Time Being by Carlos Limas

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "MFA 2017 Exhibition Neuhaus Tower"
Where: Chase Tower Lobby, 200 S.10th Street, McAllen
When: Currently into March
Hours: 9am-6pm, Monday-Friday, 9am-3pm Saturday
Information: UTRGV School of Art at (956) 665-3480

UTRGV's Emerging Artists
This exhibition features the work of Master of fine Arts students from the University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley
BY NANCY MOYER
SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

A sampling of work from students enrolled in UTRGV's graduate Studio Art program in 2017 offers an interesting exhibition for an extended holiday season. "MFA 2017 Exhibition Neuhaus Tower" shows at least one work apiece from emerging artists, Alexandria Conchola, Angela Scardigno, Carlos Limas, Eva Williamson, Iliana Salazar, Jesmi Maldonado, Jose del Castillo, and Lourdes Ballard. Although the exhibition is limited to wall pieces, there is enough variety to satisfy gallery goers. An added bonus is the posting of the artist's statement next to the image; these brief, but expressive statements provide glimpses into the artist's mind and artistic intent. While a few of them echo a standard artistic rationale, most offer a unique point of view that enhances our art experience. Three of the artists, Scardigno, Canchola, and Limas, present intriguingly developed ideas.

Scardigno and Canchola focus on narrative or story-telling visualizations. Scardigno's "Abstract Narratives" digital print uses a visual narrative format to guide the viewer through her

associated places. She has reduced a series of rooms into abstracted notions suggesting possible physical and mental situations. "Some are connected with places I lived," Scardigno explained about the sequence of squared images, "and others are just new spaces that I envision." She uses the shapes of windows, stairs, and doors to act as mediators between inner and outside worlds. Her dominant use of dark neutral tones, neutralized yellows and secondary colors, with exacting geometrics express confinement, solitude, and misunderstanding. Offering a brighter palette, Canchola's works on paper are meant to evoke experiences in the viewer that are similar to her own, encouraging a personal storyline of thought. "A Cold OK" and "She Prefers Eating Alone…but not really" reflect Canchola's passion for color. Although she refers to them as illustrations, these are psychologically complex images. "I feel things through color, Canchola stated. "It gives my illustrations a voice. It communicates a mood that at times I use to contrast with the actual narrative." So, at odds with color theory, neither of these compositions should communicate her titles. Yet combined with her sensitive placement of shapes, they do. "She Prefers Eating Alone…but not really" is bursting with upbeat saturated colors, but the placement of the tiny, solitary figure somehow converts the sated color scenario into a feeling of emptiness.

The oil painting, "Time Being" by Carlos Limas, is intriguing for its mystery. While most of the other artists are concerned with emotional experiences in a world to which we can relate, Limas jumps further out. His statement suggests a furtive search for meaningful existence in the midst of social media and materialism. "I do believe life is brutal," he posits, "so In each painting, I pose a question trying to understand my existence in this crazy reality." He hopes that each viewer will have a potential answer. "Time Being" depicts a fallen man lying on a blood-red floor in front of a large, absurd, disembodied head. I can't help but interpret this as a living death mask – mankind's future evolution returning to our time - the reality of which scares us to death. I want to see more from this artist.

"MFA 2017 Exhibition Neuhaus Tower" is a contemporary, yet conservative exhibition, eschewing anything that might be deemed too cutting-edge or controversial. As such, it is a comfortable fit for a McAllen venue. Go and enjoy.

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