



The Last Fight by Lisette Chavez

SURFACE TREATMENT

With COVID-19 still with us and slowing gallery openings until Spring, we will keep your art experiences alive by looking back at memorable shows. Today we reminisce about McAllen's Golden Age of art walks with the festive September Art Walk in 2008.

September Art Walk 2008

A full evening of art experiences is spread across the McAllen Arts District.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

September's Art Walk jumped up another notch! The tremendous turnout reminded me of weekends walking through the French Quarter in New Orleans. There seemed to be more of everything including more new venues, more music, and more art experiences. Twenty-three venues participated! Twenty-three!

Bringing the New Orleans ambiance home to me was underlined by the artist, Lee Edgar Rodriguez, drawing caricatures for delighted Art Walkers in front of the Renaissance Casa de Palmas Hotel. Inside, Rod MacGehee was back in town with a series of colorful paintings depicting various locales; "The Orange City" is a lively and particularly appealing interpretation of Austin. As a proper motif to one group's theme of "Arabian Nights", the arrival of a camel on the front lawn was rumored, but I had to move on.

A significant addition to the Arts District was the installation of "Ascension", a public artwork by Harlingen-based sculptor, Brian Wedgworth. "Brian, being the

size he is, thinks large scale,” joked real estate investor David Weisfeld, who commissioned the piece. The structure, 21 feet tall and weighing 1,500 pounds is made primarily of excess iron from an oil field and suggests a ladder aimed at the sky. The welded sculpture, located on the corner of Main and Maple, has been donated to the city. A soon-to-be-gallery space concurrently displayed a series of Wedgworth’s welded steel wall disks.

Extended exhibitions that premiered for Art Walk included: “¡VIVA LUCHA LIBRE!” at Manichaus Modern Art Space, “El Realismo Mágico de Sergio Hernández” at Art House, “New Works” by Berry Fritz at Nuevo Santander, and “Efrain Salinas’ photography” at ADBC.

Twelve local artists presented their paintings, sculpture, and mixed media in “¡VIVA LUCHA LIBRE!”. The theme called for renditions of Lucha Libre; the masked wrestler represents all walks of life struggling to overcome adversity. Although the exhibit lacked the energy of Xavier Garza’s Lucha Libres, Lisette Chavez presented a strong interpretation with her mixed media work, “The Last Fight”. With Art Walk’s thematic contrasts, Berry Fritz’ new work at Nuevo Santander resonated, as usual, with a peaceful dignity.

“El Realismo Mágico de Sergio Hernández” consists of a limited-edition series of etchings from the graphic studio of Fernando Sandoval. “Oaxaca provides me with a rich pool of inspiration,” said Hernández. “The markets are filled with mythological animals. I take them, paint them, form them, and place them in my art.” Images of crabs and scorpions are incorporated into his prints.

Efrain Salinas’ photography exhibit reflected the serious tone of a museum showing; the photographer exploits image juxtapositions of people or objects and the environment to their fullest effect.

Ruben Gomez’ large acrylic drawings at España expanded on dictionary word meanings. “Touch” was one of the intriguing works at that venue. “I included the text along with the image,” said Gomez, “something very basic, very straightforward.”

Nui Urban Living featured the artworks of Rigo Carrasco from Morelia. His paintings, such as, “Mujer con Telar” - a glamorous riff off the bullfight stereotype - bring the Spanish academic approach into the modern era. Douglas Clark’s Studio leaned toward Asia as Ricky Krause explained his Japanese influenced stained glass art to bystanders. Next door at Jac-Lin Florist, Homer Rincones’ nature paintings greeted visitors.

This was the first Art Walk exposure for United Through Art’s new space on Main. The featured artist, Lilia Deanda Cabrera, displayed her cast paper art along with works by several other artists. Impressive acrylic paintings by Pablo Peña deal with fantasy/cosmic themes; “Catch a Comet by the Tail” is technically

and visually complex. The image could have been influenced by Hubble photographs.

There were also new faces at the ADBC Market. One-of-a-kind ceramics in contemporary and traditional styles by Nicaraguan artists were stunning examples of Central American crafts represented by Transcontinental Luxury Imports of Mission.

The September Art Walk held onto the crowds lingering in the Arts District, casually contemplating each venue. How can October beat this?

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