Self-taught, Noel Castro inspired by natural world, comics

By Lori Timmer
@hollandsentinel.com
(616) 546-4262

Name: Jose Noe “Noel” Castro
City of residence: Holland
Art medium: Pencil, oil and/or acrylic on just about any surface

What is your art background?
“I am a self-taught artist, inspired by the natural world around me and the comics I started to read at age 12. Any formal schooling consists of my senior year in high school art class and from other artists that I have had the pleasure of meeting along the way. My senior high art teacher played a big part in inspiring me, as well.

“I eventually joined up with a local art group/club called The Holland Friends of Art (HFA), est. 1963, and became a volunteer board member. I also, became a volunteer at the Holland Area Arts Council at the same time and I’d like to note that HFA and HAAC still work closely together these days. In my terms as a HFA board member, I first curated the annual HFA Tulip Time Show for a number of years and continued to volunteer in other positions, which led to my position as the current HFA president.”

How long have you been practicing your art? “I have actually been practicing/creating since I was in second grade. It has been a lifetime passion, truly. I remember sitting in our yard, as a kid with my library and comic books, along the tulip lane on Washington Boulevard and drawing my neighborhood from that perspective. Although, I knew nothing of perspective... or shading for that matter, but I look back on those days with some nostalgia.”

What is most gratifying about being an artist? “Being able to express myself. For myself. To create. Anything. I use it in my daily job routine, in which, as a chef, I need to be creative. The thing about being an artist is that the ability to ‘go with the flow’ or quickly see a solution to a problem comes in handy and can be used in many situations and as therapy, even when you don’t know it, but really need it. You know, a lot of times artists are asked for a mission/artist statement and that’s fine. We all have something to say with our art, but mine?... mine would be ‘I just want to draw’ and I’m sure there are others that feel the same way.”

What artist do you most admire? “Oh, wow. This is a hard one, but I am going to pick two right off the top of my head. The first one that came to mind was Frank Frazetta. He didn’t start out as a fantasy artist, but came to be one of the greats. I love his art and technique. The other would be a gentle man named John Byrne. He was the first comic book artist that I wanted to draw like.”

Where can your work be seen?

Jose Noe “Noel” Castro is a self-taught artist inspired by the natural world and comics. CONTRIBUTED

“I have exchanging artwork hanging in two permanent locations here in Holland. The WayCup Cafe on South Shore is one and the other is at offices of Protax Notary on North River. I also do local art shows, here and there. I also, have a Facebook page Art of Jose Noe Castro.

If readers want more information about you or your work, where can you be contacted? www.facebook.com/artofjosenoecastoro