



Cantinflas

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "Laconism" by Jason Ray Perez
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen
When: Through Sept 24. Hours are Wed-Fri: 1pm-5pm,
Sat: 10am -5pm
Contact: (956) 230-2859

Cultural Twists

Laconism means using a little to say a lot, and that is just what Jason Ray Perez had in mind for his new exhibit, "*Laconism*," currently at Beyond Arts Gallery. Perez' series of colorful mixed media works signify a fusion of Chicano and American Pop styles that manifest a blending of cultural realities.

Cultural and stylistic twisting is important in this exhibit along with the artist's technique that he refers to as "Ghost Image Transfer." Perez begins his canvases with a minimal painting inspired by a favorite painter. "The series was inspired by the artistic styles of four of my favorite American Pop Artists," declared Perez, "Robert Rauschenberg, John Baldessari, Jean Michelle Basquiat, and Andy Warhol. I created this body of work to embody Chicano/Mexican culture in an attempt to combine the styles of the above-referenced artists together cohesively in each art piece." Rauschenberg utilized a technique called image transfer in some of his art works, Baldessari was known for putting dots over people's faces in his works, Basquiat incorporated text into his, and Warhol added color to his works by screen printing images over acrylic paint.

Perez honors these approaches along with his mixed media ghost image transfer. Each piece is a mixed media ghost image transfer consisting of spray paint, acrylic paint, India ink, and epoxy resin.

Initially Perez painted a stylistically iconic background, and then transferred the image of a popular celebrity that he worked on and printed himself onto the painting.

To me, these mixed media works seem to lean more toward design than art. In his three main pieces, "Cantinflas," "Dolores del Rio," and "Frida," popular Mexican images are combined with the popular/identifiable Pop styles to produce a bold and decorative effect. Perez' strength here is not so much in personal expression, but rather his sense of combination and visual arrangement. His "Dolores Del Rio" combines white circles against crimson over the drawing of Del Rio. The dark tone of her hair counters the strong red-white contrast of the paint; the circles are not random, as might first be assumed, but are arranged to play against the shape of her face and neckline. And although Baldessari was more restrained in his use of circles, Perez is not. "I took that up a notch and put plenty of dots on peoples faces," he quipped.

The weakest work in the show is probably "Modern Saint," where acrylic has been applied over a ghost image with splotchy color applications that fail to integrate with the image. While the goal may well have been to express a negative experience, the resulting disconnection fails the artist's stated objective and instead reads as a foray into pointless expressionism.

Perez is an active member of Latin Contemporary Artists and is currently the art director of three local establishments located in McAllen's art district, where he both exhibits his works and hosts art exhibitions for local and visiting artists.

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