

# Marisa Sayago

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**Though we all have our own lens through which we see the world, it is an artist's particular view that we admire so greatly.**

Their ability to bring life to the smallest detail is impactful to all who admire the art. Marisa Sayago, local artist and professor at Folsom Lake College, exemplifies this talent. With her ability to translate images and their intricate web of underlying emotions in a variety of mediums, she stands out as one of the unparalleled artists of our time.

Sayago, a classically trained artist, grew up in Argentina and spent her formative teenage years studying in an elite apprenticeship under sculptor Alfredo Cantarutti. "He was crucial in my upbringing as an artist," Sayago says. What began as basic understanding of human form from her childhood years spent as a gymnast was enhanced by Cantarutti's lessons on composition, color, basic figures and anatomy. "He taught me how to see," she says of her time spent under his tutelage. With the fundamentals of clay sculpture and drawing solidified, she embarked on a journey to find the passion beneath her skills.

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While Sayago is well known for her sculpture, being recently ranked as a “Top Latin American Artist” by the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, she also boasts an astonishing array of paintings and drawings within her collections. Taking advantage of the opportunity to expand her artistic base while completing her undergraduate studies, Sayago approached her education with diligence and determination. “As a student, I took a wide variety of classes. I tried to get a wide range of knowledge,” she says. Even more influential, though, was the time of introspective examination afforded to her as she earned a master’s degree from the University of North Texas. It was there she found the true source of her voice.

Emotion is the thread that ties the majority of Sayago’s work together—invocation of thoughts, feelings and ideas being the primary goal in each piece. Her explorations into human relationships—to ourselves, each other, and the world around us—are brought to the surface by a carefully exaggerated representation of form. Acting on flashes of inspiration, Sayago often sketches out several versions of her intended sculpture until she feels the correct composition has been achieved.

Her final thesis piece, titled *Group Therapy*, is a perfect example of the intense social commentary and deep-seeded feelings Sayago attempts to uncover in her work. In it, a group of five figures are each frozen in the throes of a different emotion. From gut wrenching pain to frivolity, the range of human emotion depicted incenses the viewer and forces her to confront the feeling contained within. Sayago is careful not to deliver her thought-provoking messages with a heavy hand. “I leave a lot of my pieces open to interpretation. I don’t usually title them in English because I want them to speak for themselves,” she says.

Sayago’s art has been on exhibition in Folsom, Sacramento, Utah and Texas; this past spring, a select few of her sculptures and drawings, including *Hija Mia* and *Nous Deux*, were featured in a solo exhibit at LA Artcore. Though her work can be found throughout the country, one of her most influential pieces can be found on the Folsom Lake College campus, where she has been a professor in the arts department since 1999. The large-scale sculpture, which sits in the area known as Falcon’s Roost, was a grant project in 2006 melding teacher and student in one cohesive artistic vision. Setting out to create something of that size can be overwhelming and intimidating, but Sayago insists that for the students the experience was incomparable. “It’s important to have students outside of the classroom doing large-scale artwork.” She explains that for many the opportunity may never arise again, citing funding, space and viability as major impediments to such an endeavor.

Sayago continues to create alongside her students in an effort to inspire and educate. Making witness to the full process of creating a piece, from beginning to end, provides the students with insight into the evolutionary nature of art. “They are seeing me, in real life, problem solving,” she says. Learning that a work of art goes through a metamorphosis helps students avoid seeing their own work through the damaging lens of perfectionism. By lifting the veil, Sayago gives her students permission to push their imagined boundaries and expand their artistic reach. Sayago teaches her pupils to “never be afraid to rework yourself.”

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