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Noel's 2004 Overture:

A Powerful, Bold Evolution in His Art Career

PHOTOS & STORY BY CARL ZABLOTNY

Eva's Son

Local artist and South Beach pioneer Noel just had a fabulous opening of his new exhibit at Liquid Blue Gallery in Wynwood. That's the recently opened art gallery owned by local realtor Jeff Mohr. The exhibit, "Overture," marks a bold evolution in Noel's career and the more than 35 pieces in this show will be highly coveted by his numerous collectors.

These pieces combine his trademark bold strokes, bright colors, and anatomical detail with a sort of classicism – integrated more thoroughly into his works as a result of his recent intensive study of Titian, Bernini, Da Vinci, and other masters.

It's hard to believe that Noel only began his professional art career in 1987 after he was forced to leave a promising career in ballet due to an injury. He was born in Cuba, and danced with Alonso's and toured with the company throughout Europe and Canada. He started his U.S. ballet career in 1981 with Ballet Concerto, Dance Miami, Boston Ballet, and New England Dinosaur Dance Company. He moved permanently from Boston to South Beach in 1988 and the rest is history!

As an artist, he has received national recognition and has been featured in many magazines and publications and has graced the cover of *Wire* on numerous occasions. Noel has created commission works for private and corporate collections. These include murals for the Ritz Plaza Hotel in Miami Beach, Grove Isle Hotel in Coconut Grove (for which he also created the fountain at its entrance), and murals for Paradise Point Hotel in San Diego. He also created a portrait of Eartha Kitt and other Private Collections and book covers for Argentinean author Alicia Borinsky.

Noel was the Featured Artist for Miami's White Party 1998 for which he created "Sueño Blanco."



That image became an important work that graced the covers of CDs, posters, and other promotional material throughout the world. Noel has had an incredible history of doing numerous charitable works throughout his career and will create a work for White Party's 20th anniversary this year.

It's great to have a person like Noel in the community here since he's always re-creating and re-inventing himself. Actually, he's just evolving and maturing, sometimes forcing himself to take bold steps forward as he's done with this exhibit, which is a very powerful, expansive one. What's interesting is that it reflects every dimension of his career and teases us as to what lies ahead.

South Beach and Miami have been very good to Noel – and he's been good to them in return. It's been very fertile ground for him and he continues to sing the area's praises, noting the strength of the local community even after so many years. That was evidenced by the more than 600 people who passed through Liquid Blue's doors last Thursday! He only sees things getting better, too, as Art Basel and Art Miami continue to add depth to the art world here as well as continued developments in Wynwood and the Design District.

One thing that you notice in all of Noel's work is that he really loves what he does – and that gives him incredible energy and inspiration to create works for such an outstanding exhibit like "Overture." We highly encourage a visit to Liquid Blue Gallery to view this exhibit. It's really worth a drive or cab ride over the causeway!

You just opened an exhibit called "Overture." Why that title?

I feel like this is a new beginning for me. I'm at a certain point in

NOEL'S "OVERTURE" THROUGH JULY 8
LIQUID BLUE GALLERY
3438 N. MIAMI AVE.
MIAMI'S WYNWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD
GALLERY HOURS: 11 A.M. TO 7 P.M. TUES.-FRI.;
10 A.M. TO 5 P.M. SAT.
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my life professionally and personally. So I wanted to make a statement that this is a new level – of what I've accomplished in the past and what's to come in the future. "Overture" represents my work in the past and my life now. It also has a theatrical meaning to it since that is also a part of my life, from my dance background. "Overture" means an introduction to a musical piece made up of many parts. It describes what that piece of music or opera or ballet will become. People should see this new body of work as representative of all the new things that are to come from me.

How many pieces are in this exhibit and how would you describe the variety you're offering?

There are more than 35 pieces in this exhibit, including new mosaics, originals, and drawings. And there are a number of unfinished pieces, sketches, which fits into the whole theme of what's yet to come. They are new pieces in the same style and genre of what is displayed in this exhibit but which won't be finished until later this summer for other exhibits in Boston and Provincetown. It's a continuation.

You went back and intensely studied some of the great

masters in art history. Tell us about how that affected your work.

I decided this time to pay more attention to the masters who have inspired me so much. I did a great deal of study to identify myself with them. As a result the works in this exhibit are even more "me." I was seeing the work of Da Vinci, Bernini, Titian, and Michelangelo at much deeper levels since I studied them in much more detail. Particularly a certain look or gesture – I absorbed it and made it my own. So there are a lot of those feelings mixed together in all my works, in every painting in this exhibit. There are my personal feelings, my personal life, with the inspiration of the masters, all transcribed into the style I've created. I've made it new, fresh.

Did you visit museums and exhibits to study these masters?

Visiting museums is what I do as part of my life. I also have friends who have some great paintings of these masters, too, in their collections. And I always visit New York at least three times a year. Then there's the fact that Miami has taken such bold steps forward in the arts – with Art Miami and Art Basel. Not only do you get to see the masters, but you get to see the new masters, the new artists. It's wonderful!

What inspired you the most from your recent studies?

It's always a general feeling that starts with movement. There are paintings that simply capture my attention and I might not even know who the artist might be. For example, I saw paintings by Titian who I've always liked. But I've never seen as much of him as I've discovered in the past two years, because I decided to go

Absolutely! I have to say I'm so pleased with the developments in the art world here. I was here when there was really nothing except a handful of people and galleries. In the past 10 years the growth has been truly amazing. People know me nationally and internationally because I'm in Miami! Being here is like being exposed to the world—and in many ways, even more so than New York. We've got Art Miami and Art Basel—and they're both wonderful! There's only more growth to come! It's getting better and better and I realize that as I travel around. You know what, there's really no place like home! And that's right here!

