

Fine Arts

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GREENSBORO COLLEGE

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815 West Market Street
Greensboro, North Carolina

Mirta Toledo -- a Woman's Art

By Jacquelyn Lowry

On Mon., March 13, Greensboro College was fortunate to have artist Mirta Toledo speak about her work. She now lives in Fortworth, Texas, but is originally from Argentina. It was in Argentina that she received her degrees in drawing, painting and sculpture. Mirta Toledo has had six solo exhibitions and sixty-eight group exhibitions throughout her career. She has won many awards and has had bibliographies written in magazines, editorials, and newspapers. She has also had short stories published and illustrated six books.

During the slide presentation of her works Mirta expressed to the audience: her reasons for being an artist, the ideas and stories she portrays in her pieces, and the major people or events that have influenced her life and career. Her approach was genuine, capable, and full of feeling.

Mirta Toledo was raised in Argentina-- a land of dictatorship. The eldest child of all daughters, her father, uncharacteristically instilled in her qualities of strength, ambition and values, normally reserved for males in her society. Her father always made her aware that she should follow her dream. Although everything was limited in her country, especially for women, she was able to overcome the difficulties, and she understood she must break these limits in order to find herself and grow. By removing the boundaries and connecting the compartments she created a space for self expression.

The reasons for Mirta Toledo choosing to be an artist appeared valuable and honest, and at the same time complicated. The main reason for her expression in art is the way it helps her find herself. By this I mean finding her feelings, anger, sadness, humor, fear, joy, or uncertainty. She says, "Through my sculptures, drawings, pottery, and writing, I am searching for answers." In the creation of art she finds joy, pleasure and fulfillment. The significance of life experiences around her, and the attempt to understand them, saturate her art and pour out as a vision of her family heritage, personal beliefs, and spirit.

Sometimes Mirta Toledo's paintings, drawings, and sculpture are meant to evoke feeling or thought by telling a story or expressing an idea. At other times they are simply appealing to our basic senses through color, form, design and imagery. Mirta values symbolism and uses it in her artwork frequently. Some of these sym-



bols include: sacred colors (black and red), skeletons, snakes, and birds. She also portrays the mythological spirit of her country's people using her work to illustrate the values behind the legends and myths. In her painting "Trio of Life," she paints a closely grouped trio of a man, woman and child. The child is being held slightly over the man's shoulder and the woman nestles close to them. In this composition Mirta is expressing the belief that while families are different now, we still need the male and female aspect or point of view when we raise our children, in order to create a wholeness. In many of her works of art she represents or tells the story of "Mother Earth" which was taught in her country. One piece is a lovely painting of the story of how Mother Earth lay down and slept with the sky. Mother Earth then bore twins by this act, and was happy because she was no longer lonely. Mirta Toledo is constantly searching out and reading the faces of her people. She wants to represent them and their reality. Many of her sculptures are the heads and faces of these people. Reality she puts into form include: life, death, family, women, visions, legends, and religion. To her, all of the faces that make her world are universal, and important.

I found Mirta Toledo an inspiration. Her view on life was honest and admirable. Her ability to convert the energy of the life force surrounding her into beautiful pieces of art was an ability I myself desire. The challenge and vulnerability of opening herself to the audience took courage and strength. I believe Mirta Toledo is an exceptional artist and woman. It was beneficial and fortunate that I had the opportunity to be introduced to her.