

PAINTING ON 'INSTINCT'

Dominican artist explores spirituality at Madelyn Jordon

By DANIELLE RIVERA

Antonio Carreño has been painting since he was a boy, growing up in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Now, his 9-year-old son, Daniel, is following suit, experimenting with painting and studying the violin.

Carreño is happiest with his son, he said, but hours spent with a brush in his hand clock in at a close second.

Carreño has been painting full time since he moved to the U.S. in 1988. He was 26 and a soon-to-be father to his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, now 29. Elizabeth's mother, Carreño's wife at the time, was American; the two met while she was visiting the Dominican Republic and fell hard for each other.

Since they couldn't very well raise a child with an ocean between them, Carreño decided to move to the U.S., and he said the transition was seamless. In the years since, he has lived all over the country, and even now, has studios in Pennsylvania; Venice, Florida; New Jersey and Long Island City.

While he immigrated nearly three decades ago, Carreño said his passion for his art and his family burns just as strongly as it did then.

Today, he paints full time and has exhibited his work in galleries at Arizona State University, Instituto Dominicano Americano in Santo Domingo, Art Museum of the Americas in Washington, D.C., The Allentown Art Museum in Pennsylvania and The Museum of Modern Art in Santo Domingo, among others.

Now, Madelyn Jordon Fine Art, 37 Popham Road, presents Carreño's fifth solo collection at the gallery. "Instinct," a fully abstract, psychedelic collection of oil paintings, runs through Dec. 23.

A free, public reception will be held Nov.



PHOTOS COURTESY ANTONIO CARREÑO

Above, Carreño painting in his Long Island studio. Right, "Allegorical," 2017. Oil on canvas, 48 x 52 in.



17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Carreño said he loves dabbling in pastels, charcoal and mixed media, and believes experimentation is a necessity in the creative process.

It's that sense of spontaneity that leads artists to drift into other realms, Carreño said, experiencing the world in new ways.

"[Art] can transport you into other dimensions, not necessarily the physical ones we always turn to, to understand and analyze," he said. "You really have to look beyond."

With "Instinct," Carreño said he wanted to explore spirituality in a way that was slightly vague and open to interpretation.

"It is up to each individual, feelings and emotion and determination, to see what they're wishing to see," he said.

Still, as the artist, Carreño said he was influenced by his own belief in a collective consciousness and a search for spiritual elevation. Humans are constantly evolving, he said; we look back on the 1800s, for instance, and view their customs as "barbaric and unacceptable ... I think we continue to rise. And this is what we call the collective human mind."

Carreño's paintings reflect that inner dialogue with bold, rich colors and fevered strokes. The titles of each work reveal the subject's psyche — from "Ascending In" to "Perpetual" and "Profusion."

Still, Carreño said there are some real-world threads.

"There is always the connection back to the

roots," he said of the Dominican Republic. "Where I come from ... we have, on the island, the sun, the light. It's always present in your mind somehow."

Carreño said he visits his home country every few years, and his love for the island continues to influence his work. "I paint very spontaneously. Where this motivation comes from, it can be a little more complex because maybe what I'm painting today is something I saw five, 10, 15 years ago and it's just coming to me," he said.

In the end, Carreño said he hopes the paintings help viewers reach new spiritual heights and "bring us to a realm of peace and enlightenment."