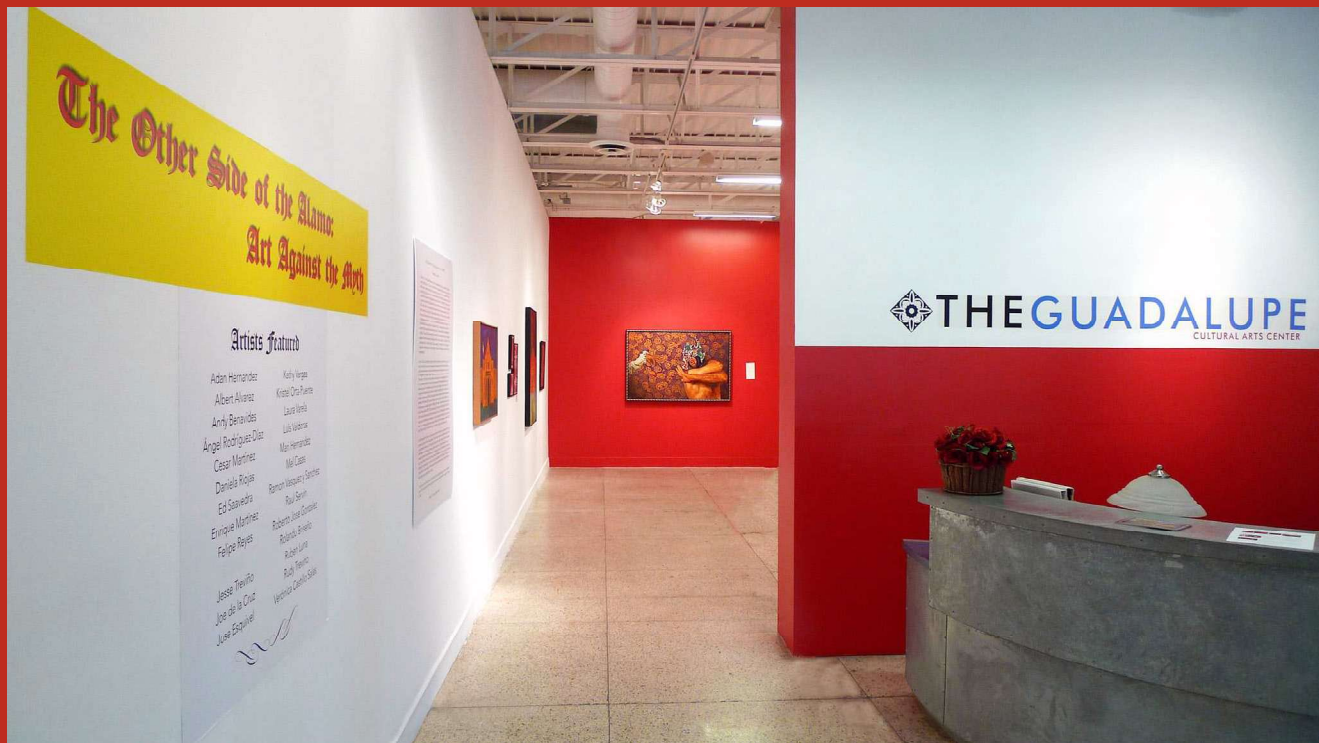


The Other Side of the Alamo



Art Against the Myth



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Front cover: Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz, *Antifaz: Forget The Alamo. Yellow Rose* (detail), 2004, acrylic and oil on canvas, 39 ½ x 60 inches, courtesy of Dr. Raphael and Sandra Guerra.

Back cover: Daniela Riojas, *We Built It, We Will Dismantle It* (detail), 2018, photograph, 20 x 16 inches, courtesy of the artist.

Photography credits:

All images of individual works by Cesar Martinez, Daniela Riojas, Kathy Vargas, Laura Varela, Andy Benavides, Mari Hernandez, and Kristel A. Orta-Puente are courtesy of the artists. Images of *A Line Beyond the Sand* and *1836, A-La-Mo-There!* by Luis Valderas are courtesy of the artist. All other photographs are by Ruben C. Cordova.

The Other Side of the Alamo: Art Against Myth

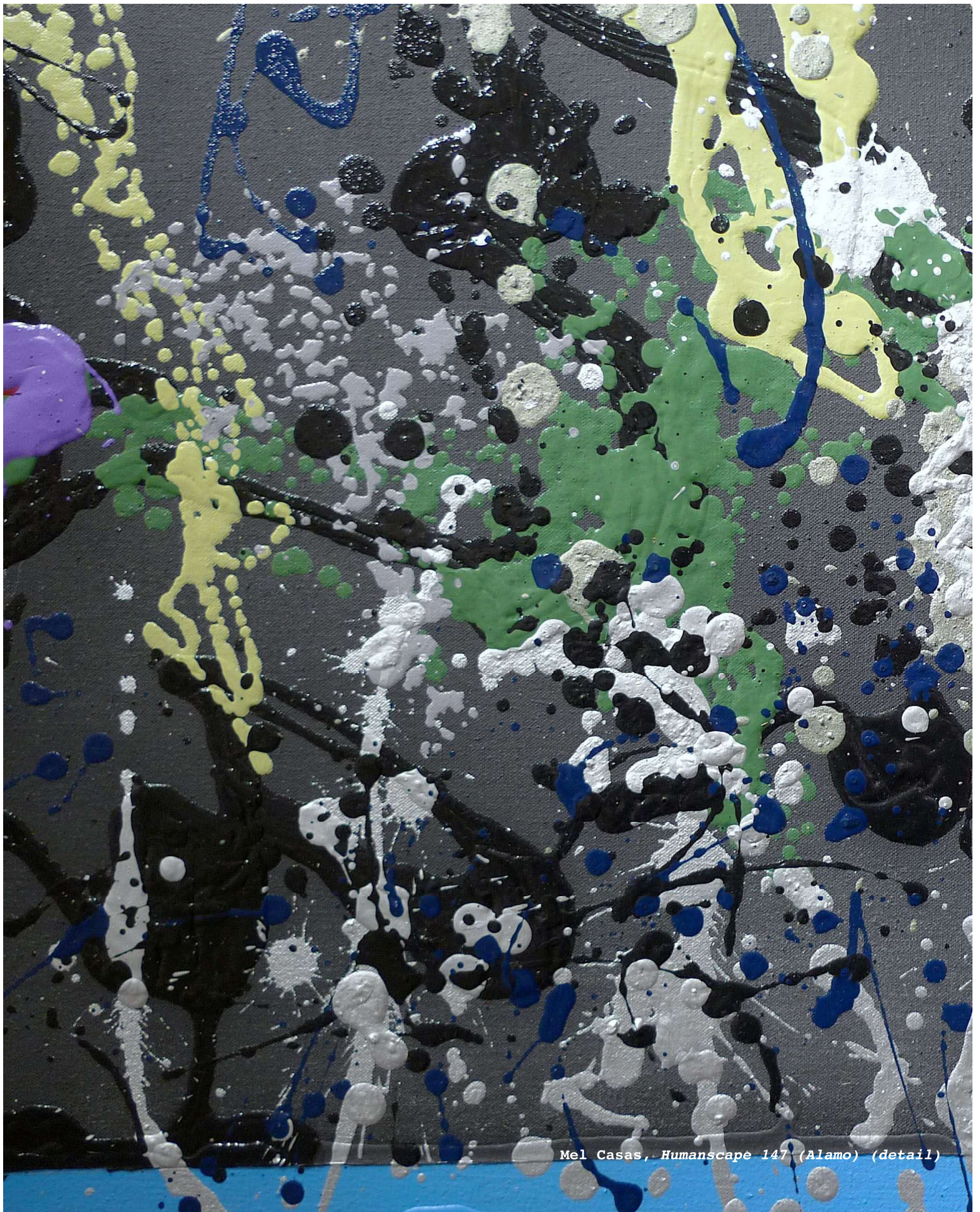
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Mel Casas, *Humanscape 147 (Alamo) (detail)*



Mel Casas (1929–2014), *Humanscape 147 (Alamo)*, 1987
acrylic on canvas, 6 x 8 feet, courtesy of the Mel Casas Family Trust

* Ruben C. Cordova, "The Cinematic Genesis of the Mel Casas Humanscape, 1965 – 1967," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, vol. 36, #2, Fall 2011, p. 51-87.

MEL CASAS

Humanscape 147 is one of the last in a cycle of 150 large-scale paintings Casas called Humanscapes that the artist made between 1965 and 1989. They were inspired by a glimpse of a drive-in movie screen in 1965: a speaking woman appeared to be “munching” on trees in the landscape beneath the screen. Each Humanscape painting has a large screen in the upper portion that references that momentary experience.*

Casas’ final group of Humanscape paintings, which he made from 1982 to 1989, were called Southwestern Clichés. Rather than simply working with a brush, Casas increasingly utilized the techniques of pouring and dripping paint onto the canvas. Verbal-visual puns are a vital aspect of Casas’ Humanscapes. The screen image in this painting depicts an abstract cottonwood tree because the Spanish word *alamo* means cottonwood.

The artist explains that this cottonwood tree “bears blurry”—one might even say cottony—“Alamo shapes.” These little “Alamos” reference the miniatures sold in the Alamo gift shop, such as the Alamo-shaped Christmas ornament in the center of Rodríguez-Díaz’s painting in the previous gallery. Casas likens these miniature Alamos to “acorns that will fall and be multiplied.” Thus the mythos of the Alamo—in the material form of small relics of the shrine itself—serves to seed itself. In a discussion of *Humanscape 56 (San Antonio Circus)*, which references a San Antonio annual holiday called Fiesta, Casas relates Fiesta and the Alamo. Casas views both of them as examples of “fake patriotism based on fake history.” He adds: “when we repeat a lie over and over again, with time it becomes real.”

