



VIREDO

MUSIC, MYTH, AND MEMORY

OLD TOWN GALLERY • TUSTIN, CALIFORNIA
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Front cover: **ISAROKO** 1988
24" x 30" mixed media on canvas

Viredo's art speaks from the spirit. Memory is his palette. Not the kind of memory that we usually experience as a linear narrative but an alchemical memory - stirring, roiling, congealing, collaging, refining. The source of this transformative power is in the raw materials of his past, of his loves, his passions. They are filtered through his subconscious, at times to sink below awareness (but never to be forgotten) while at other moments surfacing in vibrant images both narrative and symbolic. Both are cognitive processes and are analogous to the onerous world of dreams. He is not rendering a history or attempting to illustrate a specific memory of his life or of Cuba but to present to us the spirit or to play on Carl Jung's idea, a collective consciousness.

Surrealism with its ideas about the subconscious, dreams and memory were already a compelling presence in the world of art in which Viredo came to his maturity. While we see traces of Kandinsky, Klee, Wifredo Lam, they too are only a palette to be stirred and mixed like the complementary colors of his paint. Viredo speaks in his own voice. He has developed a style, a visual vocabulary that is wholly his own.

The figures or perhaps more accurately stated, personas, are iconic and narrative, casual and profound. Even though I do not share the specific references of his figures and symbols I do sense a meaning that compels me to look closer. We have mythology itself in common. I don't believe in universals, that is, that one symbol will mean the same the world over. However I do accept Jung's premise that there are shared archetypes present in human consciousness that manifest visually, ever new and in differing forms for each generation for each distinct culture. Viredo's work allows the possibility of understanding Cuba and perhaps Viredo in a way straightforward narrative illustrations rarely do.

All figures, in the formal sense of that word, exist against a ground. It's how we distinguish one thing from another whether we are presenting dimensional objects or articulating abstract ideas. Viredo's grounds are a gorgeous array of interplaying patterns - patterns of simple graphic designs and patterns of complex symbolism. Pattern translated into musical terminology is rhythm. Using the same translator, color can be seen as melody. In his paintings melody dominates rhythm. It is in his graphic works that rhythm is clearly seen/heard. The contrasting black and white creates a visual syncopation. Perhaps my eye popping in and out, moving up and down the print's surface can be seen as a metaphor for snapping fingers and tapping toes. It is the linocuts that best fuse the figure ground relationship. The eye moves effortlessly between the two, never resting on any one spot, thus acquiring a temporal dimension found usually only in dance and music.

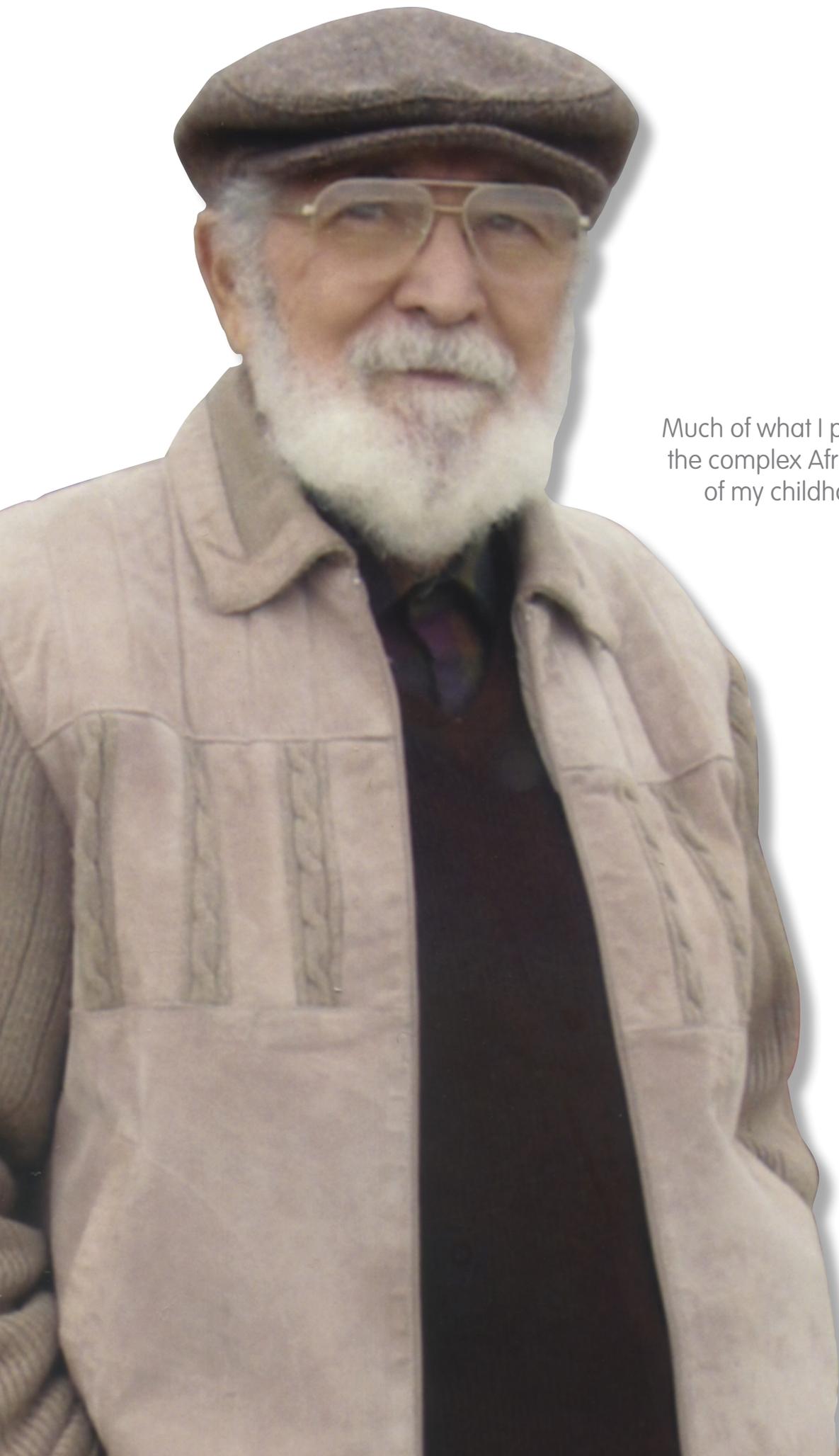
To say that the foundation of Viredo's art is grounded in myth, memory and music is only to begin the conversation. All art is, or should be a site for dialogue. I invite you to take the time, to look and listen to what Viredo has to say. You will be uplifted. Your world will be brighter for the experience.

P A T R I C K M E R I L L

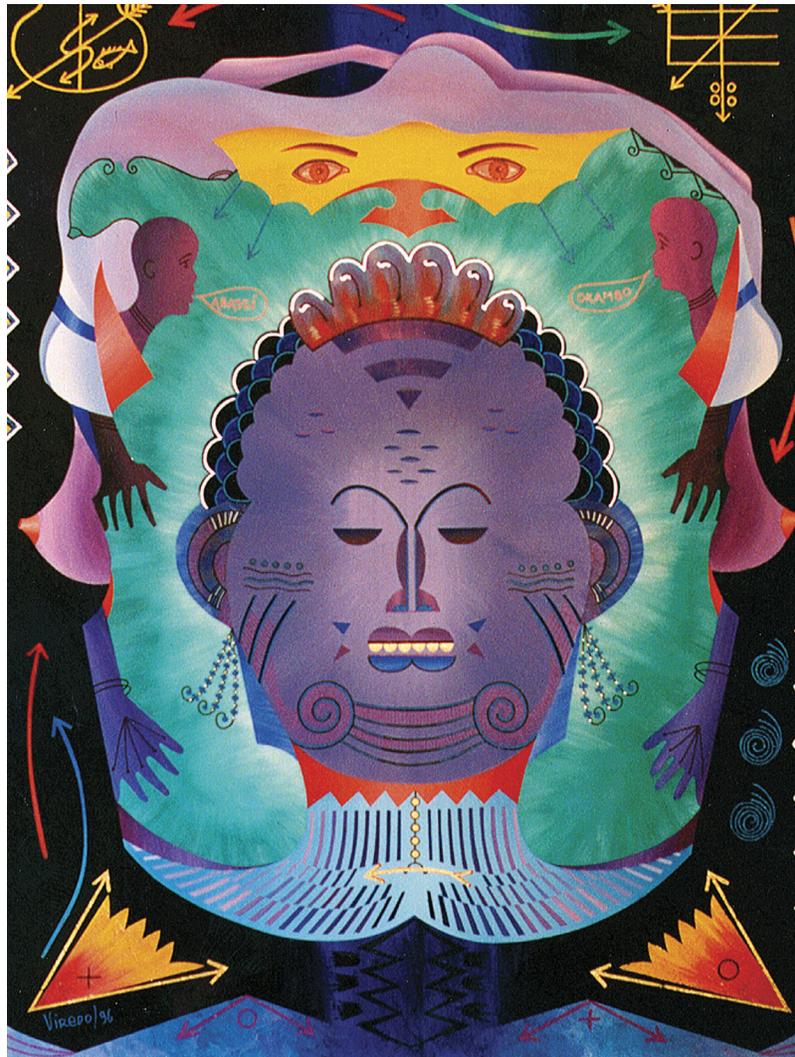
"In my art I try to communicate my amazement at the diversity of humankind that I see around me. Sometimes I try to show the relationship between music and the visual arts. Other times I try to pay homage to the great artists of the past. I always return to the rich canvas of my childhood where so many elements blended together in so many colors and sounds."



Llabo 1953
26" x 39" oil on canvas



Much of what I paint comes from the complex Afro-Cuban culture of my childhood in Regla.



Abasi Okambo 1996
30" x 40" oil on canvas

"Over the years my technique has changed from the simplicity of childhood drawings, the abstract expressionism of my "Los Once" days, to the more reflective symbolic style that I use now, which has elements of the earlier phases. My subject matter has always been Cuba, whether it is workers in the fields, fishermen in ports, Afro-Cuban mythology, rural landscapes, or children playing in the street."

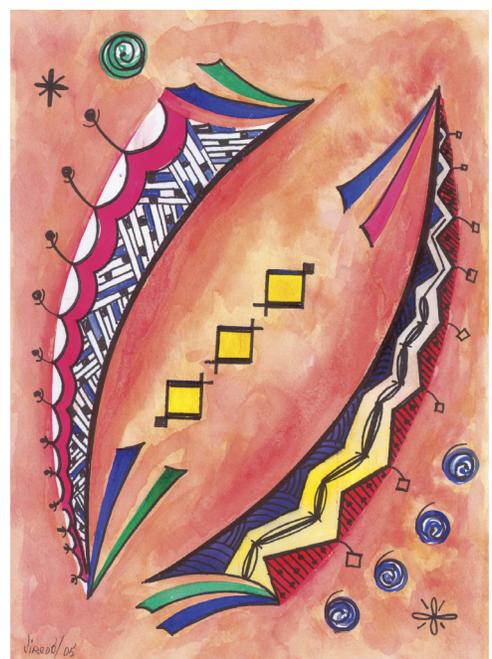
“Much of what I paint comes from the complex Afro-Cuban culture of my childhood in Regla. I am not an expert on this culture, just a witness to what I experienced as a young man. That is the perspective of youth where everything blends together with no sense of logic. Later in school, I learned that much of what I saw originated beyond Cuba in Africa, China, Spain, and other parts of the world.”



ORQUESTA ABAKUA NYEGUEYE DE REGLA 2001
68" x 48" oil on linen



Olokum 1975
24" x 30" oil on canvas



Capricho #12 2005
water color on paper



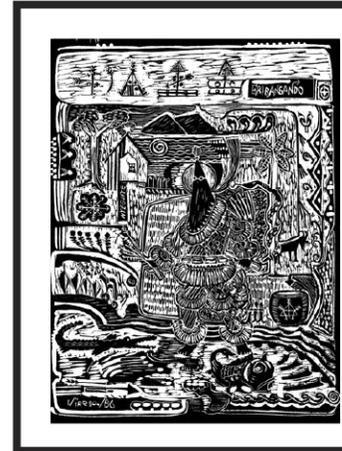
Iconografía de la Virgen de Regla 2002
36" x 48" oil on linen



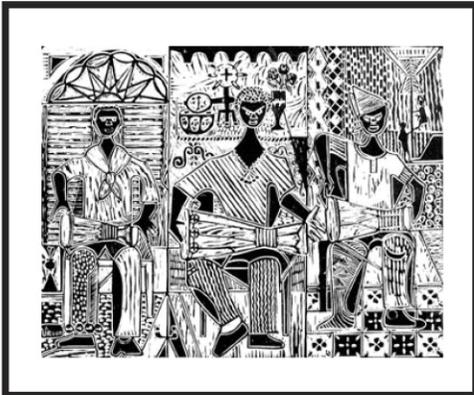
Nympha del Caribe - Aquatint



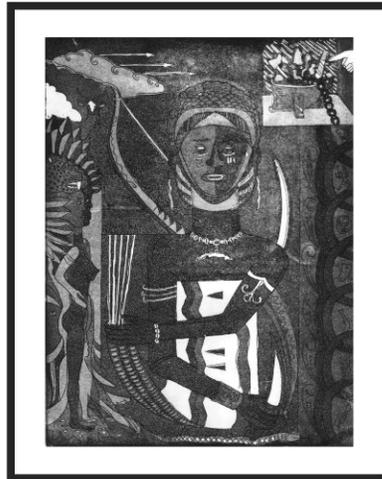
Bola de Nieve - Linocut



Eringbangando - Linocut



Tres Musicos - Linocut



Ochosi the Hunter - Aquatint



Sexteto Habanero - Linocut



Billie Holiday - Aquatint



Little Walter - Linocut



Satchmo - Linocut



Abasi & Sikan - Linocut



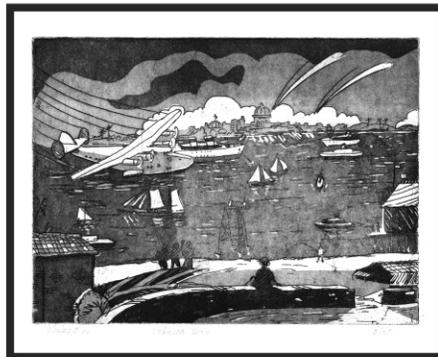
Josephine - Linocut



Adan & Eva - Aquatint



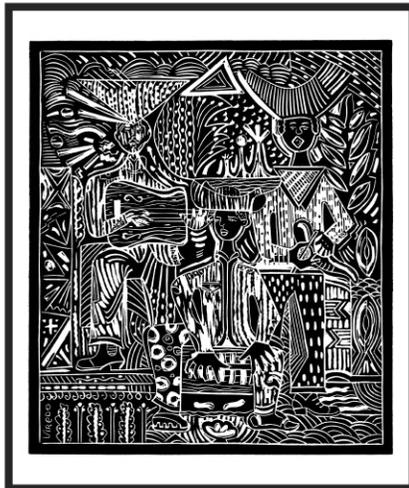
John Lee Hooker - Aquatint



Havana Bay - Aquatint



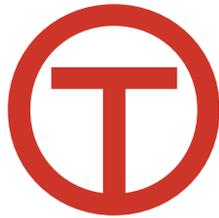
Arsenio - Aquatint



Tiempo de Son - Linocut



Simbolos- Aquatint



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