

Wepa!

Learning to play classical music on the piano and french horn, and performing as a Flamenco dancer were serious early creative pursuits begun around age six. In 1986 after finishing high school, a close family friend working as the art director for a textile design studio, hired me to work full-time in the heart of NYC's garment/fashion district, where I was taught how to paint patterns using gouache. Many of the artists in the studio were formally trained painters and introduced me to art.

A focused and deliberate study of oil painting began in 1988 at Hunter College when I enrolled in Painting 101. It was an opportunity to learn as much about the medium and history as possible. Three years later in the summer of 1991 as an undergraduate at SUNY Purchase majoring in painting, I was nominated and won a scholarship to the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

In the 1990's I lived and worked in a loft on the south-side of Williamsburg, and spent years developing my painting. In 1999 I got my MFA in Painting from Hunter College, moving out of my loft and into a carriage house around the corner from the Brooklyn Museum. It was on the roof of that building in 2001, standing next to my father, that I saw the World Trade Center fire and a plume of smoke across the sky. My father passed away on April 17, 2005. His political career spanning three plus decades included working as a commissioner under three NYC mayors, and serving as a President of the National Puerto Rican Forum, and a founding member of ASPIRA.

In 2006 I moved to the municipal area in downtown Brooklyn called Borough Hall (near a few of his former offices), and painted in a small converted storage space with 20' ceilings directly above a bar. Recently hired as full-time faculty for The Art Institute of NYC meant my commute was just across the East River to Tribeca. In 2012 my studio practice moved into a spacious farmhouse in the Catskill Forest Preserve, and the garden apartment of our family home in Brooklyn. I am enjoying every opportunity to split my time between the city and the country.

*Miguel Martinez-Riddle* was born in Brooklyn NY, and continues to live and work there, and in the Catskill Mountain Forest Preserve