

The Two-Headed Dog

2019. Acrylic on wood.

48" w X 36" h: additional extension 3½" w X 5½" h.

Carlos Araque Osorio, Carlos E. Sepulveda, Valerie Osorio Restrepo, Patricio Vallejo Aristazabal, storytellers. David Feinberg, Michelle Englund, Sima Shahriar and Benay MacNamara artists. Sara Feinberg and Adolfo Menendez, video. Olivia Nortwen and Miki Schumacher, writers, Rita Morris-2 headed Dog artwork.

This piece was a collaboration between 4 storytellers – 3 from Colombia, and 1 from Ecuador. The participants each selected 2 abstract shapes cut out of wood, placed them on the piece, and connected one of them to another shape with paint in a color of their choice. As they worked together, meaning emerged and their stories connected along with their shapes.

Dr. Carlos Araque Osorio, director of Vendimia Theater in Bogotá & professor at District University of Bogotá:

When the shapes were first presented, Carlos immediately knew he wanted the shape with the sharp points, because it reminded him of the Colombian process of creating theater that isn't linear, rather, there are many points that don't always arrive at one message. He placed it outside the margins because he likes to break bonds. He wore a mask during his interview, and joked that it allowed him to speak on camera and see beyond his own perspective.

For the last shape, it was given to him, not something he chose. This made him think of the indigenous people of Latin

America, because they also were given leftovers, not choice. But there are 3 things he liked about the figure: it looks like an Incan, Mayan, or Quechua temple, it looks like Minnesota, and it looks like a shoe. To him, this shoe means something that brings him to wherever he wants, and the more he uses it, the more he grows to love it. He connected his shoe to Sepulveda's dove with a pink path like a comet, because the shoe leads to the dove, and thus symbolizes the journey to peace.

Dr. Carlos E. Sepulveda, professor at National Pedagogical University in Bogotá, Colombia:

When Carlos chose his first shape, he thought of many things. The first is his country, Colombia, since the shape has the figure of a bird. He explained that his country's name is misunderstood, as people think it's from Christopher Columbus, when it is from the Latin word for dove; Colombia means land of the doves. He also thought of his academic work, and how the Colombian peace agreement is being destroyed. He placed the shape by Valerie's because it is as though her animal, becoming a two-headed dog, is eating the peace of Colombia. Lastly, he thought of the formation of the river, because the two largest rivers in Colombia were used in the war to make the dead bodies disappear. So his shape also represents a piece of human flesh flowing down the river. His line of red transforms the rivers into tombs, like blood trickling down the river and rupturing the peace as it meets the figure of the Colombian dove.

His second shape was selected and placed above Patricio's shape of the secret place holding the most valuable things in life. This triangle became a way to release all of these things, like a volcano erupting, reminding him of a volcanic eruption that occurred during his childhood and the pain it caused for many communities. However, the space between

the secret place and the outside is very small, indicating that it takes a long time for everything inside to flow out.

Valerie Osorio Restrepo, PhD candidate at University of Texas at Austin:

Valerie chose her first shape because it looked like an animal. She placed it low on the piece because she wanted it to be near water, which she then drew in at the bottom. This shape and its water grew to have more and more meaning as the other storytellers connected their pieces to it, transforming the animal into a two-headed beast with a good and bad side, and the water into the rivers of Colombia.

The second shape Valerie chose because it has two forms, the first being a speech bubble. Then, if you turn it upside down, it becomes a drop of water. She connected it to Patricio's shape, that to him represented the secret space, and she put letters in her shape because to her, everyone has something to say. She chose to connect it to the dove figure Carlos placed, because it has to do with the bodies that this figure also represents. Valerie says the bodies of missing people in the rivers of Colombia also have stories to tell.

Patricio Vallejo Aristazabal, director of Contra el Viento Theater in Quito, Ecuador:

Patricio chose his first shape because the cutout in the center felt like a secret place in the middle of everything, which is why he placed it in the center of the piece. This place is where you find your worth, and where you guard life's most valuable things. He says that to him, theater is a precious jewel, his life's revelation, and serendipity. Theater is his secret place.

The second shape, he chose without much thought behind it, but when he placed it down, it looked like a wave. It then became something that elevates, and he thought of Japanese paintings of waves in the air and Mt. Fuji under the peaks. To

Patricio, this is a lesson of what art means: to do impossible things like raising waves over mountains. He then chose to connect his figure to Carlos's figure that is like a path leading out of the margins. He chose a color that makes him think of the muddy earth, like sand after rain. To arrive at this path, it is like walking on quicksand. Patricio explains that he thinks of those who dedicate their lives to theater as those who walk on sand in even the most precarious situations, like walking on quicksand.

Rita Morris:

Rita Morris, a Duluth artist was asked by V2V to draw a version of the 2-Headed Dog that would touch or overlap all the imagery chosen by the story tellers. When she studied in Ireland around 20 years ago, she made a series of dog drawings that were displayed at the Hopkins Center for the Arts, that was curated by David Feinberg.