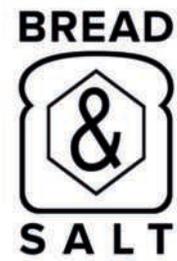


**SAN
DIEGO
ART
PRIZE**
2021

Thank you to all our sponsors



In loving memory of Larry Baza

Larry Baza has championed the arts for almost 50 years with his kindness, warmth and unfaltering passion. In 2019, Larry joined the SD Art Prize committee to continue his support and celebration of our local artists. Before he passed away in Feb of 2021, he was appointed to the prestigious position of Executive Director of the California Arts Council. No matter how high he went in the establishment of art administration, he always spent a generous amount of his valuable time advising and encouraging all of us in San Diego. The SD Art Prize truly appreciated his support of the arts and our mission and how much he will always mean to us. We dedicate the 2021 San Diego Art Prize to Larry Baza as a gesture of gratitude and acknowledgement that he will live long in our memories with enormous affection and gratitude.



Foreword

Chi Essary

A variety of perspectives enrich the San Diego/Tijuana region: *multi-cultural, trans-border, bi-national, borderlander, and trans-national* are just a few of the manifold and diverse ways of encountering the border in areas such as ours. This year's SD Art Prize recipients – Beliz Iristay, Hugo Crosthwaite, PANCA, and Perry Vásquez – celebrate many of these diverse experiences. Congratulations to these extraordinarily talented artists, who have graced San Diego with their arresting visions and interpretations of their individual and shared border crisscrosses and reencounters.

To enliven the conversation, we invited Norma Iglesias-Prieto, Ph.D., to write the opening essay. We're pleased to have Norma, a renowned trans-border scholar with almost 40 years of academic experience in cultural studies on the U.S.-Mexico border, share her knowledge on the subject that has been her life's work. She has analyzed the varied experiences along the border region and explains these "borderisms" in her essay as they relate to this year's recipients. Thank you, Norma, for sharing your expertise and insight with us as we celebrate a few of your designated *borderisms*.

I'm excited to announce a new addition to the SD Art Prize committee: Felicia Shaw, the Executive Director of the Women's Museum of California. For more than 30 years, Felicia has dedicated herself to supporting the arts in our region. We're honored to have her leadership and passion for the arts on the committee!

We've also been busy building an advisory committee and are delighted that Arturo Rodriguez, Director of La Caja Galería, Tijuana, Mexico, has joined us. Arturo will help us bridge the border with his expertise in Mexican and cross-border artists.

This catalog was created thanks to the generosity of your fellow community members, many of whom contributed between \$10 and \$500 to our fundraiser. Thank you to everyone who made this year's catalog possible and free for all!

The SD Art Prize celebrates artists in our region who have demonstrated outstanding creativity and added vitality to the arts community through their extraordinary contributions. This region has a wealth of amazing artists, and the SD Art Prize endeavors to recognize artists of merit by supporting and promoting those who are working to build their career and contribute to the regional arts scene.

Founded and supported since 2006 by the San Diego Visual Arts Network, the SD Art Prize was conceived to promote visibility and public interest in talented local artists and foster community engagement and critical dialogue about contemporary art in San Diego.

Presented below are the artist eligibility guidelines:

- Outstanding creativity in exhibitions or other public art presentations in the last three years.
- Live/work in San Diego County and Baja Norte region (Fallbrook to Ensenada).
- No age restriction.
- Previous San Diego Art Prize recipients are ineligible.

Each year, four arts professionals from different sectors of SD's art ecosystem are invited to write about a finalist for the catalog. The writers and the Art Prize Committee submit nominations for the following year to ensure the nomination committee is regularly refreshed with new perspectives. A special thank-you to the 2021 writers for their contributions: Adriana Martínez, an independent curator, writer, and cultural activist based in Mexico City; Anthony Graham, Associate Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Eve Wood, Artillery Magazine Arts Writer; and Seth Combs, Arts columnist and writer, San Diego Union Tribune.

I'd also like to thank my fellow members of the SD Art Prize Committee, who make the final decision on the nominee selection: Alessandra Moctezuma, director of San Diego Mesa College Art Gallery; Debra Poteet, prominent collector; Erika Torri, director of the Athenaeum Music and Arts Library; Patricia Frischer, coordinator and founder San Diego Visual Arts Network; and our newest committee member, Felicia Shaw, Executive Director of the Women's Museum of California.

The SD Art Prize is not only a cash prize. It also comes with exhibition opportunities for the four finalists, which were limited by this year's continued impact with Covid. We'd like to thank Bread & Salt for hosting the SD Art Prize 2021 exhibition, Oct. 9th - Dec. 31st, in Barrio Logan.

We'd also like to extend special thanks to the San Diego Visual Arts Network, which founded and has supported the Art Prize since 2006 (SDVAN.NET); the Bread & Salt for stepping in with a last-minute exhibition for the pandemic-cancelled 2020 show and hosting the 2021 show; Neyenesch Printers, for their generous printing support of the catalog; Rosemary KimBal for proof reading and finally, Alexander Kohnke, for his design and additional support in producing this catalog. What you have in your hands would not have been possible without his creativity, guidance, and patience with my learning curve and all those last-minute edits! Thanks Alex!

Chi Essary is the curator of the San Diego Art Prize, Vanguard Culture board member and Independent Curator specializing in cross-discipline collaborations and science inspired exhibitions.

Art and Artistic Practices that Transgress Borders

Norma Iglesias Prieto, Ph.D.

There are a great variety of border experiences and perspectives along the San Diego/Tijuana region. During my life's work, I have analyzed those varied experiences that I call *borderisms*. Two of those *borderisms* are represented in this year's SD Art Prize recipients which are *transborders* and *borderlanders*.

There is a geopolitical fact that can mark the lives of those of us who live near an international border; that fact is precisely being the neighbor of another country. And I emphasize that it "can" mark someone's life because the border is not lived in the same way or assigned the same value in all cases. The importance and the specialness assigned to the "other side" can vary from person to person. For some San Diego residents, being neighbors of Tijuana - or Baja California in general - may be an unimportant fact because it does not affect the dynamics of their daily lives. For others, Tijuana or "the other side" can be an exciting tourist destination (usually for one day) where one can go to eat, drink craft beer, buy medicine, see the dentist, or watch a Xolos game. However, for many others, the Mexican side of the border is an integral part of themselves and their identity. In these cases, Tijuana, Tecate, Rosarito, Ensenada or Mexicali, are places full of sentimental and identity value for several reasons: because a family member such as a grandmother or an uncle lives there, because they have lived there at some point in their lives, because it reminds them of their origins and culturally affirms them, and/or because these places inspire them. In those cases, the "other side" is not unknown or distant. The different ways each person experiences the border and, therefore, signifies it, are what I call *borderisms*.

There is a range of *borderisms*. Among them are the "non-border" who are not affected by the other side, the "binational" or "bi-local" for whom both sides may be important yet the separation of each space is maintained. There are also the "borderlanders" who experience a de-territorialized border, in which the line is considered more as a cultural, conceptual, or symbolic marker than as a formal geopolitical limit. And lastly, there are what I call "transborder" for whom both sides of the border become one.

Those who have become transborder people live both sides as their own. For them, the experience of crossing back and forth occurs in a more or less fluid way, although not without tension because of what an international crossing means in terms of controls. Transborder people experience both sides of the border as one single space because the "here" and "there" loses strength when they experience it as a third space/condition. These transborder people cannot imagine their lives and their daily practices without the other side and the action of crossing. In the Tijuana and San Diego region, there are many artists for whom the border, its dynamics, and its crossings are part of their daily lives and therefore are a central part of their artistic work. Hugo Crosthwaite, for example, was born in Tijuana, grew up in Rosarito and studied for many years in San Diego, and also lived in New York. Similarly, Paola Villaseñor (PANCA) grew up in Chula Vista and has lived in Tijuana for many years. Hugo and Paola have spent much of their life crossing the border and constantly switching between English and Spanish. They have developed plenty of skills to know how to negotiate and function on both sides. The border has been their muse and inspiration in countless artistic works, and their aesthetics take up elements from both sides. Their life and art experience on both sides has marked their critical perspectives on the border itself and the power exercised in this region.

Beliz Iristay was born in Turkey, but she has lived between San Diego and Ensenada for several years, and her work takes up that in-between condition in a critical way. She takes up part of the Turkish cultural traditions to reflect aesthetically and critically on geopolitical borders, human migrations, and symbolic borders or borderlands (gender, ethnic, social class differences, or marks of otherness, for example). Similarly, Perry Vazquez's life experience in Los Angeles, North Carolina, and San Diego has impacted the techniques and the ways in which he works. The borderlands or symbolic borders have played a central role in his life and his work. Although the geopolitical border crossing has not occurred with the fluidity of the other artists, his artwork has been nourished by the critical tracing of his



origins, heritage, and identity. His artwork is inspired by a mixture of aesthetic traditions of both countries (American popular art, pre-Columbian art, among others).

What characterizes the work of the four prize recipients is that it is anchored in this geopolitical border, allowing them to have a critical and non-romanticized perspective of fluidity, questioning the narratives and actions of geopolitical separation and border power structures. These artists are nurtured and inspired by both sides of this border; through their work and their artistic practices, they provoke new notions of what it means to neighbor another country, use and appropriately both spaces to work, and take up aesthetic and cultural traditions from various sides. These artists operate as bridges, translators, and articulators of multiple communities. Through their way of life, their work, techniques, aesthetics and themes, these artists constantly question the traditional notions of borders.

Norma Iglesias Prieto, Ph.D., is a transborder scholar with interdisciplinary education. She has 39 years of academic experience in cultural studies on the U.S.-Mexico border, emphasizing identity, gender, visual art, and mass media (particularly cinema). Since 2000 is a professor at San Diego State University. For more than 22 years she was a researcher at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Tijuana). She is the author of five books, among them Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladoras (1985/1997) and Emergencias: Las artes visuales en Tijuana (2008). She has contributed essays to many academic journals, books, and exhibition catalogs. In addition to her academic work, Iglesias Prieto has experience as a media producer and art curator.



BELIZ IRISTAY



Adriana Martínez Noriega, *Independent Curator, Writer, Cultural Activist, Mexico City*

East, West, North and South are the four cardinal points, the bearings that mark our direction on our external and internal compasses. However, when it comes to culture and geopolitics, these apparently neutral categories — as some thinkers have pointed out (Edward Said; Joaquín Torres García) — emerge as epistemologically problematic since they are imbued with biased aesthetic, historical, sociological and economic value judgements. Hence, the oppositional West-vs.-East / North-vs.-South logic that, in order to sustain the supremacy of the West and North, has construed false unifying collective identities of the latter.

Beliz Iristay, a mixed-media Turkish-American artist currently living in Valle de Guadalupe, puts forth a more nuanced perspective that derives from her gendered and cross-cultural experience. Her work, a set of representations of in-between spaces, tackles cultural and

photo: Zeynep Dogu



religious customs through aesthetically hybrid ceramic sculptures and installations that question official social and political discourses by critically reflecting on mysticism, traditions and womanhood.

Born in Izmir, on the Aegean Sea, the artist attended the Dokuz Eylul Fine Art University and studied ceramics, learning ancient Anatolian techniques and traditional Ottoman designs through which she investigates contemporary issues. Having lived in the cosmopolitan city of Istanbul, where Asia and Europe meet, Iristay was used to going back and forth from East to West. “I grew up in a country that, although surrounded by check-points that function as mental borders, has no actual physical walls. So, when I first came to Tijuana to visit Jamex” — her partner — “I was shocked at the vision of a wall that goes miles and miles of distance, through hills and mountains. It was just surreal,” she said. Now, after more than 15 years living on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, the artist’s sensibility is interested in the vast array of misconceptions she has experienced at the crossroads of both, East and West, and North and South, neighboring cultures.

I remember seeing one of her works at a group show in an uptown San Diegan house around 2013. A white glazed round plate decorated with reliefs of porcelain lips hung vertically on the wall, actually, making them look like vaginas. “She just tilted the compass 90 degrees over; she is simply pointing into a different direction,” I thought as I remained humored by what I saw. There was, however, much more to the piece for it symbolized not only women’s historical silencing but also the constant (over) sexualization of our bodies. Since then, I have been following the artist’s particular gaze, that is, her acute although subtle strategy to remap and disrupt hegemonic narratives. (fig. 1)

Another work from that earlier period is “Internal Intention/External Pressure,” (fig. 2) a pair of fired clay painted and glazed tiles in which the artist points to the tensions that exist between the inner and outer forces involved in personal life expectations, although, it can also be read at national or regional levels. With contrasting colors, an above-and-below layout, a direct and short written message, and a clear-cut separation, the two rectangular tiles address the notion of actual and metaphoric boundaries between free will and social constraints.

In 2017, on a more political level, as a result of a collaborative Border Biennial project with the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez, the artist included a collection of PVC “rahles,” the traditional Islamic bookrests used to display the Quran, covered in colorful Turkish military photos, and topped with irregularly displaced acrylic minarets at the El Paso Museum of Art and Peter & Margaret De Wetter Gallery. The immersive installation “Oku/Read,” highlighted blatant ignorance regarding all things Islamic by the Western world. The semi-chaotic atmosphere of the piece was a provocative way of inviting (Western) people to read — that is what “oku” means, and it is also the first word in the Quran — in order to dissipate false archetypes. (fig. 3)

Iristay’s last series of vases, tile and brick sculptures, and installations made up her 2020 Lux Art Institute solo show “Tracing acculturations.” (Plates 1 and 2) This project combined Mexican soil and adobe techniques, Ottoman forms, and painted fertility motifs that can be traced to either ancient Anatolian civilization or indigenous American tribes. In doing so, the artist says, “I am following the Silk Road in reverse direction to re-create the cross-cultural route we used be part of without there being any borders.” Therefore, stressing the importance of eastern civilizations in economic, historical, and cultural terms, the artist is once again tilting the compass to find true north. Or, should I say ‘true south’?



FIG. 1

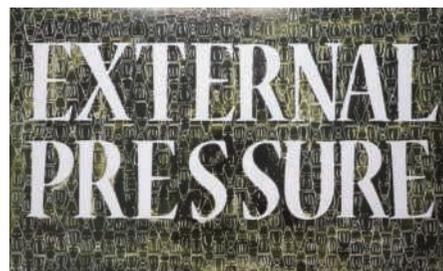


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

FIG. 1
Broken Cundina, 2015
Dia. 23"
slip-cast ceramic plate, Raku firing, clay
cast lips, epoxy, acrylics

FIG. 2
Internal Intention External Pressure, 2011
25" x 17"
slip-cast ceramic tile, hand painted
overglaze ceramic paints, wood panel,
silicon, epoxy

FIG. 3
OKU/Word, 2017 (installation detail)
dimensions variable
mixed media, resin, PVC panel, digital
photography, epoxy
photo: Museum of El Paso, TX



PLATE 1



PLATE 1
Anottomans, 2020
 16" × 9.5" × 5"
 solid cast red clay mixture underglaze painting
 photo: Zeynep Dogu

PLATE 2
Enculturations, 2020
 16" × 9.5" × 5"
 solid cast red clay mixture, blue and white Chinese manufactured slip-cast ginger jar, underglaze painting
 photo: Isik Kaya

PLATE 3
Wonderboy, 2018
 15" × 10.5" × 2"
 adobe mixture solid cast brick, underglaze painting, aluminum panel, silicon
 photo: Zeynep Dogu

PLATE 2



PLATE 3



PLATE 4



PLATE 5



PLATE 4
CALL, 2019
 30" × 20" × 1"
 adobe mixture solid cast brick,
 underglaze painting, overglaze decals,
 aluminum panel, silicon
 photo: Philipp Scholz-Rittermann

PLATE 5
Where is He, Triptych, 2020
 27.5" × 27.5"
 hand painting on half cut adobe clay
 bricks, underglaze ceramic paints, over
 glaze decals, silicon
 photo: Zeynep Dogu

PLATE 6
Solid Cast I, 2020
 15" × 9" × 3"
 adobe mixture solid cast brick, slip-cast
 white clay form, metal, silicon
 photo: Zeynep Dogu

PLATE 7
Solid Cast II, 2020
 15" × 9" × 3"
 adobe mixture solid cast brick, slip-cast
 white clay form, metal, silicon
 photo: Zeynep Dogu

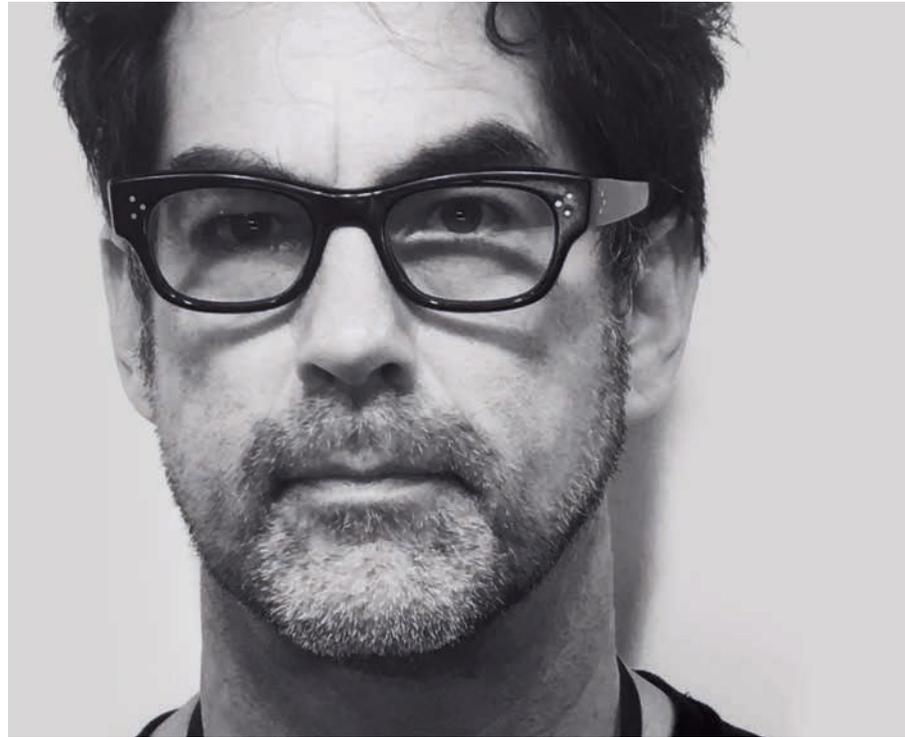


PLATE 6



PLATE 7

PERRY VASQUEZ



Seth Combs, Arts Columnist and Writer, San Diego Union-Tribune

There's something to be said for the artist that stays.

This thought occurred to me in 2018 while viewing Perry Vasquez's solo show, "WRONGLANDIA," at the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library. Looking around the exhibition, there was something ironic about the affluent La Jolla denizens taking in Vasquez's paintings of burning palm trees and fighter jets. My mind flashed to images of some well-meaning venture capitalist or old-money millionaire, in some late-middle-aged attempt to be edgy, deciding to decorate his study with paintings of flaming fronds. That's not even mentioning the fact that many of those pieces were from a series ("Under the Perfect Sun") that Vasquez

named after a book that explored San Diego's sordid history of corruption, militarism and inequality.

Vasquez is attempting to bring attention to the dark undercurrents of our otherwise paradisiacal home, I thought at the time. Surely, this fact is not lost on these people, no?

In a local career that has now stretched out over three decades, Vasquez is a San Diego artist through and through. For as long as I have lived here, San Diego has been seen, for many, as something of an artistic sojourn; a place where artists come to live and to develop a buzz before relocating to more (let's see ... how should I put this?) artist-friendly cities.

Of course, Vasquez is a literal exception to this interminable trend. He has lived, taught and created in San Diego since the early '90s. What's more impressive, however, is how his work, which incorporates a variety of mediums and techniques, is so distinctly localized.

I look at this work and I see someone perfectly encapsulating the conflicting dualities that come with living in San Diego. Is anyone else seeing this?

Take Vasquez's "Keep on Crossin'" project, a particularly blatant and humorous example of this duality. The 2002 collaboration with writer/filmmaker Victor Payan, was a series of paintings, installations and Robert Crumb-derived posters and patches. It was meant to bring attention to the immigrant experience at a time when jingoistic and nationalistic fervor was at an all-time high. (Fig. 1)

Yes, we can love where we live, but it's also okay to prick holes in the militaristic, nativist bubble that encompasses our city.

Even Vasquez's ventures in surrealism, pop-art and lowbrowism, while certainly vibrant and multifaceted on the surface, are voluminous examples of an artist trying to make a very centralized point. His "Cuerpos Transformados" and subsequent "The Gates of Heck" series of works mixed pop-culture with Christian iconography to make a larger statement about, as he puts it, "the hierarchy of values and norms that govern political and social interactions." (Plate 9)

Hmmm ... is Perry a political artist? Has this been the case all along?

Never one to be pigeonholed, Vasquez morphed "The Gates of Heck" into a multi-disciplined project that incorporated paintings, music, video and projection art. It's only fitting that a project inspired by Rodin's "Le Port de l'Enfer," itself inspired by Dante's "Inferno," culminated in Vasquez traveling to Stanford University to project flames and hellish sounds onto the sculpture itself. (Fig. 2)

Even with his painted and printed works, I'm sure it's occurred to Perry that there are performative elements within all his works. What is art if not the realized performance — a dance, an act, a movement — that the viewer walks away from feeling inspired and changed?

These thoughts occurred to me in 2018 and still occur to me now, when accessing the length and breadth of Vasquez's career. A career, mind you, where Vasquez lived and created in San Diego. While so many artists come, and go, Vasquez has let the city inform and inspire him, distilling that experience into work that is both provocative and surreal, decorous and accessible.

There's something to be said for the artist who stays. The ones who continue to create throughout the years, never settling on a comfortable categorization much less a medium. And whatever medium he's working with at the time — music or paint, printing or performance — Vasquez is an artist who has stayed and whose work has stayed with me long after viewing it.



FIG. 1



FIG. 2

FIG. 1
Keep on Crossin', installation view, 2008
silk screen prints
photo: Michael Elderman

FIG. 2
Memory of Fire
site specific light projection
Rodin's Le Port de l'Enfer
Cantor Arts Center



PLATE 8

PLATE 8
Keep on Crossin', 2008
slip-cast mold and paint
photo: Alexander Kohnke
13" x 12" x 10.5"

PLATE 9
The Gates of Heck, 2014
oil on canvas
43" x 50"



PLATE 9



PLATE 10



PLATE 11



PLATE 12

PLATE 10
Atmosphere, 2021
72" × 22"
oil on canvas

PLATE 11
Deep Blue Day, 2020
72" × 22"
oil on canvas

PLATE 12
The Ideal Copy, 2020
22" × 22"
digital print and oil on canvas



Anthony Graham, *Associate Curator at Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego*

PANCA is an artist who works with the public. Not just in how she sites her paintings in urban landscapes but also for the far-reaching extent that her work circulates — on walls, on stickers, online. Whether working in illustration and painting or enormous murals, PANCA constructs what often feels like an organic, ever-growing universe of grotesque people and tender monsters. Fragments of faces orbit around hearts and pyramids in densely painted and intricately layered environments of color.

Like many living in San Diego and Tijuana, PANCA and her work have long been a part of my daily commute. For years, I passed by her 45-foot-tall mural on the side of Bread & Salt. The melting ice cream of “The Heat/La Calors” (2017) drips and sweats as the bright pink and teal paint vibrate under the bright sun. The tragicomedy of the animated dessert characterizes much of PANCA’s work, riffing on a familiar feeling of day-to-day disappointments. PANCA’s works brim with emotions such as these, almost to the point of sensory overload.

With her signature style, PANCA's drawings appear almost tactile. Bodies and geometric shapes can both appear to be squishy or stretched; they sit atop one another, variously opaque and transparent to merge figures into their surroundings. Their insides pour out, gushing sickeningly sweet streams of color. These objects tend to gather together into elaborate and messy constellations seemingly from some other galaxy, merging even familiar settings like bedrooms and jungles with an impossible, gauzy field of paint.

PANCA's work is often rooted in her own experiences and blended with a wide-ranging set of references and influences. Her work is created alongside her constant consumption of music and movies. At times, certain lines or quotes find their way into the works themselves. But as always, PANCA transforms these personal citations into something imaginative and surprising. For example, the exotic birds that appear in several pieces might reference her grandmother's parrot. But rather than a purely nostalgic image, these birds seem to reflect a broader view of beauty and nature.

Born in Chula Vista, PANCA has now lived in Tijuana for almost half her life. Drawing on her own experience, moving between these two cultures, PANCA's art is double-edged, bifurcated, but never binary. Through her representations of conflict, PANCA finds a new form of clarity. In her world, everything treads the line between happy and sad, fun and freakish.

While her work is recognized for its exuberance, the light and playful aspects of PANCA's work are complicated by the poignant realities of our political and social dynamics. In 2018, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego commissioned a site-specific wall painting by the artist for a group exhibition. Sited near a window and visible from the street, "Supply/Demand" foregrounded the ongoing conflicts between the United States and Mexico, and conflicting impact and futility of the border wall. Amid a scene of violence and mourning, weapons, drugs and money flow like toxic waste. While several figures climb the fence attempting to cross, two lovers, one on each side, embrace in a kiss. For all of the brutality that characterizes this scene, PANCA centers a certain optimism, showing how connection and love persevere through pain.

Frequently, PANCA grapples with these issues of power and, in several works, she has examined the complexity and strength of women in particular. Her 2020 mural for Mujeres Brew House depicts a line of Mujeres Zapatistas. These political activists have prioritized women's rights in Mexico and are recognized for their black hoods. Here, a group of adult women and young girls stand together, linking arms in front of a striated blue backdrop. The work also demonstrates the artist's technical ability, and is her first large-scale mural rendered solely with aerosol paint.

In contrast to this image of solidarity, PANCA's mural "El mundo salvaje de la mujer" (San Diego Art Institute, 2015) explored another dimension of how women might rebuff social expectations. In this work, a trio of nude, carnivorous women are perched above a dismembered female body. While they feast, a river of red waves flows beneath them. Similarly expressing power and ferocity, here PANCA asserts a sense of freedom — embracing both good and bad.

Following a do-it-yourself tendency of the punk scene and other street artists, PANCA has carved a place for her work not only in the physical world but also in the social, artistic world. Early in her career, PANCA would wheat-paste or paint her works in the middle of the night. Showing in more "traditional" art spaces, PANCA takes on the austerity of the white wall and imbues it with the energy and vitality that her work is so known for. Through her unique ability to draw out feelings of positivity and discomfort, PANCA opens up our world to the urgencies of her own artistic vision.

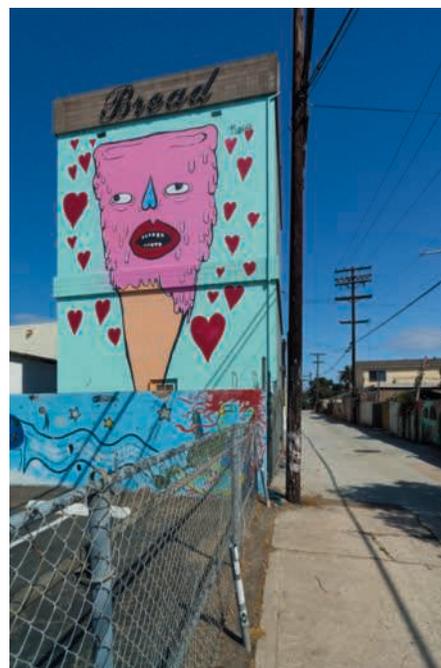


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

FIG. 1
La Colors, 2017
 mural at Bread & Salt, San Diego, CA
 aerosol paint on wall
 photo: Michael James Armstrong

FIG. 2
Supply/Demand, 2018
 acrylic on wall
 installation from Being Here with You/
 Estando aquí contigo: 42 Artists from
 San Diego and Tijuana, at the Museum
 of Contemporary Art San Diego,
 Downtown
 photo: Pablo Mason



PLATE 13



PLATE 14



PLATE 15



PLATE 16

PLATE 13
Mujeres, 2020
 mural, Mujeres Brew House, San Diego, California
 aerosol paint on wall
 photo: Michael James Armstrong

PLATE 14
Los Perdidos #3, 2019
 3.5" x 4.2"
 found Polaroid picture and acrylic paint
 photo: Michael James Armstrong

PLATE 15
Los Perdidos #20, 2019
 3.5" x 4.2"
 found Polaroid picture and acrylic paint
 photo: Michael James Armstrong

PLATE 16
Los Perdidos #27, 2019
 3.5" x 4.2"
 found Polaroid picture and acrylic paint
 photo: Michael James Armstrong

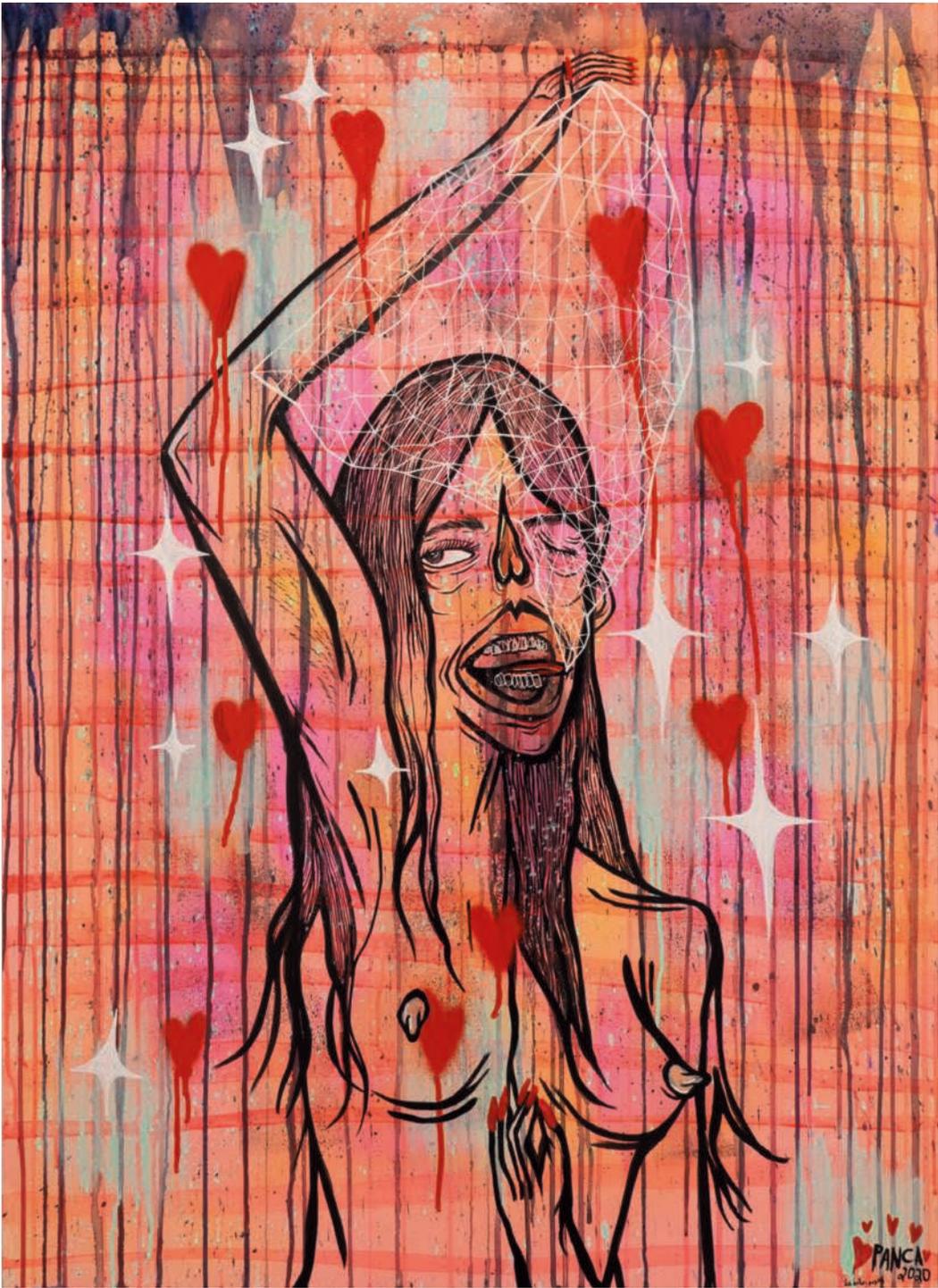


PLATE 17

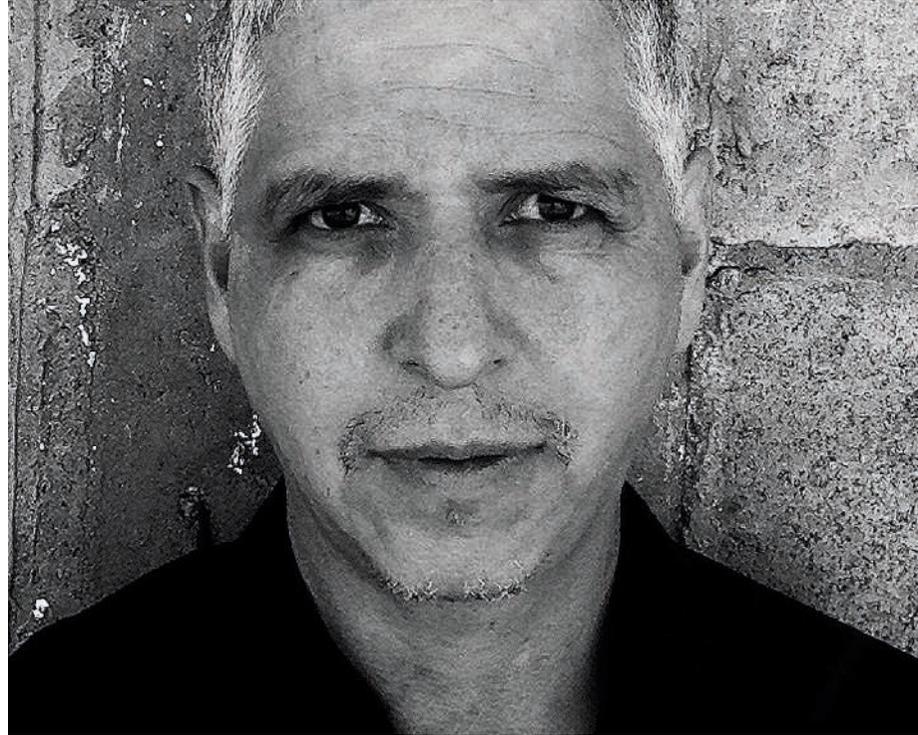


PLATE 18

PLATE 17
LA NINA POPOFF, 2020
2' x 3'
acrylic on wood panel
photo: Michael James Armstrong

PLATE 18
Sácalo, 2020
mural, Bread & Salt, San Diego, CA
acrylic on wall
photo: Michael James Armstrong

HUGO CROSTHWAITE



Eve Wood, *Artillery Magazine Arts Writer and Artist*

It was Hugo Crosthwaite's unique sense of humor, tinged as it is with melancholy and forged in the fires of personal experience, that first sparked my interest in his work — a splendidly sardonic, irreverent brand of altruistic slyness, richly literate and seething just under the surface. Crosthwaite's views of the world represent an ever-unfolding narrative, nuanced and enigmatic. I was lucky enough to review one of his first shows at Luis de Jesus Gallery, an exhibition inspired by Edgar Allen Poe's poem "Hymn." I remember the day clearly, standing in the middle of the gallery and thinking to myself, "now here's an artist whose mind intrigues me — a guy I'd like to sit down and have a beer with." I'm still waiting on that beer, but for now, I must content myself with gazing into his luminous and richly layered universe — images that tell necessary, and sometimes difficult, stories. Crosthwaite's true genius lies in the fact he subverts these same stories even as they slowly and beautifully unfold before us.

To consider Crosthwaite's work, whether they be paintings, drawings or large-scale murals, is to understand the complexity of the human experience, which includes both sadness and joy,

disillusionment and hope. The nexus of Crosthwaite's working process is always and invariably connection — with himself and with the people he speaks for. He often represents moments of human crisis, where, for example, in his mural project entitled "In Memoriam: Los Angeles" at the Museum of Social Justice, scenes of terror and divisiveness play out endlessly where frightened refugees battle the constant and seemingly unquenchable hatred of the KKK. But there are also points of light here and echoes of a divinely generous and forgiving spirit, whether that be a Biblical God, or something far less linear and literal. Perhaps the act of making art, of willing these figures into being across the endless expanse of blank walls is, for Crosthwaite, in some way sacramental. Either way, it doesn't matter. What does matter is the lasting effect these images have on us as viewers.

Born in Tijuana in 1971, Crosthwaite grew up submerged in a cross section of multiculturalism and his work often reflects both the diversity and complexity of that experience. Working with pencil and charcoal and focusing specifically on the human figure, Crosthwaite's narratives are mythic retellings of familiar and all-too-human stories. All of his work is driven by improvisation, and though he works in a linear fashion, his process allows that his drawings might develop instinctually through specific details that involve the implementation of various artistic and cultural motifs, including portraiture, comic book imagery, urban signage and commercial facades. His technique also serves to support his content as many times Crosthwaite works within a specific community and encourages people to come in as he works and share their personal narratives. This kind of awareness, charting the topography of each person's personal life experience and elevating that experience to a point where he might then share it with the larger community, is the engine that drives Crosthwaite's artistic process. He documents human resilience, his images, more often than not, explicating both the beauty and tragedy inherent in the human condition, but more importantly, Crosthwaite understands the importance of listening, synthesizing the core of another person's experience into a visual lexicon that is at once personal and universal.

Hugo Crosthwaite was the 2019 first prize winner of the Outwin Boochever portrait prize awarded by the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. His work has been widely exhibited including most recently at the Frost Art Museum in Florida, Luis de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles, Oceanside Museum of Art, and Hyde Gallery of Art. He's had solo exhibitions at the San Diego Museum of Art, Noel-Baza Fine Art and Pierogi in New York. Crosthwaite's work has been included in numerous collective exhibitions throughout the United States and Mexico.



FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3

FIG. 1
still from "A Portrait of Berenice Sarmiento Chávez", 2018
 dimensions variable
 stop-motion drawing animation

FIG. 2
still from "A Portrait of Berenice Sarmiento Chávez", 2018
 dimensions variable
 stop-motion drawing animation

FIG. 3
White Cloud Dark Tree mural
 performance, IN MEMORIAM: Los Angeles, 2017
 12' x 80'
 acrylic on wall





PLATE 19



PLATE 20

PLATE 19
Untitled No. 11
from series Reveries/Ensueño, 2020
11" x 14"
drawing ink and acrylic on paper

PLATE 20
Ensueño #4, 2020
12.5" x 15.5"
ink drawing on paper





PLATE 22

PLATE 21
Tronco de Dafne, 2019
72" x 38" x 27"
acrylic paint on wood

PLATE 22
Untitled No. 12
from series Reveries/Ensueño, 2020
11" x 14"
drawing ink and acrylic on paper

SD Art Prize Recipients

2019/2020

Alanna Airitam, Griselda Rosas,
Kaori Fukuyama and Melissa Walter

2018

Anne Mudge with Erin Dace Behling
Robert Matheny with Max Robert Daily

2017

Cy Kuchenbaker with Rizzhel Mae Javier
Fu/Rich with Alexander Kohnke

2016

Irma Sofia Poeter with Shinpei Takeda
Richard Keely with William Feeney

2015

Wendy Maruyama with Peter Scheidt
Roy McMakin with Kevin Inman

2014

Marianela de la Hoz with Bhavna Mehta
Philipp Scholz Rittermann with Joseph Huppert

2013

James Hubbell with Brennan Hubbell
Debby and Larry Kline with James Enos

2012

Arline Fisch with Vincent Robles
Jeffery Laudenslager with Deanne Sabeck

2011

Rubén Ortiz-Torres with Tristan Shone
Jay S. Johnson with Adam Belt

2010

Gail Roberts with David Adey
Einar and Jamex de la Torre with Julio Orozco

2009

Kim MacConnel with Brian Dick
Richard Allen Morris with Tom Driscoll

2008

Marcos Ramirez ERRE with Allison Wiese
Roman De Salvo with Lael Corbin
Eleanor Antin with Pamela Jaeger

2007

Ernest Silva with May-ling Martinez
Jean Lowe with Iana Quesnell
Raul Guerrero with Yvonne Venegas