



## DANCING ON CANVAS

Cuban-born artist Noel creates ballets on canvas with a passion that has translated into a successful American career spanning more than two decades

With paint that fills canvases with powerful dancers and choruses of ladies draped in flowing fabrics, Cuban-born artist Noel credits ballet, his former career, as his inspiration. "My whole body of work is because of dance," says Noel. "The movement is always present. I'm creating a set on canvas — It's like I'm a director."

Noel has painted quite a colorful career for himself in the U.S since arriving in 1981 directly from a nine-month engagement as a dancer and teacher with the Compania Nacional de Danza on tour in Costa Rica. In America, Noel began utilizing his artistic talents while performing with Ballet Concerto, Dance Miami, Boston Ballet and New England Dinosaur Dance Company. In 1986 Noel gave up dancing to dedicate his life to his lifelong love, painting. "I appreciate and respect my painting career more than my dance career," says the artist. "Great things happen when I paint. It's a very private moment — I go within."

Noel's typical year is filled with commissions, numerous exhibitions (often scheduled in two different cities at once) and a variety of charity donations and presentations. "Some weeks I don't paint at all, other weeks I paint constantly," says Noel. No matter how busy, Noel has always been able to donate time and art to his favorite charities — particularly AIDS organizations. In 1999 Miami's Care Resource requested an image for its internationally-renowned AIDS fundraiser White Party Weeks. Noel created *Sueño Blanco* (White Dream) which became

a living symbol of the event, gracing posters, CDs and invitations.

Noel, like many emerging artists, feels fortunate to be part of Miami's currently hot art scene. "Miami has changed so much since I first came here," says Noel. "There was nothing here. Now Miami gets two major international art shows every year." Noel boasts that Miami is ideal for an evolving artist like himself. "The most difficult thing (as an artist) is to stay true to yourself," adds Noel. "Not to sell yourself or commercialize yourself." Noel compares his creative process to that of mounting a ballet, starting with sketches that are later transferred to canvas. Noel fills his canvases with vibrant colors and strong images placing equal importance to color, form and style. "Three must come together, one cannot be without the other," explains the artist. "The balance makes a painting."

This month Noel premieres a new line of limited edition bronze sculptures at the New York International Art Expo at the Javits Center, an international art fair similar to Art Miami. In Miami, Noel exhibits a joint collaboration with artist Romero Britto that opens Mar. 3 at the Britto Gallery. Both artists have donated the artist's proof of one of their collaborative works that will be auctioned to benefit Winter Party Festival. The image reflects the Winter Party theme "Into the Future" with an Atlas holding the world in his hands, reaching up to the future. And what does the future hold for Noel? "To keep doing what I'm doing," says the artist. ■

