

A portrait of Luis Alvarez Roure, a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark, textured sweater. He is standing in front of a red curtain with a gold floral pattern. Behind him is an easel with a charcoal drawing of a woman in a dark dress. He is holding a pen in his right hand.

Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery; Google Arts & Culture;
MEAM Museum, Barcelona, Spain; Steinway Hall, New York City.

Luis Alvarez *Roure*

Interview **DENISA PROCHAZKA**

Photography **MARITZA ROBLES ALVAREZ**



There is something visual that captures my attention and I am moved to translate that into a painting. Creating an image that transcends time it's a notion I am driven by. I like to create a reality that can only exist in its own physical space and dimension. When I paint I become a composer myself. I have the power to subtract or to add, to finish or leave unfinished. I am creating an interpretation of my subject, which makes it unique and truly mine.

Autumn (from the Four Seasons) . Oil on panel . 42 x 24 inches . 2018



Winter (from the Four Seasons . Oil on panel . 42 x 24 inches . 2019





Photography Maritza Robles Alvarez

Luis Alvarez Roure was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, and currently lives and works in New Jersey. One of today's leading figurative and still-life painters, Luis Alvarez attended the City University of New York to study piano performance and later enrolled in the Art Students League of New York to study drawing and painting. He has become well known for his portraits of internationally known figures such as Philip Glass, Joshua Bell, Steven Isserlis, Larisa Martínez, Paul Volcker, Cándido Camero, and Octavio Vázquez Rodríguez. In 2019 he was a finalist at the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition and two of his paintings were acquired by the Smithsonian's National Portrait

Gallery. Other important American and European institutions to own Roure's work include The Museu Europeu d'Art Modern (MEAM) in Barcelona, Spain; The Federal Reserve in Washington D.C; The Steinway Hall in New York City and the Warren County Courthouse in Warren, P.A. His work has appeared in many publications including Los Angeles Times, Fine Art Connoisseur Magazine, American Art Collector Magazine, and others. Luis Alvarez Roure is represented by the Stone Sparrow Gallery in New York.

His portraits and figurative paintings depict classical realism with a masterful technical precision that not only captures his sitters' incredible

likeness, it also breathes with vibrancy and life. Leaving the background of his subjects often loosely painted and impressionistic, the contrast of the different textures and colours lead the viewer's eye to the focal point of his figures and highly refined realistic faces, blending these elements into his own unique style and interpretation.

As Luis Alvarez Roure states, "When I paint, I become a composer myself: I have the power to subtract or to add, to finish or leave unfinished. I am creating an interpretation of my subject, which makes it unique and truly mine."

“ OFFICIAL SITE
alvarezroure.com

Summer (from the Four Seasons . Oil on panel . 42 x 24 inches . 2018



Luis Alvarez Roure

Luis Alvarez Roure, how did your art journey begin, how did you become a figurative and still-life painter?

I was always inclined toward the figure, especially the portrait, ever since I was at a very young age. Still-life came later, though my figure paintings and portraits often included lots of objects into the compositions, and sometimes these objects were only complimentary, but other times they were very complex and necessary to communicate the composition's narrative. Recently I have dedicated more time to exploring the still-life but

in a quite unconventional way. Almost as if space in the painting is the main character and the objects are a vehicle of connection between us and that space.

What inspires your creativity, do you have a favorite muse or model for your figure paintings or portraits?

Music has been a constant motivation in my creative process. My wife has been and will always be my favorite subject to paint. It's like finding ground when I paint her. Of course, I have other models I like to paint regularly,

but going back to her feels like finding my center.

Tell us about the subject matter or concept that draws your attention the most and why?

Anything can draw my attention. That's the good thing about it because I never know when and what or who that will be. That makes it exciting for me. Whether or not I am aware of it, I am constantly receptive to my surroundings, like I am waiting for that moment to arrive.

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Portrait of Steven Isserlis . Oil on linen . 50 x 60 inches . 2020



Luis Alvarez Roure

You draw many sketches as well as paintings. Tell us about the technical aspect of your work, are there special techniques and materials you like to use?

I used to draw a lot more than I do now. In recent years drawing has become my go-to place to reset my brain in the way I look at things. Now I use drawing as a way to understand volume and space better. Because of it, I believe I have become a better painter. My drawings are never from b & w references. I either draw from life or old master paintings and so, I

have to translate color into a b & w image, which helps me understanding tonality, which I consider to be the most important aspect in a representational work of art. As for my materials, I like using a mechanical pencil (0.5, b), kneaded eraser, white conté, blending stumps, and a bristle brush.

What does your studio space look like? Is there a certain setting or an atmosphere that helps you create?

My studio is pretty simple. It's not fancy at all. I see it as a workshop space, not in the traditional atelier way, but more

as a woodworker or a watchmaker or a tailor's workspace. I like to go and work and to have all my materials and tools available. I am not too romantic in that sense. It doesn't work for me to depend on idyllic ideas or clichés when it comes to creating a painting.

"Salomé", describe this work as you have never done before.

Salomé has defined much of where I came from and where I am going to as an artist. The work is a life-size nude charged with compositional, artistic, technical, and even historical

LEFT Etude no. 5 . Oil on panel . 8 x 6 inches . 2020

RIGHT Etude no. 7 . Oil on panel . 8 x 6 inches . 2020





Salomé , Oil on linen , 80 x 40 inches , 2020

Portrait of Joshua Bell . Oil on linen . 60 x 40 inches . 2019  Collection of the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.



Luis Alvarez Roure

challenges. During the process of working on it, I had to make decisions that changed some of the original compositional aspects that I found were not necessarily contributing to the narrative of the work. It was a much longer process and difficult than I was expecting it to be. It took me months until I started to feel at ease with the whole aspect of the painting in a cohesive way. This experience, of course, sparked new ideas and concepts that I am exploring in my new

work and I suspect will lead the way to even more findings.

Tell us about your highest achievement in your career so far. What are you most proud of?

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery has acquired two of my paintings for their permanent collection. Both of them are portraits of international leading figures in music today. The portrait of Philip Glass was

acquired in 2018 and this year they added the portrait of Joshua Bell to their collection. This is especially meaningful to me because apart from the incredible honor this represents for me as a painter, it also puts my name next to two of the musicians I truly admire and respect highly, being a musician myself. Another event I feel most proud of has been to be chosen as one of the 46 finalists of the 2019 Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition.

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LEFT Etude no. 2 . Oil on panel . 8 x 6 inches . 2020

RIGHT Etude no. 4 . Oil on panel . 8 x 6 inches . 2020



Luis Alvarez Roure

LEFT The Artist's Father
Oil on panel 24 x 16 inches

RIGHT The Artist's Mother
Oil on panel 24 x 16 inches

What are you currently working on? Is there any new project you're excited about?

I am currently finishing the portrait of another musician I highly admire. I feel honored and really lucky to have met and painted the portrait of the master cellist Steven Isserlis. I am very excited about this painting.

As a professional and highly successful artist, what advice would you give to other beginner artists?

One thing I think for myself and advise younger artists is to concentrate on art-making and to raise your level consistently. I think that will never work against you, on the contrary, it will serve you for the time important and sometimes unexpected opportunities may arrive.



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SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

• 2020

The Outwin 2019: American Portraiture Today. Group exhibition. October 3, 2020 to April 4, 2021. The Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts of the Springfield Museums, Springfield, MA.

• 2020

Contemporary Narratives. Group Exhibition. Sep. 9 to Oct. 9, 2020. Stone Sparrow NYC.

• 2020

Persistence of Time. Group Exhibition. Feb. 5 to Feb. 29, 2020. Stone Sparrow NYC.

• 2019

Birds of a Feather. Group Exhibition. Dec. 11, 2019 through Jan. 20, 2020. Stone Sparrow NYC.

• 2019

NTD Television Fifth International Figure Painting Competition. Group exhibition. Nov. 24 to Nov. 30, 2019. Salmagundi Art Club, New York, N.Y.



MORE INFO
alvarezroure.com

