

indigenous **art**

Key West's Gallery on Greene celebrates "autochthonous" art—works by descendants or spiritual descendants of the original inhabitants of our Caribbean region.

In Greek mythology, *autochthones* are those mortals who have sprung from the soil, rocks and trees of a geographic location. The word points to those indigenous elements of a place that make the place original, unique, special. A related example: When experts speak of wine, they often reference *terroir*—taste of the place—and describe how the region where the grapes are grown, and the indigenous water and soil and temperature, affect the flavor and palate of the wine. In this way, Gallery on Greene is curated to represent autochthonous art, the characteristic and special works that represent the gallery's home—Key West. This is the concept and approach of the gallery's owner, Nance Frank.

Located at 606 Greene Street, in the heart of Key West's old seaport, the gallery represents 37 artists, including six Pulitzer Prize winners, and many who have had major museum shows. One stellar artist is Mario Sanchez, born in 1908, who carved images in wood and then painted those images, documenting the history of our island. Nance Frank says that Mario had

the philosophy of Key West figured out: "Work hard, the Great American Dream, do it with a giggle and embrace diversity." Nance describes the multicultural scenes of his work, reflecting the traditions and embracing all of the people of Key West, regardless of religion, gender or race—One Human Family, reflecting the motto and ethic of Key West.

Nance has curated five exhibits of Mario Sanchez works and produced catalogs for his exhibits presented by The American Folk Art Museum and The Museum of the City of New York and at Cuba's National Museum, *Bellas Artes* in 2014. She hosts trips to Cuba and her lifelong ties to Cuba and proficiency in Spanish have combined to build relationships with the most sought-after artists on that island, several of whom have had work shown at Gallery on Greene. An experienced and competitive sailor, Nance also led the first American women's team in the Whitbread Round the World Race.

Examples of autochthonous art at Key West's Gallery on Greene appear on the coming pages. ■





A HEALTHFUL-PASSTIME
Mantolichien



Sanchez's "Sneaky Pink"

MARIO SANCHEZ

Mario Sanchez was critically acclaimed as the most important Cuban-American Folk Artist of the 20th Century. His motto was "One Race, the Human Race." He believed in the Great American Dream with a humorous twist. Mario's passion was depicting the people of Key West and Tampa. His unique technique of sketches and intaglios of Florida's and Cuba's treasured history involve the humanistic values of a rich cultural community filled with the traditions of immigrants of

diverse geographic and ethnic origins. Represented in the collections of The Smithsonian, The Whitney, and The Bacardi Museum, Mario is the only native Floridian to have had one-man exhibits with The Museum of the City of New York, American Folk Art Museum, and Cuba's National Museum of Fine Art.

Mario Sanchez has led the way for three-and-a-half generations of Key West artists relating their stories in wood.

"Morning Gossip"—In this intaglio, each cloud has a silver lining. Whatever the man did that everybody's talking about, it's all going to turn out okay.



"Funeral #32"—One of Key West's long-lost traditions is kept alive in this Mario Sanchez intaglio.