



*Cuánto te duele extrañarme?*

#### SURFACE TREATMENT

What: FRONTEXO: A Return Home  
Where: Artist's Gallery, The Weslaco Museum of Local History and Cultural Art,  
500 Texas Boulevard, Weslaco  
When: Dec 21 - Jan 5, 2019  
Hours: 10am-4pm Tues-Sat  
Contact: (956) 968-9142  
Regular admission applies.

#### **A Symbiosis of Meaning**

San Antonio's Poet Laureate coevolves his poems with mixed media art

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

BY NANCY MOYER

Although many proficient artists, writers, and musicians are able to cross over into other creative areas, the public does not often get to appreciate their experiences. San Antonio Poet Laureate 2018-2020, Octavio Quintanilla, shares his experience. Known for his poetry, Quintanilla brings his coevolving art and poetry to us in his exhibition, "FRONTEXTO", now on display at the Weslaco Museum. The Gallery is filled with his poems and their imagery, or in some cases, his images and their poems, offering a very good read for viewers. It should be noted that the poems are in Spanish and no translations or titles are offered.

Quintanilla considers these works “unpolished.” The unplanned colors and shapes speak the language of his poems and together they comprise the poet’s inner landscape. Introspections and observations flow freely from his mind and once written and painted, they’re there. The poet works intuitively and often doesn’t know what the initial impulse or idea will be when he starts a work. “Sometimes it might be an image that drives the idea,” he explained, “sometimes, a poetic line or a word - so there’s a lot of play in what I’m doing; every day I challenge myself to do one; it’s a way to commit myself to my art.” Quintanilla currently has about 340 of the art and text works. Some poems are lyrical and deal with nature, some speak of relationships between people and their desires, absence, or relationships gone wrong, while others question our very existence.

This coevolving series began last January when he started writing a poem a day. “Sometimes I don’t have the words, sometimes I don’t know what to say, so I start sketching,” he explained about his process. “Then some words come; sometimes the image takes over the page and then you only see one or two lines, and then vice versa.” Some of the works present longer poems, an indication that the words came first; others are image heavy with a very brief poem, as in “¿Ars Poetica?”. This collaged piece depicts a falling figure cut from a newspaper with scratched out words. Other figures behind him reflect his position. The poem, “el poeta responde a las exigencias de nuestro tiempo (The poet responds to the demands of our time),” consists of words cut from a newspaper. The imagery in these works relies strongly on abstract elements, but representational shapes are often superimposed over shapes and colors to illustrate the poem. The text is hurriedly written allowing the words to act as textured areas among the other lines and shapes, offering wonderful flights of visual spontaneity. Symbiotic relationships exist between the ink drawings, the rough-edged color shapes, and the physical lines of the poems. The torn edges of the paper serve as a subtle container for the aesthetic action happening within its frame. The words stroke the mind, and the paint strokes please the eye, bringing about a savored harmony of senses. “¿Cuánto te duele extrañarme? (How much does it hurt to miss me?)” is a masterful symbiosis between the image and the words, both are intensified by the other.

Originally from Weslaco, Quintanilla is an Associate Professor at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. and author of the poetry collection, *IF I GO MISSING*, Joe Steve Vera, an Analyst from Austin who is currently dedicated to poetry and the visual arts, assisted me with translations.

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