to do is look at his work.

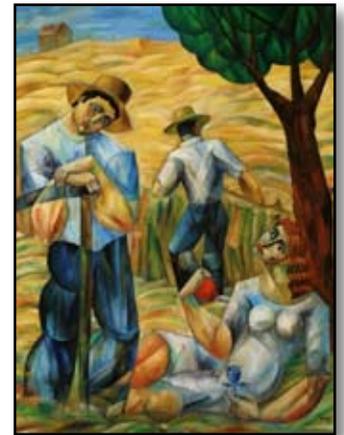
## “THE ART OF YUROZ”... *On Display at OHC&FA* May 9, 2014



The Redhead by Window



Dreaming of her Lover



The Harvest



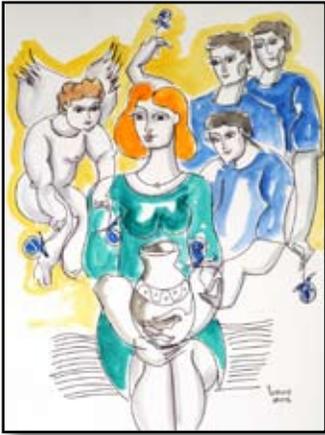
Embrace



The Musician and His Muse



The Offering



Her Courtship



The Proposal



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The Letter



Woman in Red Hat



Harvest II



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