

The New World of Jose Rios

After being addicted to drugs since the age of 11. Jose Rios is clean. He is a brilliant artist and he is premier-ing his art-work this March in New York.

As a young man Jose dedicated his life to two passions, drugs and art. However, as he grew older he let his passion to paint die. Drugs began to take over his life. Jose attempted to live a normal life with his girl friend and daughter while hiding his darkest secret: his addiction to heroine. The drugs left Jose homeless and alone.

Jose wandered the streets for 10 years. After countless trips to jail, Jose finally found the strength he needed to reconstitute his life.

When Jose finally revealed his drug secret his family and friends gave him the encouragement he needed. Jose left his life of drugs behind him and turned to his art. His love of art gave him a new strength.

Jose was thrilled to discover that his talent had improved. "I still had it, and it felt incredible," said Jose. He found that his painting would be his new "high." Jose smiles as he explains, "I turn up the music and dance when I paint, makes me feel alive." Now, Jose has used his art to mend his relationship with his daughter.

After years of being apart from her father, Jose's daughter, Jephthahlyn Rios, Rodriguez, saw his art as a way to peek into her father's mind. "I was able to know him, through the images he put on canvas," she said.

On March 10th at Gelabert Studio (255 West 86th Street, off Broadway) José Rios will be holding a reception to open his first solo show. It was organized by Jephthahlyn.

Amigos. You should go to one of Jose's exhibitions. They feature a complete anthology of his life. Through his art, Jose explores his past and his present and looks into his future. Jose tells us he hopes that the show will allow him to invite others into his world. Visitors can escape the security of their own lives, and find themselves overwhelmed by the chaos of Jose's past.

Best of all, amigos, they can take time to speak to the artist and explore the possibilities of his future.

Jose Rios was born in Puerto Rico. When he graduated from High School he was encouraged by teachers to pursue an art career. But he decided against it. He felt it was more important to make a living.

Jose realized later on that it was a mistake. At age eleven he had begun experimenting with drugs.

Jose has not touched drugs for over four years. He was blessed with a beautiful daughter, Jephthahlyn Rios-Rodriguez, who is now a college graduate and the mother of Jose's beloved grandson.

Amigos, the story of Jose's life inspires us all to remember some basic truths. First, each man is the master of his own destiny. As we



our lives we all find rocks on the road - some more than others but we all have the ability to overcome if we really want to. Next, no man is an island. Each of us belongs to the world. The entire world, amigos. And so does our talent. God surrounds us with many blessings: family, friends, faith. etc. We need to reach for them just as they reach for us.

Amigos, I invite everyone to see Jose's "Jewels of the Lost Artist" exhibition. They may give you a glimpse into Jose's world. Perhaps even your own.

Esta columna... "Buenos Días Amigos", acoge con beneplácito comezentarios de sus lectores. Las cartas deben dirigirse a: Emb. Phillip V Sanchez 38-42 9th Street 3RD Floor Long Island City Nueva York, 11101

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