

MEXIC-ARTE MUSEUM'S 15TH ANNUAL YOUNG LATINO ARTISTS EXHIBITION

CONSENSUS OF TASTE

YLA 15

CURATED BY CLAUDIA ZAPATA



In 1996, the inception of the Young Latino Artists (YLA) exhibition resulted in one of the most highly anticipated annual traditions for Mexic-Arte Museum. The Museum based the YLA exhibition concept and structure on Mexico's El Encuentro Nacional de Arte Joven (ENAJ), an annual exhibition of artists 30 years old and younger working in all forms of media. From 1966 to present day, this Aguascalientes-based exhibition provided an invaluable forum for Mexican young artists to present their works. Aspiring to achieve similar programming success, and with the additional objective of creating a forum for Latinos to gain museum experience as curators and visual artists, Mexic-Arte Museum created the Young Latino Artists exhibition. Now in its fifteenth year, the current YLA exhibition looks back at previous artists and presents their current artwork as professional visual artists. The artists I selected exemplify some of the most notable participants from past YLA exhibitions. Each individual artist's career amasses a wide range of accolades from fellowships, solo exhibitions, and residencies, to participation in international art exhibitions and biennials. For some artists, their fledgling work in their initial YLA allowed for pivotal exposure, experience, and criticism that marked a turning point in their work. The

CONSENSUS OF TASTE YLA 15

and curatorial concepts occurring within these past YLA exhibitions provided a unique forum given this parameter: a Latino curator selecting Latino artists in a Latino-run institution. Although curators adhered to the exhibition guidelines, in no way was this a limitation, but rather a cognizance of the visual diversity created within and by a diverse cultural group. What was the outcome of the YLA exhibitions? Latino curators found what the greater art world did not know they wanted yet. Moreover, each YLA curator's specific tastes foreshadowed and confirmed the caliber of their chosen artists. In a paper entitled "Can Taste Be Objective?" Clement Greenberg, a notorious American art critic, posits that taste in art over the course of time is agreed upon by all, no matter generation or cultural tradition. He suggests that there is a "consensus of taste" in which disputed taste eventually is agreed upon by all parties; the inexplicable durability of the artwork and artists becomes an enduring fact. Utilizing this concept, I suggest an agreement, or consensus, among viewers resulted in the success of these selected YLA artists and will persist into the future.

-Claudia Zapata

JESUS BENAVENTE

Social standings dictate the difficulty of cultural assimilation and attempts to move up in social strata. My origins in San Antonio and subsequent move to Austin verify the difficulties that people face when attempting to better themselves. My adversity driven beginnings form the basis of my current work in video, performance, and installation media. Challenges are recreated, reinterpreted and violently romanticized. These works are often oversized in scale and are treated with a masculine physicality that echoes the very nature of adversity.

The creation and destruction of my installation work is designed to physically tax my body and stretch the limits of my abilities. It is the time in between, when the work exists for others to see, that I am able to overcome adversity and demonstrate it in a daunting yet poetic manner. The work is physical, and its message is unmistakable: this is what is happening, and I refuse to give up.

I Break Mountains
2010
Dirt and wood
Variable dimensions

JESUS BENAVENTE

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CANDACE BRICEÑO

I was asked to be a participant in a YLA show right before heading off to graduate school at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, so it was perfect timing to have an opportunity to show in a museum and start to understand the processes that galleries and museums needed from artists participating in a show. The show had a review in The Austin Chronicle, and I was slightly singled out very briefly about my pattern paintings and how the work was not clear as in my artist statement that described fabrics as referring to specific women in my life. At the time I thought I was making a spin on portraits through very gestural fabric patterns that I was blowing up, and the writer was correct that it was not being translated. Through those two sentences that the writer wrote about my work I took the criticism to heart and went away to graduate school as planned and really thought about that. I believe it was that opportunity to be out in public and finally have other eyes on my work that really began the process of propelling my work. In graduate school I realized that there were too many layers that I was going through to get what I wanted, and the design aspect was put away. Being away from Texas made me realize that the simple truth: I was very interested in the abstraction of Texas landscape. It took leaving Texas to realize what my work was really about. Being in graduate school gave me the confidence that I needed to harness my painting skills and then use those skills to combine my three loves: painting, drawing and fiber work into my studio practice. Currently, I am working on some ideas of rock collecting that I did as a child and working on using my exploration skills as I did as a child with this new body of work.

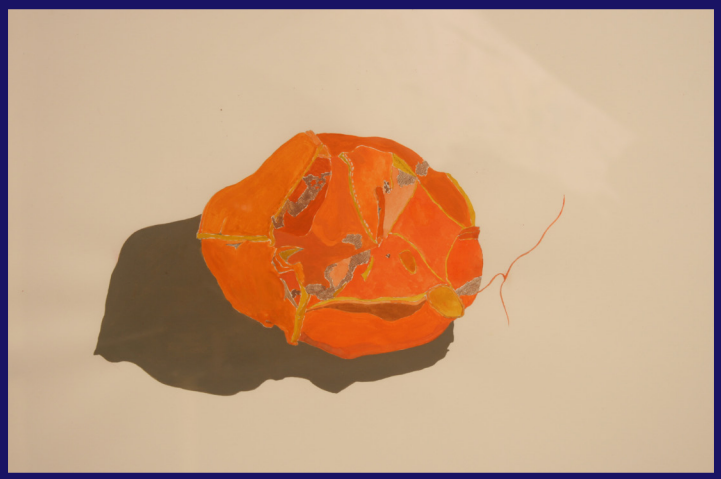
Orange

2009

Gouache on paper

14" x 18"

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MARGARITACABRERA

Margarita Cabrera was born in Monterrey, Mexico, and lives and works in Houston, Texas. Her sculpture has been included in various exhibitions, including *Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA (traveling); *Nexus Texas*, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX; *Trabajo Mexicano/Mexican Work*, Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Ketchum, ID; and *Domestic Odyssey*, San Jose Museum of Art, CA. Her participation in the 2002 Young Latino Artists exhibition *It's a Glamorous Life* at MexicArte Museum was an early and important encouragement to her in her artistic practice. Cabrera is the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant and was a finalist for the Texas Prize in 2007. In 2008 she was a resident artist at Artpace, San Antonio, TX and had her fourth solo exhibition at Sara Meltzer Gallery, New York, NY. Currently she is working on FLOREZCA, a coordinated series of collaborative workshops with immigrants from Mexico and Central America. She is also working on *Muertes Cotidianas*, a project that aims to raise public awareness of the ongoing series of brutal murders in Ciudad Juarez.

Nopal can Tunas #5

2007

Border patrol uniform,
thread and terra cotta pot

42" x 26" x 26"

Courtesy of the Artist
and the Walter Maciel Gallery,
Los Angeles

MARGARITACABRERA



Bobby Dixon is a native Texan artist working in poster, graphic, and toy design. Since his initial Mexic-Arte Museum premiere, this past YLA artist has gone on to create the Kollektive Fusion design firm and the Asiatic All World Clothing line. Dixon's fusion of music inspired-design has thrust him into a prolific gig poster career resulting in posters for Al Green, Fischer-spooner, Public Enemy, Thievery Corporation, Snoop Dogg, and Common. His works are regularly on display at the FLATSTOCK poster show series and are featured in Paul Grushkin and Dennis King's *The Art of Modern Rock: The Poster Explosion*.

Untitled

2008

Acrylic on wood

24" x 24"

BOBBY DIXON



As an artist, I work with familiar media images in order to reflect on how society molds beliefs and ideas about itself and different cultures. In my research I explore how this phenomenon generates superficial judgments about the “other”. In my recent series, entitled *Action Heroes*, I’ve been photographing myself as heroic male characters – stereotypes that have been exploited in mass media for years. My exploration addresses issues of identity and masculinity by portraying myself in roles I would never be able to inhabit in real life because of my physical characteristics. By projecting my own image, a body type considered outside the average, I hope to question not only what is considered normal but also the prevalent visual imagery representing idealized masculine, heroic characters in fiction and daily life.

Russian Nuclear Plant
(Self-Portrait, from the series
Action Heroes)

2009

Archival pigment print
56" x 44"

SANTIAGO FORERO



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Currently my work derives from that longing of someone or something which we cannot quite determine who or what it is. Perhaps it is something lost from our life and yet still makes its presence known here and there. *Over de couner* is a series of pieces that is intended to frame a memory that is not always present. Most times we seem to dismiss it as lost or forgotten. Given the time, consciousness brings these concepts or ideas back either as they enter our minds or are reinterpreted and reshaped by our daily living. For the most part my intentions in my work are, through the use of video and synthesized audio as a vehicle, to portray the personal experience. I believe that these concepts can either be taken literally or in a more abstract approach; either way the works function as a representation of the very human condition in the present state.

Over de Couner

2010

Still from digital video/
synthesized audio

5:31 min. loop

EDUARDO XAVIER GARCIA



IVETE LUCAS

Ivete Lucas is a Mexican filmmaker, photographer and audiovisual artist born in Sao Paulo, Brazil and raised in Monterrey, Mexico. Her photographs and audiovisual installations include subjects such as Mexican miracle workers, a study on the gender-upbringing of girls in the Americas, Mennonites rebuilding houses in hurricane-struck Louisiana, drag queens, luchadores, and Mexican immigrants living in the United States. Lucas's most recent short documentary, *Mexican Fried Chicken*, follows a Mexican immigrant boy's struggles with his cultural identity and hectic life: working at Pop-eye's Chicken, aiding in his father's repair shop, getting good grades at school, and taking care of his brother and sister. This short film garners varying emotions ranging from melancholy to hubris but overwhelmingly carries an inspired message of strength and possibility.

Mexican Fried Chicken

2010

Still from digital video

13:02 min. loop

ME E LUCAS



I wait for a revolution that never comes.

Through your passive acceptance you perpetuate the filth spewing out of digital screens that feed on vacant eyes.

Don't be afraid of the truth.

If you're not angry, then you haven't been paying attention.

Corporate vultures manufacture dissent and your kids can't get enough of it.

You're praying to stars beneath the influence of some clever marketing scheme and the universe is laughing at you.

Who will save you from yourself?

Hunting. Lying. Stealing. Killing. Animals.

We are not what was intended.

John Lennon is rolling in his grave.

Who do they have to martyr before you'll give a damn?

Art isn't dead as long as I'm alive.

I'm not as alone as I'd like to think.

If you are reading this, then you are the resistance.

After the forms of this world die, The infinite will look back and remember that our time here wasn't wasted on you.

Don't judge a book by its movie.

Only an educated, well-informed, public can make being American something to not be ashamed of.

If you don't claim your humanity you will become a statistic.

Now is the time for action.

Turn it off.

Every passing second is another chance to become a person of substance.

Prove you're alive.

Keep your own secrets because we won't pay your debt.

Take back your soul.

Won't Let You Win

2010

Charcoal / spray paint

20' x 5'

RANDY MUNIZ



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"i hear music
mighty fine music
and anytime I think my world is wrong
I get me out of bed
and sing this song"

– b. holiday

there has always been something that drives me to get up and move – Of course there has always been something to keep me down - It's global reality – the action of getting up and moving is essential to human existence – throughout my process i'm in constant search for strategies that help me clearly understand the ability of humans to 'want' – the angle that I am most interested - is the position of 'the lover who never gets the one he wants' –

"I want the one

I can't have

And it's driving me mad"

– the smiths

so then i'm left with creating models that investigate into real tangible methods of getting "my Love" – these devices include:

- balladic broadsides
- transient architecture
- life-size flying contraptions
- megaphones

- pushcarts
- rockets
- maps
- banners and flags
- siege machines

the creation of these models alone are not sufficient – I have found it necessary to engage these into the public landscape – not just gallery/art space – but into a real context where the general public can also witness some of my solutions to the issue – these interjections are usually executed unannounced – then other times they are staged for the purpose of documentation or viewer participation –

the labor of this investigation has made me realize the romantic transient and clandestine gestures as pathetic – it's difficult to realize hope in a time of distress – but then – I get up – and keep walking

"Yes, I'll admit that I'm a fool for you

Because you're mine

I walk the line"

– j. cash

CRUZORITZ

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Briar Bonifacio was born in Austin, Texas in 1977 in the home of The Cathedral of Junk five years before the Cathedral had even been built. He is passionately curious about Gung Fu, Land Art, Green Architecture, and Muppet Puppet Building. Bonifacio recently completed a residency in Hartford, Connecticut where he attached eyes, noses, and smiles to 77 trees at the entrance of Pope Park; the entrance transformed into a Toonville welcoming party of Happy trees Titled "Smiling is Contagious!". His work is a reflection of his beliefs and morals expressed as short stories in the form of Land Art, Puppet Shows, Paintings, Animation, Photography, and Sound.

Tenderloin

2010

Ink on paper, construction paper,
pen on photograph, Lava bar soap
wrapper, and fabric
Various dimensions

MATTHEW RODRIGUEZ

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The work I am currently making aims to have a powerful physical presence along with a sense of humor that allows ideas and concepts to establish and expand. I am currently exploring and conveying ideas of the cultural exchanges, histories, and visual ideas of my Mexican-American and Native American background.

These works are meant to be navigation sites for a very personal investigation into my cultural vestiges. They are the result of an exploration into academic history, oral familial histories, pop cultural representations, and exploitations. Formally they aim to be visually inventive, humorous, beautiful, and exciting.

Many of my sculptures are assemblages of found objects. Each object that is used is chosen very specifically. Much of my process involves finding and choosing objects and images for their specific symbolic and formal characteristics.

Sculptures are only one part of the work. Performance, text, and specific generational aesthetics play a large role in creating a visual dialogue that points the viewer to contemporary methods of cultural exchange.

A powerful physical presence is key to my work. Minimalism was the first sculptural movement that made me understand that a sculpture has the ability to activate and implicate the viewer in the existence of an object. My work is using a minimal language to give the viewer an immersive experience. Humor is also key. Much of my subject matter has to do with issues of class, race, and social structure. These ideas are nothing to laugh at, but a dose of humor helps these concepts to be confronted and have information delivered through an alternate method. Sometimes you have to laugh to keep from crying when talking about the histories of Mexican-Americans and Native Americans.

Ritual Fire

2009

Found objects

Dimensions variable

CARLOS ROSALES-SILVA



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ABEL SAUCEDO

Abel Saucedo is from El Paso, TX, the second safest city in the country. Only about a thirty-second drive over the Rio Grande River separates El Paso's sister city: C.D. Juarez. Infamous for its ongoing drug-related violence and brutality, Juarez crime affects both cities that make up the largest bi-national metropolitan area in the world with a population of close to three million people. Saucedo's work depicts everyday situations from this communal dichotomy, and he continually utilizes his artwork for social, cultural, and political commentary.

C.D. Juarez Es the Number 1
Pinata Series of 4

2009

Various materials

18.5" x 13" x 12"

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I use scientific visualization to explore the human use of non-gravitational aesthetics, geometry and architecture in extra-atmospheric space, to create drawings, paintings and multimedia installations. The visual data I mine is from the spaceflight programs operated by the U.S. and Russia. Visually, I'm concerned with form vs. function, remote sensing, aerospace architecture, earth observation, and materials sciences. My studio work is produced as works on paper, oil paintings, wall drawing installations and sound pieces. I use real-time data from the ISS, space walks, spacecraft dockings, and Mars Rovers activities, for drawings, paintings, works on paper, and wall drawings. Further post-studio research is conducted in Houston, TX; Cape Canaveral, FL; Korolyov (Moscow), Russia and Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

Space Station: Docking Point

2008

Oil on vacuumized aluminum
thermal blanket on canvas

48" x 48"

The graffiti art form is often negatively characterized as criminal and destructive, but I found, early on, that painting afforded me a creative outlet through which I was able to confidently develop a legitimate identity as an artist – in spite of the pressures of gangs and gang-related activity prevalent throughout the working class neighborhoods of San Antonio in the mid-1990s. Graffiti was my singular form of expression, and opened up a dialogue between me and my community that continues to this day through my artwork.

My subject matter has always been those familiar, accessible things of everyday life in my neighborhood, in my community, in my culture – those seemingly commonplace people, places, and situations that are so frequently overlooked or taken for granted, but can and should be recognized as really remarkable things with so much potential for greatness. I am proud of and I am inspired by where I come from, and my work documents feelings, moments, or specific images that define me in terms of self and community.

Both sides, cold as stone

2009

Enamel on found object

4' x 8'

DAVID "SHEK" MEGA

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Jason Villegas is a native Texan artist currently residing in Harlem, NY. Villegas melds animal, machine, luxury, cosmology, microbiology, evolution, and globalism into an absurd and engaging mythology of consumption. His work has been published in *Art in America*, *Art Lies* and the *Los Angeles Times* and exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Contemporary Art Museum of Houston, Phoenix Art Museum, El Museo Del Barrio, Museo Tamayo and Exit Art.

Polo Pile Detail
2009

Clothing, logos,
cardboard on canvas
Courtesy of the Artist
and McClain Gallery,
Houston
48" x 60"

JASON MILEGAS

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2009 - 2010

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