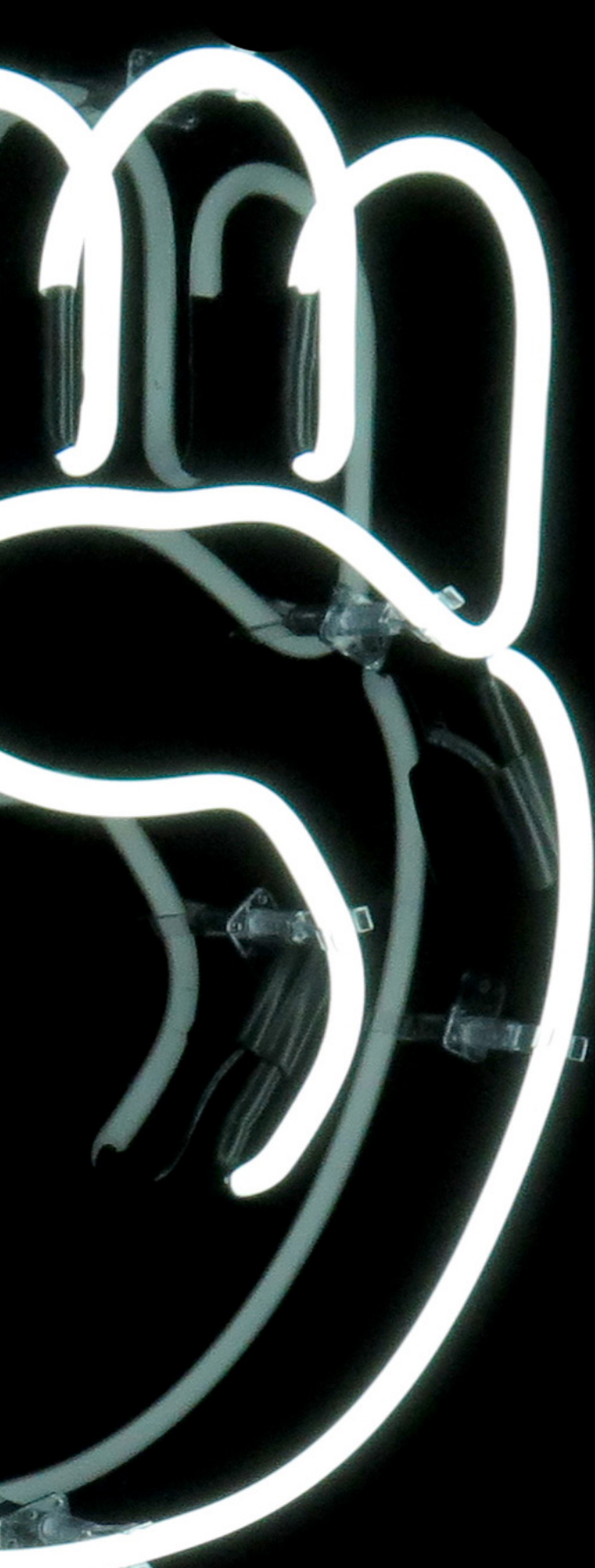


IMAGES OF
POWER





Mark Anthony Martinez, *Off-White Power* (detail)

This catalogue was published to accompany the exhibition *Images of Power* on display February 10 – 24, 2018 at Freight Gallery in San Antonio, Texas.

co-curated by Alana Coates & Mark Anthony Martinez

Contributors: Alana Coates, Kelvin L. Easley Jr., Daniel Alejandro González, Mark Anthony Martinez, Sergio Martinez and all of the exhibiting artists.

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IMAGES OF POWER

co-curated by Alana Coates
& Mark Anthony Martinez



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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

We opened Freight in the spring of 2015, and in that time, I have curated and collaborated on over 40 exhibitions. I have been fortunate to work with some incredible artists whose collective experience and perspective spans just about every possible background, ethnicity, and culture. Diversity and inclusion have been one of the core values of Freight from its inception, and I am proud to say that we have provided a space where artists can feel confident that their voices are heard.

Being an immigrant, the recent discourse on issues such as immigration, institutional power structures, race, and the role of white supremacy in our society has hit very close to home. It is for this reason that I feel *Images of Power* is such an important exhibition. One of the difficulties we face as a society is the inability to see things through the eyes of people who might be different from us, to know their struggles, to feel their suffering and pain.

American ideals and the reality of America are two concepts that very rarely converge. I believe that for this country to truly live up to its creed, then we need to start asking some grave questions of ourselves. The artists in this exhibition ask these questions in some powerful and emotive terms. *Images of Power* establishes a dialogue that might at times be painful or difficult, but one that is important and worth having.

— Sergio Martinez

PRE FACE

The idea for this exhibition spawned from artwork censorship in the midst of one of my independent curatorial projects. Although I selected the artists and fully supported their vision, I ultimately found myself powerless in the face of the institution's decision to exclude the work.

Images of Power was organized to honor the artworks rejected from the previous exhibition, as well as, to create a platform for discussion both verbally and visually of such histories and issues.

Artists from Los Angeles to Brooklyn are presented, visually exploring the idea of *Images of Power*. The exhibition deals with the past, present, and the unknown future for those fighting and living in a world built on the ideals of white supremacy.

—Alana J. Coates

CURA TORIAL STATE MENT

We live in a white supremacist society—this reality has existed since the founding of this country. Through this lens, these contemporary artists integrate current events, historical quandaries and the rising tide of fascism at our doorstep. Highlighting recent events, such as the reemerging rise of neo-Nazism and the horrors of the police state, the exhibit also highlights the powers of good – such as the collective action against the rising tides of xenophobia. *Images of Power* is a snapshot of history and the contemporary situation that leaves no room for ambiguity and pulls no punches. Our aim for this exhibition is to illuminate these topics and start a dialogue for understanding and change.

— Mark Anthony Martinez

RECON
QUISTA
OF
VOICE
SPACE
AND
DIALO
GUE

Daniel Alejandro González

This exhibition is an opportunity for dialogue with the artists about their situatedness and positionalities, and about their relationships with power. The artworks provide insight into how they are impacted by societal power. The visual elements and artistic expressions address symbols and images of white supremacy from various perspectives. There are expressions of power relationships that connect at multiple levels ranging from the interpersonal, institutional, societal, and intrapersonal dimensions.

CONTEMPORARY DIALOGUE

The dialogue of the current era in the U.S. includes issues of racial and cultural conflicts inspired by national and local occurrences. National discourses include the anti-immigrant and white supremacist principles espoused by the current president. These expressions of othering are an attempt to normalize the hierarchical value of people by race, gender, class, and citizenship status. Conflicts over public art pieces are flashpoints where opposing sides clash over the legality and the appropriateness of public art that glorifies historical figures who promoted and championed racialized policies of slavery and legalized oppression. The discourse on these topics has inspired intense and violent interactions.

In Charlottesville, Virginia, white supremacists united to rally against the removal of a statue of a Confederate icon from a public park. When people arrived to protest this action, an enraged supporter of the rally was inspired to drive his vehicle into the crowd of protesters, disregarding their right to express themselves, disregarding their humanity, and ultimately killing one person and injuring nineteen more.

Another national discourse is the #MeToo movement which is promoting the voices and rights of women through dialogue. Across the country, women are inspired to overcome the social pressures of shame and judgment designed to silence them. They have begun sharing their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse in public forums. The energy behind this movement has impacted various sectors. In the film industry, there has been long-term systematic harassment and misogyny. This movement has allowed for individual perpetrators to be publicly outed and held more accountable than in the past. The meaningful dialogue from the #MeToo movement has helped women reclaim their voices and speak their truths.

ICONOGRAPHY, LABELS, & POWER

Images of Power is about the artists reclaiming the power, speaking for themselves, of reclaiming their identities, and of reconquering internal elements of their own minds, ideologies, voices, and artistic representations. These works include the obvious pieces of oppression and white supremacy and extend into their reaches and influences in their lives and communities.

Mario Garza, Marcelina Gonzales, Alejandro Macias, and Alán Serna all provide commonly known references to white supremacy and historical abuses of power like iconography of Ku Klux Klan members' gowns and hoods. Andrei Rentería references the connotations of a man in a hoodie. Images of hoodies implicate the coded vocabulary of othering. Hoodies reaffirm discourses on labels and calling someone a 'thug'. The dominant discourse infers that the wearer of a hoodie is a non-white citizen, who should be feared, and it would be largely supported and legally justifiable if they were murdered. Christopher Velasco challenges how beauty is often defined by elements of white culture and phenotypes. These can be seen in efforts to make one's hair straighter, lighter, and blonder, or the lightening of one's skin tone. Amanda Benavides presents other images that show the standardized white male body and the respect and reverence it expects and threatens to enforce.

The works together create a new space to confront the oppression and violence of power ideologies. The principles being challenged here range from the labeling of who is an official 'American', what

is a dignified and noble form of labor, what are the limits of one's gender, and how do these all get decided by someone else when it pertains to marginalized individuals and ethnic communities. The artists collectively share their own agency for self-reflection on how to define their own beauty, their own personal and professional boundaries, and critique the physical violence and the institutional and administrative violence that abuse communities of color.

RECLAIMING VOICE, HISTORY & IDENTITY

Ashley Mireles' piece, *Reconquista!*, speaks to a historical and larger sense of what parts of history and herself are left out of dominant discourses and institutionalized official knowledge. The imagery references a creation story with protective and loving hands, similar to concepts of Pachamama. There are visual references to Mesoamerican history and culture like the national flower of Mexico, the Dahlia pinnata. The imagery of corn in this piece speaks to indigenous scientific and cultural contributions, specifically those of women.

These ideas relay a lacking awareness of indigenous and non-white histories. There is limited space for indigenous values in educational settings and in contemporary discourses. By writing *Reconquista!* in Spanish, the image becomes a vehicle with a clear purpose of valuing Mesoamerican histories, contributions, place, and revisiting agency. Here, this sense of reconquering tells of a reminder to reclaim valuable pieces of ourselves and of our history that dominant discourses demean and exclude. This reminder of indigenous contributions and belonging is an important message for meaningful and constructive national dialogues.

RECLAIMING IDENTITY & PATRIOTISM

The video titled *FLAG FOOTBALL*, Rafael Fernando Gutierrez, Jr., both displays and challenges the reverence often given to the U.S. flag. There is a widely-understood etiquette to handling the flag. Rules extend to how you hold it, fold it, display it, store it, and present it. These rules relay the importance of what the flag is, and the ideals and constructs that it represents. With *FLAG FOOTBALL* we have the smooth and reverent cadence of a standard U.S. flag being caressed, handled, and precisely folded. The diegetic sound is limited to how the person and their hands interact with the flag.

The relationship between the artist and the flag moves from this reverent interaction to a combative one. We are not privy to the details of the relationship between the handler and the flag, but we can infer the intimacy and hostility between them. The video of the performance challenges both what it means to be a patriot and who gets the final say in attributing the honor of that label.

RECLAIMING IDENTITY & GENDER

Kristel Orta Puente's piece, *Disambiguation of the Introverted Megalomaniac*, uses a defiant tone with layered messages and an opportunity to reimagine gender. There is imagery of a strong-willed, confident, and indifferent Frida Kahlo in front of a U.S. flag. The stereotypes of an exotic, meek, and docile Latina woman is problematized. Taking its place is the independent and indifferent Latina who does not seem to need male affirmation, nor male action and male leadership in order for her to act and live purposefully. The double middle finger 'fuck you' is another opportunity to reflect on normative expectations of gender.

In this way, the piece is dialogical and interactive. This imagery urges viewers to engage in a dialogue with the work and conceptually with the artist. It also promotes critical reflection. Like any challenge to our normative experiences, we may be reactionary, resistant, and defensive of these movements and of their messages even if they speak to our own realities and our own self-interests.

DIALOGUE & CRITICAL REFLECTION

Before there is a challenge to external assumptions, these pieces are a contribution of self-identification, self-determination. What is beyond the piece? Not just what are the obvious elements of challenging and identifying power and oppression, but what have they been through to feel these inspirations, to feel these pains, and to seek ways to heal, challenge cycles of abuse, and engage in dialogues both public and internal. What is our role in these relationships and how are we complicit?

Maybe the messages in these works are not directed at our individual behaviors but at our collective privileges. Are there vehicles of power and privilege that we collectively are pushing into the artists' social spaces that inspire such a strong pushback? Shall we

look here at a woman that should be critiqued and challenged, or can we consider our contribution to this message and historical relationship? Should we consider what components of power we opportunistically deny and benefit from? This exhibition has created a voice of empowerment, of educating, of advocating, and being critically reflexive so as not to pretend immunity and blind neutrality.

By interacting with these works, we can transform our understanding of power and privilege. We can transform ourselves to see that there are places and spaces to improve dialogue. Ethnic minorities can be more aware and sure of their belonging, history, identities, and culture as dignified elements of who they are. Collectively, we can become transformed in how we listen and how we communicate about power and oppression.

RECONQUISTA! OF AGENCY & DIALOGUE

This exhibition is not simply about an underrepresentation of artists, voices, and spaces. It is about censorship of their work and access to public discourse. These works are contributions to the current and ongoing dialogue on systemic abuses of power including white supremacist principles and their impact on communities. This exhibit is an opportunity to transform dialogical practices that are important to our country. Here, these artists are speaking directly and reclaiming themselves. This is a *Reconquista!* of their voices, identities, and personal boundaries.

###

Daniel Alejandro González, MA, researcher and filmmaker, a graduate of New Mexico State University, his research examines ethnic and cultural identity in teacher development and bicultural visual arts communities of practice, pedagogy, critical studies, and social movements.

BROW
NESS
VS.
WHITE
NESS:
AN
INTRO
SPECT
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NEON

Kelvin L. Easiley Jr.

What images come to mind when you think of whiteness? Not as a color but as an identity? How does one either choose it or have the moniker ascribed to them involuntarily? These were some of the questions I had when I interviewed Mark Martinez, a contemporary artist whose work primarily consists of mixed media and installations. We recently met on a Tuesday afternoon at a local tap room and began our discussion about his art, censorship, white supremacy as an ideology, and whiteness as identity. Martinez self-describes as “tenuously Latino.” He was clean-shaven, a mix between brooding and affable. I perceived him as deeply insightful and that he doesn’t take his work or its intended message as something to trifle with.

Martinez is a contemporary artist whose work primarily focuses on whiteness, Brownness, and his own relation to systems of oppression. In July 2017, Martinez showcased a new series of work incorporating neon signs. All of Martinez’s works were tongue-in-cheek nods to the absurdities of white supremacy’s inclination to divert attention away from its inherent racist narrative. The neon signs glowed brightly in white light and were unapologetic in their messaging. One read “No new white friends” and the other “Some of my best friends are white”. The latter sign was a subversion of the popular compulsive response used by people who are accused of being racist. In response, they claim to not be racist by stating that one of their best friends is a person of color, usually Black. The piece is full of irony, showing proof that these people are bereft of an inward dialogue that would indicate that their response in and of itself is problematic. In this way,

Martinez's work is deliberate and unflinching. But, the neon sign installation didn't come without controversy. There was a third neon in this series that was not displayed as intended. Martinez created another radiant neon sign that had a glowing closed fist emoji, which is often used to symbolize solidarity, and underneath it was the phrase "off white power". The sign's lettering had the word "off" actually turned off, not illuminated. However, "white power" glowed brightly. The museum refused to show the piece stating that it would create an unsafe space and that they didn't want to explain it to their audience. The museum even went as far as to call the piece "unsuccessful art". Martinez and the curator obviously wanted the piece to be shown so they were willing to compromise and provide some companion reading to give the work historical and contemporary context. Still, the work was ultimately denied and censored.

The exhibition space that Martinez's work was featured is a Latin-centric museum. This museum is also in the heart of downtown Austin—Texas's liberal bastion in an overwhelmingly conservative state. I asked Martinez if he was surprised that his work was censored at the museum, especially in such a progressive city. He noted that his curator was white and was in no way surprised by the censoring. In Austin, being liberal meant nothing. In fact, Martinez strongly believes that if it was shown in Portland, where he attended art school, then it would not have gotten the axe. What that says about liberal politics in Texas versus the Oregon coastal city is up for debate.

During our talk, I sought to comprehend the underpinnings of his dynamic voice as an artist and the subsequent work that stems from it. Martinez elaborated that when he left San Antonio to attend art school in Portland, Oregon, it was there that he became aware of his "otherness." While feeling privileged to be at an art school across the country, an experience he acknowledges is not usually afforded to other kids from his neighborhood, he was made keenly aware for the first time that he was the only person of color in the physical and metaphorical room.

Martinez recalled pivotal incidents in his art life. Moments like the times when he was made to feel suspect by white shop owners who would follow him around art stores as though he may have been stealing, or when he would walk on trails and people would

cross to the other side out of a perceived threat. He told me about how, during his undergraduate work, his brother came to join him on campus and other students would approach him about class work for classes that they did not share. They did however share classes with his brother—to whom Martinez bares very little resemblance aside from the fact that they are both Brown. These and other encounters sent Martinez on a creative path that sought to both challenge and flip the gaze of being “othered” back around on the same group that sees him as an outsider.

What happened then was an ongoing conversation about whiteness and its relation to other “Off-White” groups. *Off-White* is a term Martinez has coined to describe people of color and their adjacency to whiteness. The closer one aligns themselves with whiteness the more they are avowed to the system of oppression that is white supremacy. Martinez seeks to subvert whiteness and white supremacy in his work by pointing it out. He wittingly does so using grating and sarcastic comedy, albeit dark (no pun intended), to point out the machinations of an oppressive system that we are all entangled in but rarely talk about.

We spoke at length about his own identity politics and the conflict they present. Martinez grew up in San Antonio, which is a city of about 1.5 million people. The majority of these individuals being of Mexican descent. Martinez spent a lot of time distancing himself from the Brownness that most would label him with and still doesn’t feel as if he can fully claim a Latino identity. Martinez says that he is used to “having been somebody that has grown up fairly assimilated, that has not really grown up with the culture.” He continued, “I grew up monolingual and with a certain kind of television.” These are not facts of life Martinez takes for granted. He shared that “the positioning that one gets when they do become more assimilated and indoctrinated in a white supremacist system, you start seeing stuff like distancing yourself from your Spanish-speaking relatives.” Thus, Martinez is painfully aware that there is a direct correlation between the treatment of individuals with noticeable Spanish accents and the process by which his inherited privilege and claim to whiteness make him complicit in the oppression of others. He is cognizant that if he is not actively fighting against the perks of what being a light-complected Brown person affords him, then he is a part of a larger systemic problem.

In an era when white nationalism is regaining mainstream momentum and the public discourse surrounding immigration, particularly from our southern border, is saturating all forms of media, it is refreshing to have a visionary like Martinez to send a silencing shockwave, if but for a brief moment, that disrupts the chatter and forces his audience to gaze inward and listen to their own voice. Whether or not Martinez's "Off-White power" sign is unsuccessful art is debatable — as an aside, if the installation engenders such visceral emotion, it seems indicative of what the purpose of successful art is.

Art is personal and often assists in facilitating uncomfortable conversations. As such, Martinez's artistic focus on whiteness as an identity and white supremacy as an institution is a brave endeavor. Martinez's voice is a welcome reprieve from the cacophony that drowns out the inner voice. His work calls things what they are, successfully and unapologetically.

###

Kelvin L. Easley Jr. was born and raised in Oakland, CA. He is a poet, a spoken word artist, and essayist. He resides in San Antonio, TX with his immediate family, his partner Mark, and their two dogs. When Kelvin is not writing, he is reading. If he is not reading he is writing. If he finds himself doing neither he is immersed in the world of computers and technology. Kelvin's biggest literary influences are Toni Morrison, bell hooks, Essex Hemphill, and James Baldwin. His work has been published at The Black Youth Project, a Zine published out of London, by the Lonely Londoners, and the former online publication Mused Magazine.

ARTIST BIOGR APHIES

ART WORK DESCR PTIONS

Born in the city of Allende in Coahuila, Mexico, Abel Ortiz-Acosta earned a Masters of Fine Arts with a concentration in painting from The University of Iowa. He currently resides in Uvalde, Texas, where he is an Associate Professor of Art at Southwest Texas Junior College. In 2010, Ortiz founded Art Lab, a contemporary art space promoting arts and culture along the U.S./Mexico Border.

Ortiz has exhibit his work across Texas and beyond, including K Space Contemporary, Corpus Christi; TX; Crown Center Gallery, Loyola University, Chicago, IL; Presa House Gallery, San Antonio, TX; HERA Gallery, Wakefield, RI; and the Main Art Gallery at University of Texas at San Antonio, TX.

Iconoclast II (Putin) is a frontal portrait of the Russian President Vladimir Putin with a spoon draped vertically atop his nose, creating an art historical dialogue with Soviet Nonconformist Art, specifically Viktor Pivovarov's Sacralizers for a Friendly Party from the Sacralizers album.

However, the impetus for the incorporation of the spoon in this painting was found in the book, *Faith, Power and the Twilight of the Romanovs* by Douglas Smith. According to the author, it was custom for Rasputin to "lick the spoon before he used to serve others." The mystery of this ritual sparked the idea for this painting.

Ortiz states,

By focusing on the weakest links in the United States: race and economic disparity, Putin is using the ancient technique of divide and conquer. His favorite weapons are fake news and armies of hackers. Putin is set on revenge on the West for its role in the collapse of the Soviet Union and along with it, Russia's glory days. His cold stare, reminiscent of a 'Westworld' cyborg determined on his goal; Putin is undermining our democracy and his abettors are within our borders now.



Iconoclast II (Putin), 2017,
oil and collage on panel with metal spoon, 16 x 16"

ALBERT ALVAREZ



A San Antonio native, Albert Alvarez earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in digital animation from the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design.

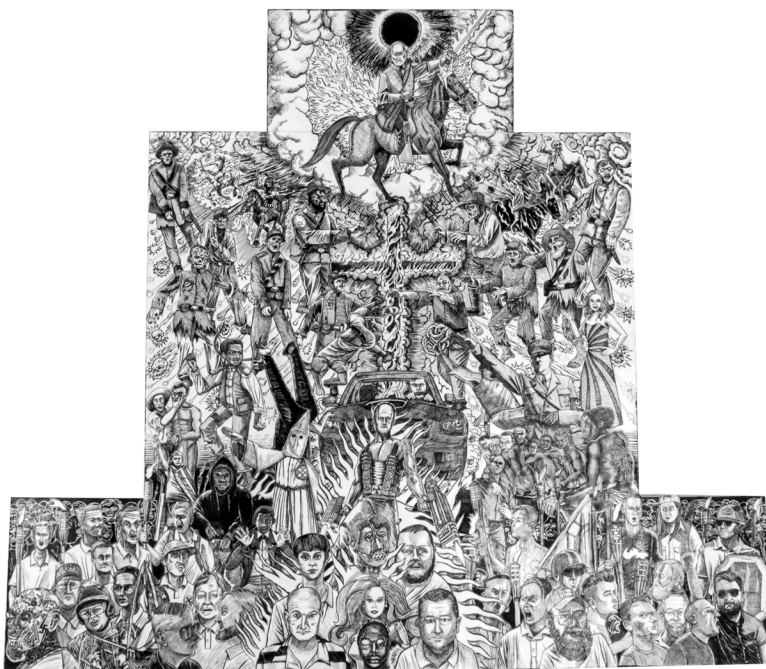
Many of his paintings are stylistically a nod to his admiration for contemporary artist Joe Coleman. His drawings thematically share the same distressed and turbulent subject matter and compact narrative compositions.

Yet, Alvarez also harks back to the draftsmanship of Albrecht Dürer with his use of intensely intricate lines and dramatic tonal range. This is how the artist obtained his nickname Albrechto Alvarez, along with his very stylized signature that is also homage to the great 16th century Northern Renaissance master. A third comparison can also be made to the satiric cartoonist Robert Crumb, but Alvarez's concentration on the visual vernacular of San Antonio's underbelly of society in a stylistically baroque-excess is what makes his artwork his own. With a deep focus on the environment he grew up in—the poor and crime-ridden south side of San Antonio—and the incorporation of the very distinct characters from his hometown makes Alvarez' oeuvre so unique.

Alvarez is in the collections of the San Antonio Museum of Art and the City of San Antonio. He has exhibited at the Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin, TX; *The Power of Ten* at the McNay Museum; The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and Centro de Artes, San Antonio, TX. Alvarez's work will also be included in forthcoming exhibits at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and Texas A&M's Wright Gallery.

For the *Images of Power* exhibition, Alvarez presents an unholy altarpiece fusing America's dark histories of white supremacy with its most resent upticks. Zombies from the confederate army lash out into an apocalyptic scene with flaming skulls jutting across the battle field. Images of whip-scared slaves and Africans huddled in cargo-shipments call out the systems of slavery that the confederate army was fighting to uphold.

In the center of the mayhem, a cross is ablaze symbolizing the historical ritual of the Ku Klux Klan, a ceremony the KKK still partakes in today. The equestrian figure in the top register not only connects the narrative to the four horsemen of the apocalypse, but also references the contemporary confederate monument debates. The desire to remove a public statue of Robert E. Lee was the impetus for the marches and the counter-protests in Charlottesville, Virginia in August of 2017. Events which led to the man shown here just below the cross driving a Dodge Challenger at full-speed into counter



The Second Seal, 2017-2018
collage, ink on paper, 32 x 36"

protesters. Alvarez states, “in that man’s mind, he thought he was a hero defending their ideology.” The driver stares directly at the viewer as a call to action—you’re next.

Perhaps, this murderer thought of himself akin to the video game protagonist, Duke Nukem, the figure in the foreground overlaying the vehicle. The despicable lot of folks flaming in hell below, also dreamt themselves a similar type of video game vigilante for the Klan’s creed: Dylann Roof, responsible for a mass shooting in an African American church, Christopher Cantwell, the crying neo-Nazi, and George Zimmerman –Trayvon Martin’s murderer, who was acquitted of the charges, prompting Black Lives Matter and civil-rights rallies across the country. Barbie is sandwiched in the middle of the pack, as the perfect emblem for their nonsensical notions of white purity.

In the left lower register, a man holds up his white hands with a black face, referencing the tradition of white actors painting their faces with black make-up to play the role of a Black man. This idea harks back to the 1915 silent film, *The Birth of a Nation*, a film that is credited with renewing mass interest in the Klan. To the right, we find an accurate depiction of the tiki-torch marchers from the *Unite the Right* rally that were outed on social media, such as the rage-filled Peter Cvjetanovic who’s image of hate was likened to the iconic photo of Hazel Bryan.

As viewers, we want to shut the doors to this altarpiece and see the positive outcomes painted on the other side of the panel; however, Alvarez paints the story of white supremacy in America with the same hash candor that he depicts San Antonio barrios. By intertwining so much history with the horrific recent events, Alvarez reminds us there is nothing positive to draw regarding this topic. With all of these references to horrible people and events lumped into one altar, Alvarez reminds us that hate is powerful and evil is visible.



The Second Seal (details)

*MUST REMEMBER THAT WE
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WITH CHILDREN.*

Veronica (Nica) Aquino was born in Los Angeles, California where she currently works and resides in Northeast LA as an art educator for Center for the Arts Eagle Rock. Aquino earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon and obtained a Masters in Visual Culture from the School of Art at Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom. As a multidisciplinary artist, Aquino explores ideas of place, identity, and diaspora in her work.

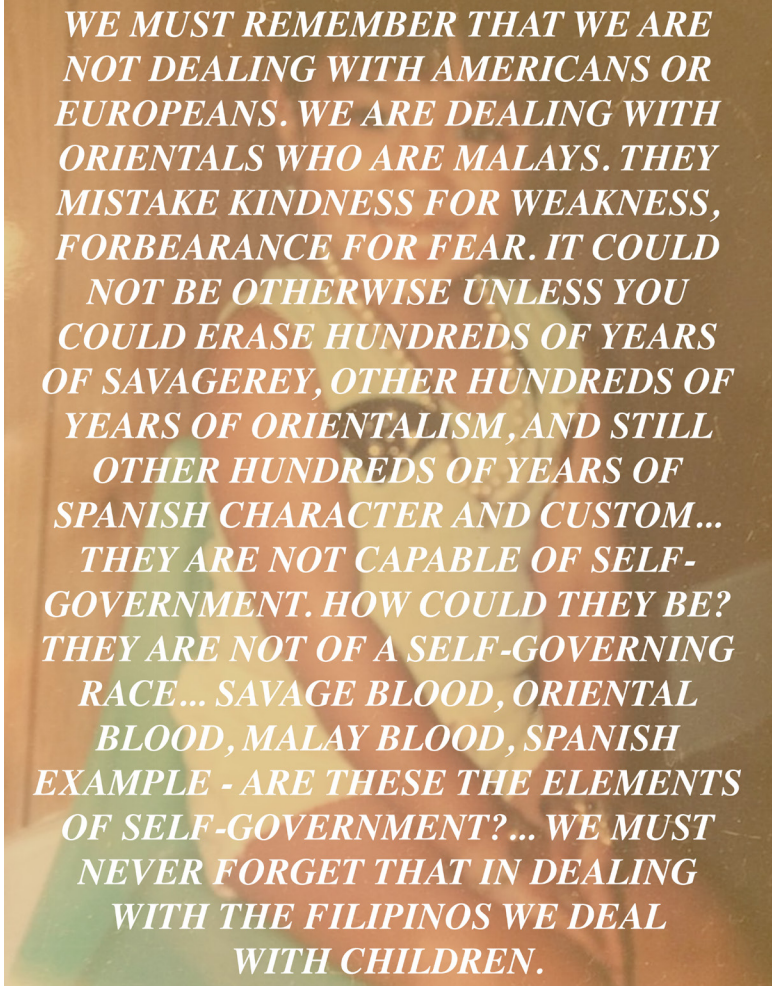
Aquino has exhibited internationally in Manchester, United Kingdom; Belgrade, Serbia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and nationally including exhibits in Portland, Oregon and Los Angeles, California.

Using photography, Aquino aims to convey her story as a first generation Ilokana-American navigating North American culture, but she is also inspired by the diverse immigrant communities that surround her.

Like many artists that harness the power of the written word to add impact to their practice, such as, Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer, Aquino appropriates text to deepen her visual message. Historical text from U.S. Senator Albert Beveridge declaring his support for the annexation of the Philippines is overlaid on a childhood image of the artist. The villainous qualities of “savages” that Beveridge bestows on the Philippine people with his racist rhetoric lays emblazon over the sparkling smile of an innocent child.

Aquino states,

At the turn of the 20th Century, White America used racist imagery as a way to primitivize indigenous populations and other colonized peoples. One of the commonly forgotten nations colonized by the United States at the turn of the century was the Philippines. While indigenous Filipinos were trafficked into the U.S and displayed on touring human zoos across North America, racist propaganda was simultaneously distributed across the states to show White America why these uncivilized savages needed U.S. occupation. White Americans attempted to make humanitarian arguments for colonialism, claiming that the Filipinos needed the U.S. occupation to assist in civilizing them. William Howard Taft, the twenty-seventh president of the U.S., coined the term ‘Little Brown Brothers,’ infantilizing the indigenous Filipinos. He stated that the Filipinos were not fit for self-government, were like children and depended on the U.S. to civilize them. Going to war and colonizing the Philippines became an extension of Native American genocide and African slavery. The Philippine-American War is not recognized in U.S. history in American education, coinciding with the ongoing historical erasure of U.S. imperialism. This erasure from U.S. history contributes to the overall erasure of the Filipino-American identity.



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THEY ARE NOT CAPABLE OF SELF-
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THEY ARE NOT OF A SELF-GOVERNING
RACE... SAVAGE BLOOD, ORIENTAL
BLOOD, MALAY BLOOD, SPANISH
EXAMPLE - ARE THESE THE ELEMENTS
OF SELF-GOVERNMENT?... WE MUST
NEVER FORGET THAT IN DEALING
WITH THE FILIPINOS WE DEAL
WITH CHILDREN.*

Self-Portrait: Little Brown Sister, 2016
35mm Photograph, Digital Media, 20 x 16"

AMANDA BENAVIDAS



Amanda Benavides is a multimedia artist born and raised in Crystal City, Texas. She earned a Bachelor in Visual Arts from Columbia University in New York, prior to moving to San Antonio in 2013, where she founded Mâché, a creative company that includes a mobile art gallery and custom piñatas.

Benavides' practice has focused on many topics to date, including the physicality of materials and place versus virtual and imaginary worlds, social mobility, violence, transcendence, and hip-hop.

For the *Images of Power* exhibition, Benavides states that growing up, she felt a sense of inferiority around white men. In *Matt Damon*, a photograph of a manikin made for kickboxing practice displayed with a visible price tag, the irony runs deep; in the alternative sphere of an Academy sporting store, one can purchase a life-sized oppressor-type figure for fighting practice. Benavides says "I chose to title the piece *Matt Damon* because to me, Matt Damon represents the stereotypical, privileged white male. He has a degree from Harvard and has worked with so many different people in the industry, yet has still managed to make controversial sexist-leaning and racist-leaning comments in recent interviews."

In her rasquache mixed-media work, Benavides incorporates a plethora of mark-makers including, acrylic and airbrush paints, charcoal, polyurethane, marker and spray paint to achieve a complex layering of pigments on cardboard that the artist uses for her piñata shipments. Many layers of paint are applied in a gestural manner throughout a text-based composition that is reminiscent of the graffiti epigrams of the late Jean-Michel Basquiat. However, this statement records a sad moment in contemporary U.S. history.

Just after a pair of devastating hurricanes hit and destroyed the Island of Puerto Rico in 2017, President Donald Trump tweeted in response to criticism for not sending more federal aid to help the humanitarian crisis on the island: "They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort."* This statement juxtaposed with the complicated and iconic image of Speedy Gonzalez, a Warner Brothers animated cartoon character conflicted with both good qualities and mixed with derogatory Mexican stereotypes that other characters in the programming held, such as, some of the other mice being lazy and drinking too much. As it is clear, Donald Trump was accusing Puerto Ricans of being lazy for wanting more Federal Aid after the disaster. However, Benavides reflects also on the positive attributes of the cartoon mouse, stating "he is so small, but he smiles and exists in color. It makes me sad but also hopeful."

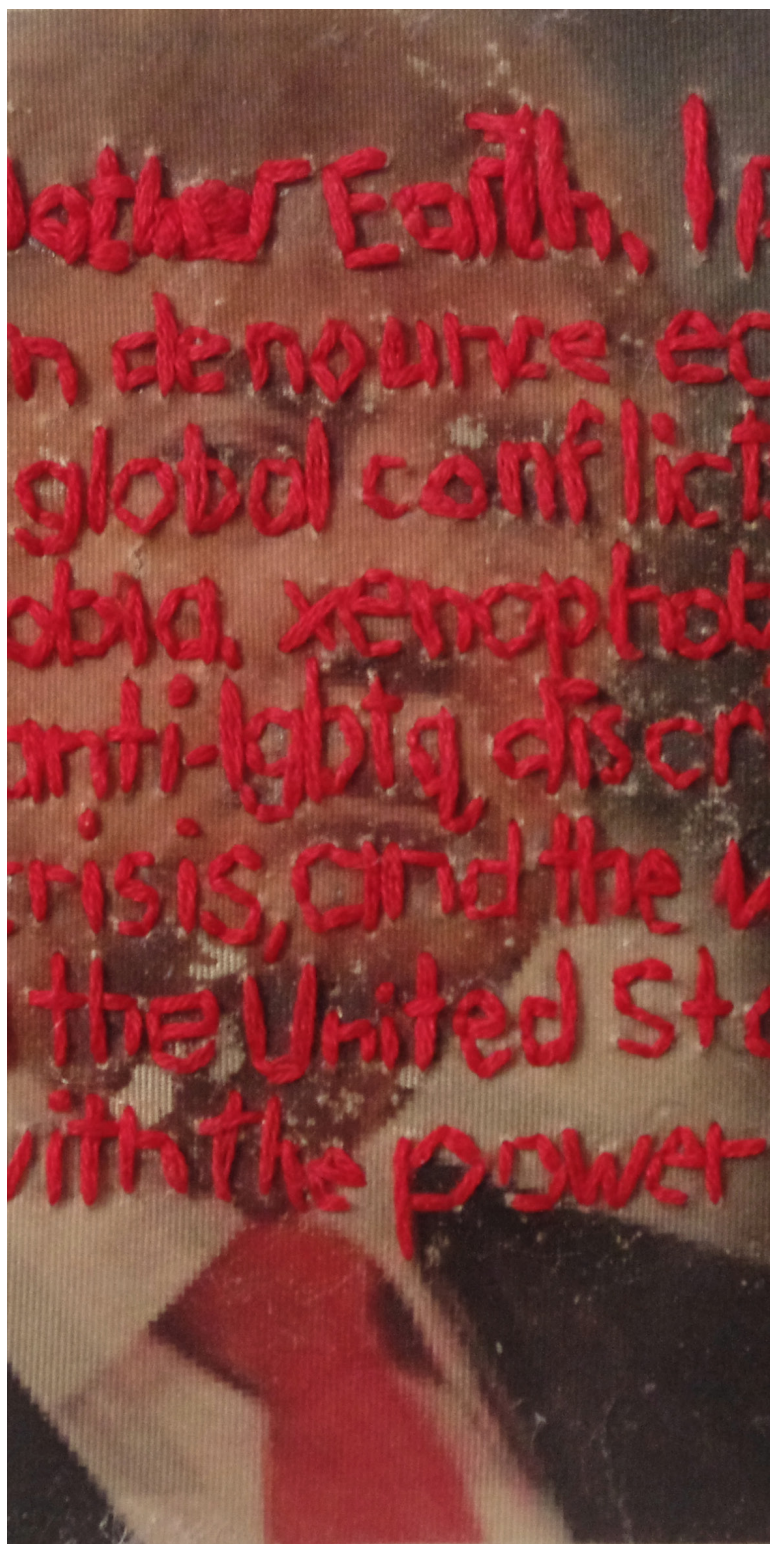
*Trump, Donald J. Twitter Post Sep 30, 2017, 7:29 AM



Top: Matt Damon, 2017
C-Print Photo, 12 x 12"

Bottom: Speedy Gonzalez, 2017
cardboard with acrylic, airbrush, spray paint, pencil,
clay, polyurethane, digital photos, 36 x 24"

SARAH CASTILLO



Sarah Castillo is a San Antonio based feminist artist, who has worked extensively in fiber arts and collage but also employs painting, photography, and video into her artistic practice. With a Masters in Bicultural Studies, Castillo is highly engaged with identity formation, history, and cultural memory. Well respected for her work with the Chicana visual artist collective Mas Rudas, Castillo also gained much recognition independently for her work as the founder and director of Lady Base Gallery, a premier platform for women and LGBTQIA artists in South Texas.

Castillo is a recipient of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC) grant for visual artists and was also selected for the *IV Border Biennial* organized by the El Paso Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez. She has exhibited at the Galveston Arts Center, Luminaria Arts Festival, The University of Texas at San Antonio Art Gallery, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, Mexic-Arte Museum, and Artpace. Furthermore, Castillo is a resident artist at Clamp Light Studios & Gallery.

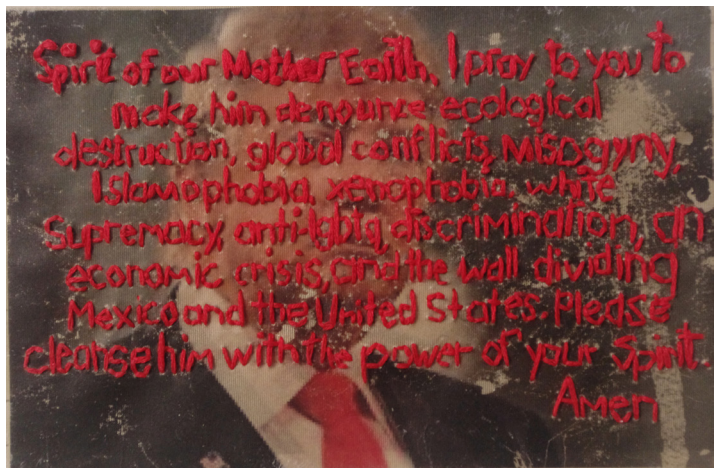
In the *Embroidered Prayer Series*, Castillo uses the traditional materials of embroidery to make politically charged artworks. By doing so she harks back to a long tradition of rebellious embroiders fighting for righteousness with needles and thread, such as, the artists who made embroidery based suffrage banners to demand the right to vote.

Using text appropriated from a book of Catholic prayers that ward off evil spirits, *Spiritual Warfare Prayers*, she stitches over some of the most troubling images of American culture today including President Donald Trump, and his troublesome appointees—Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt—all of whom stand at the moral antithesis of their positions.

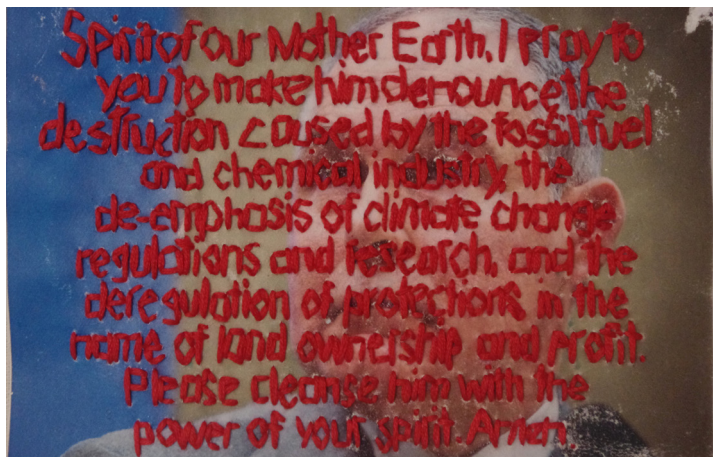
Top: *Tyrant Be Gone*, 2017
color photo transfer on fiber, cotton thread, 4 x 6"

Middle: *Scott Pruitt*, 2017-2018
color photo transfer on fiber, cotton thread, 4 x 6"

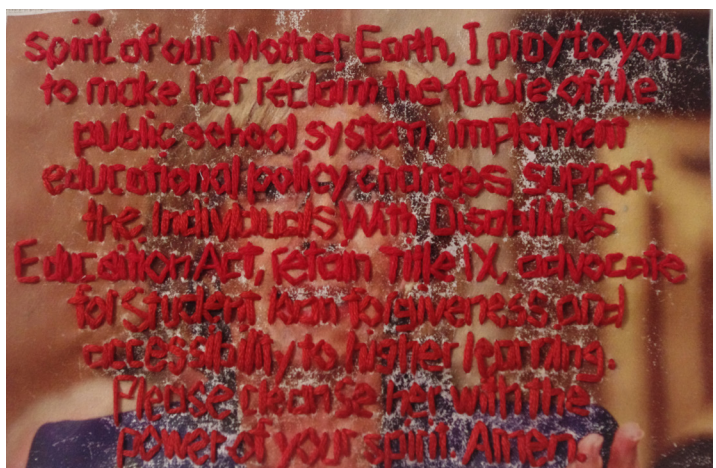
Bottom: *Betsy DeVos*, 2017-2018
color photo transfer on fiber, cotton thread, 4 x 6"



Spirit of our Mother Earth, I pray to you to
make him denounce ecological
destruction, global conflicts, misogyny,
Islamophobia, xenophobia, white
Supremacy, anti-lgbtq discrimination, an
economic crisis, and the wall dividing
Mexico and the United States. Please
cleans him with the power of your Spirit.
Amen

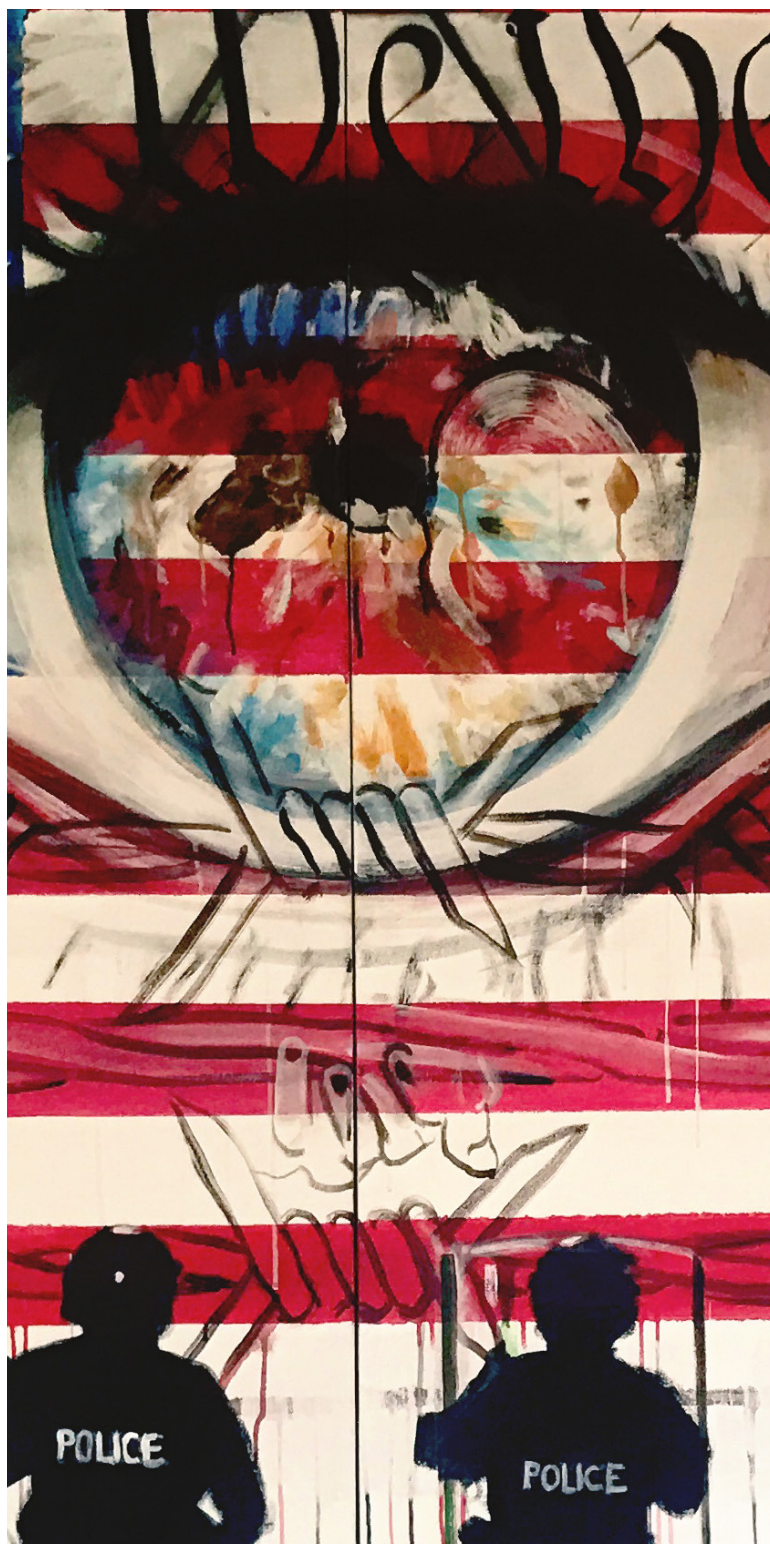


Spirit of our Mother Earth, I pray to
you to make him denounce the
destruction caused by the fossil fuel
and chemical industry, the
de-emphasis of climate change
regulations and research, and the
deregulation of protections in the
name of land ownership and profit.
Please cleanse him with the
power of your spirit. Amen.



Spirit of our Mother Earth, I pray to you
to make her reclaim the future of the
public school system, implement
educational policy changes, support
the Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act, retain Title IX, advocate
for Student Loan forgiveness and
accessibility to higher learning.
Please cleanse her with the
power of your spirit. Amen.

JOSE COSME



Jose Cosmé has a community-oriented art practice. He uses art as a process of therapy for healing and good. In the San Antonio art community, he has been involved with the Texan-French Alliance, 1906, Say Sí, Gallista Gallery, Centro Cultural Aztlan and San Anto Cultural Arts. He volunteered and later led murals for San Anto, where he was proud to honor both community members and Chicano heroes. Through this experience, he worked with Judy Baca, Valerie Aranda, Victor Ochoa, Raul Salinas and other influential people.

Cosmé has exhibited at Museo Alameda, Arizona State University, Centro Cultural Aztlan, 1906, Salon Mijangos, Gallista Gallery, Bihl Haus Arts, 3rd Space, Texas A&M Cultural Arts Center, for the Arts and Freight Gallery.

Growing up on the west side of San Antonio and working so closely with the community has strongly shaped his artistic outlook. *We the People* shows a line of police officers with riot-gear superimposed over an American Flag. Other references are made to the unjust treatment of people of color such as segregation alongside text from the constitution. The flag consists of bricks and barbed wire evoking incarceration. And the Eye of Providence or the eye of God is watching from above. The viewer wishes for God to be a witness to the events, but there is a double meaning as this eye is found on the reverse side of the American dollar, reminding us that the prison system is a lucrative business. Cosmé was himself imprisoned for murder and later exonerated.

Cosmé states,

I'm not looking for a definitive statement or one interpretation of this work, rather I would like it to be a conversation piece. In *We the People*, I'm looking at past events and our current situations, and I'm hoping to learn from mistakes.



We the People..., 2017
acrylic on canvas , 6 x 8'

JOE DE LA CRUZ



Joe De La Cruz is a San Antonio native. As founder and director of Silkworm Studio and Gallery, he has been a significant part of the cultural infrastructure for San Antonio's South Flores District since 2012. As a professional art preparator, he works behind the scenes at major art institutions, while focusing on his artistic practice with an emphasis on drawing, painting, and printmaking.

De La Cruz has exhibited his work at the McNay Art Museum, Centro De Artes, Blue Star Contemporary, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio, and Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, Texas.

For this exhibition, De La Cruz presents drawings of t-shirts with quotidian references taken from Punk and Heavy Metal music. It is typical of his oeuvre to render common objects in realism and isolation.

De La Cruz states,

The story goes that Jello Biafra, the singer, and songwriter of the Dead Kennedys wrote *Nazi Punks Fuck Off* and released the single as a response to neo-Nazis who had started coming to shows. The DIY punk scene was inherently opposed to fascism, racism, conformity and suppression of the weak.

These drawing are from a series that approaches t-shirts as objects of expression and highlight the role they play in identity. I focus particularly on t-shirts that I had worn in my formative years; I had these shirts in 1996 as a high school kid. I was involved with the anti-racist skinhead movement, which meant actively trying to bring attention to the non-racist history of the subculture. However, the movement was hijacked by white nationalists and racists who gained media attention and notoriety in the 1970s and 1980s.

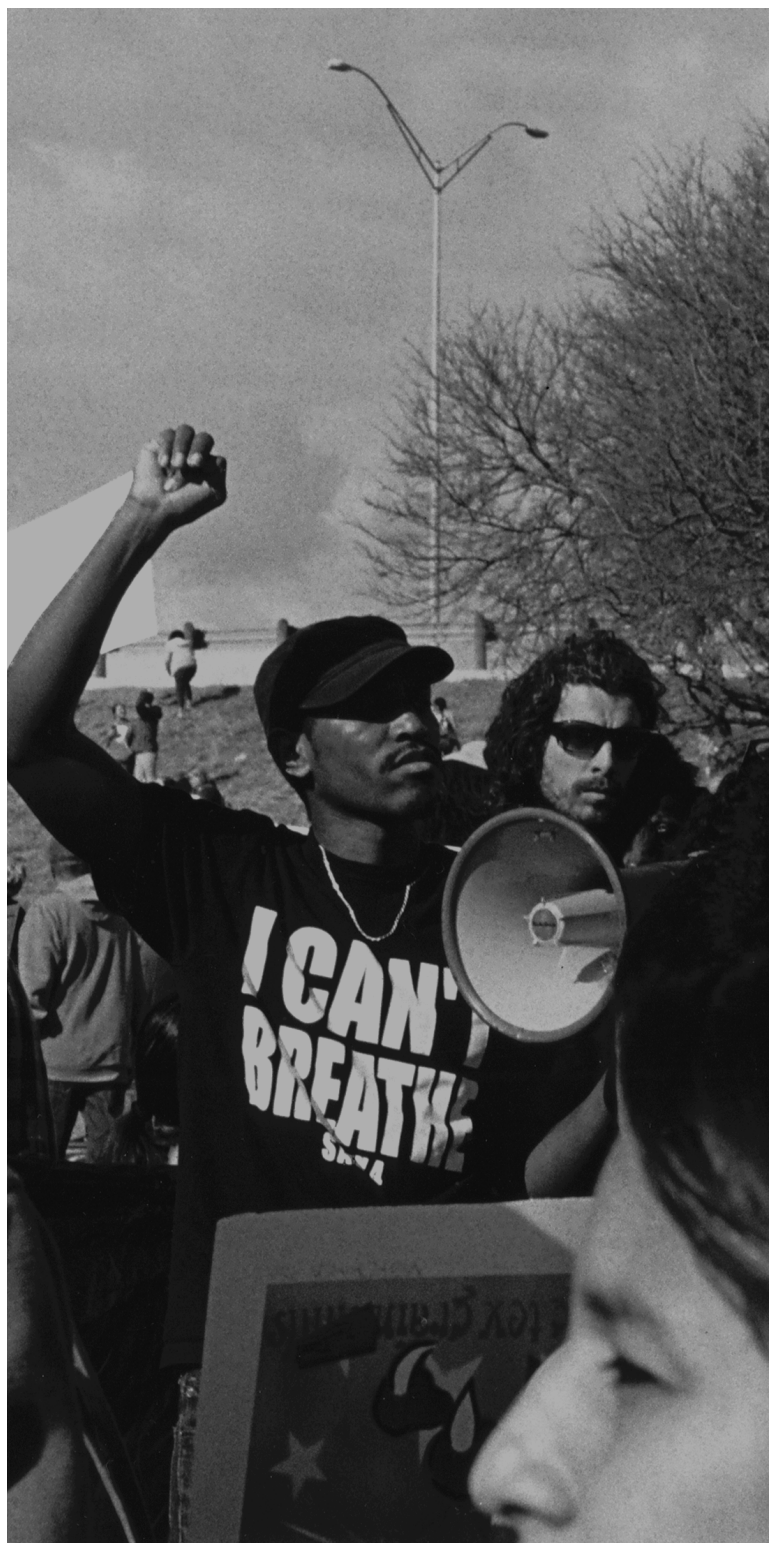
As I worked on this drawing, in 2017, the Nazis were once again in the news. Far right groups in the U.S. clashed with protesters and racial tensions heightened. A neo-Nazi killed nine Americans while they were in church, and the President defended white-nationalist protesters as 'fine people'.

As for the phrase *Kill 'em all, let God sort 'em out*, it emerged during the medieval ages and more recently was adopted as an unofficial slogan by some U.S. military units during various conflicts overseas. I feel that this sentiment is echoed domestically in the U.S. as well. We literally watch the unwarranted murder of fellow Americans on the streets and quickly refer to the victim's legal history or find other ways to vilify the person in an effort to reconcile their murder. It is a message of antagonism, supremacy, laziness, and a refusal to value the lives of anyone who is different from ourselves.



**Left: *Nazi Punks Fuck Off*, 2017
graphite on paper, 40 x 30"
photo by Jenelle Esparza**

**Right: *Kill 'Em All*, 2017
graphite on paper, 40 x 30"
photo by Jenelle Esparza
from the collection of Ruben Luna**



Manuel Diz was born in Gómez Palacio in the state of Durango, México but has called San Antonio home for almost a decade now. An emerging photographer, he is currently studying darkroom, digital photography and Photoshop at the Southwest School of Art. His photos have been shown in the *San Antonio Current*. Diz' artistic inspirations include Graciela Iturbide, Man Ray, Edward Weston, Henri Cartier Bresson, Vivian Maier and above all Manuel Álvarez Bravo.

I Can't Breathe and *Black Lives Matter* are two of the most important phrases of our time. "I Can't Breathe" were the last words uttered by unarmed Eric Garner as he was choked to death by officers. The horror and senseless murder of Garner by police was caught on tape for the world to see and subsequently gave rise to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Diz states,

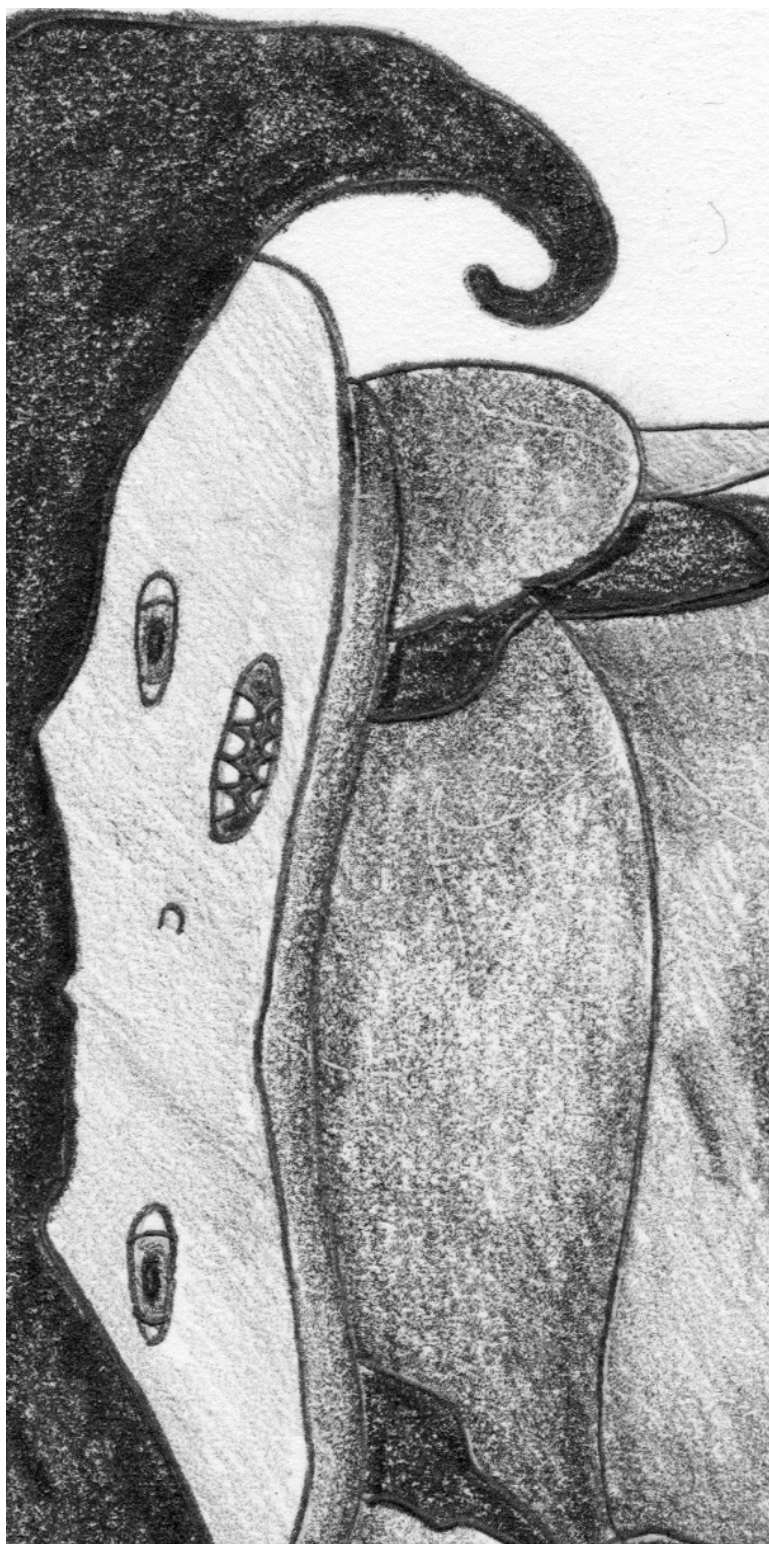
I use photography as a tool to find the truth. It is not always beautiful, but I aim to find the light of the truth in every part of society from religion, to politics and social structures. These images were taken during the Martin Luther King March in San Antonio, Texas, which is the largest March in the nation.



Top: *I Can't Breathe*, 2018
Silver Gelatin Print, 8 x 10"

Bottom: *Black Lives Matter*, 2018
Silver Gelatin Print, 6 x 8"

ANDRÉ FILIPEK



André Filipek was born in Lagunitas, California and he currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. His art focuses on the history of colonialism, the materials of the Mexican cultural import market, internalized racism, and culturally embedded Western supremacy in the United States.

Filipek earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland Oregon and has exhibited both nationally and internationally. He has shown in group exhibitions at Stadelshule, Frankfurt-Am-Main in Germany and Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon. Filipek has also had recent solo-exhibitions at Jace, Los Angeles, 100% Gallery, San Francisco; Produce Model, Chicago; Wreath, Atlanta; and Amor, Mexico City. He was also the co-founder and director of HQHQ in Portland, Oregon from 2013 – 2015.

Filipek states,

In my practice, I digest the ways that the United States systematically antagonizes Mexican culture and people through the colonial history of Latin America. The pain of colonialism is inextricable from Latino and Mexican identity -- my work isolates and re-contextualizes implicit symbols of Mexican culture. I am interested in the way that everyday material like food, packaging, television, and urban detritus clash against the American filter-bubble and can act as analogs for migration, goods import, and cultural diaspora. Choosing imagery that relates to my own lived experience as a first-generation mixed-race Chicano raised in an assimilated immigrant family, I transform combinations of these implicit symbols into tableaux that afford varying levels of access to the viewer based on their background. I am interested in contributing to the conversation of creating a “third-space” within which new languages for defining Mexican culture and heritage can emerge.

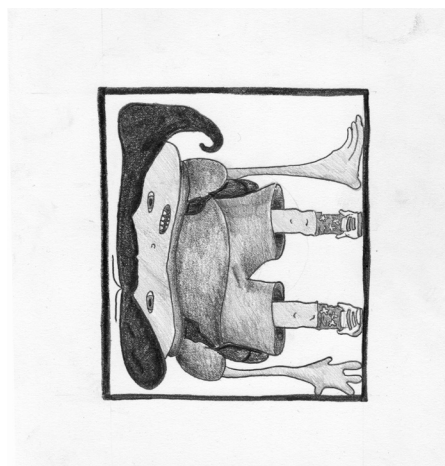
My ongoing series of *Dora Drawings*, uses the animated cartoon character Dora The Explorer as a vessel for expressing political and internal anxieties related to the U.S./Mexico border, mestizaje (the Mexican worldview based on indigenous and European hybridity), and Mexican-American identity.



Top Left: *Dora Drawing #12*, 2017
Graphite on paper, 10.75 x 12.25"



Top Right: *Dora Drawing #4*, 2017
Graphite on paper, 12.25 x 10.75"



Middle: *Dora Drawing #5*, 2017
Graphite on paper, 12.25 x 10.75"



Bottom: *Dora Drawing #9*, 2017
Graphite on paper, 1



Mario Garza was born and raised in San Antonio's East Side. He is a self-taught artist who finds inspiration from music, graffiti, abstract expressionism, and neo-expressionism.

Recent exhibitions include *Nuestra Gente* a two-person exhibition at the Centro De Artes, *Spacemen Evolved: Peace is Just 13 Light Years Away*, a solo-exhibition at Freight Gallery. Group exhibitions include *Art Heals Hearts* and *El Corazon de San Antonio*. Garza's work is within a number of important collections, such as Texas A&M University and University Hospital Medical Center.

Garza states,

In the wake after the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, I was overcome by the hatred and the protests of the white supremacists, neo-Nazis and other groups that sparked racial tensions and violence that killed an innocent woman this past August. I was angered by the hatred that was spewed by the alt-right, white supremacist's movement and how Trump could not call out and condemn these groups. I needed to express myself and used the only way I knew how to express my feelings and that was through art.

I had seen a photograph of a flower memorial that was dedicated to the victim that was killed at the rally and among the flowers and photograph was a sign that read No Place for Hate. My painting, *No Hate* depicts a small child whose mouth is covered and voice squelched by the hands of the KKK and the words *No Hate* is etched just above the hood and The KKK emblem. That photograph of the memorial inspired me to do the painting. *No Hate* shows the power and privilege that the white supremacists expect and how they attack and try to use their power over ethnic groups and people of diverse backgrounds to silence them.



No Hate, 2017
Acrylic, pencil on panel, 16.125 x 12.5"



Xavier Gilmore, a San Antonio native, earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Texas at San Antonio. His work largely focuses on the exploration of identity and the transfer of ideas using collage, drawing, and performance with a strong emphasis on intuition in his practice.

Gilmore has exhibited internationally at the Capilla del Arte, Puebla City and the Mueso Soumaya in Mexico City, Mexico. He has also exhibited regionally at Haus Collective, Hello Studio, High Wire Art Gallery and Clamp Light Gallery. In addition, he has a forthcoming solo-exhibition, *ASTROBLACK*, at the Southwest School of Art in San Antonio this spring.

Exploring ideas of power, Gilmore employs perhaps one of the most recognizable symbols, the U.S. flag, and presents it with new color relationships and materials. The composition shows a cropped view of a freely flying flag in motion, yet it is captured stiffly on canvas. Furthermore, its colors are replaced from the traditional red, white, and blue. The color orange can signify many things from uniforms, construction sites, caution signs, and alerts. Gilmore prefers the subjectivity of the connotations and the ideas of safety and safe zones. What one person feels is safe might make another person feel completely uncomfortable—this is the type of idiosyncratic areas the artist intends to explore with the viewer.



***flag(safe zone)*, 2016**
Acrylic paint on canvas and led lights, 60 x 96"
photo by Robert Pecina Jr.

***Untitled (bananas)*, 2016**
mixed-media collage, 6-5/8" x 13-1/4"
photo by Robert Pecina Jr.



Likewise, he references the dark past of an American corporation, the United Fruit Company in *Untitled(bananas)*. Bananas are a fruit of commerce that represent the history of the United States' pernicious relationship with Latin America in the name of capitalism. A crashed military aircraft muddles in the center of a discounted bag of rotting bananas, expressing the spoils of the environmental destruction, violence, and neocolonialism such a fruit epitomizes.

Gilmore states,

This work presents ideas about safety and safe zones and uses them as ambiguous figures. For example, *flag (safe zone)* considers color; its relation to ideas about safety, comfort, and the way that these feelings and notions vary per person or demographic.

I used orange because it's a color closely associated with caution zones or places where extra safety precautions are needed. The second color which is an off-white beige type color is associated with safety. In other words, it is a color one would use to repaint a house because it's safe and it's the default color people go to. It's even the default color for Band-Aids even though no one's skin is actually that color. The blue was really a response to people who "back the blue" or a more static representation of emergency lights.

Untitled (bananas) was made using my usual intuitive process. I create with the goal of making works free of censorship or conscious influence. The result was a piece that spoke to the commodification of militarization, tropical cultures and the way in which aesthetics and mass production has the potential to normalize and de-escalate our thoughts.

MARCELINA GONZALES



Marcelina Gonzales earned a Bachelors in Art from the University of Texas at Brownsville. She has exhibited in The Arts Center of Corpus Christi, El Paso International Museum of Art, Fort Works Art, NX2 Berlin Gallery, and the Brownsville Museum of Art.

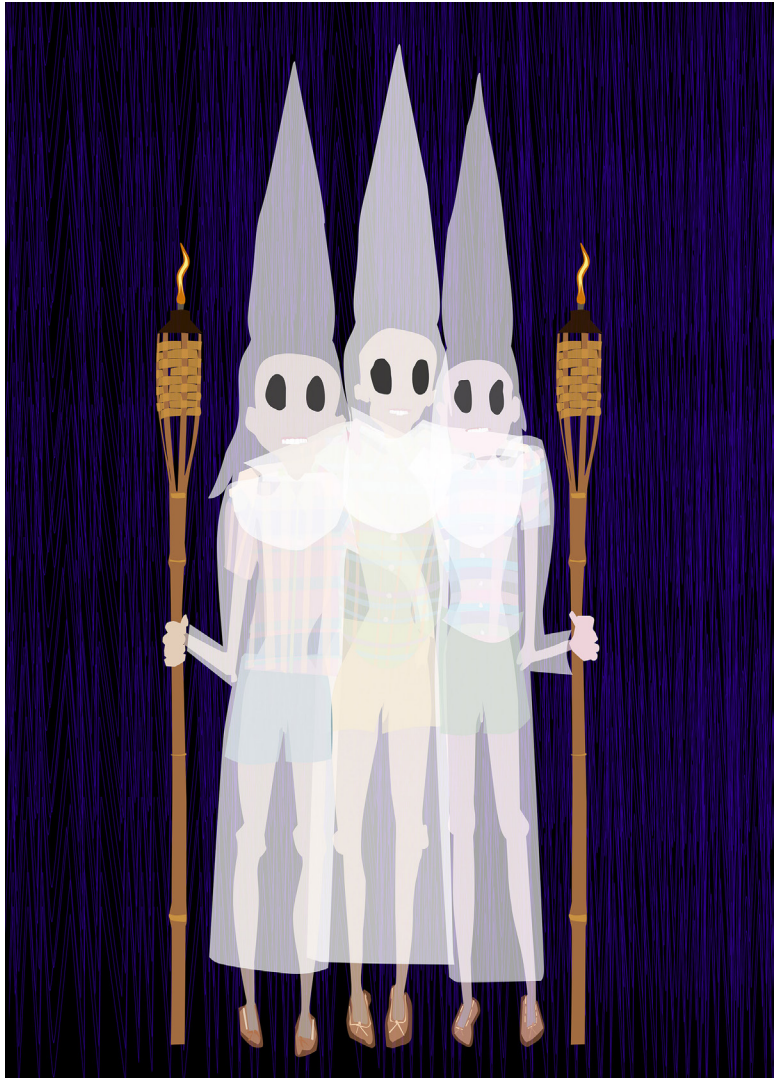
Working with digital media, Gonzales typically invents fictional narratives from her daydreams to create images of sassy and rebellious females; however, *No Class Tomorrow, Bro!* depicts the recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia. The androgynous figures presented in the work remind us that ideas of hate do not carry forth a strict uniform or gender. Preppy attire is now connected with the alt-right and women have always been equally responsible for racial hate crimes. From support roles to direct involvement, women have taken part in every aspect, since the formation of the Ku Klux Klan to the election of Donald Trump.

Gonzales says,

Since the early 20th century, white robes have unequivocally become the most identifiable symbol of racial hate. Underneath their white gowns vigilantes hid their faces and bodies afraid of being recognized; a little over a hundred years later, and so much has changed.

On August 11, 2017 over 200 people gathered at the University of Virginia. With colleges often being a hub of organized free speech this would not have been peculiar, until white power chants and markers of white supremacy, such as confederate flags and Nazi swastikas, brought forth the true identities of the demonstrators. They were photographed looking eerily similar: white young men dressed in khaki pants and a crisply ironed tucked-in polo shirt holding Polynesian-style tiki torches. They no longer hid under a symbolic costume, but were proudly expressing their pro-white power views in broad daylight. They grossly appropriated the uniform of an average hard working man, like my own Hispanic father, to become the new symbolization of white hate.

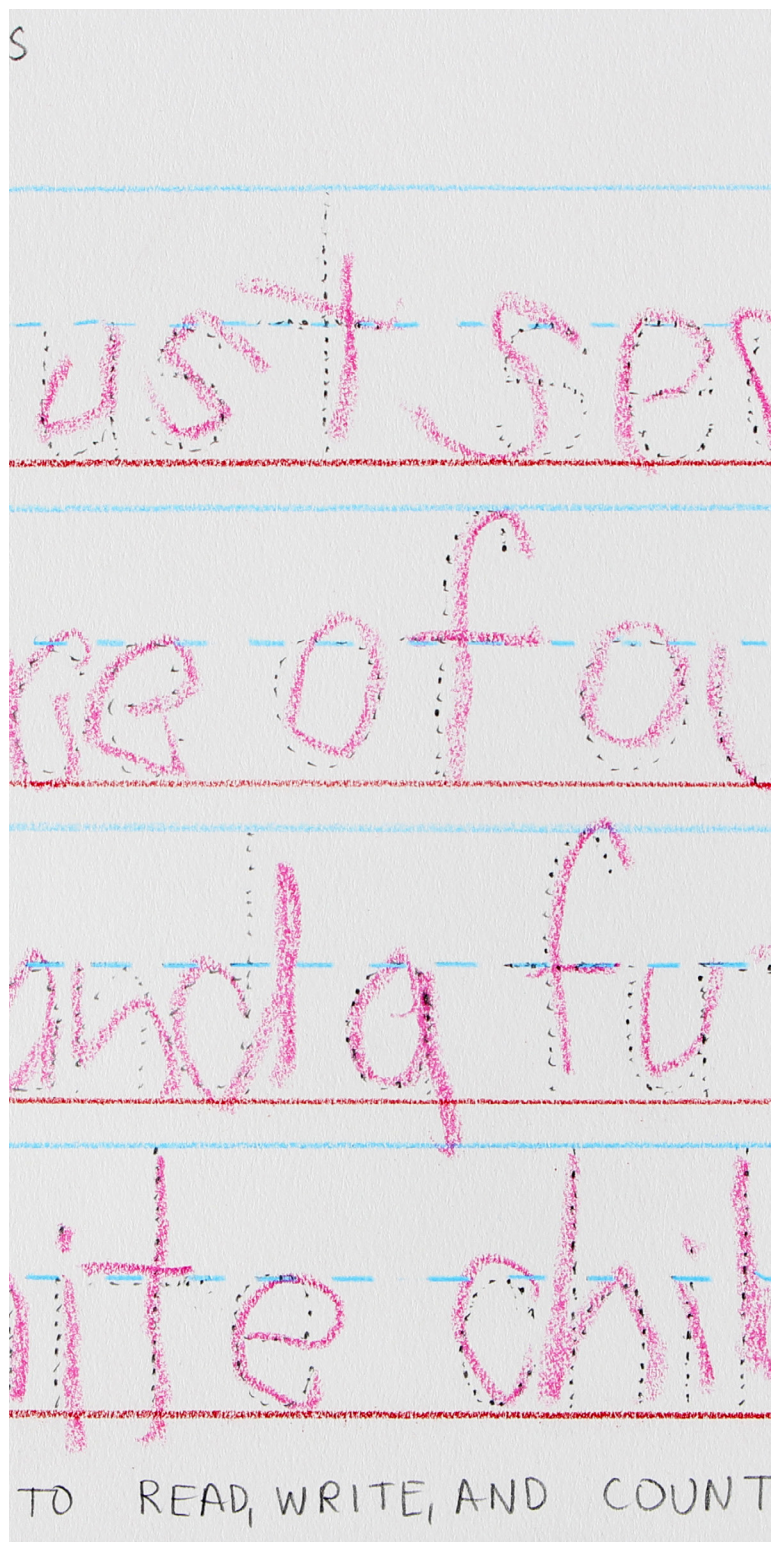
It is important to question who may have helped with these outfits. Who ironed them to perfection then dutifully placed them out for these men; perhaps their mothers, wives, girlfriends, or sisters? Despite the absence of white women and their participation that day, it would be foolish to assume that their invisibility suggests their indifference, but rather, highlights the role in the movement they have chosen to maintain. Extremely traditional in their household role as



No Class Tomorrow, Bro!, 2017
Digital Media, 40 x 28"

a female, the women are inconspicuous to the public but stand fervently behind their men. They protect their children and home lives while their men freely parade hatred in broad daylight no longer needing the secrecy of hoods and masks to evoke fear. Instead, they are transparently proud of what they are. Even more frightening is the thought that perhaps they feel like they have been given permission by a very specific someone in charge.

RAUL GONZALEZ



Originally from Houston, Texas, Raul Gonzalez moved to San Antonio to pursue graduate studies at The University of Texas at San Antonio where he earned a Masters in Fine Arts with a concentration in painting. In addition to painting, Gonzalez also has an active print-making and performance art practice.

Gonzalez is a recipient of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC) grant for visual artist and the Surdna Foundation grant through Artist Lab at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. He most recently had a solo-exhibition at grayDUCK Gallery in Austin that traveled to Freight Gallery in San Antonio accompanied with a catalogue. In addition, he is a forthcoming artist in residence at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA).

His artwork can be found within the collections of the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, and Artes de la Rosa in Fort Worth, Texas.

Gonzalez states,

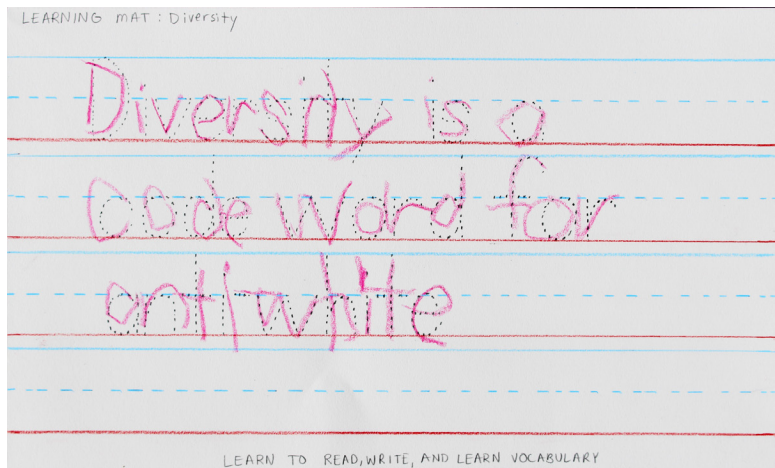
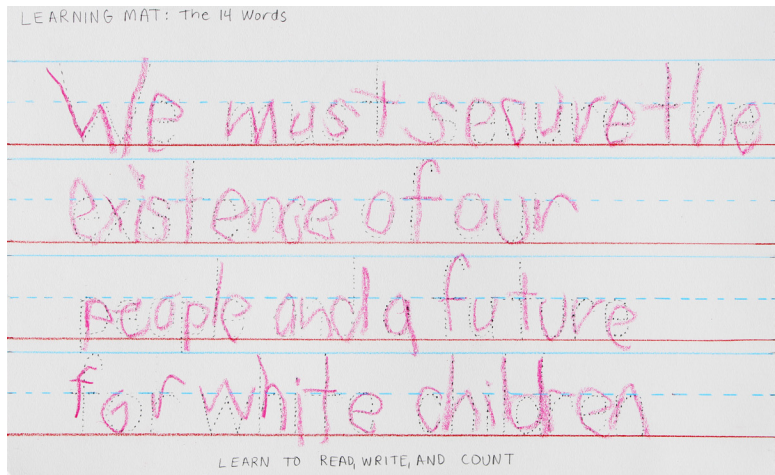
Hate crimes and acts have gone up and most of the reports occur in schools across the country. From college fraternities to bullying in elementary and middle schools, young children are using racist languages and attitudes at an increasing rate.

As a father, I think about all phrases my daughters might pick up from me. One can only imagine what's being taught at racist homes across the country. Are parents sharing racist propaganda?

For my drawings, I selected two of the most commonly used white supremacist phrases and placed them in a what appear to be homemade children's *Learning to Write* placemats. I then used a crayon to trace the phrases as if writing as a child.

The first phrase is the most popular in the United States, also known as *The 14 Words* – 'We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.' The phrase was created by white supremacist prisoner David Lane. It has become the widely-used slogan for white supremacists. Also, the 14 is a common tattoo of white supremacists.

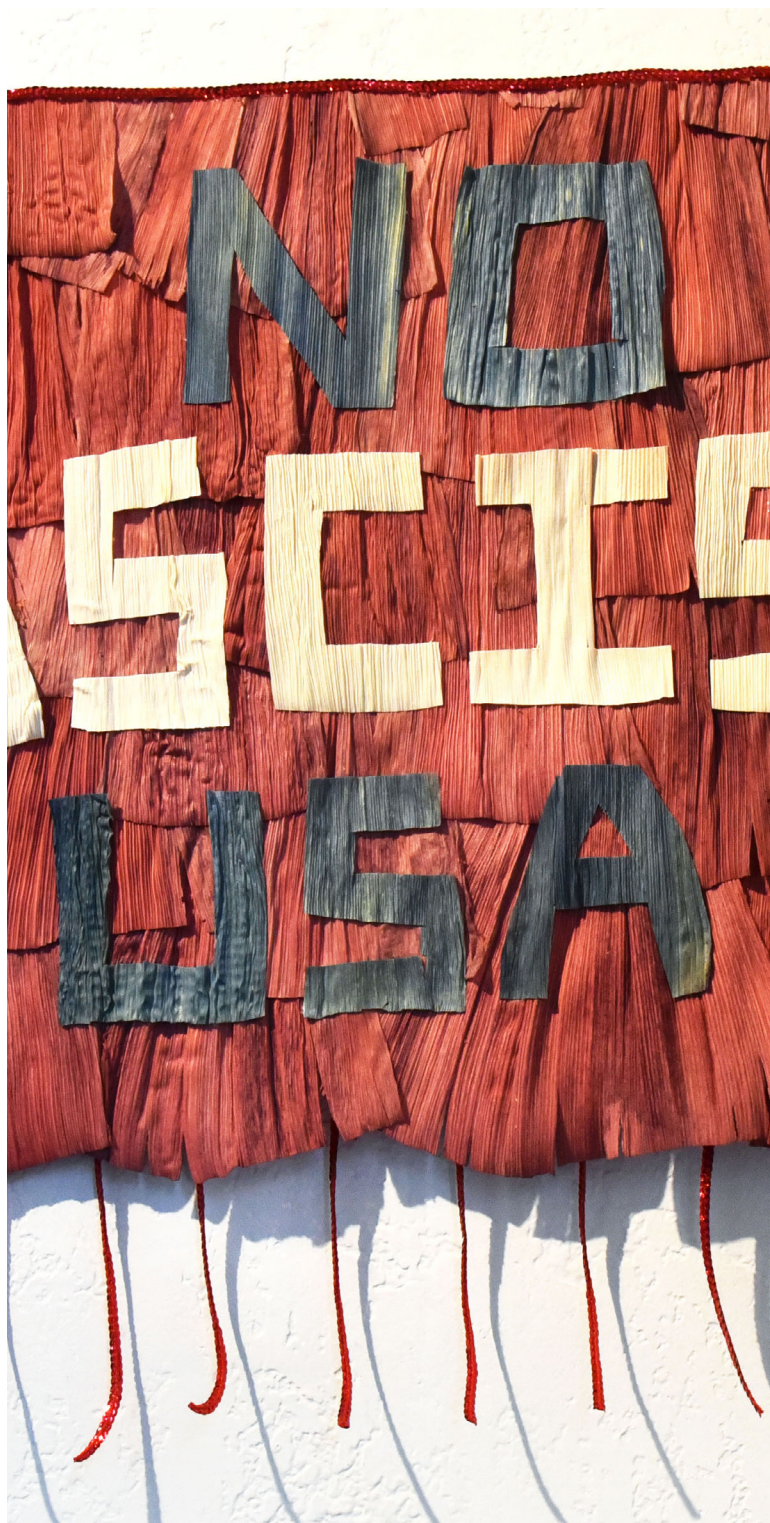
The second phrase 'Diversity is a code word for anti-white', is one of the most popular slogans used on white supremacist's social websites and on banners at rallies.



Top: *Don't Teach Hate (The 14 Words)*, 2018
colored pencil, graphite, and crayon on Bristol paper, 8.5 x 14"

Bottom: *Don't Teach Hate (Alt Definition of Diversity)*, 2018
colored pencil, graphite, and crayon on Bristol paper, 8.5 x 14"

SUZY GONZALEZ



Suzy González studied art at Texas State University and at the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design where she earned a Masters in Fine Arts with a concentration in painting. She was also awarded residencies at Vermont Studio Center, the Trelex Residency in Peru, and at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA).

González was highlighted in “16 Female Artists You Should Know” in Brit + Co and featured in the Huffington Post’s “13 Young Latina Artists Changing the Contemporary Art Landscape.” She has exhibited at Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin, TX; Thomas Young Gallery, Boston, MA; The Painting Center, New York City, NY; MACLA, San Jose, CA; Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL; and the University of Connecticut Art Gallery, Storrs, CT. She is also co-director of Yes, Ma’am Zine, which focuses on intersectional feminism and free speech, as well as part of the Dos Mestizx artist collective.

González states,

The threats of our current political situation have resulted in a loss of faith in government for many of us. Through chant, action, and ritual, we can gain a new faith in the people and the power we collectively hold. In creating decorative protest signs, I fuse art and activism and mark a chapter in time of our contemporary civil rights struggle. With a decolonized mindset, I use traditionally crafty materials to question who and what is seen as valuable within the art world. The husks that we were born from have become tainted and I seek to reclaim their worth.



No Fascist USA, 2017
corn husks and ribbon on foam core, 18 x 30"

RAFAEL FERNANDO GUTIERREZ, JR.



Rafael Fernando Gutierrez, Jr. served in the United States Air Force prior to shifting his focus to art and earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a minor in Art History from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Growing up in Augusta and Ft. Benning, Georgia, Gutierrez recalls being treated differently as a child of a bi-racial family in a predominately black neighborhood while attending predominately white schools. These experiences inform his interdisciplinary enquiry and discourse in regards to his research behind power structures and various ways of circumnavigating them. American culture and his time in the military fashioned his outlook on patriotism and national symbolism. The flag has become a reoccurring element in his oeuvre.

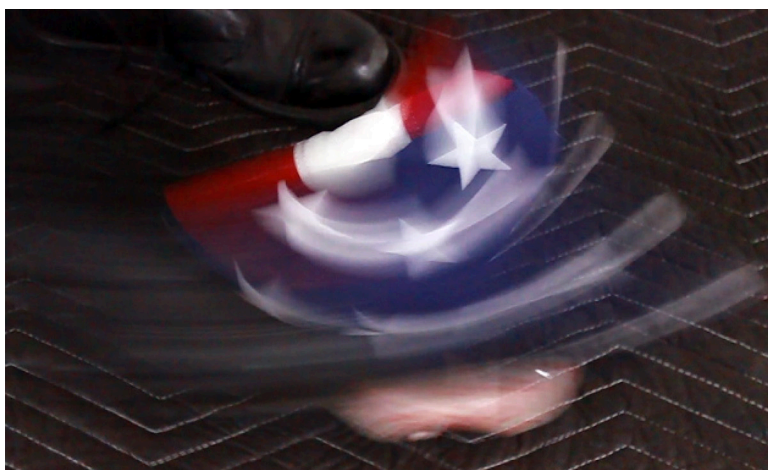
Gutierrez's piece, *FLAG FOOTBALL*, is a relevant and timely performance as recent controversies have spun from football players taking a knee during the pregame ceremonies when the national anthem is played. The players assume this position to highlight police brutality and racial injustice in the world.

Gutierrez states,

I am an artist of color in contemporary America, in a symbiotic relationship with the mental and physical ramifications and history of slavery, Jim Crow, segregation and the contemporary black identity that rejects those limitations established through category. My interdisciplinary practice reimagines the macro and micro aggressive behavior displayed by these systems.

The performance *FLAG FOOTBALL* is a personal statement examining the contemporary American issue of how best to display the American Flag. Using a performance artifact (flag) to critique the layers of nationality, proselytization, and individuality within both micro and macro society."

Gutierrez has exhibit at Sala Diaz, Clamp Light Gallery, High Wire Arts, The University of Texas at San Antonio's Main Art Gallery, and French & Michigan Gallery in San Antonio, TX. His work will be part of the forthcoming exhibitions *4 Texans: The Next Chapter* at the McNay Art Museum and *Common Currents* at The Southwest School of Art.



FLAG FOOTBALL, 2018
video/performance documentation, dimensions variable

ALEJANDRO MACIAS



Alejandro Macias earned a Bachelor of Art from The University of Texas at Brownsville and his Masters of Fine Arts from The University of Texas Pan American. Macias was born in Brownsville, Texas and has worked and lived the majority of his life in the Rio Grande Valley. In 2016, he partook in the prestigious Vermont Studio Center's international residency program in Johnson, Vermont. Since 2013, he currently is a full-time Lecturer at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley where he teaches drawing, painting, and design.

Macias has exhibited throughout the state of Texas including, the Brownsville Museum of Art in Brownsville, Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, Artspace111 in Fort Worth, Craighead Green Gallery in Dallas, Proper Printshop in El Paso, Texas A&M San Antonio, K Space Contemporary in Corpus Christi, and 3rd Space Art Gallery in San Antonio. He has also exhibited nationally at The Foundry Art Centre in St. Charles, MO, Core New Art Space in Denver, CO, Barrett Art Center in Poughkeepsie, NY and AIR Gallery in New York, NY.

Macias states,

Whether through personal experience, media or artistic exposure, the human form has directly informed my work. I gravitate towards figurative painting and drawing due to my struggle with identity, not just in terms of artistic approach, but what it means to be human and a first-generation Mexican American living in a contentious U.S./Mexico border. My artistic endeavors gravitate and rise to reflect my inner struggle and the perilous dichotomy of my identity.

The Rio Grande Valley remains a unique place for its fusion of Mexican and American culture. Coming from this large stretch of marginalized region, I feel divided by these two nations while simultaneously composed by it. This mirrors my understanding of traditional drawing and painting, while also trying to understand and challenge contemporary painting. Questioning and asking myself what artist I want or should be, remains as a quotidian encounter in today's art world, in the same way, I demand to find harmony in the contradiction between two cultures.

Technique and artistic approach are typically divided and the division is a metaphor for my upbringing while living in a remote, and yet popularized, area in the United States. I often do not feel Mexican enough or American enough. I remain somewhere in-between. I seek to gain a better understanding of my ethnic background while framing and



Charlottesville, VA, August 12, 2017
Charcoal, graphite, oil pastel on paper, 26 x 40"

contextualizing the individual qualities of the people around me. The traditional artistic approach to painting and mark making parallels Mexican values, tradition, and conservative upbringing, while the liberating mark making parallels diversity, change, and progressive thinking in twenty-first century America.

In this body of work, I examine recent events. *Charlottesville, Virginia, August 12, 2017*, was a reaction drawing to the *Unite the White* rally that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia. The horrific event resulted in the death of counter-protestor, Heather D. Heyer, who was fatally injured by a dark Dodge Challenger driven by white supremacist, James Alex Fields Jr.

In the drawing, Fields is being depicted in Ku Klux Klan regalia as a way to represent his white nationalist views. Ironically, he drives a Dodge Challenger when he is met and challenged by counter-protestors and people of color. The hood of his robe, in the shape of a subtle phallic symbol, also penetrates the roof of the Challenger as a way to represent his dominance and power over others.

Study of a White Mask is a drawing that studies the concepts of identity and “whitewashing.” White nationalist ideals and their idea for a ‘White America’ is a dangerous concept that challenges the beauty of racial and cultural diversity.

As a person who has struggled with notions of identity, I have been fascinated with the power and danger of masks and how they can be used to transcend color and figuratively conceal identity.



Study of a White Mask, 2017
Graphite and acrylic on paper, 26 x 18"



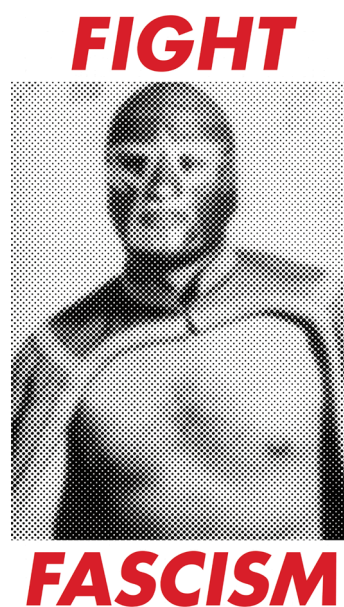
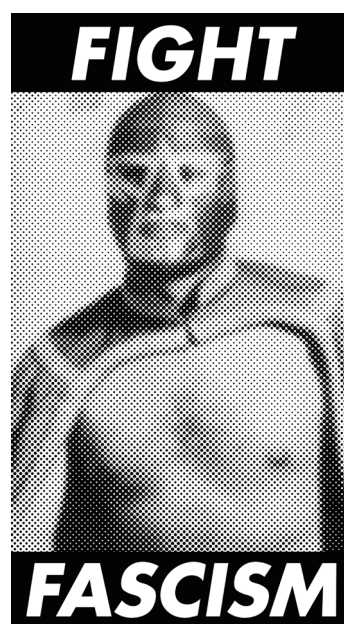
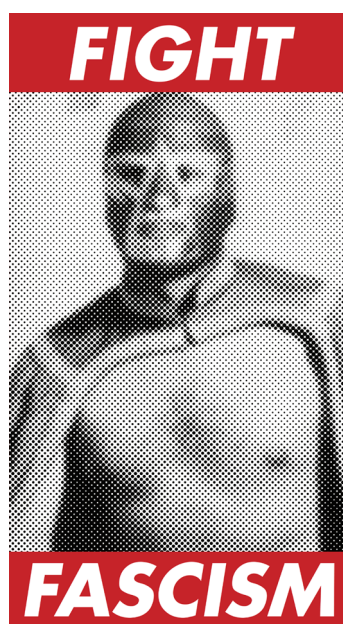
Jesús María is an emerging artist residing in McAllen, Texas and currently studying Graphic Arts at South Texas College. María is an activist artist who aims to be an agent of change by making politically relevant art. Formally his work focuses on the integration of text and color compositions.

María states,

I created this artwork in response to the presidential election results of 2016. The luchador image comes from an actual luchador, Sangre Joven from Reynosa, Tamaulipas. He is my friend's grandfather and a well-known luchador back in the 70s.

Art historically, I enjoy Constructivism and this inspires my work. The Constructivist ideology looks at the transformation of fine art to the reduction of its very core elements. Mostly reflective of sculpture and architecture, but embodied by design and by strict use of clean lines, primitive shapes and flat colors. Drawing from this movement I have learned to switch aesthetics to functionality in order to create image. Rejecting the idea of artwork as precious or unique and embracing the idea of the designer as engineer, purpose (especially social service) over aesthetics."

There are many historical examples of Fascist visual propaganda. Posters attempting to unite the masses and persuade to fascist ideals could be found all over Spain, Germany, and Italy. María also employs the use of posters for public display and consumption, but in a positive manner; his graphics are emblazoned with the words *FIGHT FASCISM* and depict a great luchador, a Mexican wrestling figure identifiable by his iconic colorful mask. The luchador stands in as a superhero of sorts to fight the new racist regime developing in America.



Luchador , 2016
Digital Image (3 Color ways), 35 x 42"

MARK ANTHONY MARTINEZ



Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, Mark Anthony Martinez obtained both undergraduate and graduate degrees in fine art in Portland, Oregon at the Pacific Northwest College of Art and Portland State University. Through an interdisciplinary practice, his work investigates how whiteness and light-skin are often removed from “polite” social conversations of racial identity and racism. His work explores the representation of power through images and symbols and exposes whiteness as interconnected within systems of domination and privilege.

Martinez has exhibited throughout Texas focusing on these concepts with exhibitions including, *Profiling Made Visible* a two-person exhibition at Bihl Haus Arts curated by David S. Rubin and “Some of My Best Friends Are White” at AP Art Lab in San Antonio, TX. He was also selected for the annual *Young Latino Artist* show at Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin from which his artworks were highlighted nationally in the *Huffington Post* and *Mitú*. His work was also featured recently at the McNay Museum’s *Art to the Power of Ten*. In addition, Martinez has shown his work extensively outside of Texas in exhibitions at the gallery at Portland State University, Light + Space Gallery | Living Room Realty in Portland, OR; Washington State University, Vancouver, WA; Co-Prosperity Sphere, Chicago, IL; and Nicholas Frank Public Library; Milwaukee, WI.

In the conceptual artwork titled *(OFF)WHITE POWER*, Mark Anthony Martinez depicts an emoji-shaped raised fist in the top center half of a black signage-board. Born of the Millennial Generation and an artist with a strong aptitude for dark humor, Martinez uses this appropriation to great avail. His entire oeuvre to date has addressed the absurdity of racialized identities with a sense of satire and wit. *(OFF)WHITE POWER* is no exception. In a true Camp fashion, he uses an emoji symbol for such form.

The act of raising one’s fist has historically represented resistance, strength, and solidarity—a hand gesture with origins in revolts and uprisings that was adopted by the Black Power movement, pro-union rallies, and the historic salute at the 1968 Olympics where medal winners raised a black-gloved fist for the duration of the U.S. anthem in a gesture for human-rights. Most recently the symbol was largely embraced by the 2017 Women’s March, the largest protest march in history with worldwide participation the day after the U.S. presidential inauguration of Donald Trump.

The image of the raised fist is found often in art history and no doubt will be a symbol that remains important in the visual culture with the current volatile political climate. Harking back to the 1848 painting by the French artist Honoré Daumier in *L’Emeute (The Uprising)*



(OFF)WHITE POWER , 2017
40 x 38", Fabricated by The King of Neon

and more recent examples from the civil unrests of the 1960s and 1970s that sparked an increase popularity of the raised fist motif. Good examples of its incorporation are found in iconic Chicano and Latin American serigraphs such as *Down with the Whiteness* by Rupert García, *Centenario de la abolición de la esclavitud en Puerto Rico 1873 -1973 (Centenary of the Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico)* by José Rosa Castellanos, and *Violar la ley del imperio es cumplir la ley de la patria (To Violate the Imperial Law is to Uphold the Law of the Fatherland)* by Angel M. Vega-Santana.

Martinez states,

Not to be construed as celebratory, the neon piece is my entry point into combining conversations of race and class. The aim is to bring sobering attention to the real and visceral presence of white supremacy in the everyday through text and image. White supremacy; a phenomenon that is perhaps being elucidated by our contemporary political climate, ever more strikingly (in recent decades) - is at once a familiar and elusive structure to point to. So often, those in power are quick to dismiss the consequence of words and policy. Despite this, conversations critical of white supremacy, are often removed from liberal and conservative circles alike.

In my experience, class is often brought up as a 'neutral' way to talk about inequality. Unfortunately, all too often this comes at the repeated dismissal of consequential historical realities that continue to inform present day economics. Slavery, genocide and the annexation of half of Mexico - all inform contemporary economics and the ways in which whiteness has been intertwined with the wholesale disenfranchisement of people of color and Native Americans.

With this work, I present what essentially amounts to commercial store signage. Power, is represented literally vis-a-vis the electricity used to make the white-hot neon glow. Conversely, as the power illuminates this glow, (dis)empowerment, complicity — if nothing short of the outright repudiation of the lived experiences of people of color — are to be illustrated within the 'OFF'. Importantly, the term 'Off-White' is also a sociological term lifted in order to point to my own adjacency to whiteness as an ostensibly Latino man. This segment of the neon signage remains off as a haunting reminder of our post-civil rights era.

MAXIMILLIANO



maximiliano earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of North Texas in Denton, TX and a Masters of Fine Art from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, OR. maximiliano focuses on performance, video, poetry and collaboration. They have participated in exhibitions across America and were most recently selected to partake in the Pittsburgh Performance Art Festival in Pittsburg, PA and Disjecta Contemporary Art Center in Portland, OR. They have also exhibited at Gallery 2 in Washington State University in Pullman, WA; 500X Gallery in Dallas, TX; and the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, TX.

They have won the precipice fund for the visual arts grant through the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art with lead support from the Andy Warhol Foundation in 2016. In addition they were selected for the c3:initiative collaborative with Nat Turner Project residency in 2017.

maximiliano's oeuvre explores diaspora, the multiplicity of identity, generative mythos, bruja, the body, non-spaces in non-times, black sovereignty x autonomy, and veiled worlds.

maximiliano states, *lvtnoir* centers on:

the things in between
all the things before and in between words. it is our brown x
black bodies between worlds,
it is the dream of the brief city-state
of communal flesh x touch
veiled like ghosts existing at all times, exploring of self,
blackness; historically x contemporarily,
of mixedness, of *mulattidad*,
of healing trauma, collective x individual pain, of sweaty black
bodies stuffed into hot cargo,
of a lost latinx tribe,
mystery myths of the *mulattine*.

a millennial thulsa doom; an unnamed snake cult.
daughters murdering king fathers.
brown x black ghosts seeking vengeance for a violent
diaspora.
drum + water [metamorphoses].

a trap arte ritual



lvtn0irx, 2017
dimensions: variable // duration: looped

ASHLEY MIRELES



Ashley Mireles has exhibited at Artpace, McNay Art Museum, Cinnabar, Plaza de Armas, Presa House Gallery, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio, TX; Mexic-Art Museum in Austin, TX and La Peña Gallery as part of Print Austin. Her work is in the collections of the City of San Antonio's Department of Arts & Culture and the University of Texas Libraries Special Collections and it has been reviewed in *Mitú* and the *Huffington Post*.

Her practice has focused on Mexican and Chicano iconography blended with popular culture, space explorations, and a feminist lens. Masterful at juxtaposing contrasting ideas and exploring cultural syncretism and histories with humor, Mireles specializes in printmaking, murals, and installations.

In *Reconquista!* Mireles incorporates narratives from ancient Mayan mythologies. A howler monkey with a curled tail and astronaut cap make for a frolicsome scene as he rides a corn rocket to outer space. Mireles connects the ancient past with ideas from the heart of the Chicano Movement—the reclaiming of Aztlán—with the futuristic figure, she bridges the concepts for a new generation.

Mireles states,

Chaac, master of all things weather, cracked open Maize Mountain, allowing human beings to nourish and flourish to make Aztlán what it is today: rightfully yours. Howler Monkey, artists' spirit animal, guiding the way to Reconquista.



Reconquista!, 2017-2018
Acrylic Paint Mural



Growing up in Puerto Rico immensely impacted the artistic practice of Patrick McGrath Muñiz. An artist with a strong Roman Catholic upbringing, he synchronizes old-world religious aesthetics—from the Renaissance to the Spanish Colonial era—and blends them with a critique of contemporary society. Each painting contains powerful political undertones and references issues ranging from climate change to consumerism. His nod to historical painting techniques creates a bridge for viewers to conceptually connect the origins of these ills to the conquest and crusades.

Muñiz earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Escuela de Artes Plásticas in San Juan, Puerto Rico and a Masters of Fine Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia. His work has been exhibited at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, Mesa, AZ; Syncretisms. Witzenhausen Gallery, New York, NY and in Amsterdam, NL; Museo Convento de las Capuchinas, Antigua, GT; Museo de las Américas, San Juan, PR; K Space Contemporary, Corpus Christi, TX; Brownsville Museum of Art, Brownsville, TX; Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY.

Muñiz states,

As an artist with a Roman Catholic background and growing up during the 1980s and 90s on the island of Puerto Rico, the oldest colony in the Western Hemisphere, my work responds to our capitalist society and consumerism with its indifference to the rising threat of climate change by tracing its origins to the time of Columbus. Adopting Renaissance painting techniques on canvas and retablos reminiscent of Spanish colonial art enables me to emulate earlier indoctrination strategies and devices from the time of the conquest of the Americas. This, in turn, provides historical continuity between the Colonial and the Neo-colonial narratives present in the Anthropocene, an epoch defined by the enormous impact of human activities on the Earth's ecosystems. Through satirical narratives and anachronisms present in my art I'm able to explore, understand and question the Imperialist agenda with its colonial roots and the ruling Corpocracy with its Neo-colonial ramifications and environmental consequences in our time.

El Desembarco (The Disembarkment) is inspired by traditional depictions of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. It is a commentary on Conquest, Colonization and the Manifest Destiny doctrine. Since 1492 to the present, indigenous peoples from north to south have been killed, displaced or pushed out of their lands. Religion has often served a



***El Desembarco*, 2017
Oil on Canvas, 38 x 60"**

‘divine justification’ for the widely-held belief that white Europeans and later Anglo-Americans were destined to possess the lands in the new world. The Judeo-Christian notion of a “promised land”, the Biblical validation of slavery and a well-established patriarchal hierarchy have all contributed to the conquest and colonization of the American continent.

In the painting, *El Desembarco* a ‘Christ-like’ figure is wearing a mask and about to preach to the native population. Behind the natives, we see animals, plants, and forests about to be invaded by a landing force. With one arm raised and the other holding a Bible with a corporate logo, the ‘false Christ’ character represents the appropriation and use or misuse of religion in order to serve a colonial agenda through manufactured consent and indoctrination. Right behind him, a number of allegorical and historical figures follow. Saint Christopher, patron saint of the immigrants is carrying a Trump-like baby. Justice is on the side of the rich and powerful, those who come to conquer in the name of profit. Above Victory leads Death, who is dressed as an anti-riot police guard with a shredded American flag. With each conquest, every Empire is closer to its own fall.

Right behind the figure of Death are Teddy Roosevelt and Christopher Columbus, both colonizers who claimed Puerto Rico and Cuba as possessions for a foreign empire. We also see a group of black slaves carrying a statue of the white Virgin while a priest holds a Eucharist but instead of a cross, it contains the letter C (referencing Capital). He points toward a dog symbolizing the supremacy and power relationships. A Mickey Mouse gas-masked child entering the scene while holding a smartphone and a toy digger represents the so-called ‘progress’ and faith in the future. In the background, some tourists arrive on a cruise ship and photograph the native children who offer fruit in baskets to them. And around the frame, we find mythic depictions and symbolic figures all related to domination, subjugation, and conquest in different forms. *El Desembarco* is a painting about colonization, imperialism, white supremacy and the power of religious indoctrination.

The Believer is inspired by the popular image of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*. The Christ-like portrait of *The Believer* represents an American citizen that faithfully defends his 2nd amendment ‘right’ to bear arms while holding an AR-15 fully automatic assault rifle on his right hand. He pulls down his



The Believer, 2016
Oil and Gold Leaf on Panel, 36 x 24"

shirt in order to reveal a tattoo of an American bald eagle and a bleeding heart with a crown of thorns, symbolic of Christian faith—this imagery is suggestive of the union of Church and State, which is against the *1st amendment*. Conveying a pseudo-sacred aura he carries a Bible like a second weapon in his holster. The blue and white cross in the red background invokes the Confederate flag. There are small icons substituting the expected stars of the southern flag, reflecting the changing values in time. Among the icons, we see an SUV, an oil pump, bomb, church, beer, burger logo, steak, and tombstone.

The Believer responds to some of the values and issues that many Americans hold dear and sacred. The red wall behind has bullet holes and is starting to crack, signaling an eventual collapse of the myths and fictions that define this individual. This imagery should ask us to question our assumptions and core beliefs. What kind of painted flag on a wall do we put up? What kind of stars, icons or dogmas does it hold? Who really built this wall and for how long will it stand?

The small altarpiece titled *The Swing* is inspired by the recent U.S. presidential campaign of *Donald Trump* and his promise to build a wall on the U.S./Mexico border. With an overwhelming support from the Christian right, and a bigoted rhetoric against Muslims, Mexicans and other minorities, it is increasingly hard to distinguish politics from religion in this country. The *Archangel St. Michael* historically has been used in Christian iconography as a symbol of the good vs. evil (us vs. them) and often been depicted as a light-skinned archangel subjugating a darker skin devil. In this case, the archangel is wearing a contemporary anti-riot helmet and baton about to swing it at an elusive dark alien, reminiscent of the famous *Alien* films. This satirical re-contextualization responds to the current government discourse, which deprives undocumented migrants of their humanity and portrays them as vile ‘alien’ criminals, something to be feared. The archangel wings are not fully realized but rather drawn as outlines for a double-headed bald eagle, which symbolizes the intense polarization of the nation. The eagle is carrying a marihuana leaf and an M-16 rifle, a clear reminder of the war on drugs at the border. On the right side a maple leaf (symbolizing Canada) and on the left, a wing from another eagle (referencing Mexico). A drone, airplane, and U.F.O. can be seen flying in the sky. Behind, we can see the wall being built by robots, an allusion to robot-sourcing and



The Swing, 2017
Oil and gold leaf on panel, 30.5 x 18"

the automatization of jobs. A Confederate flag and *Robo-cop* enforcing border security can also be seen. On the pinnacle above, *Trump* is swinging his golf club in an idyllic *Mar-A-Lago* encompassed by a colorful rainbow. *Sean Spicer* and *Mario*, a Nintendo game character look for a hiding place.

The painting *Santa Justicia* displays a classic figure of Justice. In Ancient Egypt, she was known as Maat. In Ancient Greece, Themis, and Dike. The Romans called her Iusticia and she was a personification of law and order. The scales and sword are her distinctive objects. Artists started depicting Lady Justice blindfolded from the 16th century onward. A symbol of impartiality, before this, a blindfold would have signified foolishness or ignorance. In this re-interpretation of Lady Justice, by being blindfolded, she is unaware of her current predicament. Standing on a small boat, she is surrounded by children and swords. Her sword points down to a native child holding a smartphone and accompanied by a flying bird. He may be tweeting or taking a picture of what's in front of him. A pelican is about to swallow a plastic bottle while an afflicted child onboard looks down. A Trump-like boy dressed in an executive suit looks attentively at his phone while ignoring the scene. Behind him, the Statue of Liberty under water and an oil rig on the horizon can be seen. Corporations and profit have replaced liberty and democracy. On the other end of the boat, an anti-riot police threaten a landless mother and child with his baton. The boat has no space for them. A gas tank takes their place. The 'Fake News' billboard in the water suggests flooding caused by the sea level rise. In the sky, we see six hands carrying scimitars and swords coming out of the clouds. This is an allusion to the Six of Swords Minor Arcana card from the Tarot, which signifies forced migration and uncertain destiny. It can also represent the old East-West opposition. A dim star of hope is depicted above. This is Lady Justice in the age of Trump, alternative facts and transnational corporations ruling over social and environmental concerns.



Santa Justicia, 2017
Oil and gold leaf on Panel, 23.5 x 11.5"

JUAN DE DIOS MORA



Juan de Dios Mora was born in Yahualica, in the state of Jalisco, México. When he was fourteen years old, he moved to the United States with his family. His Mexican roots and personal immigration experience formulated much of his artistic language, as well as, the Mexican-American experience along the U.S./Mexico border from subsequently living in Laredo, Texas.

His work has been exhibited at the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL; El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, TX; Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez, México; and Kyoto Municipal Museum, Japan.

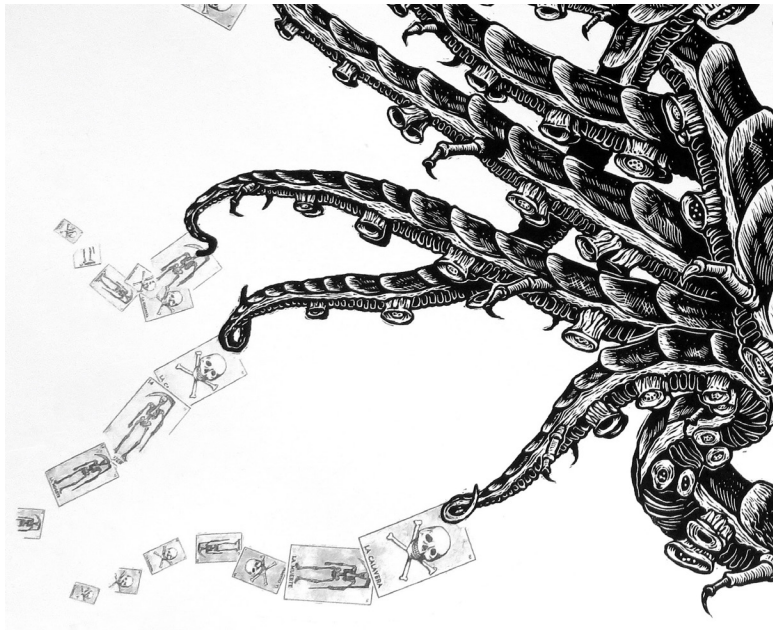
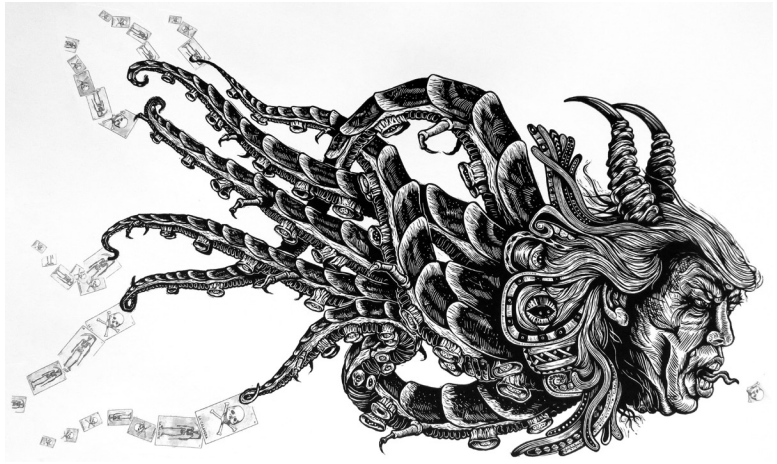
Mora received both his Bachelor of Fine Arts and his Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Texas at San Antonio. His undergraduate studies concentrated in painting and his graduate course work fine-tuned his masterful printmaking skills. At UTSA Mora studied under Malaquías Montoya, a prominent leader of the Chicano Movement in the Oakland area of California. His tutelage deeply inspired Mora to conceptually follow the Chicano art ideologies and to create art with political and social responses.

Mora's work was recently featured in the *Pittsburg Contemporaneity Journal* in the article *Exodus to the 'Promised Land:' Of the Devil and Other Monsters in Juan de Dios Mora's Artworks* written by Adriana Miramontes Olivas. In the article, the art historian connects Mora's work to the great Mexican printmaker José Guadalupe Posada and the Taller de Gráfica Popular.

In *Trumpulpo*, Mora nods to another of Mexico's most important artists, Francisco Toledo, who's fantastical forms have also borrowed from nature quite often, including the adaption of the octopus. However, Mora's creature is politically charged as rendered as a composite figure with the 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump. Suffocating tentacles of greed, racism and unchecked-power structures symbolize the new American reign. As trails of Lotería cards foreshadow the consequences of his actions.

Mora states,

A good opportunist stalks and hunts the weakest pray. *Trumpulpo* portrays an opportunist as an octopus that leaves behind scraps, and these actions are those of a leader that takes advantage of his role as president. The skull is meant to represent his impulsive behavior when he speaks senseless messages. On this print, the Lotería cards of *La Calavera* and *La Muerte* represent the Latinos being affected by the decisions of a leader that is supposed to protect and promote equality.



Trumpulpo (Trumpoctopus), 2018
Linocut and photocopy transfer, 15 x 22"



Kristel A Orta Puente is a photographer practicing with a Chicana ideology. She has worked on a variety of topics including San Antonio history and culture, civil rights issues, feminism, fashion and cultural appropriation. In 2016, she was awarded an Artist Lab Fellowship by the Surdna Foundation and The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. Puente is also the co-curator of the yearly *Color of Blind* exhibition in San Antonio.

Puente states,

Disambiguation of the Introverted Megalomaniac is a continuation of my first series of self-portraits. I was hiding who I was, scared to really be visible. This marked the beginning of a lifelong journey of self-disambiguation, that included returning to college after seventeen years to study Mexican American History and Art History. I wanted to face myself and fix the spaces that were broken. I was inspired by Ismael Salinas painting *Frida This* and he was very supportive of my interpretation. Each element is symbolic and a blending of identities as a Mexican-American woman. Not accepted in the country of my birth, and not comfortable in the country of my ethnicity, we are in the netherland or as Anzaldúa calls it the borderlands. It is a statement in rejection of the typical 'all-American' image. I am all-American. Born in the land where my ancestors have been for over 400 years, that I can document, I could not be more all-American. Until I can see my reflection in the eyes of what is called an American I will flip it off.

Finding Frida for me was life-changing. Here was a woman who looked like me and used fashion and art for self-preservation and expression. She was a weirdo, which I had been called all my life and I just melted into her work and life story. She made it ok for me to be strange, purposeful, sexual, intelligent, militant, flawed, sad and broken. She helped begin the process of my healing journey. We see her images now, on shirts at the mall and on celebrities. I wanted to create an image that claimed her essence and importance for Mexican women to our own identity. I did this my way because I am who I am.

As for *Fuck Trump*, I took this photo in New York over a year ago when Trump was a presidential candidate, I was angry. I stood on the hot July afternoon and faced the symbol of my anger and expressed my discontent. Time has transformed the anger to a very deep sadness that if I let it, could turn very ugly. It has been stated very clearly that immigrants are



Disambiguation of the Introverted Megalomaniac, 2015
Photo on Gatorboard, 18 x 11"

taking 'American' citizen's jobs, killing innocent 'Americans', raping innocent 'American' girls and selling drugs. It has been stated that Trump's America feel they are losing their culture and way of life. The irony. The audacity of people who created their empires on the backs of slaves and immigrants along with all the atrocities that have gone along with their dominance of others. All I can say is time is coming and the destiny they have manifested is coming to its fulfillment.

Our ancestors whispered to us in every crop harvested with their broken backs and swollen hands, that we are seeds. We have been buried far too long under oppression and racism that is bred by fear and greed. We have been stomped on and had our sacred spaces seemingly replaced with big concrete boxes made for our oppressor's enjoyment and comfort. We have been kept back, kept out, and kept silent at the board tables, education and in government.

We are manifesting a destiny as well. Our ancestors have kept us showered with love and fed us with legendary stories that have never been written in books. Legends that have been lovingly spoken at kitchen tables, in fields and in protest lines providing the warmth of hope and a comfort for the future we have been fighting for. We have been cultivated with love, hope, and strength. Thank you, ancestors, for your sacrifices so we could be here right now to begin to end the systems of oppression and hatred that you have stood up against for centuries.

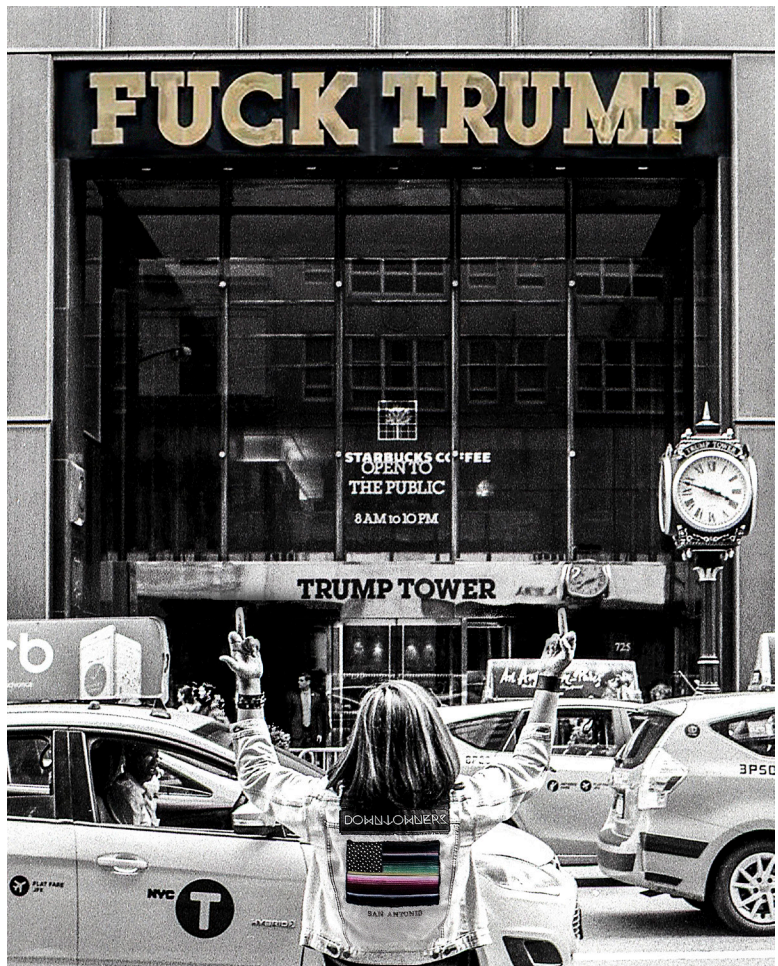
The seeds have been showered with love, not hate.
They have been fed with strength, not fear.

I am trying desperately to hold onto the future and turn the pain of oppression into hope and not hate. If we allow the pain to turn into darkness, as our enemies have, we will be devoured. We will be rendered as useless as the future that racists are desperately trying to foster, and I refuse to do that.

I refuse because I have seeds to tend to.

That is how we were raised.

And that is how we will rise.



*Fuck Trump, 2016
Photo on Gatorboard, 38 x 29"*

ANDREI RENTERÍA



Andrei Rentería earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in painting from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas and a Masters in Fine Art from the University of Texas at San Antonio. In 2016, he was awarded the Artist Lab Fellowship grant from the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and the Friends of Chuck Ramirez Award for Visual Arts from the Artist Foundation of San Antonio. He is currently an artist in residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Germany, a prestigious residency in partnership with Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas.

Rentería has exhibited in notable exhibitions including, *St@tU.S.? Prints from Puerto Rico to San Antonio* at the Centro de Artes in San Antonio, TX; *YLA 22: ¡ Ahora !* at Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, TX; *Heterotopia* at the Lumberyard Gallery in Marfa, TX awarded by Apexart; the *23rd Texas National* exhibition hosted by the Austin Art Gallery at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX; and *Genocide: Man's Inhumanity to Humankind at the Holocaust* Museum in Houston. Rentería's work has been broadcast on *KLRN ARTS* and featured in the *Huffington Post* and *Mitú*.

Rentería states,

Low-Key American Values (ooh, they're red, white, & blue) is the depiction of an American fear, the fear of color. Though color is present, the black and white drawing depicts a person seen from behind with no part of the body exposed—with the head and face covered by a hoodie and hands in the side pockets. The only colors that are visible are the red and blue coming thru the tears of the paper.

Inspired by the ideology of Gustav Metzger, an artist and political activist who developed the concept of Auto-Destructive Art, the paper itself has been abused, sanded, scraped, and torn to the point of irreparable damage but nevertheless a part of it.

I focus on the turning point of the figure and use low-key values to contrast against the bright highlights coming from a light source to the right, creating a sense of movement that seems unexpected and mysterious and reminiscent of American film noir. I aim to bring attention to the anticipation of violence from the dark subject, creating a depiction of a dichotomy of the American landscape, one that focuses on the patriotism rather than on the issue of transparency and its most preciously low key/dark values.



Low-Key American Values (ooh, they're red, white, & blue), 2018
lithography crayon on paper, 30 x 22.5"



From Huanusco, Zacatecas in México, Alán Serna earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in printmaking from the University at Texas in San Antonio and a Masters of Fine Arts from The University of Kentucky. He is the co-founder of Feral Editions, a collaborative printing press founded in 2014 to foster a sense of community and organize print exchanges with working artists and academics from across the country.

Serna states,

I utilize experiences from my upbringing in both the United States and Mexico to create a visual language that is accessible to both English and Spanish speaking communities. My works on paper range in process from traditional printmaking to mass-produced ephemera. They are chronicles of contemporary issues, immigrant narratives, and biculturalism on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

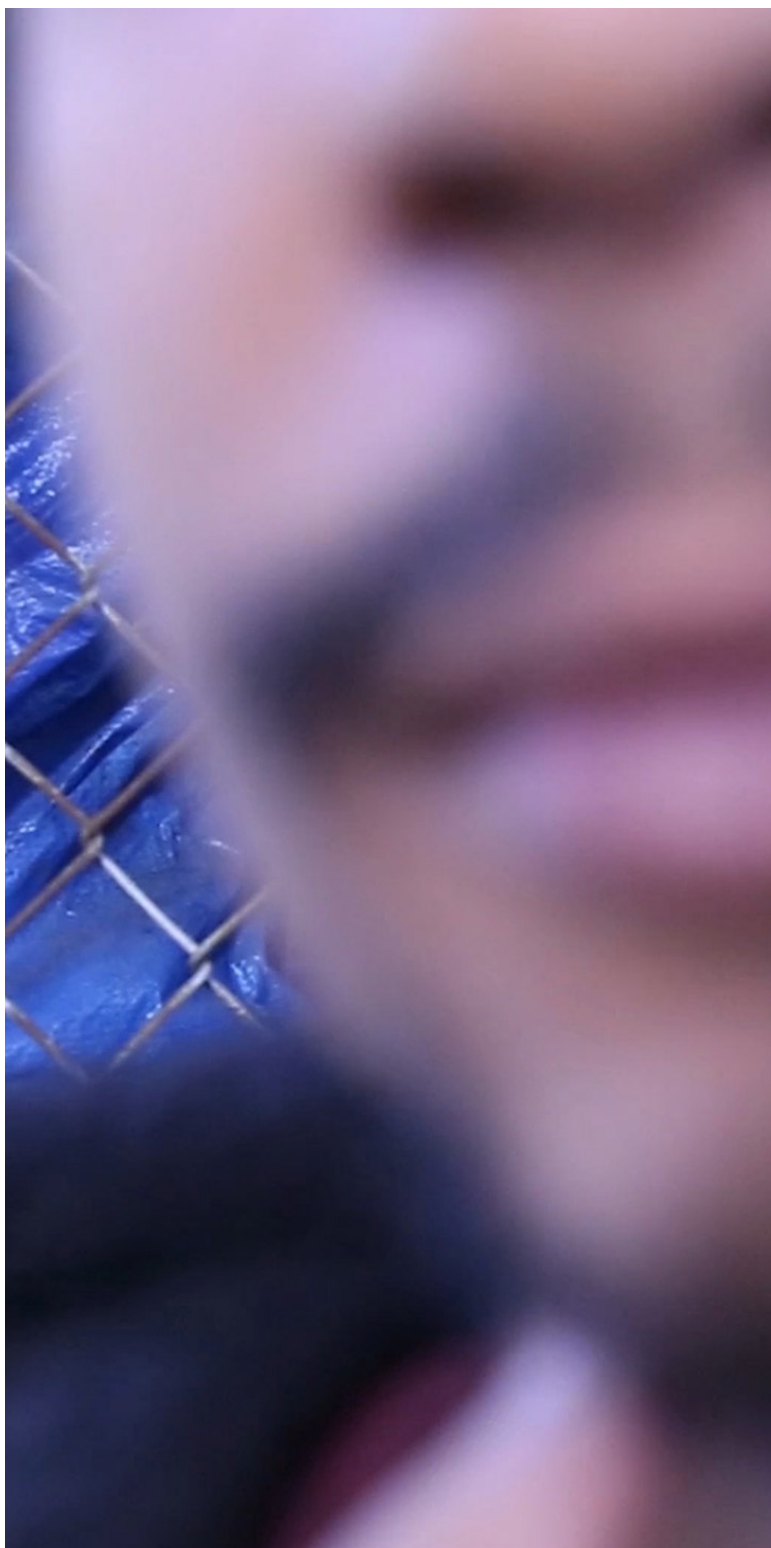
Que Dice el Publico references our current political climate. Humor is important to my work, it doesn't soften the blow of criticism but it definitely veils it on entry. The character in the black robe is 'El Chacal', a character from Sabado Gigante, a game show/variety show hosted by Don Francisco. There's a talent segment in Sabado Gigante where contestants have roughly 15-30 seconds to sing for the audience. The Chacal is the ultimate judge of who advances and who doesn't, but the audience can save them if they all agree they're good enough.

My title, *Que Dice el Publico* -what does the audience think-speaks to the country's disapproval. The three Klansmen in this piece are essentially contestants who are booed off the stage after their performance. The Chacal's three arms are a signifier of time, since it is a still image, I show the arms in three different stages of motion all at once. Other symbols like the donkey ears are meant to reference the orejas de burro, donkey ears, usually placed on conical dunce caps, or in this case the hood. MAGA [Make America Great Again] is a contemporary acronym and icon of the Trump presidency. The piece contains cultural icons that while similar in appearance stand for two completely different things.



Que Dice el Publico, 2017
Lithograph, 11 x 14"

JUSTIN STERLING



Justin Sterling earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at San Antonio and a Masters of Fine Arts from The New School: Parsons School of Design in New York. In 2017, he was awarded two international research opportunities including the Joan Sutherland Fund for exploration of Indigenous history and colonialism in Australia and the Parsons Travel Grant for inquiry of history and colonialism in London.

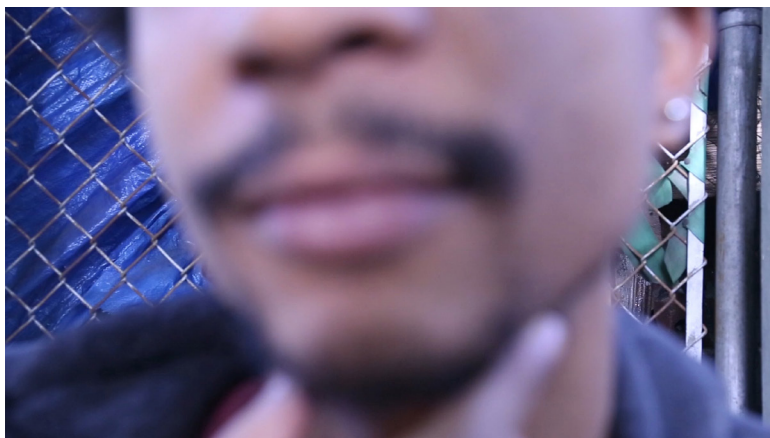
Sterling has exhibited at Our Neon Foe Gallery, Sydney Australia; the University of Rochester Gallery, Rochester, New York; Westbeth Gallery, New York; LaBelle Galerie, New Orleans, LA; Off the Wall Gallery, Houston, TX, and the University of Texas Art Gallery, San Antonio, TX.

Sterling states,

My aim is to unravel the way we view power, authority, and control by revealing various truths about urban ecosystems and American poverty. Many of my artistic propositions include interventions in public as well as the mediums of painting, drawing, sculpture, video, installation, and performance. Much of the work has an underlying tone of violence that I use to create tension inside of the status quo and challenge my audience to think critically.

In my process, I embrace, provoke, and appropriate to explore the ways violence and risk have a stake in what it means to be a responsible citizen. The everyday environment shapes our behavior, architecture is psychological. The streets deserving our compassion sounds negligible and obvious until we need this kind of truth and reconciliation in our own private lives. After all, one cannot know the true meaning of happiness without also acknowledging the realities of abject suffering. The issues of poverty, mass incarceration, and criminality in this country cannot be talked about in a revolutionary way without also being sensitive to people of color.

I am an artist that is passionate about bringing poetic justice to all sources of oppression, pushing against those problems, and challenging the status quo to achieve progress. People should not be afraid of their governments, governments should be afraid of their people. The issues stated above are symbols, as is the act of destroying them. Symbols are given power by people, alone, a symbol is meaningless, but with enough people...changing a symbol can change the world.



Crisis Confession, 2017
Three-Channel Video Installation, Duration (2:02)

JON TYSON AKA PRAYXPLOT



Jon Tyson aka prayxplot studied at Ohio Wesleyan University and Palo Alto Community College. He continued his art education with classes at the Southwest School of Art in San Antonio and subsequently taught there through the Summer Arts Studio.

prayxplot is a multi-method, multi-platform artist creating affordable art in various forms. Based in San Antonio, Texas, prayxplot aims to bridge the gap between social commentary and cutting-edge design. His method of screen printing and garment renovation alongside his graphic manipulation take his audience and his patrons to an enlightened level of style.

prayxplot has always been a community-oriented initiative and heavily involved in working with the city's best cultural innovators for nearly half a decade. He has aided fellow artist in their visual work and musicians in their music video production, through art direction and styling. His work has been featured in online and print publications (Wavezmovement & Gacho Style) alongside his many cameos in local Music Videos (Kree23, Spayc Jones, Volcan).

prayxplot states,

Destroy White Supremacy as a message needs to be spread around and seen by as many people as possible, I feel like putting it on a wearable allows that to happen better than simply putting it on a wall in a gallery or in someone's home.

Pray—to hope or wish very much for something to happen—whether you believe in a higher power or not, you pray. You hope and wish for better days, possessions, and circumstances for the people you love and support. It is engrained in human nature and is something everyone does daily. What are you praying for? Plot—a secret plan for accomplishing a goal. To plot is to simply plan to obtain those things you prayed, hoped and wished for. 'Failing to plan, is planning to fail'

What are you plotting on?

Top: *Destroy White Supremacy*, 2017
Spray paint on cotton tee, Size medium

Bottom: *We Don't Make Deals with Demons*, 2016
Screenprint on Bristol, 14 x 11"



JUAN VALLEJO



Juan J. Vallejo earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in painting and photography from the University of Texas Pan-American (now University of Texas Rio Grande Valley) and is currently pursuing a dual master's degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio in Fine Art with a concentration in ceramics and Art History with a Latin American focus.

Vallejo explores the versatility of ceramics with a conceptual framework. The son of migrant workers, he grew up tending the land himself and this personal history is at the core of *Lunch Break* and *A Shell of her former Self*. The art objects within these installations take on forms and shapes of disrepair, fragmentation, and depression reflecting the struggles of migrant workers.

Vallejo's work has been exhibited at the San Antonio Art League & Museum in San Antonio, TX and the Upper Valley Art League in Mission, TX. His photography has also been featured in the *Huffington Post* and publications for the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Vallejo states,

Growing up as a migrant worker, I was brought up constantly using my hands either digging in the ground harvesting onions or using tools to fix broken machinery to keep the work going. With clay, I am able to continue working with my hands to create and experiment in many different ways. Be it throwing a cylinder on the wheel or hand-building a thin-skinned sphere. Ceramics will be my way of telling my story through clay. Where I come from, where I am at, and where I am going. My Mexican heritage influences my work, although, I feel that it carries themes for universal understanding, such as sacrifice and hard work.

In *A Shell of her former Self*, the onion sacks were dipped in ceramic slip and fired to keep the burlap fabric texture. They replicate the onion sacks used when harvesting onions. I explore the idea of people as tools. Tools are only useful when they function but once a tool breaks down it is discarded. I relate this to myself growing up as a migrant worker. I would observe many instances when a laborer did not show up they were simply replaced. There was no thought by the farmer for the laborer's well-being.

The installation *Lunch break* is composed of real tools that are used in the fields, as well as, ceramics I made. I implement my father's citrus sack that he used almost twenty-five



**Above: *A Shell of her former Self*, 2017
Burlap Fabric, Ceramic slip, (6 pieces 60 x 18") (3 pieces 7 x 48")**

**Previous: *Lunch break*, 2017
Clay, ladder, 8 x 4'**

years ago alongside glazed ceramic spheres that I made to replicate the citrus that he picked. The installation is intended to conjure a quotidian scene; while on a break some citrus hung in the sack from the ladder tumbles out. But because these are fired ceramics rather than fresh fruit, they break, symbolizing the hardships and struggles people in such a line of work endure.

CHRISTOPHER VELASCO



Christopher Anthony Velasco earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography and Media from the California Institute of the Arts and is a Master of Fine Arts candidate at the University of California at Santa Barbara. His work explores physical space and identity.

Velasco has had solo exhibitions at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Los Angeles, CA and at the California Institute of the Arts Gallery, Valencia, CA. His works have also been exhibited at the Vincent Price Art Museum, Monterey Park, CA.

Velasco states,

The What if... series, is a dark humored take on individuals within our cultural background who insist on trying to pass as 'white.' Each of us in *The Family* (Donna Brown, Clifford Pun and myself) took on dual roles, first being ourselves, then as our interrupted 'white-self.' By using Black and White imagery to capture a before and after photograph, each of us in the group transform into people who, instead of going against the norm, are trying to blend in.

The Family (Christopher Velasco, Donna Brown, and Clifford Pun)
What if ...(before & after), 2017
Digital Chromogenic Print, 11 x 14" each



JOSÉ VILLALOBOS



José Villalobos grew up on the U.S./Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in ceramics from the University of Texas at San Antonio. In 2016, he was awarded the Artist Lab Fellowship Grant and gained much positive recognition for his solo-exhibition, *De La Misma Piel* at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. In 2017, he was selected for the annual *Young Latino Artists* exhibition at Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, TX from which his work was highlighted in *Huffington Post*, *Mitú*, and *Out in SA*.

This work is a response to the protesters at the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. The group was proudly holding confederate flags and many other racist symbols. They chanted many phrases of hate that day including homophobic ones, such as, “F*ck you Faggots.” In a time when many thought America was progressing, thousands of people gathered to proudly spew hate into the world.

Villalobos states,

As one of the leaders of the Ejército Libertador del Sur, [Liberation Army of the South] and as macho as he was, it was rumored that Emiliano Zapata held a homosexual as his Secretary General. His name was Manuel Palafox. Rumors have also said that the two men had a sexual affair. They say stories that spread always have some truth.

Nopales have been an important part of my work for some time now and in this case, they have become the canvas from which the work is based. To accord with the stories, I have draped a sombrero with layers of fringe over Zapata to provide him with a homosexual flair, a side we don’t see of him in the historic photos. This attire echoes my own outfit that I made and wore for a past exhibit. I have imposed the same aesthetic to these important and powerful figures.

This work is about concealing lies. As of today, we have been manipulated and have been fed lies by our former people. We currently run a struggle with our government excluding the LGBTQ community in many things. Like Emiliano Zapata, he excluded his secretary general from their army as he identified as gay. However, it has been known that the power of white men can cure faggots.



Fachada, 2018
 Artificial grass, chicken fencing, altered animal figurines, scarred and collaged Nopals, hemp Thread, and chicken feed on a golden platter, 9 x 3'

