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Blane Captures History of Vieques

By Melba Ferrer

Marc Blane paints a portrait of what has been going on in Vieques, and it ain't pretty. But he doesn't want it to be.

As a Vieques-based artist, Blane could easily have fallen into the rut of complacency, churning out piece after piece on the exuberant beauty, the wonderful colors, the calm waters of Vieques.

He could have catered to the decorating market and profitably sold pieces for a specific wall in the office or for that perfect spot behind the sofa. But he'll have none of that.

What he wants is for people to look at his work. And look again, finding what it is he has to say.

They don't have to like it.

But at least he expects them to go home with a bundle of questions over his work. And that is why he is currently presenting "Microevolutions" at the Conde de Mirasol Museum on the small island municipality.

Running until May 23 "Microevolutions" is about how an artist witnessed the events leading to the Navy's departure from the island.

"It was the spontaneity of the revolt and the fact it was a microrevolution," says the New York-born Blane, who has been living in Vieques since 1980.

Yet, this isn't a one sided look at the protests and demonstrations; rather it shows the many sides of history in the making.

"It's a form of recording history," he says, recalling how a teeny tiny island in the Caribbean was able to grab international attention.

"If you go to Moscow, they know where Vieques is. It hit papers internationally."

Yet his exhibit -- on view until may 23 -- doesn't involve mere paintings, but rather constructions of pieces, including bomb fragments and paint, all piecing together his views on what happened in Vieques.

"They're not painted. They're built ... It's not beautiful," he fully admits. "It's nature is not to decorate your home." Bred in New York's Lower East Side, Blane grew up in what he calls the urban "playground landscape."

"I spend my life within a box which was a playground," he says. Of course that landscape influenced his work greatly. And he made a name for himself in New York, in the United States, and in Europe.

Yet, in his early 30's he and his wife, Deleah, needed a change.

It was through a friend, of a friend of a friend ... that they found out about Vieques. The two settled there in 1980.

"I found it to be an extraordinary and intriguing place," he recalls of his first meeting with the Isla Nena.

He also remembers the tensions between residents and the Navy.

“When I came to Vieques I drew my inspiration from this microenvironment.” Not that Blane used Vieques often for his exhibits.

“I didn’t expect to exhibit. This is my only exhibit in Vieques. When I come down here I work differently.”

Age is another factor.

“As you age, you become more embedded in who you are and what you believe in.”

“I don’t want to collapse into decorative arts. It’s not about decorating people’s homes. All I want is to sell you a thought.”



Song of Orange Boy – 58” x 90” x 9” – linen, acrylic, metal, cloth