

An eye for the untold: 'Four Visions' at Ruiz-Healy Art



Left: Joel Salcido, 'En El Tiempo Del Quixote,' 2007, Archival Pigment ink print on cotton fiber paper. Right: Carlos Limas 'Stillness: Kingsville, TX,' 2021/Inkjet print. From the exhibition 'Four Visions: Carrington, Limas, Salcido, West' at Ruiz-Healy Art in San Antonio

By **Barbara Purcell** September 30, 2021

Fotoseptiembre USA, the annual photography festival that takes place in San Antonio and Hill Country each September, returns for its 27th year with a host of online and in-person exhibitions.

At [Ruiz-Healy Art in San Antonio](#), four photographers with ties to South Texas capture the culture and landscape of the region and beyond. "Four Visions: Carrington, Limas, Salcido, West" transports the viewer to straddling worlds of history, identity, nature, and beauty.



Rahm Carrington, 'Luis' Leap,' 2019. Silver gelatin print. Courtesy Ruiz-Healy Art

[Rahm Carrington](#) explores the masculinity and pageantry of Charreadas — rodeo competitions rich in history and tradition— with his selected photos. Originating in Mexico (by way of Spain) in the 1500s, Charrería tests the roping and ranch skills of its competitors, while maintaining a performance-like spectacle. Shooting with 35mm, Carrington — who grew up attending Charreadas in his native San Antonio — captures a warmth and intimacy in these action-based shots.

“Luis’ Leap” (2019) is a perfectly-timed lasso trick in black and white, with the subject stepping through a circle of his own making without ever touching the rope. “Opening Ceremonies” (2017), also in striking black and white, shows two men — “Charros” — on horseback, one waving the Mexican flag, the other, an American flag.

Three photos in color feature the Charreada’s lesser-known counterparts — “Escaramuzas” — female equestrians in bright ruffled dresses, riding side-saddle in a choreographed line.

It is a fascinating glimpse into another time and place, here and now.

Carlos Limas' works focus on the mysterious beauty of architectural relics in current contexts, from a midcentury modern movie theater in Kingsville, Texas, to a crumbling bridge in Paracas, Peru. Lima's "Stillness" (2018-2021) series pays close attention to surrounding environments and signs of life in otherwise abandoned structures.



Carlos Limas, 'Stillness, Linn, TX, Guadalupe Torrero Church,' 2019. Inkjet print on archival paper. Courtesy Ruiz-Healy Art

A photo of an old church in Linn, Texas has a timeless quality, with its empty dome-shaped bell tower holding light and sky. Linn is located in the thick of South Texas ranch country, not far from the US-Mexico border, with properties going back to the area's original Spanish Land Grants. The church, now in ruins, was built 100 years ago as a Catholic way station for rural residents unable to make the longer journey on horseback to the main church in San Isidro.

Limas, who was born in Matamoros, Mexico, currently resides in the Rio Grande Valley, working across disciplines in photography, painting, video, and graphic design. His interest in abandoned architecture reveals a not too distant past while contemplating, what he calls, their stoic presence.

Joel Salcido's four photographs lead us out of the gallery and into a dimension of otherworldly light and layers. An El Paso native who worked for years at the El Paso Times, first as a staff photographer, and later as photo editor, [Salcido has pursued his own photography for decades](#). Now based in San Antonio, he has travelled throughout Latin America, the United States, and beyond with his camera.



Joel Salcido, "Atotonilco El Alto," 2012. Archival pigment print. Courtesy Rui z-Healy Art

Salcido's acclaimed "Atotonilco El Alto" (2012) is a paean to Mexico's highlands in the state of Jalisco, with its grand chandelier of a cactus, illuminated by late-afternoon sun that softens the spears of countless blue agaves. The image reveals a feeling rather than a setting, with its stunning physical landscape giving way to an emotional one.

"En El Tiempo Del Quixote" (2007) has a similar effect, though with entirely different subject matter. Shot as part of the photographer's yearlong project, "Spain: Millennium Past," its deep sepia storm clouds psychologically engulf the viewer, while three men on horseback valiantly herd bulls. "These images were perhaps meant to be painted but instead became photographs," Salcido writes in relation to the project. "May Spain remain forever odd, precarious, and precious."

Documentary filmmaker and photographer [Tito West](#) has a way with strength in details. Drawn from an early age to nature and geology, the South Texas native (and seventh-generation Texan) spent a decade doing conservation work in East Africa. In this show, West's photographs feature rodeo events throughout the U.S., in addition to several stunning shots from Ethiopia and Tanzania.



Tito West, "National Anthem – Tremonton, UT," 2018. Archival pigment print. Courtesy Ruiz-Healy Art

Each image captures an interstitial moment, mostly of men in their element. Rodeo champion Mason Clements appears in several, including a honed-in portrait with his hands on his hips, and a single glove tucked into his leather chaps; a show of unabashed pride. Another image tenderly captures a man at a rodeo in Tremonton, UT, his hat over his heart as he looks on with quiet reverence.

A single color photograph stands out of a tribesman in Sala, Ethiopia. "Mursi Man" (2019) shows an individual with his back to us, a brightly patterned cloth against his bare skin enunciating the flawless ripple of muscle and bone. Concentric circles of scars on his right tricep, and a sliver of mohawk, emits an intense masculinity not unlike the portrait of Mason Clements half a world away.

Throughout this show, we see a straddling of time and place between the foreign and familiar.

“Four Visions” is a Venn diagram of lived experiences and regional references, with its overlapping themes and unpaved paths. These four photographers have all articulated something unique about South Texas before heading off into other areas of the country and world, with an eye for the untold. And a vision for telling it.

“Four Visions: Carrington, Limas, Salcido, West” runs thru Nov 6 at Ruiz-Healy Art,
ruizhealyart.com.