



*Almago and His Coat of Many Colors by Mario Godinez*

#### SURFACE TREATMENT

While the COVID-19 situation is keeping the art galleries closed, we will keep your art experiences alive by looking back at memorable shows/reviews, as well as offering some new and special online exhibitions. Today we revisit McAllen's Art Walk in its heyday, May 2008.

#### **Grand Finale!**

Venues offering art interesting exhibitions include the Arts District Business Center, Art House, The Salon del Art House, Douglas Clark's Studio, España, Manichaus, the McAllen Library, and Nueva Santander Gallery.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Everyone was there for this season's last First Friday Art Walk in McAllen! And they weren't disappointed. Art Walk offered a full evening and art walkers happily responded. The arts spanned genres, styles, and diverse systems of presentations; the quiet dignity of traditional paintings was augmented by the seductive sounds issuing from different musical groups, with performance art, video and projections adding even more to the mix.

A recurring presence was artwork by UTPA students. ADBC filled their galleries, displaying both an MFA exhibit and UTPA's senior BFA show. Placed near the entrance, the ceramic sculpture of Mario Godinez stopped traffic. Masterfully modeled, his life-sized self-portraits aptly expressed the inner artist. "Elmago and His Shirt of Many Colors" comments on Godinez' senior semester at UTPA.

“Elmago is my artistic name,” explained Godinez. “It tells the story about how this semester was kind of rough, with all the critiques and everything. The whole thing with Joseph and the coat of many colors (the biblical inspiration) is that he wouldn’t let anything get him down; whatever bad came up he would find a way to overcome it. The whole semester was like that, up and down, and when I started doing all these paintings on the clothes (I paint a lot of my clothes), I decided to implement this into my sculpture as well.” The facial expression on “Elmago” tells everyone who criticized him that he made it after all!

Other UTPA MFA exhibits included Paula Steele at Douglas Clark’s Studio, and Marina Salinas at The Salon del Art House. Both of these artists took autobiographical directions; Steele’s exhibit bared her psyche and Salinas’ show bared her genealogy. Steele’s mixed media sculpture, “On the Run”, was almost lost amid the art walkers. It was one of several sculptures that incorporated a manikin-like head with rebar arms, manikin hands and flowing clothing lit from beneath that emitted an other-worldly sense. Seated, it reaches forward toward printed images of figures on its skirt. Behind it looms a related painting.

“You see how it mimics the posture in the painting?” questioned Steele. “What this piece is about is that we are oftentimes running from ourselves, running from our past, running from our memories; these images on the skirt are echoing the scream of frustration that you’re continually faced with. And even if you run at them, they’re almost like a river that still is engulfing you.”

Marina Salinas included paintings, sculpture, and photography in her show, “The Hybrids”. The title refers to Salinas’ family and their life in two cultures. “The photographs were first,” Salinas explained, “because they are from my great grandparents’ places.” Salinas was able to find and photograph the places in Mexico where her relatives had lived at one time. Their homes were abandoned; the people who had lived there suddenly left. “There, my imagination grew into putting things together with my own experience as a person from both cultures,” she said. Her painting, “La Raza Hibriva”, is the counterpart of the Adam and Eve story. It references the story of how ancient meso-American gods pierced their private parts, dripped the blood into the molcajete and created man. After four days they did the same to create woman.

At Manichaus Art Space, Dawn Haughey brought all three of her sound sculptures together to create “Amalgamations”, a new performance piece.

Reefka Schneider showed a series of at-the-beach scenes at Nuevo Santander Gallery. Displayed nearby, Joe Taylor demonstrated his photo-realistic technique of graphite drawing.

Music dominated two areas. Leyenda Production Company organized a music and art event by the McAllen Library and España. The local group, Musa, performed with artwork by Manuel Tiscrano. Camarata Cellista performed at Art House. Art House also premiered their exhibition, "Cosecha" (Harvest), a new exhibition in which all of the works on display expressed themes dealing with the earth.

eRic Luplow's sur-folk watercolors were shown at the McAllen Library, and Ruben Gomez presented a series of paintings of sophisticated urbanites at España.

Have a good summer, art walkers.

*Nancy Moyer, Professor Emerita of Art, is an art critic for The Monitor. She may be reached at [nmoyer@rgv.rr.com](mailto:nmoyer@rgv.rr.com)*