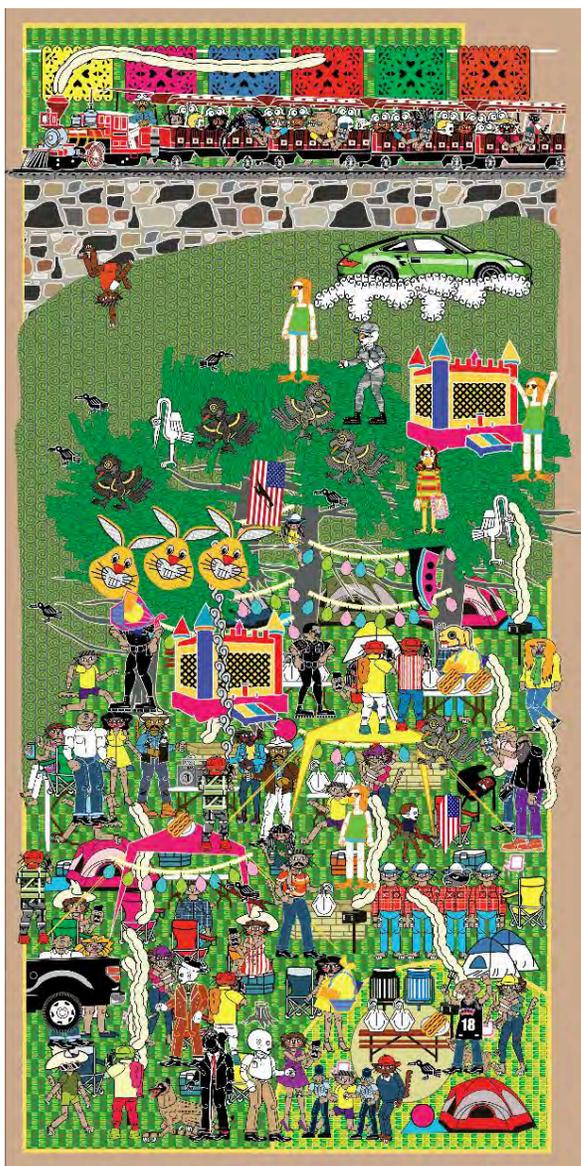


Contemporary Art Month 2018 Celebrates San Antonio Art, Nods to the Tricentennial

By James Courtney



Michael Menchaca, "Vignettes from San Antonio" (Brackenridge Park)

Contemporary Art Month (CAM), the beloved, month-long art bonanza that lends visibility to local artists and promotes the San Antonio art scene to the world, will mark its 33rd run this March, as San Antonio continues its Tricentennial celebrations.

CAM began in 1986 as a means to bring the art-loving/art-buying community together with a large and diverse pool of local artists and their work. Over the years, it has evolved into a citywide art buffet. CAM, the name of the event and the nonprofit organization that puts on several special events and hosts a calendar compiling a bevy of March exhibitions, became an independent entity in 2003 and has continued to expand its scope ever since.

Officially, CAM exists to "promote and raise the national profile of San Antonio contemporary art and artists by organizing and facilitating a

monthlong celebration of contemporary art, providing marketing support, and by organizing and facilitating public programs."

CAM's biggest areas of focus are organizing, facilitating and promoting, not event planning. Nevertheless, the organization hosts a few choice events and educational initiatives of its own during local art's big month.

These events include the CAM Kickoff Party, a festive gathering that doubles as a great networking/CAM-itinerary-strategizing opportunity (6-9 p.m. Friday, March 2 at Blue Star Contemporary); the CAM Perennial Exhibition, which brings a visiting curator to town to curate a local show that serves as something of a centerpiece for CAM (March 22 through May 6 at Artpace); and the CAMMIE Awards, a capstone event in which local arts organizations and the art-loving public are invited to celebrate the standout art and artists of the month (6-8 p.m. Friday, March 30 at CHRISpark).

Interested in the ways in which CAM has sought to answer the call of the Tricentennial with this year's programming, we talked with CAM Co-Chair Chris Sauter.

Sauter explained that, in light of the Tricentennial, the board selected a CAM Perennial curator, Canary Islander Adonay Bermudez, to help shed light on a very special and formative group in our city's history. In 1719, a group of settlers was selected to relocate from the Canary Islands to San Antonio, and their legacies (and descendants) are still a part of the Alamo City today (Las Palmas, Canary Islands, Spain is also one of San Antonio's 11 sister cities.)

"Because CAM is devoted to promoting the art and culture of our city, it was important for us to consider and be a part of the Tricentennial," Sauter said. "We wanted to create a dialogue through art, with this international curator and their community, which is especially poignant in terms of the Tricentennial."



Justin Korver, Maybe Camouflage Is a Masculine Floral (from "Thread")

This year's Perennial, different from years past, will feature works from both San Antonio artists and artists from the Canary Islands. After showing here, the whole exhibit will then travel to the Canary Islands and perhaps beyond.

"Our local artists are very interested in the history of our city," Sauter said. Insofar as one of the roles of artists is to "mine culture and history" and present their findings "through contemporary forms and a contemporary lens," Sauter sees contemporary art as an important vehicle through which we, as a city, can understand and interrogate our past.

Sauter noted that a great example of what this looks like are the ongoing "Common Currents" exhibition series, which finds a host of local artists offering their unique excavations/explications of (sometimes overlooked) aspects of our far-flung and knotty history. For more info on those exhibits, including the three slated to open during CAM, visit commoncurrents.org.

We know the sheer number of happenings on the CAM calendar can seem daunting (in the best possible way), so below, and elsewhere in this issue, we have compiled some exhibitions and events that we are particularly jazzed about. But, the true beauty of CAM is that no two people can (or should) experience it in the same way — there's something for every taste and then some. For a dizzyingly full slate of events look to the complete calendar in this week's print issue — or visit CAM's website at contemporaryartmonth.com.



Jeremiah Teutsch, "Two Heads Are Better Than One"

Jeremiah Teutsch: "Two Heads Are Better Than One"

In "Two Heads Are Better Than One," illustrator, sculptor and occasional Current contributor Jeremiah Teutsch presents a collection of striking, three-dimensional works inspired by traditional death masks. Teutsch's statement about these large-scale sculptures sets the somber, reverent tone of the exhibit as a whole: "The idea of this show came about after my father passed away. I started drawing enormous Big Giant Heads sinking into the ground, as mountainous monuments of grief. These are scaled-down monuments of grief. They're similar in form and function to death masks. The day before my father died, he

asked me to make a death mask of him. He was cremated before I got to see him. So, now I'm making these big giant heads as recompense for not being able to make his." *Opening reception 7-10pm Thu, Mar. 1, on view by appointment through Mar. 25, Hello Studio, 1420 S. Alamo St., Building B #203, (210) 291-8640, hellostudiosa.com.*

Catalina Sour Vasquez: "Projets Dissolvants"

Featuring the stunning (sometimes startling) photographic abstractions of French/Chilean photographer Catalina Sour Vasquez, this exhibit curated by Hillarey Jones melds the surreal and fantastic with the mundane, the joyful with the tragic, and the whimsical with the poignantly critical.

In her smart critiques of our culture of mass consumption, Vasquez masterfully captures the viewer with her meticulously beautiful *mise en scène* work, only to confront them with deeper, darker truths. *Opening reception 7:30-9:30pm Thu, Mar. 1, on view 2-5pm Mon-Fri through April 26, The Gallery at MBS, 1115 S. Alamo St., (210) 412-0398, mbsfitness.net.*



Catalina Sour Vasquez, "Projets Dissolvants"



Glen Franklin, *Grandma's Kitchen* (from "Not So Invisible 7%: San Antonio's Peoples of African Descent")

“Not So Invisible 7%: San Antonio’s Peoples of African Descent”

Presented by S.M.A.R.T. in partnership with San Antonio Ethnic Art Society, this exhibit seeks to “honor some of the moments, people, and places in San Antonio’s African-American community in photography, paintings, and sculpture.” The exhibit’s title, which alludes to Ralph Ellison’s seminal book *The Invisible Man*, refers to the problem that the show itself combats: “African American people feeling that they [are] visible only when it [suits] the interests of the majority.” *Opening reception 6-9pm Fri, Mar. 2, on view through Mar. 2, 2019, Cevallos Lofts, 301 E. Cevallos St., (844) 310-9758, smartsa.org.*



Jeffery Dell: “Future Castles”

Hosted by Three Walls, artist Michele Monseau’s consistently solid pop-up gallery, this new exhibition from artist/educator Jeffrey Dell takes aim at the tricky relationship between human perception and desire.

Throughout his often surreal works, Dell draws on “pre-digital populist art histories ranging from ukiyo-e prints to U.S. national park posters and sci-fi novel cover art.”

Jeffrey Dell, “Future Castles”

The resulting graphic screenprints are striking in imagery and alive with thought-provoking symbolism. *Opening reception 7-10 pm Sat, Mar. 3, on view by appointment through Mar. 24 (webinquiries7@gmail.com), Three Walls Gallery, 1160 E. Commerce St., facebook.com/threewallsgallery.*

“Art of the Sacred Texas Springs”

This exhibit is a visual continuation of the University of Incarnate Word’s (UIW) efforts to shed light on the historical, cultural and spiritual significance of The Blue Hole — the natural spring, located on UIW’s premises, from which the San Antonio River flows. A locus of practical and ceremonial significance since long before Europeans first came to the region, The Blue Hole (and other major springs in Texas) takes center stage in this collection of works in various mediums. Visit the website listed below for a schedule of cultural events associated with this timely show. *Opening reception 6-8pm Fri, Mar. 9, on view 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun through Apr. 8, University of the Incarnate Word, Kelso Art Center, 4301 Broadway, headwaters-iw.org/exhibition.*



Sol Kessler, *Presencia* (from "Thread")

"Thread"

Guest-curated by Alana Coates, the group show "Thread" is "centered on artists using needle and thread in contemporary techniques, narratives and conceptual practices." By highlighting this medium, the exhibit strikes a balance between traditional artistic practices and contemporary art, as well as between the realms of art and craft, which are often seen as distinct from one another. "Thread" features work from Bianca Alvarez, Linda Arredondo, Sara Barnes, Sarah Castillo, Martha Elena Flores, Sarah Fox, Abby Hinojosa, Sol Kessler, Justin Korver, Michael Martinez, Nicole Tovar and Jose Villalobos. *Opening reception 7-10pm Fri, Mar. 9, on view by appointment through Mar. 31, closing*

reception and embroidery workshop 6-10pm Sat, Mar. 31, Clamp Light Artist Studios & Gallery, 1704 Blanco Road, Suite 104, (401) 580-6852, clamplightsa.com.



Annette Messenger, *Mes vœux sous filets* (from "Reclaimed")

"Reclaimed"

Featuring 25 monochromatic works from the Linda Pace Foundation's permanent collection, this exhibition represents some of the most important female artists of our day. Thematically, "Reclaimed" is concerned with "the notion of 'reclaiming' what's ours, from our lands and governments to our physical bodies and basic human rights." As such, it fits perfectly (if slyly) into the context of cultural/historical interrogation that the Tricentennial has, in the best of cases, helped foster. Organized by local artist Kelly O'Connor (Head of Collections & Communications at the Linda Pace Foundation), "Reclaimed" brings together works by Lara Schnitger, Laura Aguilar, Dorothy Cross, Judy Dater, Annette Messenger, Lorraine O'Grady, Robyn O'Neil, Tracey Rose, Kiki Smith and the late Linda Pace herself. *Opening reception 7:30-9:30pm Fri, Mar. 9, discussion with artist Lara Schnitger, curator Justine Ludwig and journalist Sarah Fisch noon-2pm Sun, Mar. 18, on view noon-5pm Wed-Sat through Jan. 26, 2019, SPACE, 111 Camp St., (210) 227-8400, lindapacefoundation.org.*

Michael Menchaca: "Vignettes from San Antonio"

When it comes to celebrating and commenting on San Antonio's present and recent past, artist and printmaker Michael Menchaca is one of our sharpest, most nuanced artistic minds. In this exhibition, Menchaca, who has a special knack for combining the profound with the crude and often juxtaposes images from pop culture with traditional Mesoamerican iconography, offers up large- and small-scale works that speak to San Antonio's cultural landscape and reference such recognizable landmarks as San Antonio College and Brackenridge Park. *Opening reception 6-8pm Wed, Mar. 21, on view 11am-4pm Tue-Sat through May 21, Ruiz-Healy Art, 201-A East Olmos Drive, (210) 804-2219, ruizhealyart.com.*