

Loza's art is for family, community

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Artist Alex Loza says painting is a way for people to know each other and that Loza Atelier in his Apison home is striving to bring his new community together.

Loza said he is well-versed in still-life painting, landscapes, special requests for home decor and his passion, portraiture.

"When you look at a person's face and there's a story to tell, there's a lot to paint," he said. "For me it's kind of like writing their story with paint."

His unfinished portrait of his wife's late father is a gripping example. The patriarch would tell his daughter stories about growing up in El Salvador while radiating pride for his country, for working hard and for his family.

"It's just unbelievable," Jocelyn Loza said. "My dad's persona, what my dad stood for you can see in the painting."

The couple said they hope the painting will help their daughter, Emie, to know her great-grandfather.

"You can see him and know a little bit about him without getting to talk to him," Alex Loza said. He said his portraits become heirlooms in many families.

The Lozas came to Apison from Chicago in July to raise Emie near her cousin. Alex Loza's brother studied at Southern Adventist University and is raising his family here.

"We are here to conquer the southern part of the U.S. We left our print in the Midwest," said Jocelyn Loza, the atelier's marketing and business manager.

Alex Loza's mother, grandmother and uncle loved to paint. He began pursuing the hobby when he was named a surprise finalist in a high school art show.

He attended Andrews University in Michigan where he studied under Harry Ahn for three years before transferring to the American Academy of Art in Chicago.

Loza said being surrounded by the success of artists there who had painted the Quaker Oats icon, the Coca-Cola Santa Claus and Marvel Comics characters inspired him. The Academy's tradition in the style of the Old Masters mixed with Ahn's introduction to realism and contemporary art led him to his own personal style.

Loza's work is used in the Academy's recruitment literature and he is listed in the school's hall of fame.



Photo by Hannah Campbell

Jocelyn Avendano-Loza and artist Alex Loza opened Loza Atelier in their Apison home in July.

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In the future Loza Atelier plans to expand with a gallery and offer community painting classes.

An ongoing partnership with the Chattanooga Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure means that a percentage of purchases or commissioned paintings from Loza Atelier will support local breast cancer research efforts. Alex Loza's mother is a 10- year survivor of breast cancer.