



Art Speaks In Oyster Bay



Written by Jennifer Fauci, jfauci@antonmediagroup.com Thursday, 22 January 2015 17:51

Lifelong New York artist Xiomáro (pronounced SEE-oh-MAH-ro) has recently begun to put his stamp on Long Island. Born in Brooklyn and currently living in Roslyn Heights, the Manhattanville College alum has been busy with his new art exhibit, *The Other Side—Charles, Caesar, Harry, Sam, Pompey, Lon and Isaac*, currently on display at the Oyster Bay Historical Society. But his career as a photographer has been a little less than photogenic.

“I majored in philosophy and took a lot of art classes just short of making it a major,” said Xiomáro, who attended NYU for law school and later practiced as an entertainment lawyer. “I started my own practice in late 1980s and hip hop and dance music was becoming a big thing so I got to work with a lot of artists in that field.”

Xiomáro has always worked with creative people—painters, photographers, actors, singers and bands. It wasn’t until he was diagnosed with cancer in 2005, that he realized he wanted to fully immerse himself in the art world.

“During my recovery, the music industry was declining and then the recession crept in so it was impossible for me to sustain my practice,” said Xiomáro, who is still able to practice law. “It got me thinking about what I wanted to do with this second chance at life. I currently work two full time jobs and for photography, I get the work, prepare proposals, take and process the photos; I’m my own publicist.”

Hopeful that he will soon be able to be a full-time photographer (he has taken pictures professionally since 2011), Xiomáro is planning on hiring help to assist with his website and social media page, which he currently maintains with great pride, as he has always been intrigued by everything digital.

“I have always been interested in the digital and video arts,” he said. “I was doing the music thing but I was depressed at the time so as therapy, I bought a digital camera and wandered around parks and open spaces and took photos for myself,” added Xiomáro, who made a collection and set up mini exhibits at the coffee houses where he and his band played.

In 2007, Xiomáro purchased a better camera and officially pursued photography as an art form. In 2011, he was accepted into an artist in residence program, where he received the opportunity to spend a month living in a park of a Connecticut historic house.

“I had total artistic freedom for a month. I created a series based on the park, which led to my first commission for that same park to photograph the interiors of the historic sculptures,” said Xiomáro, who also received a lot of interest and publicity. “I also created collections for the Sagamore Hill national historic site and the William Floyd Estate—and yes, William Floyd and his descendants are indeed connected with the Floyd-Jones family of Massapequa.”

Xiomáro enjoys shooting in open spaces, which is why he has spent so much time in national and state parks.

“I love creating collections and having the collection tell the story, because people have a way of connecting to images,” he said, which has been his main goal throughout his most recent exhibition. “A lot of people don’t know about the park; there is always funding for it. There’s layers to that history and the Floyd family and I wanted to tell that story of slavery through a narrative of photos.”

The Other Side looks at the William Floyd Estate in Mastic Beach, with photographs illustrating landscape vistas of the estate grounds as well as intimate interior views of rooms not included in regular tours of the house. At the heart of the collection are photographs of undated wooden crosses bearing generic slave names, set apart from the elaborate individualized stones of the Floyd family cemetery, all representing the family’s evolution from slave ownership to active military service during the American Civil War.

“For me, the best art is the kind that draws you in. It can be educational as well as beautiful,” said Xiomáro. “Everything comes together to convey an idea to get you thinking about the piece and challenge conceptions. That’s what this collection does.”

As for his photographic future, Xiomáro will be heading to a Florida swamp for a month documenting the fragile ecosystem that feeds into the Everglades.

“I’m going to actually live in the swamp of Big Cypress National Park, in central Florida for a month and create a photographic collection of the ecosystem,” he said.

No matter where he goes, Xiomáro's camera will be along for the ride; snapping scenic shots around Long Island and the country.

The Other Side—Charles, Caesar, Harry, Sam, Pompey, Lon and Isaac features a collection of 29 photographs that will be on view through March 29 at the Oyster Bay Historical Society, 20 Summit St., Oyster Bay. For more information, contact 516-922-5032 or visit www.oysterbayhistorical.org.

For those who can't attend the exhibition, an ebook is available to download.