

Luis Fernando Lechon

Ecuador/Kichwa: artist and musician

Object: family photograph and antique bone flute

*Ñukanchik kawsayta, shina sumakta muyumuni,
jatirishunchik tucuilla runakunapak tarpunchik
allinta purini, chaymanta Mari kawsanguichu.
(Kichwa)*

[We live our lives in the way of happiness. We cultivate community together, and we walk in the way of the good. That is our way to live.]

I studied the arts in secondary school, learning the foundation, what it is to paint, watercolors – but in the university I graduated in sculpture and painting. I traveled through Ecuador with a cultural collective that painted murals for municipalities. We also traveled to Peru and to the south of Colombia to paint murals. It was an extraordinary experience.

The instrument I play is the 15-stringed bandolin from Ecuador. I also play indigenous flutes and percussion. My father played the guitar, and I learned music from my friends. Our indigenous tradition is carried in our blood from our grandparents. That was how it was transmitted to me.

I had the opportunity to come to New York to represent my country through music. I arrived here in February 2012 for a presentation at the Museum of Natural History. I came here to be an artist and decided to stay because I wanted to explore more things. It was my dream to travel and live in another city. In this country the door is open wider than in Ecuador. Here you encounter much more cultural variety. It is easier to learn different musical and cultural things.

I've had this ancient bone flute from Peru for 15 years. For me it is very sacred. It is from the Incan people. Then I also brought with me this photo of my parents. My father died when I was 15 years old. Now for me it is important to be close to him. I know that this is a way to connect not only with him but with my grandparents and all my ancestors. I brought this photo from Ecuador to inspire me. I keep it on my sacred altar, where I am close and can say a prayer.



Bio:

Luis Fernando Lechón, studied fine arts at Daniel Reyes Art Institute, in Ibarra Ecuador. He is from the Cayambe region Kichwa tribe, who are descendants of the pre-Inca Kayambi people. He was a muralist in his country. Now in the U.S., Fernando represents his culture through his art. When he first arrived, he played music in the subways in NYC. Now he has performed at many cultural events, including at the United Nations, museums, and in Andean community events. Fernando is a member of the band Kaylla, which plays traditional Andean music, and has recorded two CD albums in NYC. As an artist, he travels to art festivals and Native American markets at pow wows to sell his art. Fernando works on commission for private clients to paint portraits and other artistic works. He is planning a mural project at the Bronx Music Heritage Center.