

Alice Trepp

Afro-Americans have been the cornerstone of my artistic production. That is due to my encounter with Afro-American culture in Ecuador after living in Switzerland for 26 years and moving to Ecuador. I am of Latin and Swiss heritage and I am accustomed to living in both worlds but African-American culture in Ecuador is distinct, even from “Mestizos” (local Indian/Spanish descendants). There are traces of traditions and customs that are preserved from a distant African past mixed with newer customs that have developed from living in Ecuador while being segregated for complex sociological reasons. It is this particularity that I am after and has proven to be a rich resource for my artistic exploration. I try to express their human condition from the colours, cloths and their customs, relying on direct observation.

I find my models in a place in the north of Ecuador called Chote where there is a large Afro-American community. I interview people, learn their stories, and invite them to my studio where I sculpt from life. My shows always include cultural spectacles including music and dance performances and I sometimes collaborate with photographers. My shows travel in Ecuador in cultural centers where diverse audiences can view them.

I cast the sculptures in polyester resin because it is a great surface for my polychromatic work. Color plays as an important role as form. Sometimes I reproduce objects and cloths with casting techniques combined with hand sculpted bodies that blur the barrier between mechanical reproduction and old-style craft.