

violin by ROSARIO PONTE



I was born in Caracas, Venezuela. I was raised in both cities, Caracas and Barquisimeto, Venezuela. When I was sixteen years old, I wrote a paper on French Impressionism and I fell in love with it, especially with the faces of Renoir. I told myself that someday I had to paint like that.

I married Enrique Ponte at age 18. Then, I completed my university studies in History and Geography of Venezuela. At the same time, I studied with the renowned Venezuelan artist Requena, my first serious studies of art. Then, I worked as a teacher before a mutual dream of my husband and I brought us and our three children to study in the United States.

We went to Indianapolis where I studied intensive English and began my graduate studies. Next, we moved to New Orleans, and I received my Master's Degree in Media with a minor in Fine Art from LSU in Baton Rouge. After this, I began to work as head of a nursery for children. Then, I entered the Academy of Fine Arts of New Orleans where I completed my studies of painting. There, I studied strict realism under a diversity of professors and artists, but principally under the tutelage of the very talented Ozols Auzeklis, founder of the Academy.

After our move to El Paso, Texas in 1989, I began to teach art privately and attend various art workshops (which I continue to do because I feel that an artist can never cease to learn). Years later in El Paso, I found a professor of Impressionism, Russian artist Aleksander Titovets. I went ahead and took four years of intensive training with him in order to keep following my dreams.

In the year 2000, I went to Philadelphia to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts for advanced studies for one year. This was another dream I had because my professor Ozols Auzeklis had studied there as well as famous Impressionist artists that I admire, such as Mary Cassatt. The experience was very significant because I discovered contemporary teachings rather than traditional ones, and these challenged me to become more creative and independent in my thought and works. While in Philadelphia, I also complemented my studies at the academy with workshops.

Meeting Marc Pachter, former Director of the National Portrait Gallery, was pivotal in my artistic direction toward the portrait field. He took me on a private tour to the National Portrait Gallery and gave me instructions on important steps to follow to become a great portrait painter.

My mentor in portraiture painting has been nationally renowned artist Daniel Greene since 2008; every year I attend a workshop under his tutelage. I also attend the yearly conference of the Portrait Society of America of which I am a member. In addition, I am a member of Oil Painters of America, Texas Women for the Arts, and locally, the El Paso Art Association.

In 2010, I was commissioned to paint an almost life size portrait of senator Kay Bailey Hutchison for the desalination plant of the same name. My work has also been recognized in various art competitions, including "Best of Show" for the Arts International of 2002 in El Paso, Texas.

Violin photographed by Carlos D. Luevano