



## A troop of Venezuelan toys arrive to New Mexico

Some of the Yare's Devils, together with the Candelaria's Vassals and the Fiesta de San Juan accompany a joyful circus and some wooden horses to the United States for representing Venezuela at the International Folk Art Market. It is the biggest and most popular art market of the world, which will be held from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month in Santa Fe – New Mexico. These handmade toys will travel of the hand of their creator, Mario Calderon a toymaker from Caracas who from his small workshop in Merida developed an imaginary full of nostalgia, fantasy and Venezuelan traditions.

Mario Calderon is one of the most important toymakers of Venezuela, with a career of more than 30 years. With his work, he has gone to different countries such as Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Peru, Qatar, Spain and The United States. His work has received important awards, including the UNESCO award for Excellence of Handicrafts.

Mario is a frequent guest of the International Folk Art Market, where for 13 years more than 170 artist from 59 countries and 6 continents have gathered once a year in an event organized by the international Folk Art Alliance (IFAA). They accept the mission of promoting popular art, traditions from different peoples and cultures of the world, vindicating the value of the handicrafts.

Jewelry, beadwork, basketry, carvings, ceramics, glasswork, metalwork, paintings, mixed media, sculpture, textiles, musical instruments, and traditional toys form part of this market. There, an estimated of 20.000 people will assist and get handicrafts from all

corners of the world; they will understand the real meaning of the pieces and get to know the history behind them and connect with their creators.

This year though, Mario Calderon goes not only to present his toys, the Venezuelan toymaker has a new project which aspires to promote in this showcase: The Toymaker, a film mixing documentary, fiction and animation and looking to re-create the story of the Maestro, told by his own toys. Marzel Avila and Oscar Quintero, two young Venezuelan directors with a long path making documentaries, animation, fiction and publicity, are the directors of the film.

Regardless the crisis which Venezuela suffers nowadays, these two directors are optimistic about the project. "We are developing a strategy to find economic support through individual sponsors and international crowdfunding platforms", says Oscar Quintero, "We believe that in this moment, it is basic to promote the most positive aspects of Venezuela, our culture, our great capacity to work and our creativity. These elements are also part in the life and work of Mr. Mario Calderon" explains Marzel Avila.

The directors of this Film are convinced of making this project a reality. They have showed interesting advances though different social networks, proving that the hard work, creativity and their love for Venezuela are stronger than the crisis.

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