

RUIZ-HEALY ART

Latinx, Latin America, & Texas Contemporary Art

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chuck Ramirez: Metaphorical Portraits

Exhibition opening Thursday, November 12th, 2020
201-A East Olmos Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78212
Wednesday-Saturday 11AM-4 PM and by appointment

Ruiz-Healy Art is delighted to present *Chuck Ramirez: Metaphorical Portraits* at our San Antonio gallery featuring works by Chuck Ramirez. The exhibition focuses on the artist's career-long exploration of bringing dignity to overlooked objects in a media saturated world. The exhibition opens November 12th and will be on view until January 9th. A diverse selection of works, *Chuck Ramirez: Metaphorical Portraits* probes viewers to reevaluate the significance of almost invisible objects and consider their impact on identity and culture. An exhibition catalogue will be published with essays by Bryan Rindfuss and Dr. Patricia Ruiz-Healy.

While Ramirez's work has maintained, if not, increased its relevance since his passing, certain collections like *Quarantine* are finding a particular global resonance in 2020. Alluding to the bleak and grief-stricken atmosphere of hospitals, the wilted floral arrangements emphasize the human experience in the face of illness and isolation. But as Chuck's sister, Trish Marcus, shares, "He got the dying flowers idea from the corridors at the hospital where my grandmother was staying," Marcus said. "We'd pass these empty rooms with abandoned flower arrangements, and he'd always say, 'That's not trash, that's somebody's treasure.'" (San Antonio Current, November 10, 2010.)

Ordinary objects were a common theme in the artist's work, as seen in *Dust Collections and other Tchotchke*. More humorous and playful than *Quarantine*, the series recontextualizes kitsch objects from the past. Works from *Seven Days* and *Purse Portraits* also offer poignant studies about communal gathering and material expressions of identity. These collections speak profoundly to present-day society where isolation and reflection have become widespread experiences. Works like *Cocktail* and *Chaps* from the 1999 series *Long Term Survivor* speak again to Ramirez's ability to endow images with a myriad of conceptual themes. In response to the AIDS crisis, and his own identity as a gay, HIV positive man, *Long Term Survivor* encapsulates the relationship between human desire and the will to live. As stated by Sarah Fisch, "His mortality was no abstraction. For Chuck, death was a motivator, a commentator, a constant, something to make fun of, a background noise to be muffled with food and friends and laughter, but he never kidded himself. He knew time is short. He knew he was lucky." (San Antonio Current, November 10, 2010.) This series will be on view in San Antonio for the first time since the artist's 1999 solo show at Artpace.

Prophetically attuned to forces outside of himself, Ramirez's 2007 *Careyes* deals with the American relationship to environmentalism as compared to regions like Mexico that have a custom of repurposing items until they are no longer functional. The artist stated, "In the United States 'consumer culture' permeates every aspect of our daily lives. Material objects are disposed of as quickly as they are acquired, with aesthetic value often trumping function or necessity...The practice of a ceaseless, compulsive consumption is something that is so ingrained in American culture that most often, we forget it is even there."

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About the Artist

Chuck Ramirez (1962-2010), one of San Antonio's most beloved artists, was a major force in the San Antonio art community before his untimely death in a 2010 cycling accident. A 2002 Artpace resident, Ramirez' work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. As an artist and graphic designer, Ramirez employed the visual and conceptual techniques found in contemporary advertising and package design, isolating and re-contextualizing familiar objects to explore cultural identity, mortality, and consumerism through his photographs and installations.

His work is in numerous permanent museum collections: The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; The Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; The Pérez Art Museum (PAMM), Miami, FL; The San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX; The European Museum of Photography, Paris, France; The McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; El Museo Del Barrio, New York, NY; The Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, TX; The New México Museum of Art, Santa Fe, NM; Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN; Ruby City, San Antonio, TX; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore MD.

About Ruiz-Healy Art

Established in San Antonio, Texas and in operation since 2006, Ruiz-Healy Art specializes in contemporary works of art with an emphasis on Latinx and Latin American artists, as well as working with prominent Texas-based artists. With galleries in San Antonio, Texas and New York City, Ruiz-Healy Art's continuous investments in these underrepresented areas have remained a longstanding signature of the gallery program. To request high-resolution images and more information about the exhibitions, please contact the gallery at info@ruizhealyart.com or 210-804-2219.