

INFINITE HORIZONS



ABELARDO LÓPEZ & LEIGH ANNE LESTER

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Abelardo López & Leigh Anne Lester

June 11 - August 1, 2015

with essays by Alana J. Coates and David S. Rubin

Ruiz-Healy Art
San Antonio, TX
2015

The Harmonious Horizons of Abelardo López
by Alana J. Coates

In the nineteenth century, José María Velasco Gómez transformed landscape painting by freeing the Mexican vistas from the tropes of Romanticism employed by foreign painters. Velasco reformed the genre once known for its low rank in the painter's hierarchy into a symbol of Mexican identity and pride. His panoramas were grounded in naturalism and the grandeur of the Valley of Mexico. The respect and homage Velasco paid to his country is mirrored in the work of Abelardo López with his love of landscapes and the topography that is his native Oaxaca.

Born in San Bartolo Coyotepec, Oaxaca in 1957, López's entire oeuvre has centered on the natural environment that he was immersed in as a child; however, López transforms the genre by pushing the medium of painting itself with his signature style of carved impasto and his devotion to the radiant light of the south. Like Velasco, López's artworks are intensely bound with a sentiment of Mexico, and specifically his homeland, Oaxaca.

A reoccurring theme in López's pastoral imagery is the absence of man; although, the artwork hints that he has influenced the landscape long before the artist painted it. Converging lines in the fields reveal that humans worked the land and cultivated its abundance. Through his artworks, we gain a harmonious and idealized portrayal of the dichotomy of the earth and humankind. Perhaps the art provides a glimpse into the past, when humans had a lighter tread on their homeland. Or, the sweeping vistas of bountiful foliage, the grandiose Sierra Madre Mountains, and the expansive effulgence of the sky could allude to another presence—an emanation of a creator.

The intense horizontal is always present in López's composition. This orientation provides the viewer with a sense of steadfast stability and soothing tranquility. In fact, oscillating layers of horizontal planes are a specialty of López. In *Valle de Oaxaca*, the contrasting values accentuate the stratification. A deep yellow-green is employed low on the picture-plane as lighter values cascade into space. Seven stylized trees standing stiffly in an orderly row imply another bold horizontal divide. More trees in this fashion are found further in the distance. The mountains appear to be constructed of a more pliable material than the fields and trees. The illusion of this softness is created by the artist's use of atmospheric perspective and the blush glow of the sky. The clay appearance of the mountain range echoes the molding process of the artist's painting technique, best exemplified by the blades of grass in the foreground. Long, thick strokes of

pure pigment mold each blade into the plurality of the field.

There is serenity found in the solitude within *Mezquite*. One lone tree stands in the foreground with mountains colored in a comparable green behind it. The glow from the sky provides a luminous halo for the unaccompanied shrub, anthropomorphized in a coy stance. The lush hue places the mesquite in time—its bloom indicates spring; and the breed sets its location—a plant native to Mexico and the southwest. The picture plane is divided with two separate analogous color pallets reinforcing the earth and sky to their separate realms. The warm earthly colors of the golden prairie and hearty greens ground us in the physical world. And we are visually guided uphill to crest into a blissful pink indigo blend of the intangible atmosphere. The viewer is presented with a transcendental experience, but we must pause in the solitude with the mesquite to contemplate it.

López has named Gunther Gerzo as one of his artistic influences. The best correlation to the geometric abstractions of Gerzo to López's current body of work can be seen in *Valle de Tlacolula*. Tlacolula is a city in Oaxaca that is known for its indigenous pre-Columbian past, yet it is not the ruins of the ancients that López highlights, rather he chooses to focus again on the natural, living flora of mother earth. The variegated land in this painting is remarkably reminiscent of the color planes employed by Gerzo. One is left to wonder if this painting was truly a creation done *en plein air*, or in the artist's memories from his studies at the Taller de Artes Plásticas Rufino Tamayo.

For López, the landscape is not the backdrop for a narrative; it is the loyal focus of his admiration. Without figurative representation or manmade landmarks, López's depictions of his homeland's breathtaking countryside provide a sense of universality and tranquility to the viewer combined with a potent Oaxacan charm.



Caballito Blanco, 2015
oil on linen
31.5 x 31.5"



Valle de Tlacolula, 2015

oil on linen

31.5 x 47.2"



Cactus Valle de Tlacolula, 2015
oil on linen
59 x 67"



Mezquites, 2015
oil on canvas
19.7 x 39.4"



Alfalfa, 2015
oil on canvas
27.5 x 55.25"



Valle de Oaxaca, 2015

oil on linen

39.25 x 39.25"



Mezquite, 2015
oil on linen
39.4 x 39.4"

Abelardo López

EDUCATION

1981-1986 The Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca
Studied under Roberto Donís, Fernando Vilchis and Leticia Tarragó

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Infinite Horizons*, Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX (catalogue)

2012 *Abelardo López: Landscape Expressions*, Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX (catalogue)
Obra Reciente, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City

2007 *Mater Terra*, Arte de Oaxaca Galería, Oaxaca, México

2008 *El Horizonte*, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City (catalogue)

2005 *Auritmia*, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City (catalogue)

2003 *Naturaleza Viva*, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City (catalogue)

2002 *Paisajes Personales*, Oaxaca, México

2000 *Valles de Oaxaca*, Parchman Stremmel Gallery, San Antonio, TX
Abelardo López: Madre tierra, Archivo General de la Nación, México City

1999 *Los Paisajes Interiores*, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City

1995 *Paisajes*, Galería de Arte de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México

1993 *Abelardo López Moreno*, Clínica del Instituto del Seguro Social, Ocotlán de Morelos, Oaxaca, México

1986 *Abelardo López Moreno*, Instituto Tecnológico de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México

1981 *Abelardo López Moreno*, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2009 *Casa Lamm y sus Artistas*, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City
The Cleveland Museum of Art Fine Print Fair, Ruiz-Healy Art, Cleveland, OH

2008 *The Language of Landscape*, Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX

2007 *El Espíritu de Oaxaca*, Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA
Latin Fair Art Collective, Expression of Mexico Gallery, San Diego, CA

2006 *From the Land of Dreams: Prints and Paintings from Oaxaca*, Indigo Arts Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Colors Oaxaca México, Lakewood, CA
Transfiguraciones del Silencio, Instituto Cultural México - Mexican Embassy, San José, Costa Rica

2005 *Una Noche de Arte Oaxaqueño*, Museo Casa del Risco, México City
Pintores de Oaxaca, FCB/CONACULTA/INAH, Museo de las Culturas de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México

2004 *Colores de mi Tierra*, Museo de los Pintores Oaxaqueños, Oaxaca, México
El Poder Solidario de la Conciencia, Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, México City
Cruz Roja Mexicana, XXVII Aniversario, Municipio de San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León, México

2003 *Cruz Roja Mexicana, XXVI Aniversario*, Municipio de San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León, México

2001 *Arte de Oaxaca en Madrid*, Centro Cultural Galileo, Madrid, Spain (catalogue)
Propios y Extraños, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo y Diseño, Puebla, México

2000 *Pintores Oaxaqueños*, Casa de la Cultura de Tabasco, Villahermosa, Tabasco, México
Oaxaca bajo su Intensa Inspiración, Fondo Cultural Carmen, México City
Pintores Oaxaqueños en Ayuda, Centro Financiero Banamex Valle de Monterrey, Nuevo León, México

1999 *Propios y Extraños*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México
Pintores Oaxaqueños en Ayuda, Centro Financiero Banamex Valle de Monterrey, Nuevo León, México

1998 *Vida y Paisaje de Oaxaca*, Club de Banqueros, México City
Imágenes y Colores de Oaxaca, Centro Cultural Jaime Torres Bodet, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, México City

1997 Primer Salón de Expresiones Plástica, Palacio de Minería, UNAM, México City
Oaxaca: Plástica Contemporánea a Finales del Siglo XX, Museo del Banco Central de Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador
Beyond Boundaries: North American Printmaking, Exhibition Concourse Gallery, Bank of America, San Francisco, CA

1996 *10th Annual Day of the Dead Exhibition*, Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Chicago, IL
Oaxaca: Plástica Contemporánea a Finales del Siglo XX, Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Razón y Pasión de Oaxaca, Galería de Arte del Instituto Mexicano de Cultura, Paris, France

1995 *A los Angelitos en el Día de Muertos*, Galería Arte de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México

1994 *Mexican Printmakers*, Indigo Arts Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Arte y Alma de Oaxaca, Instituto Cultural Mexicano, San Antonio, TX
Arte y Alma de Oaxaca, Instituto Cultural Mexicano, Washington, D.C.
Oaxaca Next Generation, Jansen Perez Gallery, San Antonio, TX
Feria Campionaria, Bolonia, Italy

1993 *Eurobolsa '93*, Bahías de Huatulco, Oaxaca, México
Muertos de Gusto, Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Chicago, IL

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Buron, Jose Gutierrez. "Escuela de Oaxaca." *Arte de Oaxaca en Madrid*, exhibition catalogue Galería Arte de Oaxaca, México, 2001.

Gomez Haro, Germain. "Abelardo López: Earthy Forces, Ethereal Spaces." *Natualeza Viva*, catalogue for exhibition at Galería Casa Lamm, México City, 2003.

---. "El Horizonte" *El Horizonte*, catalogue for exhibition at Galería Casa Lamm, México City, 2008.

Henestrosa, Andrés, and Alberto Blanco. "Abelardo López." In *Imágenes y colores de Oaxaca*, 82-85. Fundación Ingeniero Alejo Peralta y Diaz Ceballos, IBP, 1998.

Hernandez, Edgar Alejandro. "Crean para hospital obras de arte curativo." *Reforma Newspaper*, August 30, 2003.

Kartofel, Graciela, Silvia Sigal, and Rodolfo Rivera Gonzalez. *Expresiones Plásticas de Oaxaca*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997.

Lara Elizondo, Lupina. "Abelardo Lopez." in *Visión de México y sus Artistas: Encuentros Plásticos Umbrales del Siglo XXI*. 1st ed. México: Quaïlitas CompanPià De Seguros, 2002.

Roberts, Diana Lyn. "Abelardo Lopez at Ruiz-Healy Art." *Abelardo López*, catalogue for exhibition at Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX. October-November, 2012.

Silva Barón, Marco Antonio. "Auritmia" *Auritmia*, catalogue for exhibition at Galería Casa Lamm, México City, 2005.

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Museo Rayo Roldanillo, Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Museum of Modern Art of Latin America, Washington, D. C.

Academia Mexicana de la Lengua, México City

Acervo Patrimonial de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, México City

Aeropuerto Internacional de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México

Centro Médico ABC Campus Santa Fe, México City

Pinacoteca del Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México

The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX

South Texas Money Management, LTD, San Antonio, TX

Harland Clarke Holdings, San Antonio, TX

Leigh Anne Lester's Mutant Botanicals
by David S. Rubin

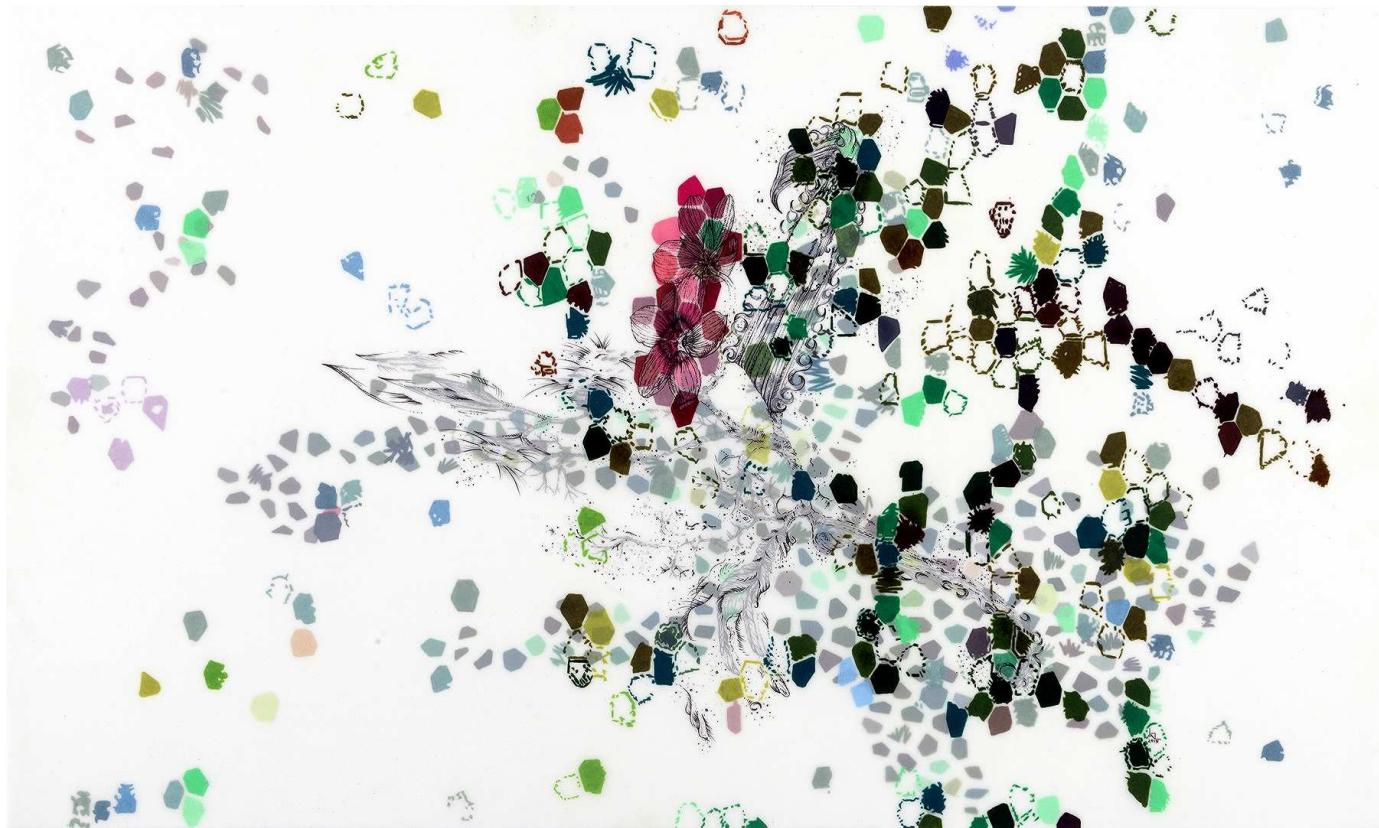
Leigh Anne Lester is often thinking about the future. Long interested in how the natural world evolves and changes, she is scientifically inquisitive, and her fascinations range from the microscopic to the macroscopic. In the late 1990s, while a resident artist at the Ucross Foundation in Clearmont, Wyoming, Lester was inspired by the open outdoor spaces and began thinking about the human connection to nature. In particular, she became interested in the human desire for Utopia which, since the advent of the Industrial Revolution and certainly in the current Digital Age, has come to mean a sought-after ideal that is achievable through technological intervention. Humans, in other words, now have the ability to use technology to reshape nature. And the results of such interventions may be both exciting and terrifying.

As an artist, Lester has been exploring her ideas and facing her apprehensions about a technologically produced Utopia for over a decade, and she has done so using a number of processes and mediums. In the early 2000s, she produced several site-specific installations composed of hand-sewn plastic vinyl plants. Mostly replications of common weeds that are ordinarily overlooked or considered bothersome, Lester fabricated them to be objects of beauty, thereby coaxing viewers attracted to the sculptures into reexamining the value of something typically considered mundane. During the same period, Lester became interested in human diseases and, after researching printed and online medical journals, she created several bodies of work in which she matched the colors of diseased organs observed in photographs to color samples of interior household paint. Conceptually, such pairings bring to mind the fact that paints and other household materials can be toxic, and harm our organs. They also reinforce the idea that humans are as much a part of nature as are plants, in that both are organic, have a life span, and are susceptible to illness; and more importantly, in today's advanced technological world, both can be subjected to genetic modification.

Lester's fascination and trepidation about the fact that humans and plants can be genetically altered has been the impetus for her ongoing series of hybrid botanical drawings, which she began making around 2003. Using transparent drafting film in lieu of opaque paper, Lester developed a method of optically blending sections of disparate plant varieties by drawing separate species on individual sheets of drafting film and layering them to form cohesive images of mutant plants. In her 2011 drawing *Mutant Spectre*, which earned her the prestigious Hunting Prize, Lester formed a composite mutant on a single sheet of drafting film, joining together appendages from more than fifteen disparate plants, chosen for their properties relating to propagation as well as environmental and morphological differences. As a kind of

encyclopedia of plant life all rolled into one mutant botanical, this work and her layered botanical drawings have become the source images from which to generate their own mutations. Working with digital technology, Lester now digitally draws and manipulates sections of these earlier works in many different ways, such as stretching an image or abstracting it to resemble the cellular structure of DNA. The computer imaging is only part of the process, however, and not the end artwork. A believer in the integrity and perseverance of the handmade object, Lester bases her finished artworks on both her computer renderings and her earlier hand-drawn mutant plants, but creates them entirely by her own hand.

In her current body of work, Lester uses extracted and manipulated sections of her drawing *Mutant Spectre* as building blocks for new layered compositions on drafting film that are as beautiful as they are haunting. In some of them, physical paint has been added to the outer layer, as if to suggest that the mutant botanical has mutated further to produce what Lester considers to be a kind of "primordial ooze." While a number of the hybrids are viewed at close range, as if they are specimens being scrutinized under a magnifying glass or microscope, others are seen from afar, having been interwoven into latticework patterns that suggest lush mutant pastures or gardens. In all there is the constant presence of flotation and flux, achieved in part through contrasts between the representational and the abstract, and between color and non-color. Within the context of art history, Lester's drawings are contemporary equivalents of traditional European botanical prints. In terms of their cultural relevance, they are poetically reflective of the current state of nature, which to be depicted accurately, now requires references to such elements as human control and manufactured artifice.



Eager Tendrils, 2015

graphite and color pencil on two layers of drafting film
13 x 22"



***Harmony of Tensions*, 2015**
graphite and color pencil on two layers of drafting film
20 x 20"



Landscape to a Blind mans eye, 2015

graphite and color pencil on two layers of drafting film
14 x 14"

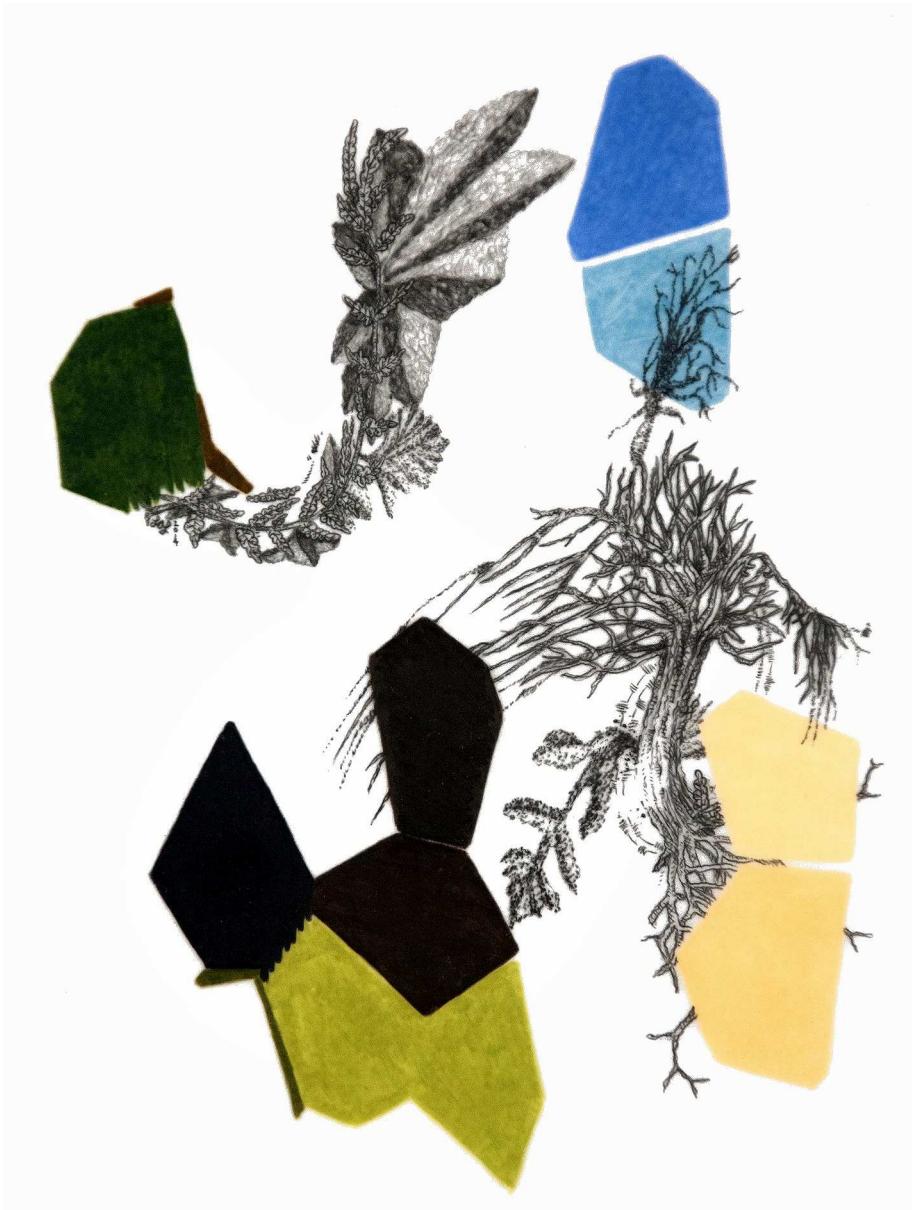


Marker 1.4, 2014
graphite and color pencil on drafting film
12 x 14"

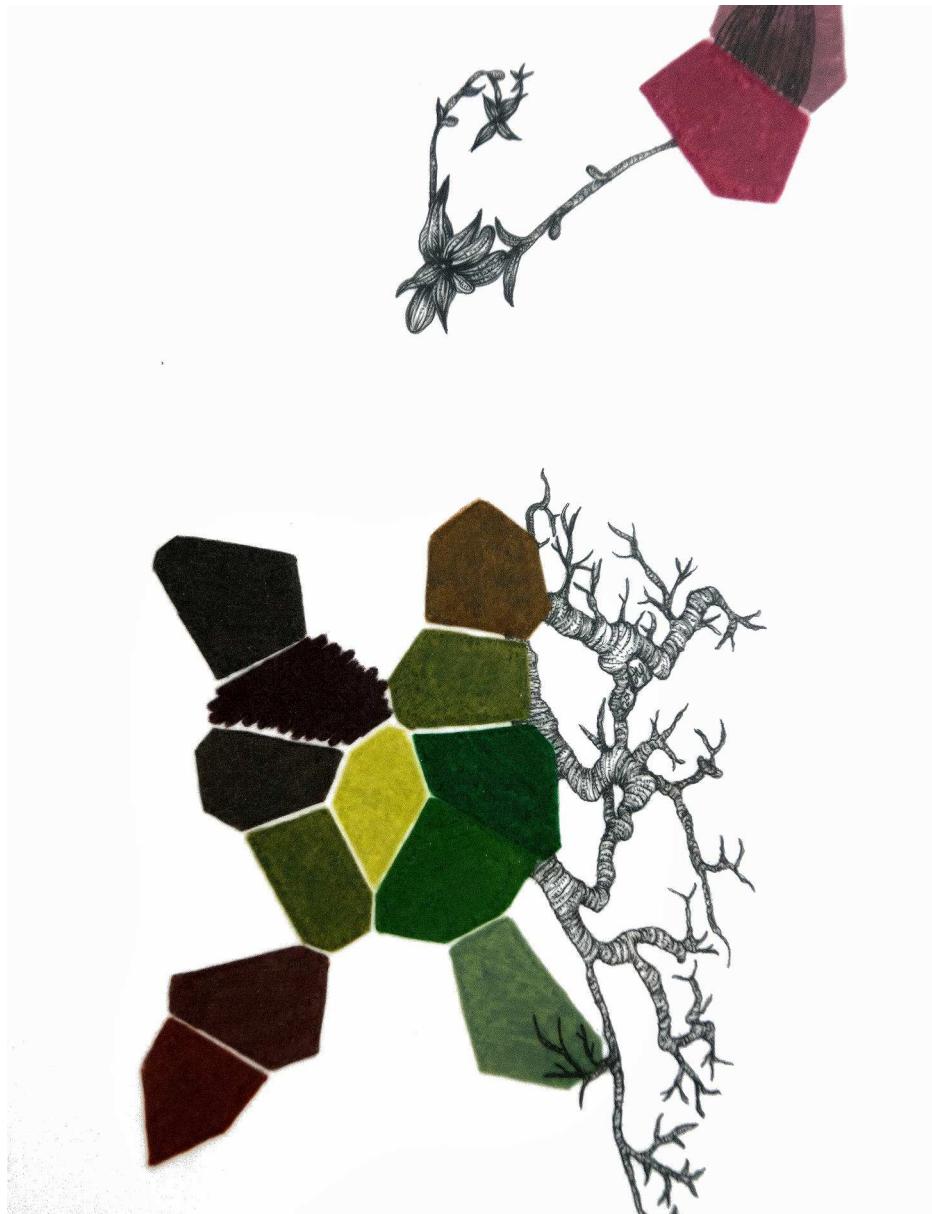


Marker 1.9, 2014

graphite and color pencil on drafting film
12 x 14"



Marker 1.10, 2014
graphite and color pencil on drafting film
12 x 14"



Marker 1.11, 2014

graphite and color pencil on drafting film
12 x 14"



Semplatherviyrusvum Tecttubeorumrosus 1.3, 2015
graphite and color pencil on two layers of drafting film
22 x 28"



Semplatherviyrusvum Tecttubeorumrosus 1.4, 2015
graphite and color pencil on two layers of drafting film
22 x 28"

Leigh Anne Lester

EDUCATION

1993 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting, University of Texas at San Antonio, TX

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Holiday Show*, The Gallery at Vaudeville, Fredericksburg, TX; curator: Mary Parke
Infinite Horizons, Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX (catalogue)

2014 *Venomous Cabbage and other demands satisfied*, grayDUCK Gallery, Austin, TX

2013 *Cultivated Divergence*, Artpace, San Antonio, TX

2012 *Seed Pod*, Site-specific/temporary land art on San Antonio River sponsored by the San Antonio River Foundation, San Antonio, TX

2011 *Beautiful Freaks/Nature's Bastards*, Houston Art Alliance, Houston, TX

2010 *Beautiful Freaks/Nature's Bastards*, The Southwest School of Art, San Antonio, TX
Intelligent Design?, Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, TX

2006 *Artificial Arrangement*, Conduit Gallery, Dallas, TX
Artificial Arrangement, Lawndale Arts Center, Houston, TX
Untitled, The McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX

2005 *Family Portraits*, International Museum of Surgical Science, Chicago, IL
Artificial Arrangement, Sala Diaz, San Antonio, TX

2001 *ROCK*, New Works Space, The McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas, TX

2000 *ROCK*, Project Room, San Antonio, TX

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Nature on the Edge: Mutation and Hybirdity in 21st Century Art*, Bihl Haus Arts, San Antonio, Texas; curator: David S. Rubin
Eastbound and down, Good Children Gallery, New Orleans, LA
Running down the road, Terminal 136, San Antonio, TX
Six Artists celebrate the McNay's 60th Anniversary, The McNay Art Museum, San Antonio,

TX; curator: Rene Barilleaux

2014 *Flatland*, Museo Guadalupe, San Antonio, TX; curator: Patty Ortiz
Crossing the Line, Centro Cultural Border, Mexico City, Mexico; curator: Michele Monseau
Aesthetic Encounters, Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX
Outside/In, K.Imperial Gallery, San Francisco, CA

2013 *The Drawing Room, Part 2*, Galveston Center of Art, Galveston, TX

2012 *Prelude: Beginning a Conversation*, David Shelton Gallery, Houston, TX
The State of Drawing, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX;
curator: Benito Huerta

2011 *Wild Things*, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
Rock, Paper, Carbon, grayDUCK gallery, Austin, TX
San Antonio Draws, The McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX

2010 *Ucross:Twenty-Seven Years of Visual Artist Residency*, Nicolaysen Art Museum, Casper, WY;
curator: Lisa Hatchadoorian
Palimpsest, The McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas, TX

2009 Texas National, Cole Art Center; juror: Mel Chin, Nacogdoches, TX

2008 *Transitions*, Cantanker Magazine, Issue #6, Big Medium, Austin, TX; curator: Leona Skull-Hons
Biennial Southwest, Albuquerque Museum of Art, Albuquerque, NM; curator: Dr. Stephanie Hanor

2007 *Beneath the Skin*, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Naturally Inclined, College of Mainland Gallery, Texas City, TX

2006 *Utopia*, Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
“Show – Offs”, Unit B, San Antonio, TX

2005 *Stitch in Time*, Women and their Work, Austin, TX; curator: Joan Davidow

2004 *Cross Stitch: Craft Medium Redefined*, The Bank, Kansas City, MO
100 Drawings, Haggerty Gallery, University of Dallas, Irving, TX
H2O: Considering the Hydrosphere, The Southwest School of Art, San Antonio, TX
Piece Work, Dallas Center for the Contemporary Arts, Dallas, TX

2002 *10x3*, San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atwell, Wendy. "Interview: Leigh Anne Lester, might be good." *The Tangible and the Ethereal*, Iss.170, May 27, 2011.

Baker, Kenneth. "The man works wonders with, yes, paint rollers." *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 16, 2007.

Bennett, Steve. "Artist is growing mutants in Artpace windows." *San Antonio Express News*, February 23, 2013.

Brenner, Wayne Allen. "Rock, Paper, Carbon." *Austin Chronicle*, June 10, 2011.

De la Rocha, Haydee. "Review: Cultivated Divergence by Leigh Anne Lester." *Art Magazine SA*, January 2013.

Fee, Brian. "Color Pollination: Leigh Anne Lester at grayDUCK Gallery." *New American Painting*, May 16, 2014.

Fisch, Sarah. "Escena San Antonio: Leigh Anne Lester rocks on, Cruz Ortiz as auteur, a visit from Houston curators." *Glasstire Texas Visual Art Online*, June 17, 2011.

---. "Strange Fruit and Odd Vegetables." *Plaza de Armas San Antonio*, December 10, 2010.

Goddard, Dan. "Leigh Anne Lester @ Institute of Texan Cultures." *Artlies*, Iss.63, Fall 2009.

Krieger, Deborah Anne. "In with the new! Recent gifts on paper." *Artes Magazine*, May 1, 2014.

Schwaiger, Seth Orion. "Venomous Cabbage and Other Demands Satisfied." *Glasstire Texas Visual Art Online*, May 31, 2014.

Silva, Elda. "Exquisite art leaves you wondering." *San Antonio Express News*, January 16, 2011.

---. "Nature in the Hands of the Artist." *San Antonio Express News*, August 9, 2009.

Wolff, Elaine. "Growth Spurt." *San Antonio Current*, Elaine Wolff, July 22- 28, 2009.

AWARDS

2011 Hunting Art Prize Winner

2007 Visual Art Award, Artist Foundation of San Antonio, San Antonio, TX

RESIDENCY

2015 The Berlin Residency Program, Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum in partnership with Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany

1998 Ucross Foundation, Clearmont, WY

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2014 Artpace Short list

2013 Artpace Short list

2008 Creative Capital Workshop, San Antonio, TX.

1993 to Present Manager, San Angel Folk Art, Inc. Blue Star Arts Complex, San Antonio, TX.

1993-2012 Co-founder, co-owner, co-curator, Cactus Bra Space, an alternative exhibition space for new artist, Blue Star Complex, San Antonio, TX.

SELECTED ART COLLECTIONS

Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, Austin, TX

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA

University Health System, San Antonio, TX

The Woman's Hospital of Texas, Houston, TX

University of Texas in San Antonio, TX



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