



*Unconditional Love 2* by Christina Correa

## SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Luminous*

Where: McAllen Creative Incubator, 601 N. Main Street, McAllen

When: Through May 2017.

Hours: 9am-5pm, Monday through Saturday

## **Women of Action**

Emerging artists present works that speak clearly

This is an excellent exhibit in an unfortunate location. *Luminous* is an exhibition of works by the Women of Action Collective. The show has a feminine overtone regarding individual themes, reinforcing the exhibit's relevance. Installed for the McAllen Creative Incubator's April Art Walk, *Luminous* has been extended through May with some fresh works; it is on display upstairs in the side balcony area on the wall, against the balcony railing, and on easels. Work includes paintings and drawings with unique viewpoints with themes that are emotional, observational, psychological, and introspective.

Women of Action is a collective of artists who were drawn together through common goals. Having met in UTRGV's graduate art program, Gaby Glez, Eva Marie Williamson, and Cristina Correa began calling themselves "women of action" because of their shared interest in personal growth and contributing to their community as artists and art educators. Noticing that there were other women in the graduate program who shared these

ambitions, Correa used the idea as a catalyst to create the exhibit, *Luminous*. "In each artist," said Correa, "I saw a light, and I wanted others to see that light, too." Six of the members also teach public school, and two are graduate assistants in the art program. Now, they are all members of the collective.

With a focus on introspection, Anais Hernandez paints nude women who are free and fluid natural beings. In "Fragments of a Great Collide," the figure exists in natural space unburdened by material reality. Hernandez wants the viewer to witness moments of women existing where they are not defined by who they are, what they wear, or what they do.

Cristina Correa's portraits of her son show a section of his face, as though his energy was too great to capture a complete view. Two large paintings, both titled "Unconditional Love," were done while he was with her in her studio. "I wanted to capture that happiness," explained Correa about her inspiration. "That's the boy I know most of the time." Layers of various fluid acrylic mediums were mixed to create lush effects on the canvas. Into this viscous mixture Correa expressed stress she was feeling through words, using chopsticks to write across the picture plane. "I just let go," she explained, "it was very freeing." And upon this enriched surface, she painted her son's image.

Using children as subject from a more objective stance, Glez's diptych is psychologically darker. Her oil painting, "In Their Shoes," shows the negative influence that parents and social media can have on children. "It's also the influence of whatever they see on the news," said Glez. "It's all the things they see surrounding them, and they want to grow up really fast."

Yesenia Toscano overcomes painful memories of her mother through her painting, Alexandria Canchola tackles loneliness, Natalia Soto interprets seaside objects with compelling ink drawings, Fatima Lai externalizes her feelings through abstract works, and Eva Marie Williamson leaves personal matters behind and finds solace in the cosmos. Her mixing of fluid acrylic mediums in the large painting, "Energy Through the Cracks," takes her mind into outer space and she wants to take the viewer there, too.

While I'm sure there are practical reasons for not showing this exhibit in the official Incubator gallery, I couldn't help but note that during April and May, the shows scheduled for that space did not materialize; make-shift displays were installed. It would have been so much better for *Luminous* to be displayed in that gallery. So hey, Incubator, would it really have been so hard?

*Nancy Moyer, Professor Emerita of Art, UTRGV, is an art critic for The Monitor. She may be reached at [nmoyer@rgv.rr.com](mailto:nmoyer@rgv.rr.com)*