

Exhibit to explore man's voyage through life



Provided by Union Street Gallery

"Bleeding Borders," an acrylic from 2008, is one of the paintings by Mexican-American artist Sergio Gomez that will be on exhibit next month at the Union Street Gallery in Chicago Heights.

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CHICAGO HEIGHTS | Union Street Gallery presents "Voyages," a one-man exhibit of drawings and paintings by Sergio Gomez.

The exhibit will run from July 6 through Aug. 6. The opening reception takes place from 6 to 9 p.m. July 8. The opening will feature live music and a demonstration by Gomez.

An artist whose work is shown throughout the Midwest, Gomez's powerful and mysterious paintings record everyman's voyage through life as well as his own very personal journey as a Mexican-American. An art educator at South Suburban College, and owner of 33 Contemporary Gallery in Chicago, he immigrated to America in 1988, and began his decades-long search for his own identity in his new country.

Using the human form as his vehicle, he continues to investigate questions such as What is identity? How do we form it? Who assigns it? He also uses the silhouetted figure to look at concepts of "absence and presence" and "good and evil." His figures, male, female, sometimes androgynous, always contain an element of mystery. Woven through many of his figurative works, Gomez includes a thin, looping red line, initially appearing at the time of his first child's birth, and symbolizing a male umbilical cord.

Gomez confronts questions of identity in a new series of "Window of Protection" and in works such as "Bleeding Border," an epic commentary on immigration. In "Family Portraits" faceless figures appear behind glass, edges of the paintings have beautifully rendered patterns embellished by the telltale red line crisscrossing the canvas. In "Bleeding Borders" the silhouettes of two children run along the United States border while a helicopter's light illuminates the night, the revealing red wandering line that breaks and bleeds across the surface. Including text along the borders of his works has been a technique Gomez has long employed. In Spanish or English, his comments might respond to the circumstances of the characters in the paintings, or put into poetic phrases the emotional content suggested through the actions of the figures. He hopes the viewer will continue to contemplate the questions of identity and family after they leave his exhibits.

Gomez creates large-scale acrylic paintings that are textured and richly layered on paper and canvas, as well as dramatic charcoal drawings. He has become adept at drawing on an iPad, and then translates those images onto metal surfaces, as in "Arizona" and "El Tiempo." He also presents live performances, accompanied by live music, where he creates artworks for a specific site and time. He plans to present one of these performances especially for the "Voyages" exhibit opening reception at 7:30 p.m. July 8.

If you go

What: Exhibit Voyages, Sergio Gomez solo exhibition

When: July 6 to Aug. 6

Opening reception from 6 to 9 p.m. July 8, live music and artist demonstration

Where: Union Street Gallery, 1527 Otto Blvd., Chicago Heights

Gallery Hours noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; noon to 6 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

FYI: Call (708) 754 2601 or email unionstreetart@sbcglobal.net or visit www.unionstreetgallery.org

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Posted in [Chicago-heights](#), [South-holland](#) on *Sunday, June 12, 2011 12:00 am* *Updated: 9:31 pm*. | Tags: [Union Street Gallery](#), [South Suburban College](#), [Visual Arts](#), [Fine Arts](#)