

Interview: Victor Palomino (with Nicole Lee)

Spring 2016

Where were you born? What was life like there? What was your family like? Big? Small? What did your parents do for a living? What was school like etc.?

I was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia. I lived there for 25 year on and off. Life there was great. Bogotá is a vibrant city full of culture, art and music.

There are 6 in my family: my parents, my older brother, myself, and my younger brother and sister. My father, now retired, was a pharmaceutical sales representative. My mother was an administrator for my grandpa's company. School was fine, but I never was a good student. I became a better student in college.

What kind of education do you have? What did you study?

I have a BA in filming and photography. I chose that, because at the time, film was the best combination of all my interests: music, visuals arts, writing, etc. Back then I was interested in sound for movies.

Why did you leave your hometown? Where did you go first? How did you get there? What made you decide to go there?

I always wanted to travel the world. After I finished school, I spent a year in Charlotte, NC to study English. After Charlotte, I visited Europe and spent almost a year in Israel. I then came back to NC in 2001 to visit my friends, at which time I met my wife in Asheville and settled there.

What was your parents' reaction to your career choice?

They have always respected and supported my decisions. They met at the Architect School, and have an appreciation for art and music, so they love to have an artist in the family.

What kind of work do you do? Or do you principally work as an artist? Who had the most impact on you and your life/career choices? Why did you choose your career? How long have you been an artist/musician?

I have done visual art, music, writing, and film all my life and will continue to do those. But at the same time, I love working for nonprofit organizations and community organizations. I currently work for a CDFI helping women and minorities start and maintain small business. But I also write for media publications, and volunteer in the community in different capacities.

What is your favorite work?

If you are asking about my influences, I think that Alexander Calder's mobiles are my favorite. I love the childlike presence of his work, his simplicity, and elegance.

From my own works, I like the two pieces I created thinking about being a dual national person. One is based on my experience as a Colombian and the other as a U.S.A citizen. They are called "La patria embolada" and "La otra patria embolada."

What do you consider your greatest success?

Waking up every day.

What inspires your work?

Life, change, movement, nature, people.

Which piece was the most challenging?

Every piece is a challenge at the beginning. Trying to translate an idea into a physical form is a journey full of frustrations, but it is part of the process, and I love the process.

What is your favorite medium or materials to use?

Wire, mixed media, whatever I find in my studio.

Why did you pick the city that you are in? What experiences have you had here? How is it different from your country/hometown? What have been the best experiences here? What problems have you encountered here? How could they be solved?

I didn't pick Asheville. I feel like the city picked me. Everything here (in Asheville) is different from Bogotá. Here I learned to live in a small town, to connect to a community, and also learn how it is to be discriminated against and what racism looks like. The best way to fix this problem is through art and collaboration and by opening channels of communication between all the segments of the community.

What is your current life like? What projects do you have for the future?

I'm in a big transition in my life, so I feel like life itself is now my project.

What do you do in your free time? Any hobbies?

Soccer - playing and watching.

What advice would you give to others who would like to come here?

To come.