



Hermanas

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Nostalgia*: Art Exhibit by Diana O. Montemayor
Where: McAllen Creative Incubator, 601 N. Main Street, McAllen
When: Through January 2016. Hours: daily except Sunday, 9am-5pm

Softly Engaging

Diana O. Montemayor dipped into remembrances of past reveries and present pleasures for the creation of these works and takes us to places that have been important to her. She hopes that her paintings can arouse within us subtle feelings of engagement and nostalgia. *Nostalgia*, a traveling exhibit of her Hyper-realistic oil paintings, is currently on display in the McAllen Creative Incubator's gallery.

Montemayor is an award-winning painter in the Hyperrealist style. The subjects in her paintings are precise depictions of the real world, yet they appeal to us on an emotional level, unlike the subject matter of a similar earlier style, Photorealism. That style developed in the late 1960s in the US, Taking basic Realism up a notch. Photorealists used photographs as a serious reference; their goal was to convey real life with the impersonal detail and clarity of photographs.

Montemayor's Hyperrealism differentiates itself from Photorealism through her intentions. While Photorealists sought to distance themselves from subjectivity and feelings, Hyperrealist painters, like Montemayor, include narrative elements with clear emotive depictions. Balancing life's emotions in their quiet moments with objective appearances, these are paintings with sentiment built in. Each painting captures the present at its own time, and the past is presented as moments that are now present in our memories. "Hermanas" is one such painting. Unabashedly referencing an old

photograph of sisters, it elaborates and presents a more precise image than the original small picture, and we can feel a subtle, but unsettling emotion shared by the three figures; maybe we are even transported back to the lives of our own relatives who lived at that time.

Montemayor says that she is very aware of her place in the past and the present. Through her paintings, she is representing some stages of her present life and some stages of the past that were important for her. In converting the selected moments to the reality of the canvas, she requires her compositions to have both action and emotion. Very often she paints things that are an integral part of the Mexican culture, although most of the paintings in this exhibit have a universal appeal. A brief series of achromatic paintings along with "Hermanas," persuades us into our own nostalgia, such as the beautifully portrayed rotary-dial telephone.

The oil painting, "Innocente," brings us up close to an older woman and an infant, a powerful image of familial continuity. Montemayor wants the spectator to connect with her work and be moved by it; she would like the viewer to see one of her paintings and think, "Oh that reminds me of one of my times." Perhaps a grandmother, at the moment upon seeing this painting, would be moved to connect with Montemayor's portrayed experience.

Diana O. Montemayor lives in Monterrey. Her work has been featured in both individual and collective exhibits in France, Spain, Switzerland, the United States, and Mexico.

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