

Leaving Aztlán

All works courtesy of the artist unless otherwise noted.

JESSE AMADO

Make Love Not Art, 2005
acrylic on MDF
12 x 17 x 11 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Finesilver
Gallery, San Antonio

Conclusion, 2001
digital print
40 x 28-1/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Finesilver
Gallery, San Antonio

L'Avventura (subtitles), no. 1-4,
2001
graphite on paper
44 x 30 inches each
Courtesy of the artist and Finesilver
Gallery, San Antonio

CONNIE ARISMENDI

Clemencia, 2006
mixed media installation
dimensions variable

Flora Mexicana, 2006
enamel on aluminum, pencil and
acrylic on mylar
55-1/2 x 12-1/2 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Patricia
Correia Gallery, Santa Monica

JAVIER CARMONA

Alameda (ejemplo cotidiano), 2005
silver and chromogenic prints
21 x 32 inches

Cast, 2005
silver gelatin and chromogenic prints
22 x 54 inches

***Interior (ejemplo cotidiano)**, 2005
digital chromogenic prints
22 x 36 inches

ALEX DONIS

***Spider and Officer Johnson**, 2001
oil and enamel on canvas
60 x 84 inches

Popeye and Captain McGill, 2001
oil and enamel on canvas
60 x 84 inches

CHRISTINA FERNANDEZ

Lavanderia #1, 2002
C-print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Luisotti
Gallery, Santa Monica

Lavanderia #2, 2002
C-print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Luisotti
Gallery, Santa Monica

Lavanderia #3, 2002
C-print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Luisotti
Gallery, Santa Monica

Lavanderia #10, 2003
C-print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Luisotti
Gallery, Santa Monica

CARLOS FRESQUEZ

***Tiempo Trippin'**, 2004
readymade
12 inches diameter

Salon de Ilegales, 2005
altered thrift store paintings
dimensions variable

DIANA GUERRERO-MACIÁ

***Punk Painting**, 2004
wool, vinyl, safety pin and cotton
48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Bodybuilder
& Sportsman Gallery, Chicago

Never Mind the Twist, 2001
wool, neoprene, polyester and cotton
56 x 68 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Bodybuilder
& Sportsman Gallery, Chicago

A Weak Charge Still Flickers, 2005
vinyl and cotton
48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Bodybuilder
& Sportsman Gallery, Chicago

Nothing Can Stop You Now, 2006
wool, vinyl and cotton
24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Bodybuilder
& Sportsman Gallery, Chicago

SALOMON HUERTA

Untitled House, 2002
lithograph
41 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Patricia
Faure Gallery, Santa Monica

CHUCK RAMIREZ

Anjali (Purse Portraits), 2005
pigmented inkjet print
30 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Finesilver
Gallery, San Antonio

Cakky (Piñata Series), 2002
digital durst print
60 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Finesilver
Gallery, San Antonio

SHIZU SALDAMANDO

***Victor at Tacos Michoacan**, 2005
oil and collage on plywood
48 x 48 inches

La Cindy with Tree

2005
oil and collage on plywood
48 x 60 inches

RUBÉN ORTIZ TORRES

Rubén Ortiz Torres and Jim Mendiola
Mapping of the Mascot Genome,
2003
DVD
Courtesy of the artist and Jim Mendiola

Impure Beauty I, 2000
Chromaluculent urethane on steel
24 x 72 inches

Impure Beauty II, 2000
Chromaluculent urethane on steel
24 x 72 inches



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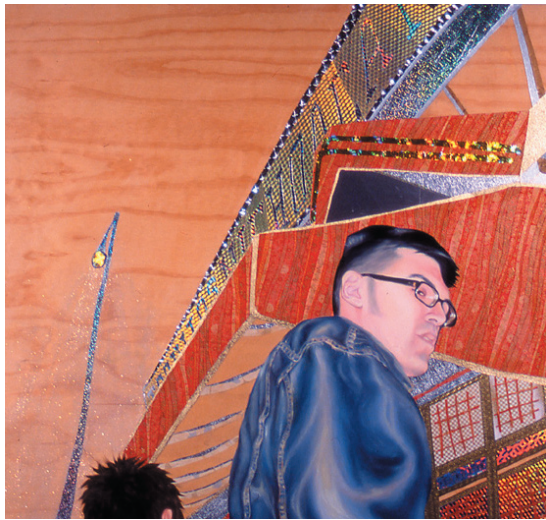
Cover image: Carlos Fresquez. Interior Images (I to r): Shizu Saldamando, Javier Carmona, Diana Guerrero-Maciá, Alex Donis



Leaving Aztlán
January 29 – May 10, 2007
DePauw University • Richard E. Peeler Art Center

Leaving Aztlán

Leaving Aztlán presents the work of contemporary U.S. artists who, by engaging a wide range of artistic practices, forms and strategies, produce work that challenges stereotypical perceptions of Chicana/o and Latina/o art as a homogenous “style” defined solely in culturally specific terms. The artists in this exhibition use culturally ambiguous formal and conceptual strategies that defy one-dimensional readings, and situate their work not within the confines and constructs of an ethnically based visual ghetto, but within the larger, global context of contemporary art.



These artists do not completely divorce themselves from the visual legacy created by Latina/o and Chicana/o artists from previous generations. Instead, they produce work that signals a significant paradigmatic shift in that it resists a culturally essentialist reading. They accomplish this through the use of hybridity as a formal and conceptual strategy; by adopting formal approaches and subject matter that thwart attempts to align their work with a specific ethnicity; and by appropriating forms and aspects of both “high” and popular culture in order to challenge cultural and aesthetic hierarchies.

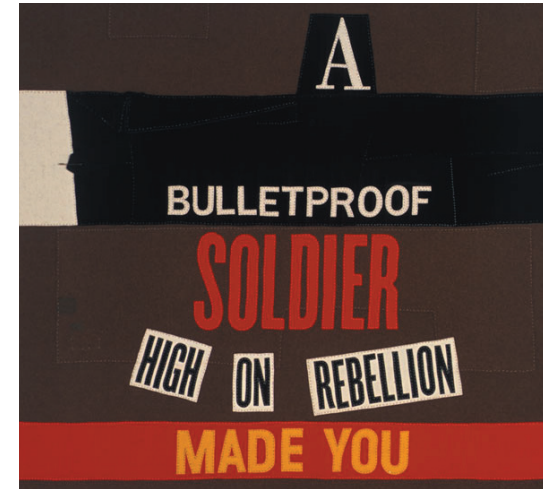


Javier Carmona’s black-and-white photographs function as nuanced, yet loaded film stills, each composed of carefully crafted mis-en-scènes that transform fictionalized images into poor man’s cinema. Connected by a nonlinear narrative thread that frequently alludes to self-identity, as well as by the repeated use of objects and themes, Carmona’s photographs exist not as discrete entities, but as a related group of images in dialogue with each other.

The text and language based works created by Jesse Amado and Diana Guerrero-Maciá engage the tradition of concrete poetry in that they are informed by the physical properties of language. Jesse Amado’s post-minimal, conceptually driven works – many referencing landmark 20th century cinema and literature – transform language by literally objectifying it. His wall reliefs and plastic tape rubbings of English subtitles from foreign films are visual forms of linguistic play; they make the spoken word iconic, and simultaneously become proxies for the films and texts that they reference.

Drawing from pictorial sources such as graphic design, pop advertising and billboards, as well as the visual language of painting, Guerrero-Maciá uses color, phrasing and typography to create graphic, text-driven works that express her interest in words and their representation. A visual editor and sampler, she wryly manipulates and reconfigures found materials – frequently discarded clothing and text from record album covers she finds at thrift stores – in works that are edgy and sometimes tinged with a political undercurrent.

A sly use of humor, as well as the employment of hybridity as an aesthetic and formal strategy, characterizes the (bi)culturally transformative work of Rubén Ortiz Torres. His works are products of cultural and aesthetic convergence, where the morphing of idolized athletes and cheesy sports mascots becomes a humorous reference to miscegenation and cultural exchange, and minimalist paintings are transformed into flattened icons of lowrider car culture, all symbols of the global mixing that defines contemporary culture.



Assuming the guise of postmodern cultural critic and rogue arbiter of taste, Carlos Fresquez expertly levels the aesthetic playing field by creating ironic, irreverent images that challenge elitist notions of taste. Fresquez’s artistic practice involves engaging in a form of historic and cultural intervention, one in which popular culture, Dadaist strategies and appropriation converge, the result being works where familiar cultural icons are profaned and traditional modes of representation are disputed, transformed and assigned new meaning.

Chuck Ramirez’s sparely composed photographs are an especially effective blend of aesthetics and content, as they bring together a formalist language that is as sophisticated as the personally informed, critical conceptuality that backs it up. Despite their cool appearance, Ramirez takes nuanced yet formidable jabs at cultural essentialism by exposing his own mixed emotions about homogeneous perceptions of identity through the reconfiguration of objects – such

as piñatas and santos – typically perceived as being culturally specific.

The allusion to romantic love and the ceremonial use of plants in Connie Arismendi’s installations are vehicles for conveying vulnerability, healing, spirituality and memory. Formally spare yet sensually rendered, her works are signifiers of physicality, intimacy, and desire. As repositories of longing and loss, her emotionally charged forms articulate the fragility and resilience of the body, as well as the complexity and profundity of familial relationships.

Human relationships are central to Alex Donis’s provocative, homoerotically charged images of LAPD officers dancing with gang members, although here the fictionalized portraits are unsettling rather than romantic. However, Donis’s images of these unlikely dance partners do not exist solely for their shock value. Instead, these utopian images suggest the transcendence of such social problems as homophobia and racial intolerance.



The post-identity practitioners represented in this exhibition create work that represents the wide range of expression found in the Latina/o Chicana/o diaspora. This generation of artists is mapping out new and important terrain through work that forces us to question, more than ever before, what it means to label work as “Chicana/o” or Latina/o” art, as well as what constitutes the relationship between ethnicity and artistic production.

Kaytie Johnson, Director and Curator of University Galleries, Museums and Collections