

ARTS & LEISURE

Mexico City Times

Painter Andrea Arroyo With Career Scarce Begun Lands A New Yorker Cover

By María Luisa León-Portilla

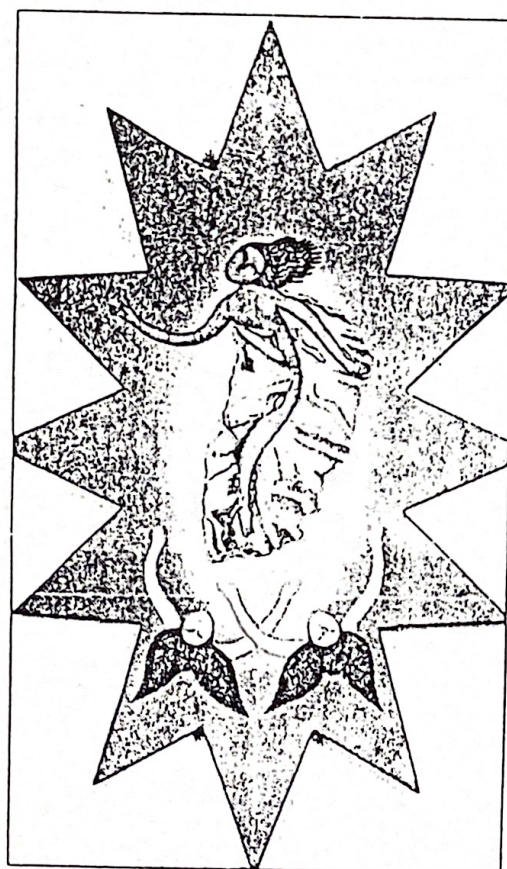
'Mythologies,' a body of 25 works by the Mexican painter and sculptor Andrea Arroyo, is currently on show at the Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Park Blvd., West Bronx, N.Y.) through March. Arroyo has been living in New York since 1983.

Arroyo's work is a unique exhibit, in that the artist's original background is dance. She taught herself the disciplines of the plastic arts after her first experiences in the media — and encouragement from others — revealed that it served her best as an expressive language. In 1985, she began to take part in exhibits at the NYU Gallery and the Pinnacle Gallery in Rochester.

Arroyo's paintings — which incorporate materials like plaster, wood, and ceramics — express an approach to life from a dancer's point of view. They are full of movement, very upbeat, and bril-

liant with color. Most of the themes she explores are taken from mythology or the Bible.

As a feminist, she strives to enhance the human figure in its female



Madona Morena, 1990.

manifestation. In works like *Eden* (1990), *Penelope* (1990), *Daphne* (1988), *Lot and His Daughters* (1988), *Lilith* (1992), *Ariadne* (1991) her female protagonists depict roles confirming her admiration for women. In *Daphne*, the woman turns into a tree to escape Apollo's persecution; in the *Daughters of Lot*, two women bear down to attack their father. Arroyo also uses literary figures as her subjects. *Alice In Wonderland* is a figure curled inside a niche cut into book pages and is surrounded by a white rabbit, a clock and a cascading deck of cards. The work won her a grant last year from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Though many of Arroyo's subjects have been treated by other artists, she approaches them in new eye-appealing ways. Images are schematic, free of excessive detail and tell their stories with directness. Messages are projected in movement.

"The movement makes them almost dream-like. I like to use well-known stories and give them a new perspective. In mythological themes, I make the woman the protagonist instead of the man."

Recently the *Mexico City Times* had the opportunity to talk to Arroyo. This modest, 33-year-old Mexican painter and sculptor is one of those remarkable talents who avoid sensationalism.

Arroyo stated that she likes to involve herself in her work, down to the smallest details, which includes carving and painting her own frames, something that few artists take the time to do. As a result, each frame is unique and an extension of the painting as a whole. Like many New York artists, she acquires her materials at the Pearl shop on Canal Street, and since color plays a very important part in her pieces, she likes to mix her own.

The artist has had a good number of selected group exhibitions, most of them in galleries in the United States.



Mary Magdalene, 1991.

In addition, she has had several individual exhibitions, the last being "Mythologies" in the Lehman College Art Gallery. It was originally slated to run from August to December, but due to its great success, was extended through March 1996.

Arroyo has earned several very important awards, including a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. Her success as an artist, however, has been primarily established by two important projects. The first, was her work for *The New Yorker* — she designed the covers for the Oct. 26, 1992 and April 26, 1993 editions. In celebration of the Matisse exhibition held at the Modern Art Museum, Andrea's well-known painting *The Dance*, appeared on the April cover.

The second project includes large-scale public art — two polychromed relief murals created through the Percent for Art program, which were commissioned by the New York School Construction Authority in 1993, and are currently housed in the Bronx.