

Art infused with merengue

A new exhibit at El Museo Latino shows how music and dance can influence artists.

► IF YOU go!

"Merengue! Visual Rhythms/Ritmos Visuales" is on display at El Museo Latino, 4701 S. 25th St., through Nov. 10. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays; and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is \$3.50 to \$5. Information: 731-1137

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El Museo Latino's visual art exhibit is all about sound.

Sounds contradictory, but "Merengue! Visual Rhythms/Ritmos Visuales" is about how a specific style of music and dance can define a culture and influence its artists.

The exhibit features 47 works by 27 artists from the Dominican Republic. They range in date from the early 1900s to the present. All feature musicians, dancers or instruments.

While the exhibit has an unusually narrow scope—a highly specialized style of music, merengue, rooted in one small country—it showcases surprising breadth.

The paintings range from highly literal and realistic renderings to cubist and near-abstract creations. Most are colorful and celebratory, but a few are dark and explore death or depression.

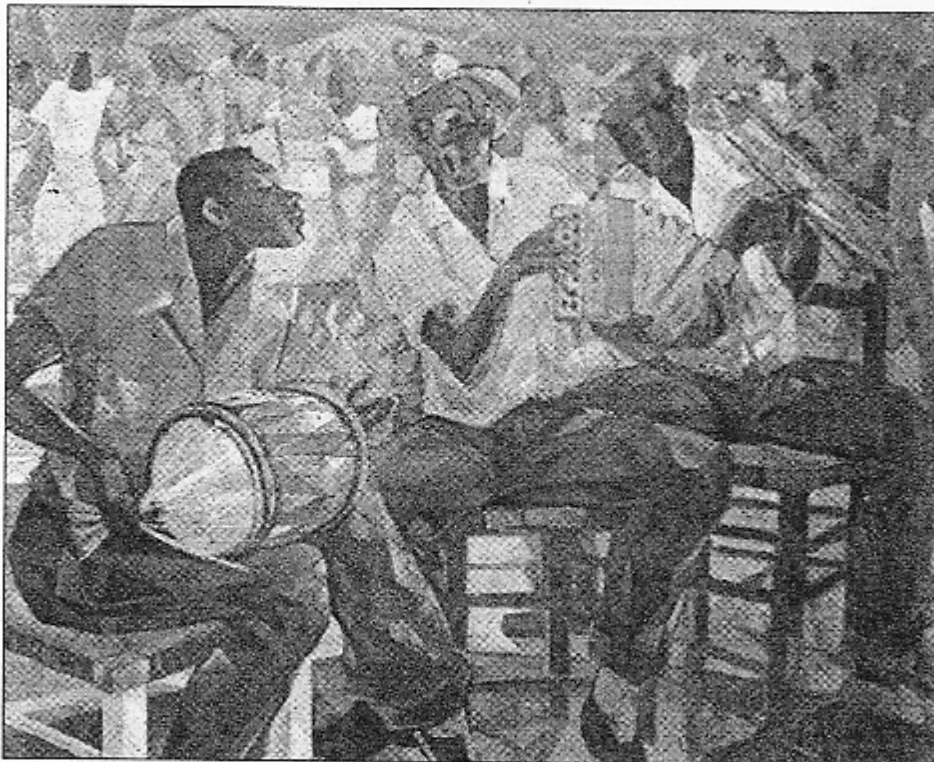
Exhibiting the depth and range of Latino artists is exactly what El Museo Latino curator Magdalena Garcia strives to do. She has considered adding individual pieces from different Latino cultures to the museum's permanent collection but feels showcasing larger exhibitions of regional works is better.

"This kind of exhibit gives people an in-depth look at a specific culture," she said. "It takes you into a place like the Dominican Republic and exposes you to different styles and artists."

"Merengue!" was organized by the Centro Cultural Eduardo Leon Jimenes museum. El Museo Latino is one of the early stops in its U.S. tour.

Merengue music—a festive sound usually mixing accordion, drums, trumpets and singing—fills the gallery. Sometimes Garcia turns it off and just looks at the artworks.

"Even when it's silent, I swear you can hear the music in the paintings," she said.



The colorful, animated work "Perico Ripiao" by Jacinto Dominguez is part of "Merengue! Visual Rhythms/Ritmos Visuales," a 47-work exhibit at El Museo Latino in Omaha. The exhibit celebrates merengue music and dance.

