

Carlos Torres

Autobiography



Unless otherwise specified photos by Lourdes Almeida

Translation,
400 x 600 cm,
1999 (acrylic on
aluminium), mural,
Children's Hospital.

I was born in 1949 in a Chihuahua mountain town, a place of light, long shadows and golden autumns. An open, imaginative, lovable family. At the age of ten, the revelation of having, if not talent, at least the ability to see and transcribe the forms around me.

From 1962 to 1968, I studied English in a Mormon school, whose neatness and discipline may well have influenced

my life. The most important thing, the discovery of photography, of the timeless magic of the darkroom and the key to my life: light.

1969-1974, attempts to study film direction. Fate decided that it be painting instead. Formal education at the La Esmeralda National School of Painting. Classical training, initially good, and confused and imprecise later; I encoun-

tered bad professors and worse artists. Like every other student at the time, I dream of Paris.

1974. Fifteen days after finishing my schooling, I leave for Brussels. I arrive in Paris by train, at night, in mid-summer. There's a feeling of almost alarm at seeing the city for the first time as I leave the Gare du Nord train station. Chance, once again, introduces me to Carlos Cruz-



Polptych no. 8, 100 x 100 cm, 1999 (mixed technique).

Diez, a Venezuelan artist who asks me to help him with a project for two weeks. The two weeks would turn into 10 years of learning and friendly collaboration. The need to be myself, to try the adventure alone, becomes imperative and I leave his workshop in 1984.

I think about all my exhibits and am surprised that I remember each one and the circumstances in which they took place.¹ The first time was very moving, both in the case of the 1971 collective exhibition in Mexico City's Palace of Fine Arts when I was still studying and my first one-man show, that included photography, in 1979 after a difficult first year in Paris, at the San Angel Gallery.

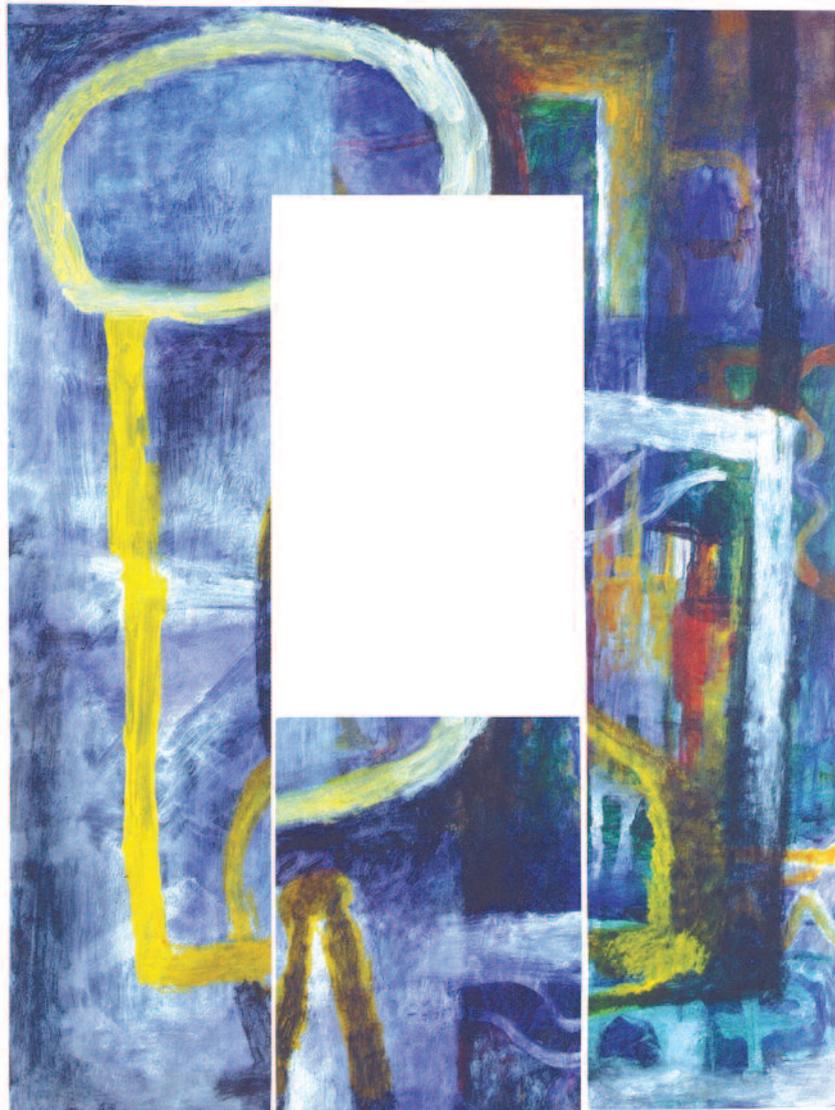
Salons like "Young and Old of Today" in 1977 in Paris and others in later years were starting points for many projects and invitations, the real door to professional painting, both Parisian and international.

The 1986 individual showing in Costa Rica's National Contemporary Art Gallery is memorable for several rea-

sons: it was the first I did after ending my period as an assistant; the crates the paintings were shipped in were lost for four days; and, finally, I remember an old woman who, after looking at my work, took me by the hands and said, "Thank you very much," and then disappeared.

Contact with Germany and the United States has been pleasant for me because of their peoples' straightforward, practical

ways; showing in New York has always been exciting. In 1987, I participated in a collective exhibition of artists of different nationalities in the Salpetriere Chapel, interesting both because of the quality of the work presented and the imposing venue itself. The experience was unforgettable. Through Cruz-Diez, I went to Venezuela in 1978 and since then my links with Caracas and its inhabitants



Daniel Pype

Vertical Slide,
120 x 75 cm, 1997
(acrylic on paper on
wood).

have gotten stronger. My collectors have become my friends.

I have always taken care to maintain contact with Mexico, both my native Chihuahua and Mexico City's galleries and institutions, from the Carrillo Gil Museum in 1981 to the Oscar Román Gallery in autumn 1999.

I don't even want to try to talk about the doubts, influences, initiation rites,

suffering, small achievements, doubts again, etc., that we all encounter along the way. Evoking them would be a different matter altogether. **MM**

NOTES

¹ From 1971 to the present, Carlos Torres has exhibited his work individually and collectively in salons, galleries, cultural centers and museums of Mexico, Europe, the United States and South America. [Editor's Note].