

RUIZ-HEALY ART

Latinx, Latin America, & Texas Contemporary Art

MoMA

Acquires Mel Casas's Humanscape 68



Mel Casas, *Humanscape 68: Kitchen Spanish*, 1973, Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 96 in., 182.9 x 243.8 cm,
Purchased with funds from an Anonymous Gift.

Ruiz-Healy Art is delighted to share that the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City has acquired '*Humanscape 68: Kitchen Spanish*,' a monumental 1974 painting by Mel Casas. This work, part of Casas's *Humanscape* series, explores the relational dynamics of Mexican American labor and culture in the U.S. We are honored to have facilitated this significant acquisition and thank Dr. Beverly Adams, the Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art at MoMA, for her leadership. Congratulations to the Mel Casas Family Trust on this notable achievement, and thank you for entrusting our gallery

with placing this historic painting.

Mel Casas, conceptual framework on *Humanscape 68: Kitchen Spanish*

Source: linguistic casting, the ubiquitous booklet design to help fill the communication gap between the “Anglo” (the employer) and the “Mexican” (the employee).

SINK: blown up for impact as an image of domestic duty.

MAID: depicted cartoon-like to dramatize her two-dimensional nature in a three-dimensional world. She stands right under the water as a symbol of the “wetback.”

*SPEECH BALLOON: emphasizes the “Kitchen Spanish” pattern. The word **perra** is used in its Spanish double entendre - dog, female dog = Bitch. Hostility fermented in dehumanization and disenfranchisement.*

Representing Mel Casas

We are pleased to announce our exclusive representation of fifty percent of the Mel Casas estate. In partnership with three of his children, who collectively represent 50% of the former Mel Casas Family Trust, we are committed to continuing to place his art in notable institutional and private collections and in upcoming exhibitions. We look forward to presenting his exceptional work through solo exhibitions scheduled for the Spring of 2027 at both our San Antonio and New York gallery locations.



Celia Álvarez Muñoz, *Mel Casas, Semejantes Personajes/Significant Personages Series*, 2002, Digital Holgas,

14 x 35 in., 35.6 x 88.9 cm, edition of 5

Born in El Paso, Texas, artist, educator, and activist Mel Casas (1929–2014) pursued higher education through the GI Bill after serving in the Korean War. He earned a BA from Texas Western University and later an MFA from the University of the Americas in México City. Casas dedicated twenty-nine years to teaching at San Antonio College, retiring in 1990 as chairman of the art department and was honored as professor emeritus.

Beyond academia, Casas played a crucial role in championing Chicano art during the 1960s and 1970s—when the genre was largely excluded from mainstream art spaces. He served as president of the pioneering artist collective **Con Safo**, which remains one of the era's most significant Chicano art groups. His most celebrated body of work, the ***Humanscape series***, began in 1965 with *Humanscape 1* and concluded in 1989 with *Humanscape 150*.

Deeply committed to social justice, Casas's artistic practice challenged ideological, physical, and metaphorical borders while bridging cultural, political, and economic divides. While Casas is widely classified as a Chicano artist, his creative foundation did not originate with the Chicano Movement itself; instead, his expressive work ran parallel to and actively supported the emergence of a broader civil rights movement.

Casas's work is held in the permanent collections of major American institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; the San Antonio Museum of Art; and the McNay Art Museum, both in San Antonio, Texas, among others.

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