



Emigdio Vasquez was born 1939 in the historical mining town of Jerome, Arizona. His father worked for Phelps-Dodge Copper mines; and in the early 1940's, Emigdio's interest in art was evident when his sister, Licinia, who would take him to class with her when their mother was ill. Emigdio would quietly sit and draw, and, according to Licinia, he seemed fascinated. In the early 1940's, his father moved the family to Orange, California.

Early-1950s Attending Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana, California, Emigdio took art classes. Later he transferred to Orange High school where he continued his art interests. He liked drawing graphic novels; and he based caricatures on friends and colorful personalities in the neighborhood.

Early-1960s In the small living room where he lived with his wife Rosie, his son Adolph and baby daughter Rosemary, Emigdio set up his painting area on the dining table. When the apartment behind his parents' house became available, he moved his growing family, and he enjoyed painting outdoors. Not yet the fine-detailed artist he was to become, his paintings reflected the broad brush strokes of an Impressionist artist. Mid-1960's, inspired by famous Mexican artist Diego Rivera, he painted his first mural, in his parent's patio.

1970s. Rosie's mother lived in Barrio La Conga in Anaheim. Her weekend visits lasted all day; and Emigdio found a way to better enjoy his time. Surrounded by weathered cars and aging self-made homes, Emigdio viewed them as interesting subjects. This would be the beginning of his signature grit style. He painted "La Carroche De Kiko", "La Carroche de Kiko 2" and "The Shack". Emigdio began to develop his "eye for color" and gained a mastery of creating mood, depth, and aura.

From 1987 to 1988 he painted six murals and several oil paintings, which was a phenomenal accomplishment. From September 1991 to December 1992, he painted an amazing eighteen, 16" x 20" portraits of his "Historical Activist" Series. In addition, he painted two murals. The mid 1990s were not so prolific, as he lost his father and two years later, his mother.

Emigdio earned an Associate of Arts degree from Santa Ana College before transferring to Cal State Fullerton University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master's Degree in Fine Arts. In 1979, for his Master's Degree thesis project, Emigdio painted an 85-foot by 64-foot mural as a tribute to the Chicano working class, complete with figures modeled after his father as a miner and other relatives and friends as field workers and laborers.

His works have appeared in some of the milestone exhibitions of Chicano art, including the 1975 Chicano art exhibit in the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, and in UCLA's Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation in 1990. His works have been in several publications; and he was the Featured Artist at the 2002 Orange County Fair. He received an award for his painting "Obreos" at California's State Fair, Sacramento.

Emigdio has drawn upon and transformed photographs into a body of work that documented and commented on the daily life of working people in the barrio. With painstaking skills, he recorded the urban experience unsentimentally and with dignity, neither glorifying nor criticizing. Emigdio is one of the most prolific American Artists; as he has created over 400 paintings and 22 murals in Orange County and countless illustrations. His works can be recognized by the 'super-realistic' style, historical transitions, and common person themes.

Emigdio has taught in the art department at Santa Ana College, and managed a major public arts program for the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, and the California Arts Council, as well as the City of Santa Ana where he created an 85-foot long mural at the Orange County Transportation Center. In 1996, he received an Artist Fellowship from the Adolph and Ester Gottlieb Foundation in New York.

Emigdio's most recognized mural is the "Legacy of Cesar Chavez," which is located in the lobby of the Cesar Chavez Business and Computer Center in Santa Ana College. Some of Emigdio's favorite subjects are people in their environments that reflect a slice of time in history — from orange pickers to Zoot Suits and Pachucos to famous labor leaders, to street scenes. He also enjoys still life and landscape painting, as well as his portraits. His diversity of subject matter and style place him in a select class of artists that transcends the traditional "pigeonhole" description that most artists are assigned.

Three of Emigdio's paintings were displayed in the residence of the US Ambassador to the United Nations Gaddi Vasquez, stationed in Rome, Italy. He completed his final mural at Cal State Fullerton which recognized their 50 year anniversary. In addition, he was recognized as one of fifty examples of successful graduates of Cal State Fullerton. He has retired from painting, due to ill health. Many of his works can be seen, with some for purchase, at Iartstore.com.

Emigdio's painting skills are par to the great Renaissance Masters whom he studied and emulated in many of his still life works. His ability to select color to translate an aura in time is extraordinary. Emigdio is one of a few great artists of his time. He was born to paint.