



Consequences of Interests Establishes Destiny by David Alcantar

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "David Alcantar: Diss this (Dis) Agreement"
Where: STC VAM Art Gallery, Bldg. B-103, Pecan Street campus
When: Through Oct 4, 2018
Hours: 8am-3pm Tues., Wed., Thurs.
Contact: artgallery@southtexascolleg.edu

About Negotiation

Art speaks to us about negotiation behavior in this excellent and insightful exhibition.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

San Antonio artist David Alcantar believes that art is at its best when it addresses what is common and inclusive in human experience, rather than the particular and exclusive. He wants his art to have a universal resonance, and his recent exhibition at STC's VAM Gallery easily achieves that goal. "David Alcantar: Diss this (Dis) Agreement" is about negotiation. "Regardless of their age," he declared, "regardless of their gender, regardless of their race, regardless of their social economic status, regardless of their political affiliation, regardless of anything about them, everybody does it." This show consists of paintings, sculpture, and graphs that focus on the decision-making and negotiation processes.

Alcantar envisions the human thought process as it functions in decisions that rely on negotiations within our own psyche and overt negotiations with others. Tables and chairs

become metaphors for the human condition in his works. "I thought the chairs were a good proxy for human beings," he opined. "Even the way we describe them as having backs and legs and feet, they're very good proxies for the human form. Tables are the same way, a little less recognizable as bodies, but I still think they hold as good metaphors for people." A large installation featuring a chair manning each side of a cut-in-half-table commands the center of the gallery. A two-way arrow on one side of the table and worded sections on the other provide clues into this negotiating process. Negotiations often happen between two people, and the kinds of chairs, even the kind of table, determines the power structure or the context of the negotiation that's going on. "The most common example is some kind of business negotiation," explained Alcantar, "such as an employee trying to negotiate a higher salary. The chair that they're given is usually a very simple worker chair, while the executive's chair is fancier. And that has a role in the way that negotiation is going to happen. Most people are not aware of that."

"No One Goes Unscathed" suggests the mental turmoil caused us by a variety of daily and life decisions; the discrete notations, identified by arrows leading away from the intense melee, help to bring the bio-electrical dimension onto the physical surface. Selected causes combine the whimsical flavor of instructions translated by a foreign vendor with 19th century nature study IDs. The sculpture, "Everyday Dealings Occurring Simultaneously Everyday", manifests the mental phenomena further into the physical dimension with a brilliant cluster of small intersecting table-forms, its solidity suggesting a possible impasse.

Diagrammatical arrows in works symbolize the direction of the negotiation and the direction of the information exchange. In the chair paintings they show the energetic engagements of the participants. One of the few figure paintings, "Invisible Current", visualizes the internal action of negotiating probabilities within one's self, exposing the aura of possibilities. "I'm really interested in how people's narratives unfold as a result of the negotiated choices," Alcantar confessed. "That's why the paintings look that way." Several other works comment on insightful aspects of the human condition, such as the equivocal sculpture, "Sinking Feeling or Emerging Confidence."

Alcantar is a rare artist who is able to think with expressive precision and impact in more than one art form. His paintings and sculptures exude a personal and convincing power, and even his giclée prints (charts) embody an authoritative message.

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