

Mara I Ayala Acosta

I was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, on September 25, 1971. I did my bachelor's degree at The University of Puerto Rico in Humanities with a major in Painting. I came to Chicago in 1994 to study my MFA in photography at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. I owned an art school in Levittown, Puerto Rico for six years. I have been the Arts Instructor of Studio Arts, a youth program for After School Matters under the Puerto Rican Art Alliance Center for ten years. My experiences back and forth between Puerto Rico and Chicago living and teaching during all these years affected and are still affecting me now as an artist. I have worked with different mediums and presentations. I am currently exploring ceramics as an extension of my sketchbook exploring cultural themes of my identity and allowing myself to emerge organically through the process. My work has been exhibited in Chicago, Ohio, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. My inspiration for this painting: "Naturaleza Viva" (Living Nature) was the Puerto Rican woman. Full of life, love, strength, pride and dreams. Everything comes from her. She is the creator of Puerto Rico.