

## Artist Julio Cesar Castillo Rosado

Julio Castillo is an artist from Mérida, Yucatan, who represents a new generation of Mexican painters that portray the life of indigenous Mexico with its many faces. Drawing upon his own memories as a boy growing up in the Yucatán, Julio draws and paints the contemporary Maya who continue today to live in small villages scattered across the peninsula.

Born in 1951 in Mérida, Julio grew up in the city where he attended the School of Fine Arts when he was only 10. Over the years, as he perfected his techniques and skills, his interest in art has always consumed him. He has exhibited in more than 30 galleries and museums in Mexico during the past 23 years.

Recognizing an obligation to give back to his community, Julio also teaches drawing and painting to youngsters and adults. He is married to Elvira Aguilar Gomez. They have three children: Julio Rafael, 28; Rut Aeli, 24; and Cesar José, 19.

Julio Castillo learned about *A Promise of Health*, the charity that brings much-needed healthcare to the Mayan villagers – the very people he portrays in his paintings. He became acquainted with Dr. Oscar Rosado, the homeopathic physician who, through the efforts of *A Promise of Health*, travels by mobile clinics to many small villages to treat the sick. Julio's profound belief in this mission inspired him to donate 80% of all sales of his art in the United States to this humanitarian cause. This is Julio Castillo's first showing of his work in the United States.

"My father abandoned my family when I was only four. It was very hard for my mother, Rinelda, who was left with four children. But she was a determined woman and she worked very hard to keep us together and to support our family. Always, I have liked drawing. When I was only 9 years of age, I began my life of art. As a young person, I would go to the cinema each Sunday to the matinee. Then, during the following week, I would begin to draw the scenes of the movies I had seen.

"When I was 10 years of age, my mother saw my pleasure for drawing and she took me to the School of Fine Arts in Merida and enrolled me. It was there that I studied my first year of painting. I then started the next year, but could not continue because my family didn't have resources. So my mother's plan for an artistic career for me was at an end. But my interest in art did not end. I did not stop drawing or painting. Whenever I could, I studied from books and magazines of art and slowly I perfected my techniques.

"It was always the human figure that fascinated me. While I was living in the City of Guadalajara in Jalisco and only recently married, I saw in a store some incredible lithographs of Francisco Zuñiga, a Central American artist who lived and died in México. This painter and sculptor captured with his works the profound essentials of the Mexican native. And so it was, through this artist's works, I fell in love with this theme of art. Soon I began to paint the indigenous people of México. Since I was then living in the north, I painted the Huichole, Coras, Tarahumaras and the Las Marias. In 1992, when I returned to the Yucatán and Mérida, I began to study and paint the Maya. In my mind, the images began to emerge that I had observed as a small boy and a youth in my land, the Yucatán.

"Many have asked, 'Why is it in your paintings there are more women than men?' My reply is that in Mexico, the indigenous woman fulfills one's obligation that I believe a man would never take on. Among the Maya, it is very common for a man to leave his home, breaking away from all responsibility and obligation. But these wonderful women, even in the most adverse situations, remain true. It is their care and love that makes the home. My work is homage to these women and their identity. My admiration is for these indigenous people, who struggle, defend and love their roots."