

RUIZ-HEALY ART

Latinx, Latin America, & Texas Contemporary Art

Ruiz-Healy Art is excited to present *Paper Trails*, a concurrent group exhibition featuring works by Santa Barraza, Cecilia Biagini, Francisco Toledo, Ruben Leyva, Celia Álvarez Muñoz, Cruz Ortiz, and Rufino Tamayo at our San Antonio and New York City galleries. The exhibition will be available for viewing at our New York City location from April 2 to May 1, 2026. *Paper Trails* explores distinct processes that use paper as a primary substrate, including painting, printmaking, experimental drawing, and mixed-media works. These procedures offer intimacy and insight into an artist's diverse techniques, revealing their processes, aesthetic experimentation, and operations.

The medium of paper allows for artists like Rufino Tamayo to experiment with shape and composition in his fractured, schematic, and abstract portraiture, expertly synthesizing influences from Mexican culture and the conceptual sensibilities of various international groups. *Deux têtes* is part of the *Mujeres suite* of color lithographs that Tamayo created in Paris, with its references to Cubism's schematicism, incorporating these influences of life and art as a universal heartbeat: "Art, like culture, is international. It's the result of many parts to which we add our own tone."

Cecilia Biagini's paper works similarly cite local and global aesthetic sensibilities. Inspired by the legacy of 20th-century abstract art from Latin America, Biagini created her sewing machine drawings upon arriving in New York from Buenos Aires. The work's qualities convey this sense of travel and relocation, with threads meandering across the page. Blurring the distinction between textile and drawing, the artist arranges her work to evoke a sense of animated movement. As the artist states, "Sewing machine drawings were among the first works I created in Brooklyn, NY, after arriving from Buenos Aires. They have a topographic quality, moving across the paper's surface, rushing forward, with the machine guiding the motion. They move randomly and embrace accidents along the way," mirroring Biagini's own style.

Cruz Ortiz, with his bright, lively, fractured portraiture, uses works on paper for historical preservation and documentation. Ortiz's *Nuevo Tejas (New Texas)* aesthetic incorporates Spanglish text, abstract figures, and dreamlike scenery, indulging in the playfulness of Chicano culture to portray the distinct sensibilities of *Tejano* communities. Central to this practice is Ortiz's notable deployment of language: the artist's use of both Spanish and English does not simply nod towards bilingualism, but rather asserts the blending of the two languages as integral to defining Mexican American identity in and of itself.

For Santa Barraza, documenting her culture is essential in her work. She embarks on an artistic journey to present what it means to be Chicana, both by connecting with a pre-Columbian past and by engaging folk Catholic styles, such as the *retablo* tradition, to energize her contemporary visions. Indigenous myths provide meaningful symbolism in her works, as seen in *Frida con Tezcatlipoca y Coyolxauhqui*, which showcases the artist's ability to synthesize and reinterpret historical figures. Barraza locates parallels in the stories of Frida Kahlo and the Aztec moon goddess Coyolxauhqui, both of whom experienced intense bodily pain, and reclaims and reflects on their stories as part of a Mestiza identity.

Throughout his prolific career, Francisco Toledo often turned towards representations of the natural world as meditations on the human experience. As noted by modern art critic Dore Ashton, "Toledo is intent on creating a natural history, or perhaps, an unnatural natural history, that will alert his viewers to both the breaches and continuities in the human imagination which, nonetheless, is eternally a dependent of nature. To the old game of animal, vegetable, and mineral, he adds the unaccountably human." Substantially inspired by the indigenous and cultural traditions of his home state, Oaxaca, Mexico, his etchings celebrate Oaxaca's artistic heritage. Slices of life become dynamic compositions; his transformations of the human form address social structures and human characteristics, reflecting the artist's commitment to his culture and community.

Celia Álvarez Muñoz draws inspiration from community and experiences growing up on the U.S.–Mexico border. Themes of language, family, and communal memory inspire her works. Her work *Sweet Nothings* riffs on its title to consider the inherent tension in modern romance: while "sweet nothings" describes words of affection between lovers, it also alludes to an emptiness, or a longing search for romantic love. She is deeply committed to expressing her bicultural heritage. Her works often explore the theme of tension, mirroring the physical and psychological experiences of growing up in the borderlands.

Paper Trails invites viewers to explore themes of identity, communal memory, and the poetic beauty intrinsic in our daily lives. These artists, through various techniques and the medium of paper, offer an intimate look into the mundane. Art, beauty, and poetry are discovered in the commonplace when the fabric that shrouds them is pulled back.

About Ruiz-Healy Art

Founded in San Antonio, Texas, in 2006, Ruiz-Healy Art represents an international roster of artists, with a particular emphasis on Latino/a and Latin American creators and prominent Texas-based artists. Biculturalism and discussions of identity are important aspects for several

artists we work with. In the spring of 2019, we opened a gallery space on New York City's Upper East Side, working in tandem with our gallery in San Antonio to serve as a platform for the dissemination of the artist's work. The continuous investment in these underrepresented areas has long been a hallmark 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 Los Angeles 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