



*Emotional Abuse: All I'm Allowed to Say* by Sandi Milford

## SURFACE TREATMENT

With COVID-19 still slowing gallery openings, we will keep your art experiences alive by looking back at some memorable shows. Today we return to the Kika De La Garza Fine Art Center and revisit the 2012 Artists Unanimous Annual Juried Exhibition; the art speaks to us as though it were new.

### **Artists Unanimous Annual Juried Exhibition**

Works by emerging artists strike a positive note for the future of art.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Kudos to Artists Unanimous! The UTPA based student art organization has done itself proud with the current show at the Kika de la Garza Art Center in Mission hosted by UVAL. The exhibit, "Artists Unanimous Annual Juried Exhibition", is an impressive display of works from this emerging group of young artists. A variety of media is on display with paintings and small 3-D works happily dominating the gallery space. Drawings, prints, ceramics, mixed media, and small sculptures are also evident.

Gerardo Gonzalez' oil painting, "Self Portrait", easily took honors as the Best in Show. A back view of the artist from the waist up, the painting shows a large tattoo of a spider prominently placed on the artist's back. Although the artist's symbolic intent is more positive than negative, the painting suggests dangerous beauty. "If I were to get a

tattoo, I would get it on the back," explained Gerardo. "I'm not saying I'm going to get one; I use the spider as a symbol. This is a crab spider. This one I relate to because if it's born in a yellow flower, then it will be yellow. But then as it grows it changes color, it's just like us - as we grow, we change our attitudes."

Another notable young artist, Sandi Milford, showed several outstanding works including computer-generated 3D modeled ABS plastic wearables. Her "Emotional Abuse" pieces are jarring statements about abusive relationships. "Conditional Speaking" represents a time in her life where she was subjected to rules that limited her conversations; the mouthpiece selections express how she felt. "All I'm Allowed to Say" represents what an abused person is allowed to say, only what the abuser wants to hear. The acceptable statement is programmed in. "I chose to 3-D model and print the mouthpiece in ABS plastic to give it a manufactured look," explained Milford. "Since this would be obtained and purchased, these practices are understood to be accepted."

Six works were honored for outstanding quality and expression. They are: Best of Show: "Self Portrait" by Gerardo Gonzalez; Best 3D work: "Emotional Abuse: All I'm Allowed to Say" by Sandi Milford; Best 2D work: "Vulnerable" by Jill Carpenter; Honorable Mentions were awarded to: "Little People" by Cynthia Gonzalez, "Barrio BBQ Pit" by Ramiro Peña, and "Tu Jaula de Oro Mi Amor" (your golden cage my love) by Esteban Lopez.

Susan Fitzsimmons, Chair of the UTPA art department, and Thomas Murray, art Instructor at STC, served as judges for this exhibit. M.C. Farris and Jerry Lyles, UTPA Art faculty members, are the Faculty Reps for the organization. Open to all students at UTPA, Artists Unanimous boasts a healthy membership, consisting of mostly Art students. This is its fifth annual exhibition at UVAL and it averages eight exhibits per year elsewhere.

"These guys are really active and very prolific," said Lyles. "At La Pesca restaurant on 107, we have after-hours exhibitions where students come in after the restaurant closes and set up a show. One-night events start at 9:30 or 10pm and go to midnight. Anyone can attend."

The student artists in this exhibition took their art beyond themselves. There were perceptive connections with the natural world, universally despicable social problems, human relationships expressed through the symbolism of metallurgy, and the malevolence of unsafe air, to name a few of many concerns.

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