

LEGACY

By

CARLOS R. CARPENA

THESIS STATEMENT

In Legacy's series of works, I want to show the audience a significant part of the military's influence on Puerto Rican culture, especially my family. Growing up, I have always been surrounded by someone in my town that served in the military. It became a tradition and part of our heritage listening to the intriguing storytelling about the military. It was part of our heritage, becoming a tradition. My grandfather instilled that legacy in our family when he served in the U.S. Army during the Korean war, paying the ultimate sacrifice fighting for other country's freedom and democracy.

My grandfather's military service inspires this project. Once before, I was motivated by him when I enlisted in the U.S. Army. Now, I'm proud to do this work to honor the legacy he passed down to my family. I want to take this opportunity to explore my history and create cultural awareness. Even though U.S. military service is an essential part of Puerto Rico's cultural background, we are still considered by many second-class U.S. citizens or not citizens at all. I will do this by sharing personal family experiences that impacted my life, either in good or challenging ways.

This collection primarily consists of multimedia sculptures, charcoal drawings, acrylic paintings, and videos based on specific events that impacted not only my family but the entire Puerto Rican culture.

THESIS PROPOSAL

My senior thesis project is a series of works that will consist of four mix media sculptures representing military coins, and four charcoal drawings representing my Puerto Rican culture, that will include a drawing of celebrities, politicians, athletes that volunteered to serve in the armed forces.

I strive to evaluate how the military service within my Puerto Rican/ Hispanic culture influenced my brother and me to follow our Grandfather's footsteps to serve in the armed forces. Each piece will concentrate on a specific/sequential event, including a brief description of it. I want to find ways to highlight the connection and impact of those moments in my life.

Drawings will be on a minimum of 18" x 24" scale drawing paper. For the sculptures, I decided to incorporate a new material to create the military coins, so instead of just ceramic sculptures, they will mix media sculptures.

ARTIST BIO

Carlos R. Carpena (b. 1978 in Puerto Rico) is a visual artist receiving his B.F.A. in Studio Art from Austin Peay State University. His work includes charcoal, graphite, acrylic, ceramic, and mix media to produce hyper-realistic images and 3D figures based on his Puerto Rican culture and military career. Carlos received his first Associate Degree in Drafting from the Huertas Junior College in Caguas P.R. in 2000; he worked as a drafting teacher in the Instituto de Banca y Comercio in 2002. Joined the U.S. Army in 2003, served for 12 years before retiring in 2014. After that, he attended the S.T.E.M. department at A.P.S.U., where he received his Associate of Applied Science in construction in May 2017 and B.S. in Engineering Technology in construction in May 2018.

Carpena's work has been included in recent exhibitions such as the 51st Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition in A.P.S.U. in 2019, earning first place in the drawing category. The Annual VA Showing Our Veteran's Art Exhibit in A.P.S.U. in 2019, winning 1st Place and overall Grand Prize of the exhibition with the artist copy "Inner Beauty" drawing. The Annual Clarksville Riverfest Juried Art Show 2020 in Downtown Clarksville, TN. Winning first and second places in the drawing/painting and 3D art in the Amateur division. Some of his artworks were recently selected for the 53rd Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition in A.P.S.U. that was displayed in April 5-28, 2021.

ARTIST CV

- **CARLOS R. CARPENA**

- B. 1978 in Puerto Rico
- Lives and works in Clarksville, TN

- **EDUCATION**

- 2021 B.F.A. in Studio Art, - AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY, Clarksville, TN
- 2018 B.S. in Engineering Technology, - AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY, Clarksville, TN
- 2017 Associate of Applied Science, - AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY, Clarksville, TN
- 2000 Associate Degree in Drafting with CAD, - HUERTAS JUNIOR COLLEGE, Caguas, PR

- **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- 2003-2014 Military Service, April 2003 – December 2014
- 2002 Drafting teacher at Instituto de Banca y Comercio, Ponce, Puerto Rico

- **SKILLS**

- Clay
- Wood Carving
- Photoshop
- Lightroom
- After Effects
- Illustrator
- Premier Pro
- InDesign

ARTIST CV (CONT.)

- **CARLOS R. CARPENA**

- **SCHOLARSHIPS**

- 2021-2022 TOM MALONE MEMORIAL ART - Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN
- MRS. MONIQUE HULL - Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN
- 2020-2021 CECA - Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN
- TOM MALONE STUDIO ART - Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN
- THE C.E. HUNT JR MEMORIAL - Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

- **EXHIBITIONS**

- 2021 53rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition, Juror: Dr. Claire Kovacs. The New Gallery, Austin Peay State University. April 5-28, 2021
- 2020 Annual Clarksville Riverfest Juried Art Show, Clarksville, TN
- 2019 Showing Our Veteran's Art Exhibit, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN
- 51st Annual Juried Student Exhibition, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

- **SKILLS**

- MacOS
- Digital Photography
- Oil Paint
- Acrylic Paint
- Watercolor
- Charcoal
- Oil Pastels
- Pastels

ARTIST CV (CONT.)

- **CARLOS R. CARPENA**

- **HONORS / AWARDS**

- 2020 1st Place Drawing Amateur Division “Self Portrait with headgear” - in Annual Clarksville Riverfest Juried Art Show
- 2nd Place 3D Art Amateur Division “Legacy” - in Clarksville Riverfest Juried Art Show
- 2019 1st Place and overall Grand Prize “Inner Beauty”- Showing Our Veteran’s Art Exhibit
- 1st Place 3D Art “Mis Raices” - Showing Our Veteran’s Art Exhibit
- 2nd Place 3D Art “Knowledge” - Showing Our Veteran’s Art Exhibit
- 3rd Place 3D Art “Sonic the Hedgehog” - Showing Our Veteran’s Art Exhibit
- 3rd Place Drawing “Trump-a- Lisa” - Showing Our Veteran’s Art Exhibit
- 1st Place Drawing “Self Portrait with headgear” – 51st Annual Juried Student Exhibition

1ST PRESENTATION (CONT.)

LEGACY

4150 Senior Thesis Proposal

By: Carlos R. Carpena

Thesis Statement

- My intention with this body of work is to explore and analyze my military and cultural backgrounds and share personal and family experiences.

Thesis Proposal

- **My senior thesis project** is a series of works that will consist of four ceramics sculptures and four charcoal drawings.
- I strive to evaluate how the military service within my Puerto Rican/ Hispanic culture influenced my brother and me to follow our Grandfather's footsteps to serve in the military.
- Each piece will concentrate on a specific/sequential event, including a brief description of it. I want to find ways to highlight the connection and impact of those moments in my life.

Research Artists

- Christina Cordova (figurative sculptor):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzhSyCjWGdI>



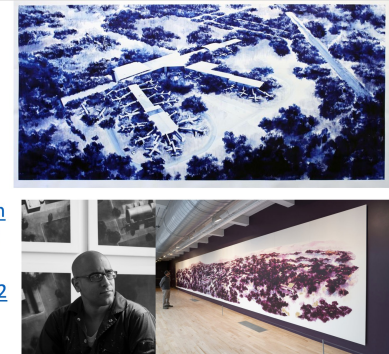
Research Artists

- Luo Li Rong (hyper realistic sculptures)
<https://mymodernmet.com/realistic-sculptures-luo-li-rong/>



Research Artists

- Gamaliel Rodriguez (Visual artist)
<http://longroadprojects.com/projects/gamalielrodriguez>
- <https://youtu.be/fENVhbe62yG>



1ST PRESENTATION (CONT.)

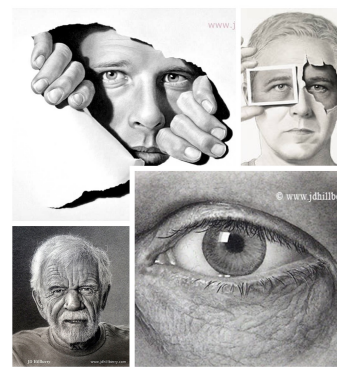
Research Artists

- Rich Johnson – News Illustrator
- <https://newsillustrator.com>



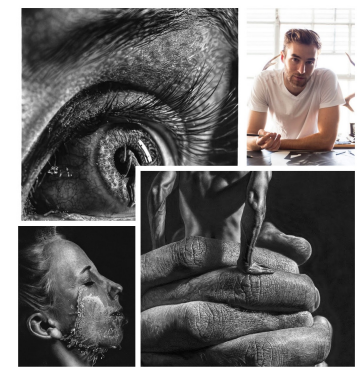
Research Artists

- J.D. Hillberry – Charcoal and Pencil Artist
- www.jdhillberry.com



Research Artists

- Jono Dry (Graphite Pencil Artist)
- www.jonodryart.com



Task List

- Research military history of Puerto Rico
- Research artists that have similar works.
- Plan sketches to figure out imagery and compositions.
- Reference photos for realistic poses.
- Collect materials to start working on the projects.
- Do final works.

Timeline

- **Jan 31- Feb-6.** Complete research artists, work on sketches. Collect materials. Meet with mentor.
- **Feb 7-13.** Start working on one of my sculptures. Continue working on the compositions of other works.
- **Feb 14-20.** Finish first ceramic sculpture or refine details. Start preparing for the second ceramic work.
- **Feb 21-Mar-6.** Bisque fire first ceramic sculpture. Start first drawing. Continue working on the second sculpture. Meet with mentor.
- **Mar 7-20.** Finish first drawing and second sculpture. Prepare it for bisque fire.
- **Mar 21- Apr 3.** Start second and third drawings.
- **Apr 4-17.** Final details on all the drawings and sculptures that are finished. Work on the statements for each piece.

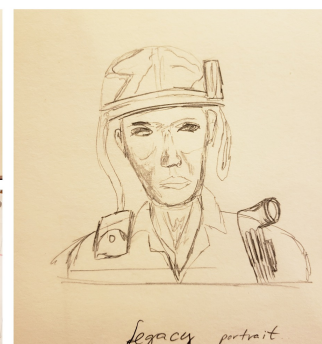
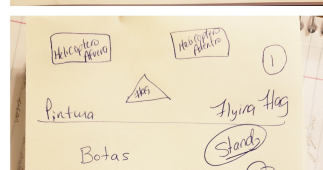
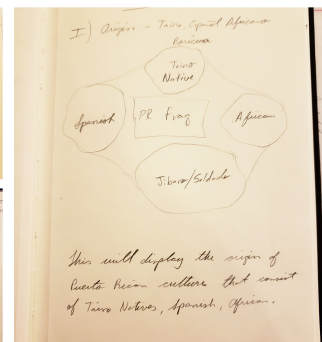
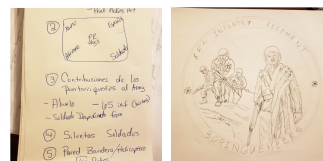
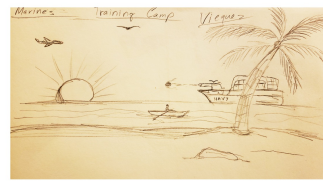
Timeline

- **Apr 18- May 1** Start on third ceramic sculpture. Collect more materials. Meet with mentor.
- **May 2- May 29** Finish working on third sculpture. Continue working on the compositions of other works.
- **May 30- Jun 26** Bisque fire ceramic sculpture. Keep working on more drawings.
- **Jun 27- Jul 17** Finish any work I got behind. Work on the statements for each piece.
- **Jul 18- Aug 7** This time is to finish any incomplete piece. By this time, I should have most of my work done.
- **Aug 8- Oct 2** This time is for final touches and prepare for my show.

1ST PRESENTATION (CONT.)

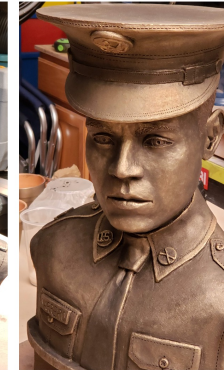
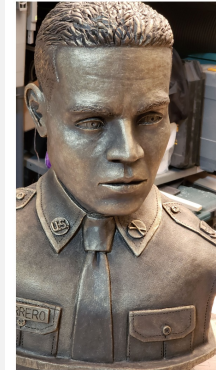
Progress

- Research is almost done.
- Already started working on sketches to figure out the composition of the works.
- Collect materials to start working on the projects.



Previous works

1ST PRESENTATION (CONT.)



Goals

- My goal is to unite all these events to display the importance of military service in Puerto Rican culture and its role in U.S. military history.
- Puerto Ricans are proud Americans and U.S. citizens as anyone born in Tennessee or Kentucky.
- I want to take this opportunity to create cultural and political awareness.

Special Concerns

- Will my imagery communicate the scenes I want to present.
- Manage time wisely without freaking out.
- Running out of time.

End

2ND PRESENTATION

LEGACY

4150 Senior Thesis Proposal

By: Carlos R. Carpena

Thesis Statement

- My intention with this body of work is to explore my history and to create cultural awareness. Even though U.S. military service is an essential part of Puerto Rico's cultural background, we are still considered by many second-class U.S. citizens or not citizens at all. I do this by sharing personal family experiences that impacted my life, either in good or challenging ways.

Refocused Thesis Proposal

- **My senior thesis project** is a series of works that will consist of four mix media sculptures representing military coins, and four charcoal drawings representing my Puerto Rican culture, that will include a drawing of celebrities, politicians, athletes that volunteered to serve in the armed forces.
- I strive to evaluate how the military service within my Puerto Rican/ Hispanic culture influenced my brother and me to follow our Grandfather's footsteps to serve in the armed forces.

Refocused Thesis Proposal cont.

- Each piece will concentrate on a specific/sequential event, including a brief description of it. I want to find ways to highlight the connection and impact of those moments in my life.
- Drawings will be on a minimum of 18" x 24" scale drawing paper.
- For the sculptures, I decided to incorporate a new material to create the military coins, so instead of just ceramic sculptures, they will mix media sculptures.

Previous Research Artists

- **Christina Cordova** – (figurative sculptor):
• <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzhSyCjWGdI>
- **Luo Li Rong** – (hyper realistic sculptures)
• <https://mymodernmet.com/realistic-sculptures-luo-li-rong/>



New Research Artists

- **Todd Krasovetz** – (realistic art style)
• <https://official-military-art.com>



2ND PRESENTATION (CONT.)

New Research Artists

- **Ian Coate** – (Author/illustrator)
- <https://iancoate.com/military%20art%204.html>



New Research Artists

- **Rafael Tufiño** – (Illustrator)
- <https://www.mapr.org/en/museum/proa/artist/tufino-rafael>



New Research Artists

- **James Dietz** – (illustrator and painter)
- <https://www.jamesdietz.com/proddetail.php?prod=jd-pr-158>



Current works in progress



Military Coin



2ND PRESENTATION (CONT.)

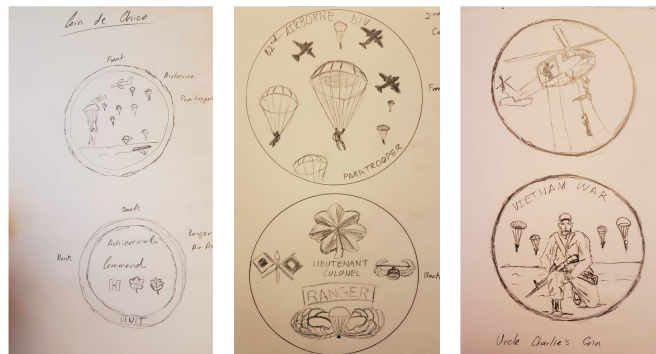
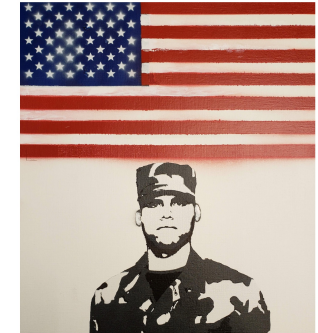
Military Vest



More Coins

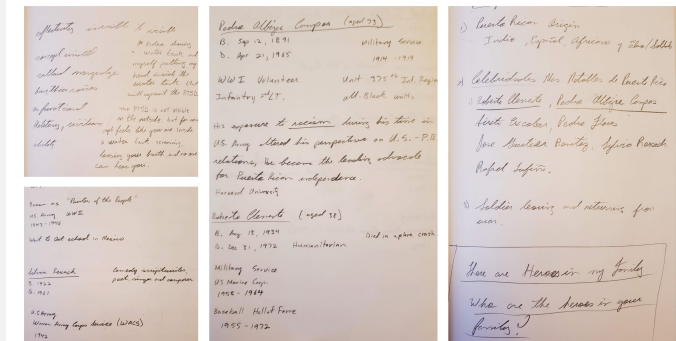
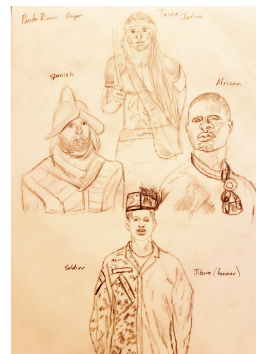


Self portrait

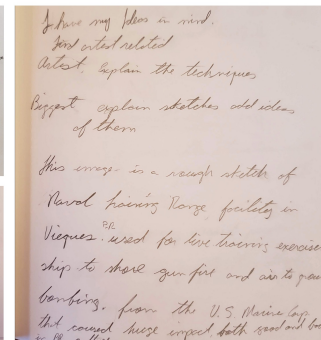
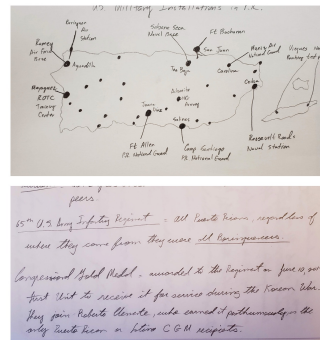
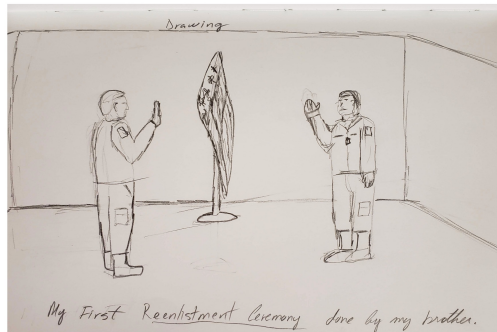


Puerto Rican Origin

Taino Natives
Spanish conquerors
African Slaves



2ND PRESENTATION (CONT.)



Task List

- Continue creating sketches to figure out imagery and compositions.
- Use Reference photos for realistic poses.
- Continue to collect materials to start working on other projects.
- Do final works.

Timeline

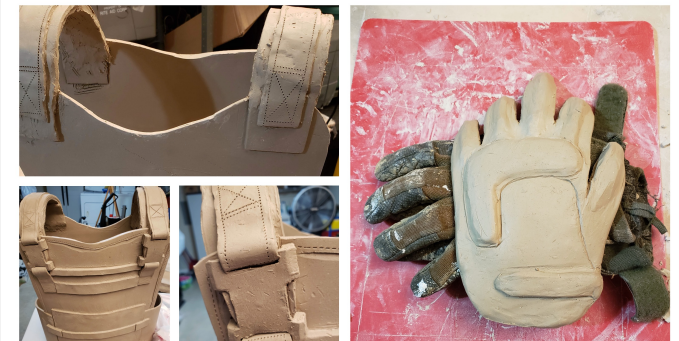
- **Apr 18- May 1** Start on the third sculpture. Collect more materials. Meet with the mentor.
- **May 2- May 29** Finish working on the third sculpture. Continue working on the compositions of other works. Start first drawing.
- **May 30- Jun 26** Start the fourth sculpture. Finish first drawing. Keep working on more drawings.
- **Jun 27- Jul 17** Finish any work I got behind. Work on the statements for each piece.
- **Jul 18- Aug 7** This time is to finish any incomplete drawing. By this time, I should have most of my work done.
- **Aug 8- Oct 2** During this time I should be working on the thesis book and finish any work left.
- **Oct 3- Oct 23** This time is for the final touches and preparation for my show.

End

2ND PRESENTATION (CONT.)

LIFE AND MENTAL DETERIORATION IN THE ARMED FORCES

These images are from a video representing the mental deterioration and the struggles in a person's life throughout the constant stress during and after the military.



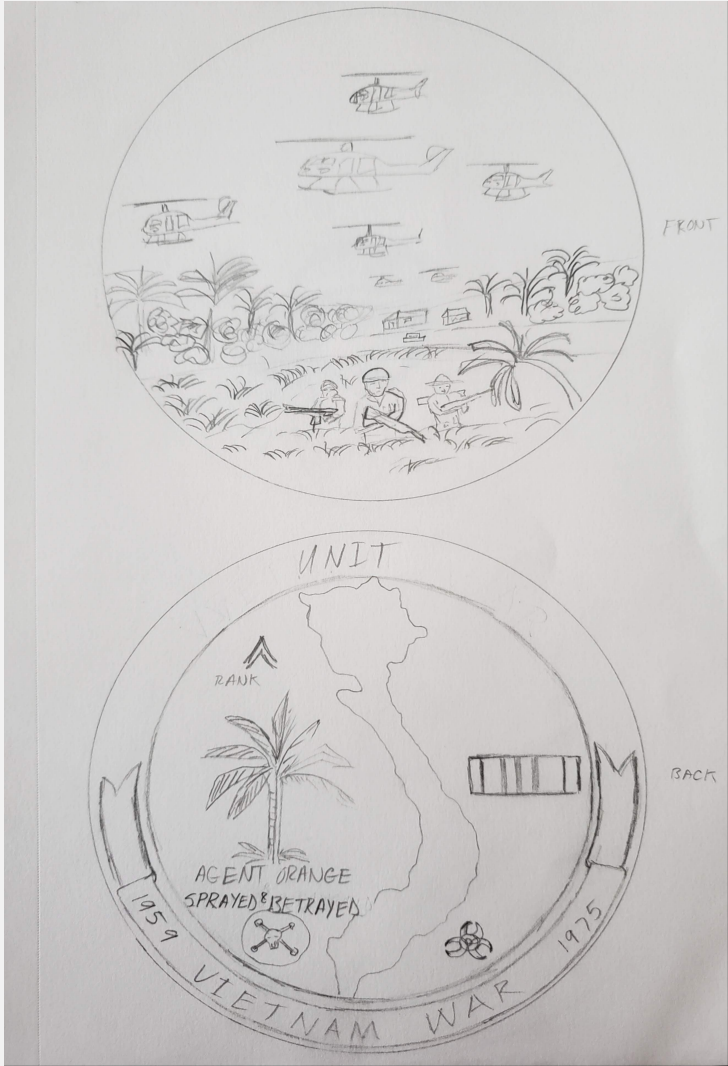
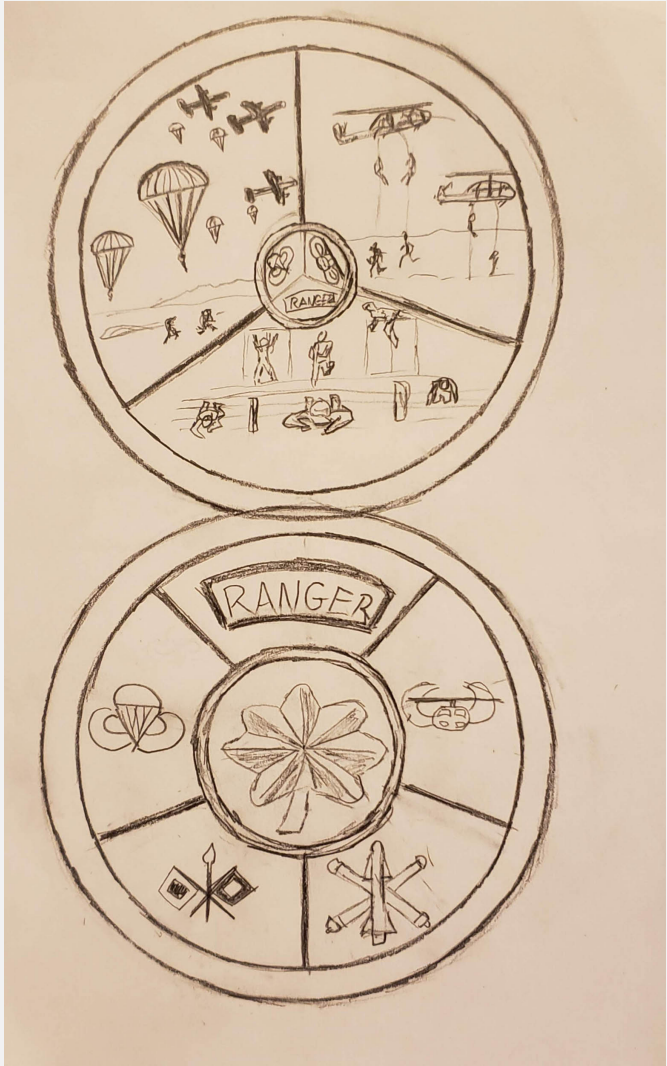
2ND PRESENTATION (CONT.)

PUERTO RICAN CELEBRITIES SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

This image shows Roberto Clemente during his rifle training throughout his U.S. Marine Corps boot camp in 1958. He is the most famous Puerto Rican baseball player whose life was cut short during a humanitarian service when he was 38 years old. I decided to use his image as an example of the military heritage on the Island. Even after he was a successful ballplayer, he chose to serve our country.



WORK IN PROGRESS











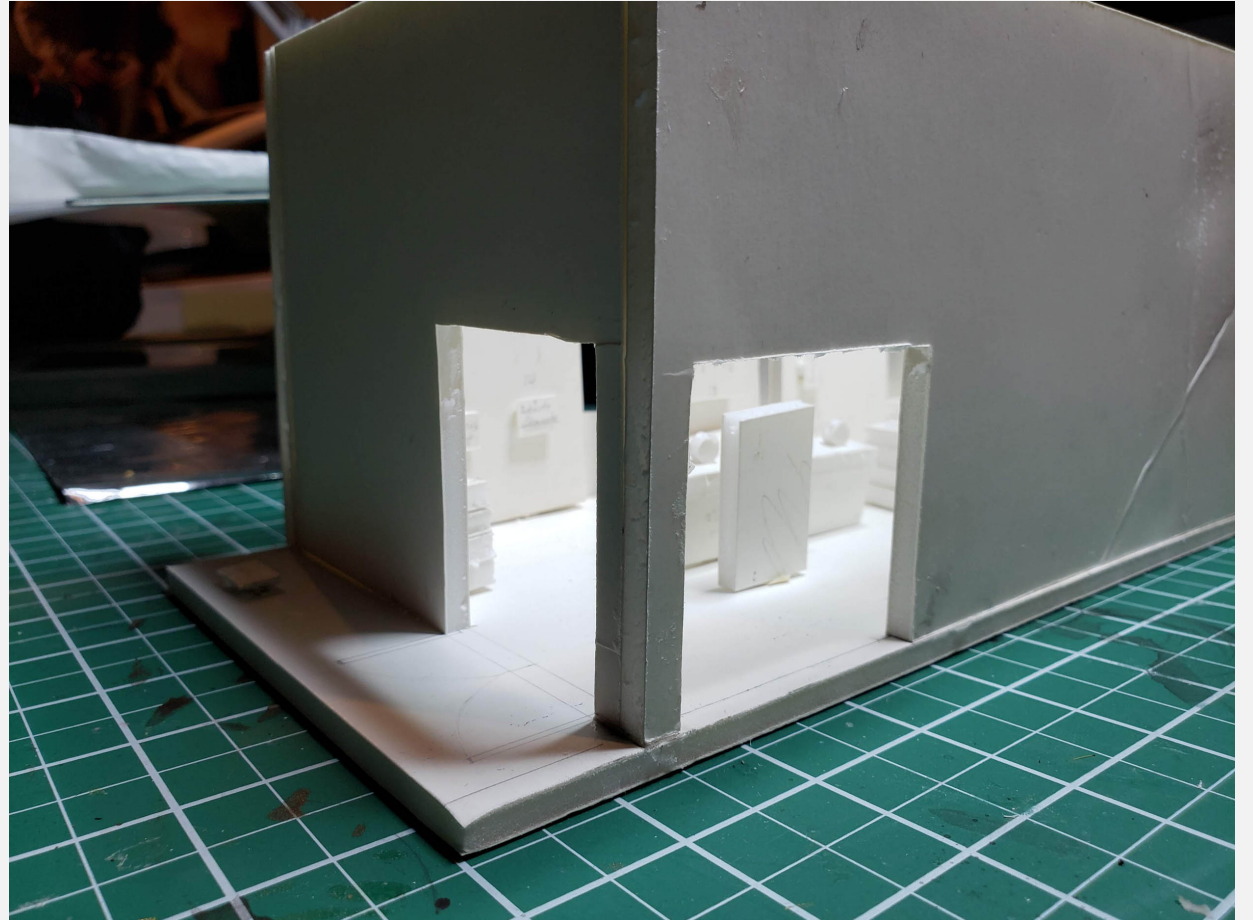












EXHIBITION



























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10



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LEGACY

CARLOS R. CARPENA



16



GALLERY GUIDE

LEGACY



CARLOS R. CARPENA
SENIOR EXHIBITION
NOVEMBER 15TH-18TH
Artist Talk: Nov 15th - 5:30pm
Reception: 5 - 7pm
Art & Design Building
Barbara Beach Gallery

Artist Bio

Carlos R. Carpena (b. 1978 in Puerto Rico) is a visual artist receiving his B.F.A. in Studio Art from Austin Peay State University. His work includes charcoal, graphite, acrylic, ceramic, and mixed media to produce hyper-realistic images and 3D figures based on his Puerto Rican culture and military career. Carlos received his first Associate Degree in Drafting from the Huertas Junior College in Caguas P.R. in 2000; he worked as a drafting teacher in the Instituto de Banca y Comercio in 2002. Joined the U.S. Army in 2003, served for 12 years before retiring in 2014. After that, he attended the S.T.E.M. department at A.P.S.U., where he received his Associate of Applied Science in construction in May 2017 and B.S. in Engineering Technology in construction in May 2018.

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Artist Statement

In Legacy's series of works, I want to show the audience a significant part of the military's influence on Puerto Rican culture, especially my family. Growing up, I have always been surrounded by someone in my town that served in the military. It became a tradition and part of our heritage listening to the intriguing storytelling about the military. It was part of our heritage, becoming a tradition. My grandfather instilled that legacy in our family when he served in the U.S. Army during the Korean war, paying the ultimate sacrifice fighting for other country's freedom and democracy.

My grandfather's military service inspires this project. Once before, I was motivated by him when I enlisted in the U.S. Army. Now, I'm proud to do this work to honor the legacy he passed down to my family. I want to take this opportunity to explore my history and create cultural awareness. Even though U.S. military service is an essential part of Puerto Rico's cultural background, we are still considered by many second-class U.S. citizens or not citizens at all. I will do this by sharing personal family experiences that impacted my life, either in good or challenging ways.

This collection primarily consists of multimedia sculptures, charcoal drawings, acrylic paintings, and videos based on specific events that impacted not only my family but the entire Puerto Rican culture.

Center row

Challenge Coins:

One of the military traditions is the use of challenge coins. They are usually given as an award for an honorable act, or a job well done to display the achievements, gratitude, and appreciation the command group has toward their members. Once they've been transferred out, they are supposed to be carried all the time. For this collection, I wanted to create pieces that resemble a challenge coin to honor my grandfather and all the family members as a token of gratitude to celebrate their achievements in their careers.

1. **My Grandfather's Coin:**

Front side: The leading figure is my grandfather holding a Puerto Rican flag on his shoulder, symbolizing that he represents every Puerto Rican with his service. The three soldiers in the background represent the three major conflicts the 65th Infantry Regiment, best known as "Borinqueneers," was part.

Backside: The phrase "HONOR ET FIDELITAS" is the Motto of the Borinqueneers. Latin for Honor and Fidelity. The fort that is the unit patch symbolizes the strength and commitment of the unit.

2. **Uncle Charlie's Coin:**

Front side: There is a scene of Helicopters dropping U.S. Soldiers for military operations, reconning, or exploring an area to obtain information about enemy forces, terrain, and other activities during the Vietnam war.

Backside: This side has the Vietnam map in the center. His accomplishments are displayed on the right side, but the consequences he must deal with his entire life are on the left side of the coin. Those are the symptoms and effects caused by the agent orange exposure.

3. **My Sister's Coin:**

Front side: This side shows the Marines Corps Anchor emblem with her bootcamp image on top of it as part of the 100 years of Women in the Corps.

Backside: Display an electrician, generator mechanic and administrative personnel, the three occupational specialties during her military career.

4. **My Brother's Coin:**

Front side: This side of the coin has the unit's name, where he got promoted to his current rank of Lieutenant Colonel on the center. Around it is the Airborne, Ranger, and Air Assault specialty skills courses logos. Also, the Signal Corp and Air Defense Artillery military occupational specialties logos as well.

Backside: This side has a scene representing each of the three specialty skill courses and their motto. Not everyone has the opportunity, the commitment, and the skills to complete these courses.

5. **Trajectory:**

This work, showing my Boots prints, knee pads, awards, shoe prints, and flashlight, represents my career trajectory: the Ups and downs, the falls, and the resiliency I must endure during my service. Even though U.S. military service is an essential part of Puerto Rico's cultural background, we are still considered by many second-class U.S. citizens or not citizens at all. Some of the discriminations Puerto Ricans encounter are based on:

Language barrier: We speak English with a heavy accent.

Racism: Some of us encountered racial discrimination from superiors and peers based on skin color, ethnic groups, etc. Throughout the years, Puerto Ricans have been treated as illegal immigrants.

Most recently seen during Hurricane Maria, the former president suggested trading Puerto Rico for another territory to avoid sending help to the island that suffered extensive damage. Many people in the U.S. were unaware that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens at birth and of the many sacrifices and contributions we have made by joining the military. Families like mine have had multiple family members served with pride thru many generations.

6. **Boots and Helmet:**

This sculpture, named Legacy, represents my military career. It consists of a replica of the helmet and boots I wore during my last combat deployment and at the end of my military career. It means that I am no longer wearing military gear, that I am a veteran now. But it reminds me that "once a soldier, I will always be a soldier."

7. **Sketch of my coin:**

It displays one of the most significant moments of my military career when I had the privilege of having my brother fly from Korea to Germany to officiate my first reenlistment ceremony. Serving the country is part of who we are. We have raised our right hand and sworn to defend our country, and when the time has come, we said goodbye with tears in our eyes to our loved ones, even to those that made the ultimate sacrifice during combat as my grandfather did. In my opinion, one of the main drives for Puerto Ricans to join the Armed Forces is to demonstrate pride and courage, but also that we are as American as any other U.S. citizen.

8. **Borinqueneer Soldier bust:**

This sculpture represents a portrait of my grandfather serving in the Army as part of the most famous unit from Puerto Rico during the Korean war, the "Borinqueneers." Also, it represents each of the 732 Puerto Rican casualties, including a total of 122 of them listed as Missing in Action.

Right Wall

9. **Visible Invisible:**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a severe disorder that affects hundreds of thousands of veterans who served in the military. P.T.S.D. signs, most of the time, are not visible on the outside. In this video, I will display my interpretation of some of the invisible symptoms and feelings a person has while dealing with the effects of P.T.S.D.

10. **Eagle:**

The bald eagle has been an emblem of the United States armed forces since the late 1700s. But also represents the strength, courage, power, commitment, and freedom each Puerto Rican has when we decide to serve and represent our flags.

11. **Retirement Certificate and the Flag:**

This flag was awarded to me during my retirement ceremony for my military service.

Left Wall

12. Self-portrait:

This painting displays the moment I enlisted in the U.S. Army. My first image in military uniform.

13. Time:

In this time-lapse video, I'm using this military armor vest to see how the constant exposure to time and the weather saturation impact unfired clay as a symbol of time in service, memories, wear and tear of equipment, and mental health deterioration with constant stress.

14. Roberto Clemente's painting:

Roberto Clemente was a Puerto Rican professional baseball player from 1955 to 1972. He died in a plane crash at the age of 38 while in route to deliver aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua in 1972. The following year, he was posthumously inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. In the 1958-1959 offseason, instead of playing winter ball in Puerto Rico, Clemente enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, spending the next six years in the military as an infantryman.

I selected the image of Roberto Clemente to represent all other Puerto Rican celebrities that served in the U.S. Armed Forces. I want to show that military service wasn't just an essential part of my family but also critical to forming the entire Puerto Rican population. During the research of the military history of Puerto Rico, I found an extensive list of Puerto Rican celebrities, politicians, and athletes who volunteered to serve in the military before or after becoming prominent figures in Puerto Rico. Their service was crucial to the identity of our culture. Puerto Rican Soldiers have fought in every major US military conflict from the Civil War on. Most of the wars have been in support of the world's democracy. In recent conflicts, we have served in support of the rights of the citizens of those countries to vote. Ironically, those Puerto Rican soldiers fighting for those causes and being U.S. citizens, themselves do not have the right to vote for their own Commander in Chief.

15. Soldiers in the sunset:

This painting represents the reunion of all my family members serving in the armed forces when the time comes.

16. U.S. Flag:

While deployed, there is a tradition that a U. S. Flag is flown as requested on special occasions. This flag was flown on my birthday during my last deployment to Afghanistan.

REFLECTION (TAKEAWAY)

These last two semesters have been very challenging and a great learning experience for me. I was able to demand more and push myself to higher standards. But every minute of arduous effort I put into this series paid off in the end. It was a great experience. These works meant a lot to me. During 4150 and 4160 thesis courses, I have explored an idea and expanded it into something more significant, evolving it into art pieces. In this series, I strive to evaluate how the military service within my Puerto Rican culture influenced my family members to follow our grandfather's footsteps to serve in the armed forces. I wanted each piece to be unique, concentrating on specific events. I intended to find ways that would allow the viewers to highlight the connection and impact of those moments in my life with their lives. I think I have achieved my goal in that regard.

These courses helped me be more confident with my work and trust my instincts. I had the opportunity to use the summer break to finish most of the coins and other sculptures I presented in my show. Also, I had the chance to do other experimental works that didn't make the exhibition either because they were too complicated or didn't work well with the other pieces. I want to thank my mentor, Billy, who was excellent. He helped me think outside the box when it came to specific works. He carefully studied my pieces and told me what I could change or add to improve them.

REFLECTION (TAKEAWAY)CONT.

The actual challenge this body of work has presented, forced me to view the military from another perspective. Other people's points of view, not just mine, prevented this work from becoming a biography. The long hours researching the Puerto Rican military history and practices helps me connect my family history, Puerto Rican culture, and military background to my work. I'm satisfied with the result of my work. Still, if I had the opportunity to add or change something, I would add more pieces displaying artists' and politicians' contributions (mainly from middle-class people like me) from Puerto Rico to the U. S armed forces. Also, I would show more the political and cultural aspects of the military that still, up to this day, negatively impact and affect all Puerto Ricans' military service. I want to expand this theme to complete some of the pieces mentioned above, then move on to other projects different from this one soon.

Now I get to graduate and close another chapter in my life that opens a new one full of great opportunities to do what I love. I will miss this place, but I am confident that I will apply everything I've learned to be the artist I know I can be. Overall, I think it was a great show and a gratifying year.