

Ruiz-Healy Takes Big Steps toward Becoming Olmos Park's 'It' Gallery

By Dan R. Goddard



Lucky You, 2014, Collage on black and white archival printed image

Courtesy photo

In evocative collages and digital prints, Spanish-born artist Andrés Ferrandis, a Miami resident since 2002, explores intuition, perception and memory. But, more concretely next door to this exhibit, workmen are busy transforming the former Bistro Bakery into what promises to be a destination gallery for Olmos Park. After years of appointment-only shows in the living room of a home in this upscale neighborhood, Patricia Ruiz-Healy is creating a first-class showplace for modern and contemporary works by Latin American and San Antonio artists.

Last fall she opened a 500-square-foot gallery space (where Ferrandis' "Numinous" is installed) in the 1920s Spanish Mediterranean-style strip center located on the northeast curve of the Olmos Circle. With high pressed-tin ceilings and large picture windows allowing in plenty of natural light, another 1,500-square-foot of exhibit space is being prepared for the March 27 opening of "Straight from Berlin: Paintings and Works on Paper by Uwe Kowski and Jörg Herold," a collaborative exhibit with Galerie Eigen + Art, Leipzig/Berlin.

Ruiz-Healy, who represents the estate of Chuck Ramirez, said photographic works by the San Antonio artist will be shown in Berlin as part of the exchange. Last October, her gallery sold a work by Ramirez, *Seven Days: Breakfast Tacos*, to the Smithsonian Institution, which featured it in the exhibit "Our America: The Latino presence in American Art."

Meanwhile, Ferrandis' "Numinous" consists of small collages and large digital prints displaying a clean, well-designed, semi-abstract aesthetic that you might

expect from an artist influenced by graphic design and architecture.

“Numinous,” a word usually associated with early 20th-century religious philosopher Rudolf Otto’s *The Idea of the Holy*, is defined by the gallery as “an experience that makes you fearful yet excited and fascinated, awed yet attracted to the powerful, personal feeling of being overwhelmed and truly inspired.” Working with images and materials of everyday objects and experience, Ferrandis appears to be attempting to chart the invisible realm of emotional and spiritual resonance lurking beyond the mundane visible universe.

In *The Orenda Series*, large digital images are printed on cotton paper and then dotted with circles of various transparent colors that seem to bubble up from the bottom of the frame. Printed with large Ben-Day dots that heighten the graphic quality of the image, parts of a woman’s body, a side view of a fashionista and a girl’s throat with her head thrown back, are treated almost like landscapes, with blue, pink, yellow, orange and purple translucent dots sprinkled over them, seemingly highlighting points of focus.

In the largest image in the show, *Waiting for S*, a 1950s-era surfer wearing a straw hat and plucking a ukulele stands before a bunch of long boards leaning up against an old trailer pulled by an ancient automobile in a desert landscape. A cool, louvered cabin is perched on the side of a lake in another image that seems to suggest a favorite vacation memory. But an image of dark tree limbs and snow recalls the eerie feeling of a horror story by Edgar Allan Poe.

Reproductions don’t do justice to Ferrandis’ collages, which are subtly layered and textured, often with circles cut out of the picture plane. Using his own or appropriated digitized photographic images as a backdrop, Ferrandis overlays fragments of text, often clipped from newspapers, along with a variety of shapes made from fabrics, tree leaves, industrial colored paper, hand-painted paper, cardboard, Mylar and aluminum foil. He attaches cut-out plastic and felt circles with grommets to create a swirl of geometric forms that seem to drift and sway through fleeting flashes of memory.

Lucky You, with a background of white coffee cups, plates and bowls, has shapes reminiscent of jigsaw puzzles, a part of a newspaper story with

“Philosophy” in the headline and other geometric forms floating through the scene like snatches of a half-remembered, desultory conversation over breakfast. The front of a Vespa scooter forms the backdrop for *Our Day*, perhaps a tribute to a holiday ride with a friend. *Inercia*, with wavy forms reminiscent of an internal view of the human body a la *Fantastic Voyage*, shares the same title as a 2013 film by Mexican director Isabel Muñoz Callejas about a woman looking after an ex-boyfriend hospitalized for a kidney problem. Cozy yet highly suggestive, Ferrandis’ collages invite viewers to invent their own narratives.

Ruiz-Healy, a member of the International Fine Print Fair Dealers Association, says she has a particular affinity for works on paper, which attracted her to Ferrandis’ work. But the show feels a little cramped in the small gallery, with some works displayed in an adjacent office, though there is a catalog with an essay by José Antonio Navarrete. It’s going to be a treat to see what she can do with her larger space once it’s finished.

Andrés Ferrandis: Numinous

Free

11am-4pm Tue-Sat

Ruiz-Healy Art

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Through March 22