



05 by Jesus De La Rosa

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: **One More Time with Feeling**
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen
When: Through Mar 3, 2018
Hours: 1-5pm Wed-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat
Contact: (956) 230-2859

Feeling the Land

Filling the large gallery, abstractions with bits of representation form evocative landscape impressions.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

“One More Time with Feeling” combines Jesus De La Rosa’s practice of subjective abstraction with landscape. De La Rosa, an Associate Art Professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, grew up in the Rio Grande Valley and Nuevo Progreso, Mexico. Because his parents worked in Mexico, but lived in Texas, he spent his early life traveling across the U.S/Mexico border, and that experience now plays a pivotal role in his art. This new exhibit at Beyond Arts Gallery features some of De La Rosa’s larger previous works along with a series of recent small acrylics. While the previous works are much more complex, the smaller works are succinct compressions of the artist’s reactions to the land of South Texas.

“I love painting in the subconscious,” proclaimed De La Rosa. “That’s my favorite part. I feel there’s a different higher spiritual connection there, and I’m always thinking about landscape; I’m always thinking about land and how we divide it.” Growing up on the border gave De La Rosa plenty of time to observe the varied landscape, letting it stamp both grand and intimate impressions onto his psyche. His paintings reflect the things he

has seen and felt while reacting to the land; more recently, he has collected colorful observations while driving the RGV to Kingsville roads. The large paintings often include geometric pale blue shapes/sections where the sky interacts with the land forming a vista. The complex painting, "El Trángulito", speaks of the divisions. De La Rosa recalls how the land was divided when his father farmed it. "We had this piece of land that they called the triangle," he explained. "Every time during the harvest, the combines would stop because it was so thick; it was magical. There were no roads to it - you just knew how to get there." The blue sky-shape cuts through this landscape, dividing tangled layers of shapes and textures, and touching other flights of spatial division. A color chart, fastened to the top of the painting adds the ultimate division and takes us beyond the painting itself. "This Side of the Fence" looks at the border wall. "A lot of my work is based on people moving," he continued, "but instead of painting people, I do it without the figures." In these paintings, circular shapes represent people and are beautiful in their reflection of the artist's intense process. Multiple layering of paints and various materials constantly occur and interact. Collaging vellum helps the artist minimize the information of previous layers, and torn pieces of appropriated material are forced to adapt to his message.

The small paintings extend the length of the large gallery's south wall. De La Rosa was thinking more about cross sections and reactions with these works, allowing them to become multi-layered memories that overlap and fuse on his painted panels. With "05", thoughts are intersected and sometimes altered by subsequent ones. "I always put the wall in a copper color," he explained. "It always interrupts that composition or becomes part of the composition." Below the copper shape, there is order; above it, disorder. Process-intensive, these small works contain thirty to forty layers of tones, colors, and images to achieve their visual richness. Depicting the ever-changing landscape as it exists empirically and mentally, De La Rosa creates time-lapsed perceptions, memories, and impressions, and compresses them into a single visual moment.

Nancy Moyer, Professor Emerita of Art, UTRGV, is an art critic for The Monitor. She may be reached at nmoyer@rgv.rr.com