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
digital print
40 x 28-1/4 inches
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 56 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
Lavanderia #3, 2002
C-print
30 x 40 inches
Lavanderia #10, 2003
C-print
30 x 40 inches
CARLOS FRESQUEZ
*Tiempo Trippin’, 2004
readymade
12 inches diameter
Salón de ilegales, 2005
altered thrift store paintings
dimensions variable
DIANA GUERRERO-MACÍA
*Punk Painting, 2004
wool, vinyl, safety pin and cotton
48 x 48 inches
La Cindy with Tree, 2005
oil and collage on plywood
48 x 48 inches
RUBÉN ORTIZ TORRES
Rubén Ortiz Torraes and Jim Mendiola
Mapping of the Mascot Genome, 2003
DVD
Courtesty of the artist and Jim Mendiola

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

SAVOMON HUERTA
Untitled House, 2002
lithograph
41 x 21 inches
Courtesty of the artist and Patricia
Faure Gallery, Santa Monica

CHUCK RAMIREZ
Anjel (Purse Portraits), 2005
pigmented inkjet print
30 x 24 inches
Courtesty of the artist and Finesilver
Gallery, San Antonio
Cakky (Pieata 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

SALOMON HUERTA
Untitled House, 2002
lithograph
41 x 21 inches
Courtesty of the artist and Patricia
Faure Gallery, Santa Monica

DIANA GUERRERO-MACÍA
*Punk Painting, 2004
wool, vinyl, safety pin and cotton
48 x 48 inches
La Cindy with Tree, 2005
oil and collage on plywood
48 x 48 inches

RUBÉN ORTIZ TORRES
Rubén Ortiz Torraes and Jim Mendiola
Mapping of the Mascot Genome, 2003
DVD
Courtesty of the artist and Jim Mendiola

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

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

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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 defined constrictions and constructs of an ethnically based visual ghetto, but within the larger, global context of contemporary art.

Javier Carmona’s black-and-white photographs function as nuanced, yet loaded film stills, each composed of carefully crafted mise-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 memory. Formally spare yet sensually rendered, her works are signifiers of physicality, intimacy, and eroticism 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, Hamrigez 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, homoerectically 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.

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 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