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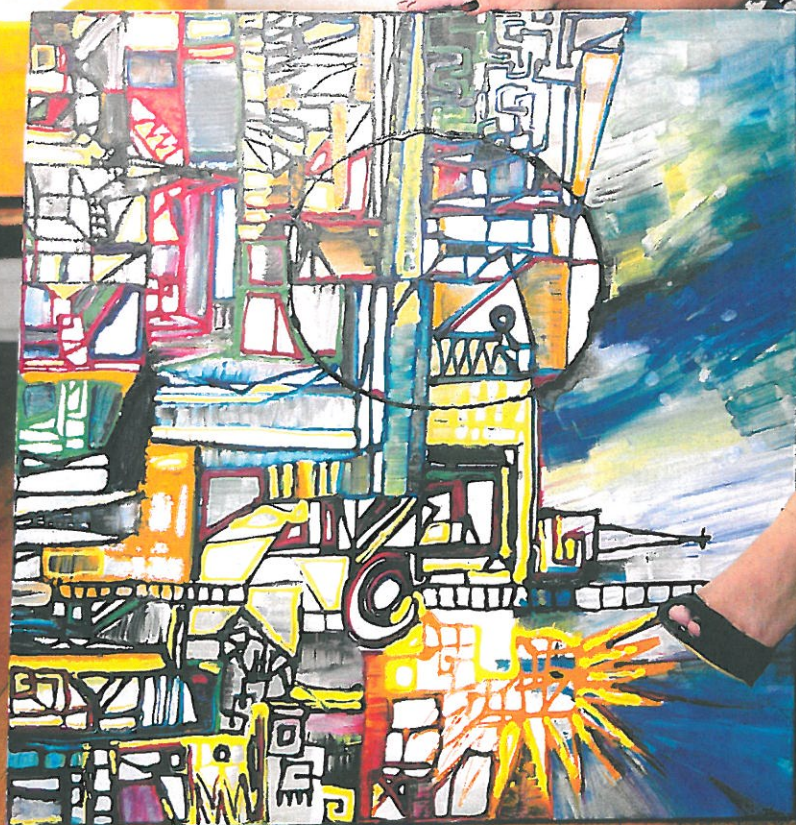


# VIVID Intuition

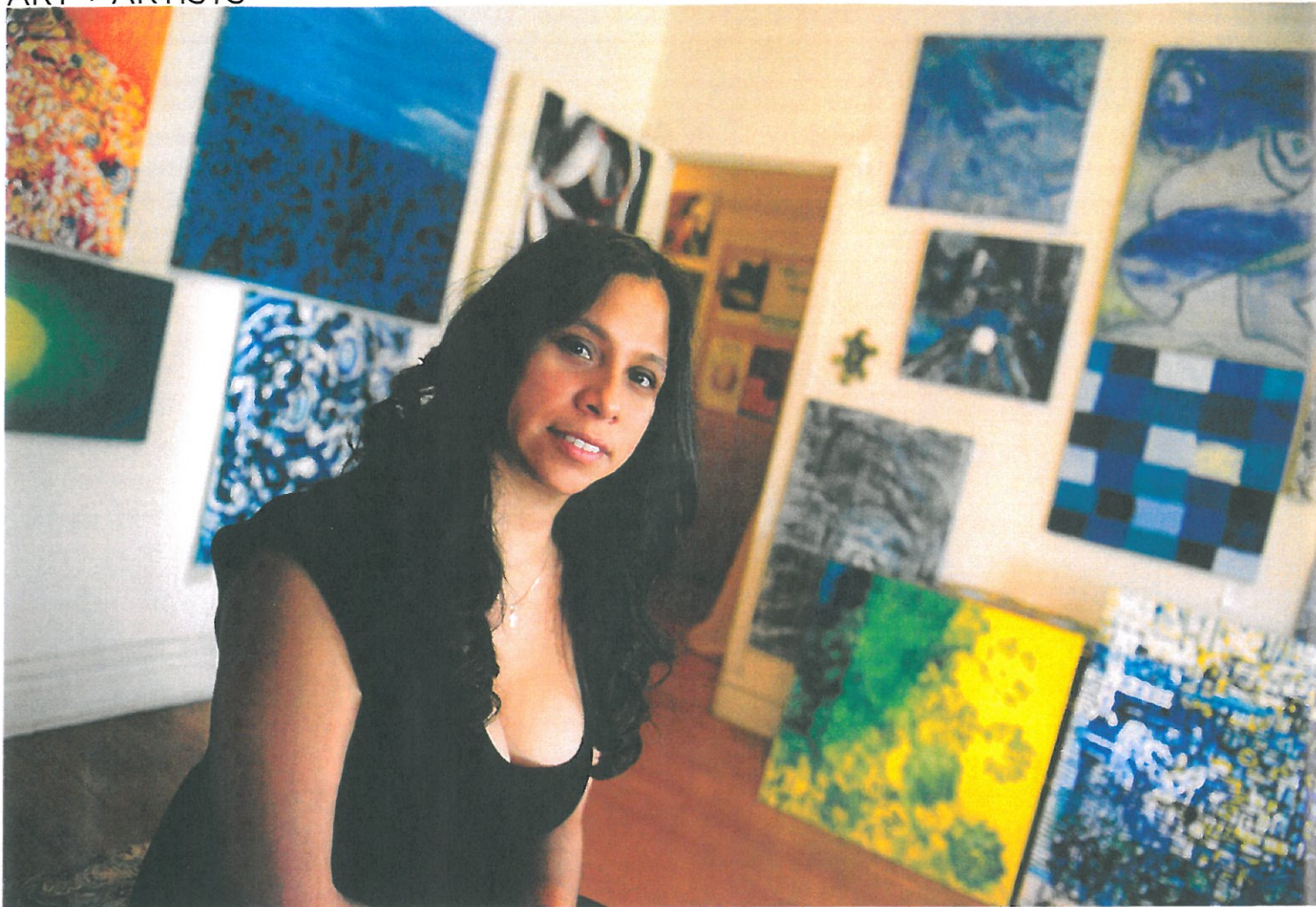
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM PRISCHING

Though she starts her paintings without a plan in place, up-and-coming artist Licha DeLaPeña's final products are definitely stunning and thoughtful works of art.

By Evangeline Politis



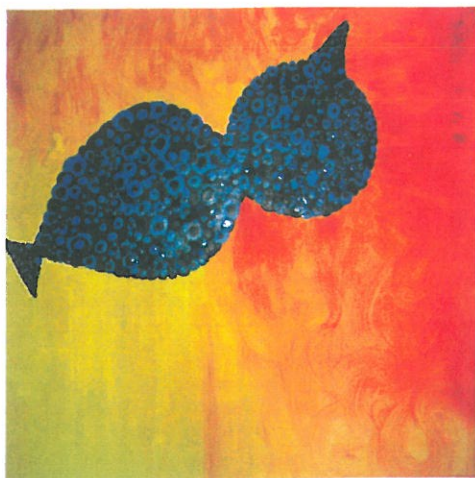




LICHA DELAPEÑA SITS IN HER LOGAN SQUARE APARTMENT THAT ALSO SERVES AS HER STUDIO AND WORKSPACE

ON THIS PAGE:  
"SUNSHINE"

ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE (CLOCKWISE):  
"THE HALF M;" "YOU WERE ONLY WAITING FOR  
THIS MOMENT TO BE FREE;" "MIDDLE OF THE  
OCEAN;" "HYMNS I CAN'T BE WHAT YOU WANT"



Painter Licha DeLaPeña has been living in her Logan Square apartment for more than a decade. Her two-bedroom is lived-in; a comfortable couch by the front window allows you to watch the pedestrians exiting the nearby L station. The white walls are hidden by rows of her brightly painted canvases. The rooms are knowingly cluttered with personal belongings; only a large space in the kitchen is left open. The songs of Sam Roberts Band blast out of her speakers, drowning out the city noises.

These are all the necessary ingredients for DeLaPeña's creations: the city, bright colors, her floor, and music. Many of her paintings reflect the city she overlooks, incorporating its grid and crowded feel. Her signature use of bright colors is noticeable in almost all of her work. She paints on her kitchen floor rather than an easel so she can get up-close to her work. And one of her primary inspirations is music—she can't paint without it.

Even with all these essential elements, she can't force herself to paint. Like many creatives, it needs to be sparked by some sort of inspiration. "It

can depend on my mood. Sometimes I just kind of feel the need to paint," she explains. The same goes for the imagery of the painting. "I don't have a plan. I never have an idea of what I'm going to paint. I just take the canvas out and paint," DeLaPeña adds.

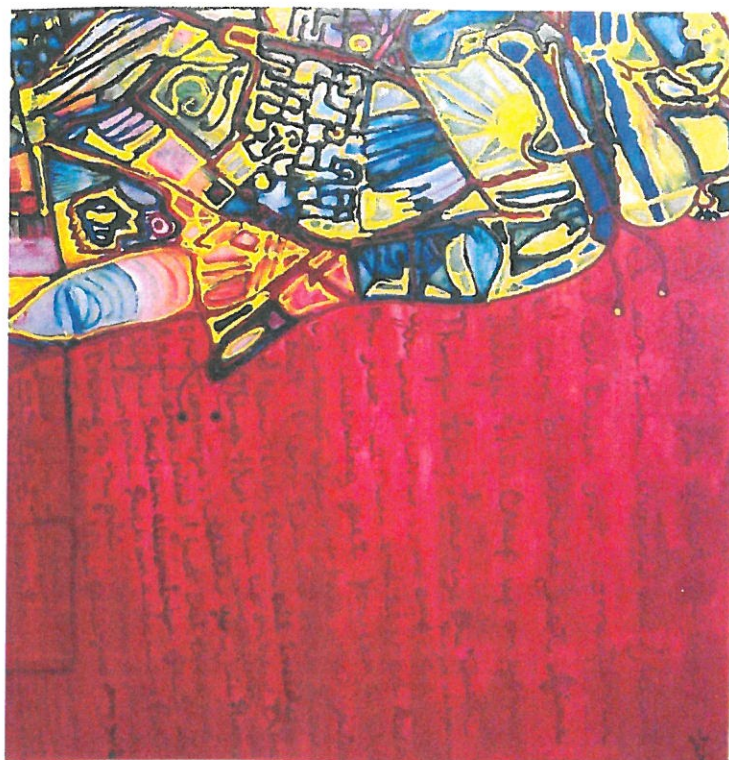
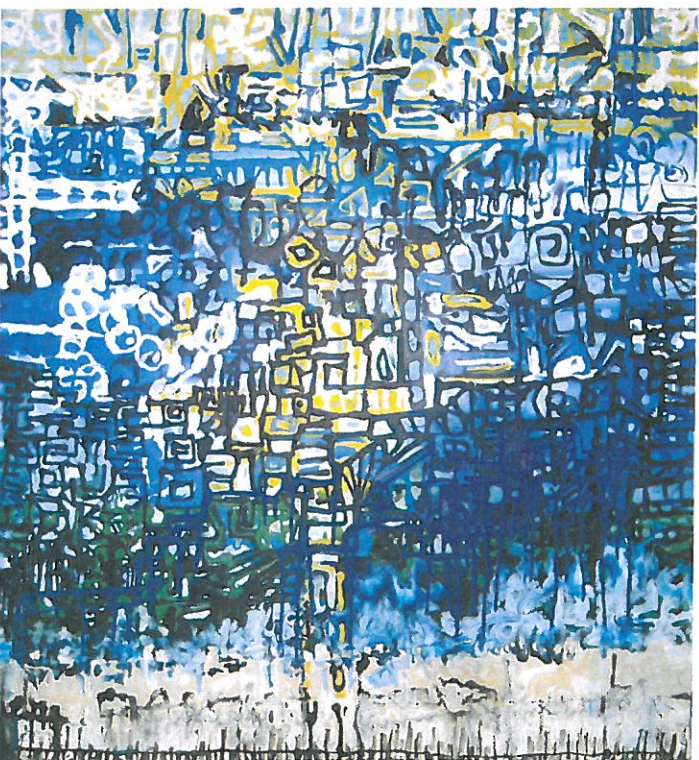
She has been painting this way since 1996 when she was attending Columbia College for a degree in advertising. Though she never had any professional training in painting, her older sister who was also dabbling in art at the time, was her guide. In 2000, she started showing at local bars and cafes. This took a bit of encouragement from a friend because she had such a difficult time letting go of her work. "I was going to see a band and the bar showed art. When I got there, my friend said I've set up a show for you," explains DeLaPeña about her first show. After that, she started working with Gallery 1633, which is no longer in existence but was the oldest gallery in Bucktown. While there, she was further familiarized with the local arts scene and was encouraged by the gallery.

*Liche DeLaPeña* continued on page 141





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"WORDS & FIRE"

owner, Montana Morrison.

Then a change came in her painting in 2006. "Everything before [then] was just okay. It wasn't what I wanted and what I imagined in my head," DeLaPeña explains. But all of a sudden something clicked and everything she was trying for was translated onto the canvas. Even her followers noticed the transformation. "I had a show around then. The people who came had been following my work for a while and they were like, 'What happened? This is a whole new you.'" She credits the change to her continuous work the decade prior. "From painting and more painting, my work evolved to a point where I'm very happy and it has my trademark on it. It's how I want my art to be."

DeLaPeña is currently not working on any sort of schedule for her work. She used to aim for a show every month; instead, she will pursue it now only if an interesting opportunity presents itself. Such a situation came about this summer when she got involved with the Milwaukee Avenue Arts Festival. During this weeklong July festival, she invited people into her Logan Square apartment to view her pieces. "It was really important to me to establish who I am and where I work because I was letting the public into my home," she explains. She also had her work on exhibit at the Division Street hot spot Crust for nearly a year.

When we spoke to her, DeLaPeña was preparing for a show on Northwestern's campus at Dittmar Memorial Gallery. The one-woman show will mark her first appearance on the North Shore. Located in the Norris Center, the exhibit will run until December 9. Though she's not really sure of her next step, she is on a mission to get her name out there and would one day like to make painting her full-time career.

Liche's paintings are reasonably priced from \$100 to \$800. Visit her website, [lichaatoktoberstudio.com](http://lichaatoktoberstudio.com), or contact her at [oktoberstudio@hotmail.com](mailto:oktoberstudio@hotmail.com). For more information about her exhibit at Dittmar Memorial Gallery, visit [noris.northwestern.edu/recreation:dittmar](http://noris.northwestern.edu/recreation:dittmar), or call 847-491-2348. □

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