

Ruiz-Healy Art™

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Six Latin American Artists Reveal Their 'Photographic Encounters: Humanity in Nature' ***Exhibit on display Sept. 3-30 at International Center during FotoSeptiembreUSA***

Miami artist Carlos Betancourt (born in Puerto Rico) uses digital photography and computer manipulation techniques to create opulent images in rich jewel tones, which he masterfully exemplifies in his self-portrait piece titled "Totem for Light I (Carlos)."

Atop a portrait of Betancourt is a towering totem pole that resembles a magnificent and glittering headdress decorated with a cornucopia of brilliant images: a globe, a shiny disco ball, a desk, a bushel of bananas, flowers, seashells, miniature statues and hundreds of precious gems.

"He works with themes of Trans-Caribbean identity in which people come from the Caribbean and settle in other areas while maintaining their identity, blending it with the popular culture of their adopted country," says Patricia Ruiz-Healy, owner of Ruiz-Healy Art.

Betancourt is one of six Latin American artists who will showcase their works in "Photographic Encounters: Humanity in Nature" during an **opening reception from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3 at the City of San Antonio International Center, 203 S. St. Mary's.**

Curated by New York art critic and scholar Graciela Kartofel, the exhibit can be viewed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday through Sept. 30. Presented by Ruiz-Healy Art, it is in conjunction with FotoSeptiembreUSA.

The unifying theme that connects the six artists is nature and identity, Ruiz-Healy says. "It is the idea of the intersection between nature and the human form whether it's self-portraits of the artists or their use of the human form in exploration of our place in the world as it relates to nature," she says.

Yolanda Andrade of Mexico, a traditional black-and-white photographer, recently began working in color photography and has been producing outstanding results, as she does with "Caballito, México City." In it, a carousel horse can be seen held high by a pole while a white-and-gray sky serves as a backdrop. A string of plastic flags is attached to a wire while a bucket containing cactus sits below.

"When she began working with color, she began to address the issues of the intersection of popular media and culture with traditional Mexican culture and values," Ruiz-Healy says. "She also works with themes of nature and most of her photography is taken outside. But it's still that raw, documentary style that she is known for."

Viewers, no doubt, will find the works of Peruvian-born artist Cecilia Paredes fascinating. The technique in which she works is Photo-Performance. In “Armadillo,” and in all her images, Paredes paints her body to become the subject of her photography.

“In the ‘Armadillo’ image, she’s doesn’t reveal herself as a human being. She has transformed herself into the animal, illustrating her deeper connection to the natural world,” Ruiz-Healy says.

Three other participating artists are also featured. Arturo Almeida of San Antonio whose abstract black and white photographs of Joshua Trees echo cycles of the artist’s own life. Also shown are works by the Argentinean Alicia Candiani, a world-renowned conceptual artist, and Alfredo De Stéfano of Mexico, who explores the topic of the desert lands.

Ruiz-Healy Art Studio will host several other events related to “Photographic Encounters: Humanity in Nature.”

- **Friday, Sept 4:** Graciela Kartofel will offer a free tour of the exhibit at 5:30 p.m. at the International Center.

* **That evening** the New York art critic and curator will hold private 20-minute artist portfolio reviews for a \$15 fee and \$10 for students with ID. Call (210) 804-2219 or e-mail katy@ruizhealyart.com to make an appointment.

- **Saturday, Sept. 5:** Artist portfolio reviews with Kartofel in the morning. Call (210) 804-2219 or e-mail katy@ruizhealyart.com to make an appointment.
- **Friday, Sept. 18:** Guided tour by the curator at 5:30 p.m. at the International Center.
- **Note:** Professional artists and upper-level art students are invited to bring their portfolios and/or images on a CD. No Internet available.
- Portfolio reviews give artists the opportunity to receive insightful, unbiased feedback on their work. Such a professional approach helps artists develop their careers. In September the focus is photography, multi-media and photography based mixed media art.

About Ruiz-Healy Art

Ruiz-Healy Art also has extensive portfolios of other artists working in photography, including critically acclaimed authors and younger photographers with an acute vision and concept. Ruiz-Healy Art deals in modern and contemporary works of Latin American art – painting, sculpture, photography and works on paper. The studio allows clients to see works of art in a domestic setting rather than the “white box” often associated with contemporary display. The gallery works by appointment only. For more information, call (210) 804-2219 or visit www.ruizhealyart.com.

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