



*Gavage* by Leila Hernandez

## SURFACE TREATMENT

What: STC Art Faculty Exhibition  
Where: STC VAM Gallery Bldg B, Pecan campus  
When: Through Jan 31, 2018  
Hours: 8am-3pm, Tues, Wed, Thurs

### **Art from the Experts**

STC Art Faculty offer art that carries on a lot of communication

BY NANCY MOYER

The South Texas college art faculty exhibition is a good one. Currently on display in the VAM Gallery, the exhibition boasts a stimulating range of approaches and provocative content. There is an eclectic mixture of styles that have the serendipitous result in broadening viewer appeal. A traditional mother and children painting coexists with a small vitrine encasing a 3-D printed object, and a painting depicting sports violence hangs opposite an installation of banners protesting the border wall. This exhibit can handle a wide audience.

The strong point of this show is the significance of the individual works. These are artists who not only have something to say, but ingenious ways of saying it. Not only is the content of this exhibition worthwhile, but most of the artists are also experimenting with fresh ideas about the form into which their idea is communicated. Kyle Chaput's woodcut is a standout in this category. Printed on chunks of rebar-connected concrete rather than a traditional paper support, "Dry Docked III" embeds the image onto a support that further reflects a possible broken condition. We are drawn into Chaput's scenario. Also offering a unique experience is Tom Matthew's column of sectional tree slices, "Progress (STC Lumber Company)". Extending upwards to the height of the gallery, he has reconfigured a tree; although it gains height, it loses life. Trade-offs surround us in everyday life; we should pay attention.

There are more faculty artists involved with social commentary than in the past, and it's certainly easy to understand why. When entering the gallery, Leila Hernandez blows us away with her installation, "Gavage", which amply fills the entrance display area. Hernandez shows us an exquisite

ball gown opening wide from the neck as it is filled to overflowing with discarded plastic bottles; the bottles spill out in an unpleasantly breathtaking pile, as letters on the wall above read, "Forgive us, Mother Gaia."

Moving into the main gallery there are works speaking of localized issues as well as those looking at the bigger picture. Richard Smith surprises us with his painting, "Reconstruction", showing the Confederate flag - except the crossed bars have been shifted to separate verticals on opposite sides of the painting. Nathan England's blue plastic covered sculpture suggesting an erstwhile statue is titled, "It's Only History." Rachael Brown keeps it relevant to South Texas with her installation of border wall protest signs/banners, while David Freeman takes on US immigration policy with his mixed media work. Spelling out "welcome" with incendiary objects, such as matches, bullets, and etc., Freeman places the conflicting message on an unwilling welcome mat by painting on an actual carpet. Eduardo Garcia continues placing his appropriations of famous paintings into current relevant concerns with his linocut print, "Homage to Picasso's Guernica", complete with war planes.

Reading this exhibit a step at a time results in a jolt of aesthetic excitement, and surprising experiences from instructors who experiment and take chances with their art along with having something worthwhile to say is appreciated. Participating artists also include: Maria Alcoser, Chris Leonard, Phyllis Leverich, Daniel McInnis, Heaven Mendoza, Isai Mireles, Scott Nicol, Juan Saenz, and Carl Vestweber. This exhibit will remain up only a few more days, so plan a long lunch break.