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TCU hosts Hispanic artist's

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"If I study hard and work hard, I can reach my dreams and no one can stop me."

These are the words Hispanic artist Mirta Toledo recalls when she remembers her father and lifelong role model.

"I decided I wanted to be an artist when I was 15," Toledo said. "It was very hard for my family to understand, but my father was always encouraging me and was very supportive."

Her father's advice was well-heeded. Toledo is now an accomplished artist who has had exhibits in

galleries throughout Latin America and some parts of the United States. In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, her latest exhibit, "Pure Diversity," will begin its run at 1 p.m. Wednesday in the Student Center Lounge and end Oct. 1.

The exhibit will feature many of Toledo's paintings and a few choice pieces of her sculptures, an art she began in 1977.

Two of the sculptures scheduled to be a part of the exhibition are "Once Upon A Time" and "Mother Earth" and her latest painting, "Pure Diversity", from which the exhibit derives its name.

Toledo's education in art began at the Belgrano School of Fine Art

where she received her diploma in drawing in 1973. Since then, she has participated in 68 exhibitions, 51 of them being juried ones. The exhibits have taken place across the Americas in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Hawaii and now, Fort Worth.

Toledo's art has brought her much acclaim and numerous awards. Her record of accomplishments is lengthy along with the number of cover illustrations she has created for numerous books and journals.

In 1991, Toledo stopped painting and sculpting and began writing. Since that year, she has published several short stories and one novel, "La Semilla Elemental," with her second due to be published this year

first exhibition in South

by Editorial Vinciguerra in Buenos Aires.

"I felt the necessity to write because there were so many things I wanted to express that I couldn't with a sculpture," Toledo said. "I believe it's something magical, something necessary for your soul. When I wrote, I didn't have a formula. It was like someone was telling me what to write."

In writing, Toledo says she never worried about scenes not fitting together. Instead, she always knew that in the end everything would come together.

"It's you and only you who makes the events match," she said.

Toledo cites her father, Toribio

Toledo and her mentor, Antonio Pujia, a renowned Argentinean sculptor, as the driving forces in her art.

"He (Pujia) is a very talented man," she said. "What I admire most about him is his capacity to work and work. His discipline is amazing. He was very important to my career."

Toledo said in a time where encouragement toward daughters was not seen as very important and fathers had the final word in everything, her father was always supportive of both her and her two sisters in whatever they were doing. Toledo's father passed away last January.

"He used his power for good," Toledo said.

Upon moving to Fort Worth, Toledo witnessed a type of multicultural and diverse community she had never before experienced.

"I had a different image of what I would see," she said, "but when I got here I changed my mind."

Fort Worth is a diverse city full of all different kinds of people and places, she said. Toledo said she loves going to the mall alone because it unearths a whole multitude of different cultures and people.

"I see a person as a mystery, where you draw what you think is the mystery," she said. "It's not like a photograph. People here express themselves, and visually that's very powerful to me."