Raúl Colón

Tall Tales & Huge Hearts

(Omaha, NE) — New York City has been Raúl Colón’s loyal patron, from cover illustrations for The New Yorker to an MTA mural at the 191st St. subway station to artwork in The New York Times. But in addition to this “grown up” work, Colón is also a prolific and award-winning illustrator of children’s literature, with more than 30 books to his name. Employing watercolor, colored pencils, litho crayons, and a technique of scratching or drawing down through the layers of washes, he brings stories to life with the glowing, richly textured, rhythmic images that are his trademark style.

Opening April 27 at Joslyn Art Museum, the exhibition Raúl Colón: Tall Tales & Huge Hearts features art from 15 of Colón’s books, including scenes from myths, fairytales, folktales, and tall tales, and from books based on real-life stories of baseball players, ballerinas, migrant workers, and ministers — inspiring characters all.

Colón was born in New York City in December of 1952 and moved with his parents in the 1960s to Caguas, Puerto Rico, where he studied commercial art. “As a child I had chronic asthma and would frequently be so ill that I

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could not leave the house for days or even weeks at a time,” said Colón. “But all those times I spent locked up inside, I spent filling up dozens of composition notebooks with all kinds of drawings. I even tried to write my own comic books . . . So my illness as a child, which kept me from going outside to play, became a blessing.”

In 1978 Colón made Florida his home, working at an educational television center designing everything from puppets to short animated films. In 1988 the artist settled with his family in New City, New York (a suburb of New York City), and began a freelance career. Today, Colón continues to be a versatile and acclaimed illustrator whose work has appeared in important national publications.

Colón was chosen to illustrate Dr. Jill Biden’s recently published Don’t Forget, God Bless Our Troops as well as Frank McCourt’s bestselling Angela and the Baby Jesus, both from Paula Wiseman Books. The industry has recognized Colón with a Golden Kite Award, a Pura Belpré Award, and both a gold and silver medal in The Original Art show. Colón currently resides in New City, New York, with his family.

At Joslyn, exhibition wall labels and some of the picture books will be presented in English and Spanish. Books illustrated by Raúl Colón are available for purchase in Joslyn’s Hitchcock Museum Shop (open during all regular Museum hours).

For exhibition images, contact Amy Rummel, director of marketing and public relations, at (402) 661-3822 or arummel@joslyn.org.

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