



*Bienvenido 1*

## SURFACE TREATMENT

What: **The Art of Delfino Martinez**  
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen  
When: Through Nov 18, 2017  
Hours: 1-5pm Wed-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, Tues by Appt.  
Contact: (956) 230-2859

### **Today's Stress and Anxiety**

Delfino Martinez delivers today's anxieties through his art

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

"The Art of Delfino Martinez" touches our stress levels at Beyond Arts Gallery. Not the stress/anxieties that we inflict upon ourselves, such as insecurity and envy, but rather the ones that come at us from the outside world, inflicting uneasiness and fear. Martinez, a Brownsville artist who skillfully uses various media including ink, graphite, Prisma color, watercolor, oil, acrylic, and drypoint prints, maintains a close balance between his medium and his message. The landscapes suggest a neurotic take on the American Scene, with paranoia, stress, and unease supplanting the more confident values of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century American style. Prevalent dark tones underline his visions and recommend caution. His impressive use of drawing media is masterful and achieves a richness that eludes lesser artists. "It's fun creating little scenes on a picture plane," Martinez posited. "Investigations and experiments can allow a closer understanding about our

world and help us cope and make sense of it. It's this idea of belonging to a large group other than your family that makes the world seem a bit more crowded. And as the crowds get closer, you become more aware of where you are; your place in it seems smaller and you pay more attention. Then, the blank page can become a window to a new scene or idea. It's fun to make and create even when it doesn't make sense."

However, his work makes a lot of sense. The exhibit begins with "Home", colored pencil on paper. Here, home is depicted inside a test tube. By placing it in a piece of laboratory equipment that keeps specimens preserved and protected, he symbolizes a need for protection and safety in today's world. Intense black and white emits a nervous outer excitement, while inside, the warm colors of the home and yard feel comfortable and safe. The oil painting, "Counter-Espionage-We're All Hiding Something", shows an overhead view of a house. Martinez presents it the way government surveillance is depicted, and ponders, "What are we hiding? We're not hiding anything. Facebook is like a data base of our lives." The painting's unusual dark achromatic composition projects an uneasy feeling of intrusiveness or maybe just Google Earth. Is there a difference?

Every individual on this planet has a complicated life; the artist creates analogies with excessively detailed compositions. The drawing, "Pal Norte", weaves highlights and shadows together in an amazing scenario contrasting a seductive city with Mexican border town problems. In this brilliantly rendered nighttime scene, the surveillance perspective of a poor neighborhood is filled with people; a closer look exposes them as armed military. The expressway to the city abuts the dramatic scenario with oblivious drivers. "It's about going north and finding success," said Martinez. "But when I went up there, it was like a conglomerate of roads and traffic and people and it was just what's going on. And I thought, 'I'm lost here.'" "Transportation of Self" expresses being overwhelmed by the city. Martinez was inspired by M.C. Escher's Mobius ribbon for his industrial expressway. If you follow it, everything connects back to itself - you're stuck in a congested and continuous loop.

Another kind of disillusionment/stress occurs in the perceptively imagined, "Generations", a drypoint print. A bus representing one generation makes its way along the narrow, bumpy, precipitous road of life, while the bus ahead is seen experiencing freefall. "It's not about the bus driver or the people inside the bus," explained Martinez. "We send the next generation ahead to help us, to lead the way for us, and they fail us."

"The Art of Delfino Martinez" is worth a visit. Is Martinez tapping into feelings that we all have?

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