

# Meet the Artist: Maria Arango

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Hello visitors, and thank you for taking the time to look at my art. Would you be so kind as to please **sign the guestbook** before you leave.

I was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1959. A one-and-a-half year old child cannot remember what it was like to have our homes and businesses taken over by the regime of Fidel Castro. In any case, we took a long ship-ride to Spain right about when Cuba turned communist. I was raised in Barcelona, Spain until 1974. In a sense, I still think of Spain as home, a home that will be undoubtedly changed if and when I return to visit. There again, hard for me to remember the turmoil of Franco's impending death and the threat of socialism or possibly communism.

Time for another long trip! This time my family and I moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, where we were reunited with my father's family.

I have loved art all my life and earned a few stripes at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. After a short but fruitful career in Exercise Physiology, I decided I wanted to make art full-time. As of September 30th, 1999 I am proud to say I am a full-time artist.

My current body of work includes figurative semi-abstracts inspired by the grain of the wood, and simple realistic works of the world around me. Other hobbies I actually have time to practice are dog-walking, home-improvement projects, and traveling by car. I love my life!

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## ART BIO

Maria Arango earned BS and MS degrees in Psychology and Exercise Physiology from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas before taking a variety of fine and graphic art classes. Printmaking changed her life forever. After a few years of honing her skills and amassing a body of work, primarily in woodcut prints, she is now a full-time artist living in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Maria has been exhibited in several galleries in the Las Vegas area as well as the Las Vegas Art Museum for the second time in the Annual Fall Art Roundup, and has quickly expanded to regional and national shows. Most recently works have been accepted in the prestigious Brand Gallery and Art Center in California in their annual juried works on paper exhibition, the Springfield Museum of Art in Missouri for the PRINTS USA annual juried exhibition, and a 7-artist group exhibit in the Charlevoix Gallery in New Mexico. She is represented by Art Encounter Gallery in Las Vegas, Nevada, and GalleryNOW, an online gallery and art dealer. Upcoming shows include the Skokie Library Print Exhibition, Illinois, an artist reception in Las Vegas, NV, and international shows, in Uganda, and Australia. She is a member of the Wood Engraver's Network, the Kyoto International Woodblock Association, Nevada Arts Council, and the Baren Woodblock Printmakers, an active printmaker's group who participate in quarterly folio exchanges.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

I am currently dedicated to making woodcut and wood engraving prints, having cast aside all other artistic activity; the wood is magic. In one of the latest series of woodcut prints I try to let the wood, ink, and paper speak their own voice and add their own imprint to the resulting work; many images are inspired by the grain of the wood itself. I strive to show the public tactile and visual qualities not possible with a reproductive method, but only with the precise woodcut printmaking method that created the work. The process must show in every print.

As far as my imagery, I work in series, exploring and squeezing particular imagery until I am satisfied and allow myself to move on. Figurative work interests me as much as the desert and all its fruitful offerings, the two being principal subjects in my current work. Barely controlled and boundless energy must be present in all works. I strive to reward the viewer, to impress the critic, to delight the collector, to always honor the master, and to capture the attention, if only for a moment, of the artist that lies within all.

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