

## Yuroz

Born in Soviet Armenia in 1956, Yuroz was only ten years old when he entered the renowned Akop Kodjoyan School of Art in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. After graduating with honors, Yuroz gathered up his incredible talents and entered the Yerevan University of Art and Architecture. His natural aptitude for architecture can be seen to this day in every aspect of his art. Yuroz' most recent sculpture, the life-sized "A Delicate Balance," displays an artist with an implicit knowledge and understanding of how angles and lines must converge to create the lovely curves of the human form.

Even though he was a master architect and a blooming artist, Yuroz' political views clashed with the Soviet regime in Armenia, and he realized that freedom was the only path to his true artistic potential. In order to find this path, Yuroz became a refugee. He married a woman who gained entrance into the United States, but Yuroz himself was not allowed to emigrate for seven years.

Those seven years imbued him with a compassion and understanding for all refugees seeking new homes and fresh beginnings. Fittingly, in January 2000 Yuroz was chosen by the United Nations to be the official artist for their 50th anniversary stamp honoring refugees worldwide, and in November his mural was unveiled at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City. Through this mural we can see the grand panorama of Yuroz' vision, where individual and racial differences slide away, and the courage of refugees and humanity as a whole is brought to the surface. Later this year his magnificent testament to human courage will be sent to the General Assembly Building in Geneva, Switzerland, to be installed permanently as a part of their collection.

When the years of waiting finally came to an end, Yuroz was reunited with his wife in the United States. But the long period of separation combined with his tireless dedication to art led to conflicts at home, and eventually Yuroz set out on his own. After struggling for years to achieve and enjoy the freedom America offered he found himself homeless in the land of opportunity. Even though he had no home, hope was his constant companion, and Yuroz continued to create art with the supplies of the streets. Napkins and cardboard were conjured into canvas, and discarded pens were transformed into paintbrushes.

Yuroz' Los Angeles street friends were portraits filling the gallery of his mind with the beauty and simplicity of life. Like the refugees who would later populate his United Nations mural, Yuroz was able to capture the survivor mentality of his homeless brethren when they made their way onto canvas, a reflection of his own burning desire to create art in his new home. With the success of this early "Hollywood Boulevard" series, Yuroz was walking his dream path.

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