

unity



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

Hispanic Heritage Issue
September 2015 Edition No. 75

Reminiscence and reverence

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3,000-mile mission accomplished



"The idea for Run Carlos Run," says Carlos Ibarra, "came as a result of a script I wrote." Photo by Eileen Meny

In 2015, Carlos Ibarra traversed the nation – a feat he completed on his own two feet. Along the way, this experienced, long-distance runner deepened his bond with America, connected with scores of people and raised scholarship money for inner-city youths nationwide. This New York filmmaker's journey was at the center of a project called Run Carlos Run.

"The idea for Run Carlos Run," Ibarra explains, "came as a result of a script I wrote. I kept meeting with production houses, and they all liked the script but were hesitant to 'green light' the project because I wasn't a household name. They kept saying I needed a little more buzz behind me. Hearing this made me think, 'Do I have to run across America to make this film happen?'"

"It seemed like a crazy idea, but then I started breaking down the themes embedded in the script and my own reasons for wanting to make this film, and it made sense to run. The script is about a college track runner looking to actualize one of his life dreams.

"I wanted to meet people, not just in New York but across the country, and hear their stories. But that's been done before, so I thought, 'How could I challenge myself and present it with a twist?' That's where the running came in."

Ibarra's goals for his trek were ambitious and admirable.

First, he says, "I wanted to reinvigorate people's

drive to go after their dreams. Run Carlos Run shows that a dream may not be easy, but if you commit fully and take it one day at a time, you'll be one step closer to achieving it.

"From a professional perspective I hope Run Carlos Run will help solidify my place within the entertainment industry and show that I'm a force to be reckoned with. I have ideas, and I will continue to push myself to create content that is visually beautiful and thought-provoking. I'm here for the long run, and I will leave my mark in this world." He believes a narrative short film about his experience will elevate his creative profile.

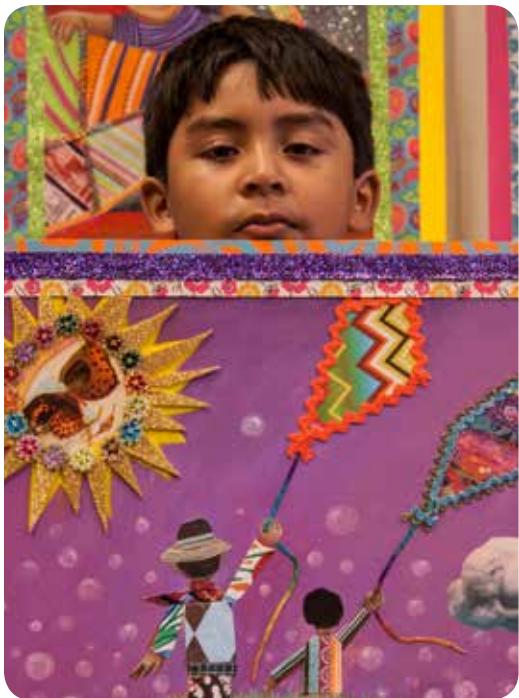
Ibarra also endeavored to raise money for three organizations – Save Our Youth of Costa Mesa, Assistance League of Newport Mesa and the Horatio Alger Association – from donations made at www.runcarlosrun.org. Through early July, \$6,060 had been raised. Eventually, Ibarra planned to donate half of the final amount collected to those three groups.

"I chose these three organizations because I was fortunate enough to receive assistance from them when I was attending NYU (New York University)," says Ibarra. "I've managed to maintain a relationship with all of the directors of each organization, and they've been extremely supportive in all of my endeavors ever since. When it came time to select the organizations I wanted to benefit from Run Carlos Run, it was a no-brainer that it would be these three. I believe in their mission and want to support their goals of helping students from underprivileged backgrounds succeed in the world."

Ibarra and his support team departed Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 30, en route to California.

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Photos by Rodrigo Dorfman, courtesy of Levine Museum



Convergence of cultures

In just a quarter century, the growth of the nation's Latino population has surged in the South. Many historians consider this evolution in demographics and culture to be the region's most significant story since the civil rights movement. During Hispanic Heritage Month, an interactive exhibit explores this transformation and celebrates the lives of Latinos in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina.

When "¡NUEVOlution! Latinos and the New South" opens on September 27 at Charlotte's Levine Museum of the New South (www.museumofthenewsouth.org), the public can explore the multifaceted ways Latinos are altering the South and how the South is altering the Latino experience.

Created by the Levine Museum in partnership with the Atlanta History Center and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, this 3,500-square-foot bilingual exhibit includes artwork, interactive displays, photos (some featured on this page) and videos. These and other elements illustrate the exhibit's organizing principle known as *encuentros* – a Spanish word with multilayered definitions that include the acts of "coming together" and "growing." Complementing the exhibit will be events such as panel discussions and a film series.

"¡NUEVOlution!" will be displayed in Charlotte until September 2016 before traveling to Atlanta, Birmingham and other cities.



CULTURAL FINE ART

Reminiscence and reverence



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Memories of their native lands and love of the country in which they presently live infuse creations by the three artists highlighted in this Hispanic Heritage Issue of *Unity Magazine*.



"A Horse of Course" by James Sexer Rodriguez

JAMES SEXER RODRIGUEZ

James Sexer Rodriguez was born in Caguas, Puerto Rico. His interest in art began as early as age six. Four years later, Rodriguez's artwork was displayed at an old Gimbel's department store in New York City, and he illustrated a children's book a year later.

Rodriguez credits his grandfather as being the catalyst for his pursuit of art as a profession. He studied commercial art at the High School of Art and Design in New York City and later continued his education at the Fashion Institute of Technology and Parsons School of Design.

While attending high school, Rodriguez showcased his work as a graffiti artist on the streets and subways of New York City. Through "A Horse of Course," Rodriguez remarks, "I wanted to liberate the horses that pull carts often used by tourists, instead of cabs in the city, and give them a moment of pleasure with a joyride in an old checkered cab."

Another piece, "Lexington Avenue," symbolizes where Rodriguez attended high school. It incorporates images from his daily commute in a city that he loves.

"Indiscriminate" (pictured on the cover of *Unity*) links an emotional connection with a loved one battling cancer. Rodriguez created it to be sold at a leukemia-and-lymphoma benefit auction.

"Rescue Me" is the quintessential portrait of a woman Rodriguez describes as having "a look of desperation, struggle and a need for salvation of her soul."

"I continuously study people of the streets, especially women," Rodriguez says.

Graffiti art has influenced and inspired many facets of Rodriguez's work. He has been commissioned to create several projects, including a mural in front of the original World Trade Center. Rodriguez's artwork has also been licensed for reproduction to support the troops of the "Wear a Yellow Ribbon" campaign. His work has been displayed in New York City, the Caribbean, Switzerland and Russia.



"Lexington Avenue" by James Sexer Rodriguez



"Rescue Me" by James Sexer Rodriguez

CARLOS MATEU

Born in Havana, Carlos Mateu remembers having a creative sense even as a young boy helping his grandmother wrap presents for birthday parties.

As a teenager, Mateu studied painting, drawing and art history. He later studied mechanical drawing and completed his art education at the San Alejandro National Academy of Fine Arts, considered one of the most prestigious fine art schools in Havana. By the time Mateu moved to the United States, he was an established illustrator, poster artist and graphic designer.



"Peasant With Chicken" by Carlos Mateu



"Tropical Birds II" by Carlos Mateu

Mateu calls his painting style geometric realism, which blends elements of cubism with realism while using straight lines and perspective. He also incorporates surrealism to reflect Afro-Cuban life and religion, his memories of Cuba and his life in the United States.

Mateu's work, "Peasant With Chicken," was created with intense colors of acrylic applied in layers like silkscreen. Clean and precise divisions between tones and oil pastels, added for texture, give this piece a geometric, three-dimensional look.



"Tropical Birds III" by Carlos Mateu

Mateu has exhibited in galleries and art competitions throughout the country. His work is also displayed in New York City restaurants, and his mural project can be seen at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, N.Y.

CORINA ALVAREZDELUGO

Corina Alvarezdelugo, born in Valencia, Venezuela, experienced her first formal art training under the guidance of a Venezuelan painter and sculptor. As a young adult, she continued her fine art studies at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Conn., and earned her bachelor of fine art in studio art from Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Conn.

"I approach my work as a fascinating challenge," Alvarezdelugo says. "My eyes are open to surrounding stimulus, and my mind determines how to translate what I see into visual images."

Alvarezdelugo's

"Awareness," stoneware on a cedar base, brings together contrasting texture and color. The rounded sphere shows sophisticated subtlety, yet makes a bold statement of social consciousness. Alvarezdelugo hopes that, through this piece, women are inspired to become more proactive about staying healthy.



"Awareness" by Corina Alvarezdelugo

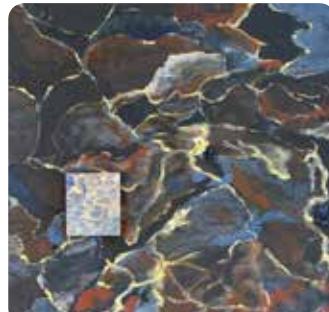


"Diffuse" by Corina Alvarezdelugo

A group of people in front of the Venezuelan consulate, wearing the colors of her native flag, inspired Alvarezdelugo to create the piece she named

"Diffuse." Says Alvarezdelugo: "I depicted my impression of that day with the blurry figure dressed in colors of the Venezuelan flag and a mysterious hand."

A reminder of the homes of her great-aunts in the middle of a forest, "Flow" presents the reflection of water passing over shiny rocks and shimmering light peering through the dense foliage. For Alvarezdelugo, this piece represents one of the fondest memories of her life in Venezuela.



"Diffuse" by Corina Alvarezdelugo

Alvarezdelugo's work has been exhibited throughout the Caribbean, South America and the United States, and she is a member of many distinguished art societies.

Breakfast spreads with a heaping of sizzle

In the mood for a taste temptation in the morning? Now is a good time to expand your culinary horizons with meals inspired by cuisine from Latin and South America. According to the National Restaurant Association, traditional ethnic breakfast dishes, such as chorizo con huevos, are bona fide culinary hits in 2015.

Here's a look at some breakfast dishes chock-full of Latin flavor and distinction.

- Bolo de Fuba is a cornmeal cake beloved by Brazilians with good reason: It's delicate, moist and lightly sweetened. You'll also appreciate how easy it is to prepare since its ingredients can be mixed in a blender and poured into a cake pan in about five minutes.



- Brussels Sprouts With Mexican Chorizo (see recipe) is a clever pairing of the notoriously bitter vegetable and sausage enhanced by garlic, paprika and powdered chile.
- Calentado, which means "heated," originated in the Andean region of Colombia. For this dish, cooks reheat beans and rice from a previous day's meal and combine them with such ingredients as eggs, arepa, chorizo and grilled beef.
- Mote Pillo, also known as Ecuadorian hominy with eggs, is a traditional dish that hails from the highlands of Ecuador. Fast and easy to prepare, the mote is sautéed with chives, cilantro or parsley, eggs, garlic, milk and onions. Ecuadoreans serve it with black coffee and fresh slices of cheese. When prepared from scratch, cooks often freeze large batches for future meals. Or you can buy mote in grocery stores; just check the canned-vegetable or ethnic aisles.
- Perico – Venezuela's famed scrambled eggs, onions and tomato dish – is often served at the center of an arepa (flatbread made of ground maize dough or cooked flour). The dish's name derives from its ingredients' brilliant colors that resemble those of a perico, or parrot.

Brussels Sprouts With Chorizo

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, washed
- 1 large lemon, zested and juiced
- Ground black pepper to taste
- 2 poached eggs

Trim the stem end of the sprouts. Cut them in half.

In a large heavy skillet, cook the chorizo over medium heat. Break up the sausage with a wooden spoon, stirring occasionally until cooked through, about 5 to 8 minutes. Place on paper towels to drain.

Drain all but 2 tablespoons of pork fat from the pan, or you can add some olive oil if needed. Add the Brussels sprouts, zest and juice and cook over medium-high heat until cooked through and browned on both sides. Be careful to not overcook the sprouts because they can get mushy.

Return the chorizo to the pan and mix thoroughly. Season with salt and pepper.

To serve, sprinkle on more lemon zest and top with a poached egg.

- 6 ounces Mexican chorizo (pork)
- Kosher salt to taste
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil as needed



Yield: Makes 2 servings

In a class of her own



Chef/educator Lourdes Castro cooks at home about four days a week. "For a New Yorker that is quite an accomplishment!" she says. Photo by Lucy Schaeffer

Lourdes Castro relishes cooking, whether in her kitchen or her classroom. The Miami native with Cuban roots taught herself to cook while in college. Since then, she has mastered the roles of registered dietitian, author (of three cookbooks) and academic.

But the culinary role of restaurateur is one she doesn't want to assume.

"I have never considered or even fantasized about [owning a restaurant]," Castro says. "I have many friends who are chefs/restaurant owners, and my eyes are wide open when it comes to the challenges of owning a restaurant. I'm not afraid of hard work or long hours; I just love the career I was able to carve out for myself within the culinary world and wouldn't trade it in."

These days, Castro has a recurring role as a judge on the "Beat Bobby Flay" cable show and appears as an expert guest on morning TV shows. She also blogs about cooking on her website, www.lourdes-castro.com. Still, when it comes to culinary arts, Castro is something of a late bloomer.

Says Castro: "Neither my mother nor grandmother spent too much time in the kitchen, so I was never really exposed to it as a child. I recall some snapshot moments of my childhood when I was drawn to the kitchen, but I would say the definitive moment was when I took my first food science class at NYU. It was at that moment that something was triggered in me, and I knew then and there I was hooked and couldn't imagine any other industry I wanted to be involved with."

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in nutrition and food from New York University, Castro earned her master's in nutritional sciences from Columbia University. An NYU adjunct professor, Castro launched two cooking schools in Florida. In 2013, she signed on as a spokesperson for diabetes-care provider Novo Nordisk. In that capacity, she creates diabetes-friendly recipes and writes cookbooks, the most recent of which is centered on vegetables. "I chose that focus after reading research that showed Hispanics have a very low intake of vegetables and a high incidence of diabetes," Castro notes.

Speaking of vegetables, Castro admits to having a severe dislike of raw celery. But the avocado is, "hands down," her favorite veggie and the main ingredient in one of her guiltiest pleasures – guacamole. "Thankfully all the ingredients involved are good for you, but the amount I am able to take in is pretty astonishing!" Castro admits.

Perhaps that explains why the avocado will be featured prominently in a dish she'll prepare this month alongside some of her youngest students at Manhattan Star Academy. At the school, which caters to special-needs children, Castro focuses on "fresh fruits and vegetables that can be prepared and presented in a fun way, so the kids enjoy cooking and eating them." Her pick for September is Lady Bugs on a Stick – featuring a spread made from Castro's beloved avocado.



Lourdes Castro credits a college course in food science for drawing her to the kitchen. Photo by Ben Shaul

3,000-mile mission accomplished

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He averaged about 40 miles each day. Throughout his trek, Ibarra enjoyed getting to know people in towns large and small. Among the most memorable were Joanne and Gary, a couple in Wheatland, Mo., and Dmitri in St. Louis.

"We were staying at the motel [Joanne and Gary] own," Ibarra recalls. "I had some laundry I desperately need to get done, and I asked them if it was OK to use their washer/dryer. They said yes, and we spent the next four hours in their hotel laundry room talking about their children, dreams and the history of their motel."

An immigrant from Russia, Dmitri "has no real path to citizenship, but that doesn't stop him from wanting to contribute to society and to dream," Ibarra says. "He strives to educate people about simple things we can do to help protect our environment. He is also part of various community groups and is working to revitalize St. Louis."

As might be expected, there were definite highs and lows along Ibarra's lengthy path to The Golden State.

"Ohio was a pleasant surprise," he recalls. "I expected farmland but instead got a little bit of everything. Following the National Road all the way to Missouri provided me the opportunity to see plenty of historical landmarks throughout Ohio, Indiana and Illinois." On the other hand, "Pennsylvania was extremely difficult. There were hills; temperatures reached the high 80s in May. I also had a lot of unexpected encounters with dogs.

"Missouri was very similar in terrain, lots of hills and high elevation, but it's a beautiful state filled with lakes, mountains, rivers and forests."

Not long after the run's completion near Anaheim on July 10, Ibarra and his filmmaking colleagues expected to turn their attention to documenting the experience.

"We will be entering the narrative short into all the top festivals," he says. "For the series, we are looking to create partnerships with other media outlets and have the series live online in various platforms."



Raising money for young people was among Carlos Ibarra's goals during his 71-day run across America. Photo by Marvin Rodriguez

On the cover: "Indiscriminate" by artist James Sexer Rodriguez. *Unity* is a celebration of food, art and culture. Published six times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitalityjv.com. ©2015 Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. Produced by Final Edit, www.finaledit.net

