

## 'De Aquí y de Allá: Frank Romero, A Survey' opens at Ruiz-Healy Art



Frank Romero, Pistola y Calavera, 2023-4, Signed and dated top left, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 in., 91.4 x 121.9 cm.

**NEW YORK, NY.**- Ruiz-Healy Art is presenting De aquí y de allá: Frank Romero, A Survey, a concurrent solo exhibition of works by Los Angeles-based artist Frank Romero, curated by Rafael Barrientos Martínez at the New York City and San Antonio galleries.

A pioneer of the Chicana/o art movement, Frank Romero (b. 1941, Los Angeles) is counted among the earliest and most influential of its participants. Romero's visual explorations of Chicanismo are cornerstones of this period in art history that arose from El Movimiento. This social and political civil rights movement began in the early 1970s. Pulling together a diverse cast of signs and symbols to invent a visual language reflective of the multiculturalism that is at the core of the community, Romero drew from both his immediate surroundings of Los Angeles as well as iconographies related to the American Southwest, from where he traces part of his ancestry. From palm trees to serapes, corazones to crucifixes, cowboy hats to pistolas, Romero's version of the Southwest is at once familiar yet seemingly removed, both evocative of a lived experience while also influenced by American image culture and the Hollywood lens through which it has been accessed.- Rafael Barrientos Martínez

Romero's still-life painting, Pistola y Calavera, synthesizes his multifaceted cultural landscapes. Sitting atop a vividly colored Navajo blanket draped over a table is a collection of curated objects that construct a folkloric narrative, including a western hat, a pistol, and a skull. The decorative calavera, often associated with Dia de los Muertos celebrations, serves as a reminder of the cyclical nature of life and death, the fragility of existence, and the enduring impact of tradition. Romero's Pistola y Calavera becomes a microcosm of cultural influences, each object contributing a unique layer of meaning. - Rafael Barrientos Martinez

Caja de Sombra-Dos Palmas (shadow boxes) is an artistic format that blends sculpture and painting. The work features palm trees, a recurring symbol in Romero's work, "palm trees are all I've ever known. I don't know a Dutch elm from a maple," reflecting on the natural landscape of Los Angeles, a central theme in much of his art. These shadow boxes often evoke personal and cultural narratives, capturing fleeting moments or memories. Caja de Sombra features a car towing a trailer against a backdrop of acrylic-painted palm trees. The wooden three-dimensional sculptures recall the artist's long-standing interest in the image and symbolism of automobiles and lowrider vehicles. When Carolina Miranda from the LA Times (March 9, 2017) asked about the genesis of his intrigue in cars, Romero said, "It's so much Los Angeles. My father loved to drive. I grew up in a car, driving everywhere. That's what I know about California. Cars were a part of the culture. That's all you talked about as a young man."

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