



RUIZ-HEALY ART

Latinx, Latin America, & Texas Contemporary Art

Ruiz-Healy Art is pleased to present *Richard 'Ricky' Armendariz: The Gods Wait to Delight in You...C.B.*, a solo exhibition of works by Texas-based artist Richard 'Ricky' Armendariz at our New York City gallery. This is Armendariz's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery and his first solo exhibition at a gallery in New York City. The exhibit will open on Thursday, February 8th, with an opening reception with the artist from 6:00-8:00 PM; it will be on view through March 29th, 2024. The exhibit features new woodblock prints along with unique oil on carved Baltic birch reliefs that illustrate traditional printmaking techniques and non-traditional carving techniques. The result displays the intricate mark-making process and allows multiple colors to shine through in the crevices of the carved wood.

Armendariz's work explores the American Southwest's cultural and biographical narratives drawn from classic novels, poetry, Tejano, and country music lyrics. Much of Armendariz's work references song lyrics, reinforcing the link between words' nuanced meanings and imagery. The exhibition takes its title from a Charles Bukowski poem, *The Laughing Heart*: "You can't beat death but/ You can beat death in life, sometimes./ And the more often you learn to do it,/ The more light there will be./ Your life is your life./ Know it while you have it./ You are marvelous/ The gods wait to delight/ In you."

Throughout his career, the animal world has been a significant source of inspiration, representing emotions, conflicts, personal experiences, and more. Armendariz incorporates highly saturated color choices that pay homage to astrological signs, the supernatural, and song lyrics. Armendariz's opus references Greek and Mesoamerica mythology and iconography alongside Mexican, American, and Indigenous cultures and the flora and fauna native to the American Southwest. The archetypal animals, coyotes, rabbits, owls, and birds, are enigmatic and reused and, in turn, recontextualized by the artist, becoming antagonists and protagonists. Anthropomorphized animals in motion serve as stand-ins for the metaphorical and literal idea of the movement of people, whether forced or involuntary. Animals in flux make up the exhibition: hawks fly down in the air together, rabbits and birds flee, and a female skeleton rides her horse.

The Predicament features an owl in flight holding a fire stick, symbolic of knowledge, and emulates the idea of choosing understanding or blissful ignorance. In *Wish I Could Leave Well Enough*, a coyote and other fauna are fleeing an unseen danger, taking with them knowledge, as represented by the burning stick in the mouth of the coyote. The desire to assign symbolism to animals sharing our world connects human cultures across time. Armendariz states that many works in the exhibition are "tied to our current state of the border, the exodus of people from one country to another, looking for a better life."



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About the Artist

Armendariz was born and raised in El Paso and resides in San Antonio, Texas. “Romanticism for the American landscape and the hybridization of Mexican, American, and Indigenous cultures have always informed the content of my work. Images with cultural, biographical, art, and historical references are carved into the surfaces of my woodblocks. I use traditional printmaking techniques and non-traditional carving methods to achieve my aesthetic. The content found in classic novels, poems, and song lyrics is referenced to elevate and reinforce the conceptual link between the nuanced meanings of words and my imagery. Themes involving power dynamics, destiny, and the role chance plays in our lives make up the conceptual backbone of my work.”

About Ruiz-Healy Art

Founded in San Antonio, TX, in 2006, Ruiz-Healy Art represents an international roster of artists, emphasizing Latinx and Latin American artists and working with prominent Texas-based artists. Biculturalism and identity discourse are important in several artists we collaborate with. In the spring of 2019, we opened a gallery space in the Upper East Side of New York City that works in tandem with the gallery in San Antonio as a platform to disseminate the artist’s work. The continuous investments in these under-represented areas have remained a longstanding signature of the gallery program. The gallery is recognized for its success in placing works by our artists in prestigious museum collections ranging from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the LA County Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Antonio Museum of Art, McNay Art Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and many others.