



La Frida-la Muerte-y el Andy

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Visions from a Subconscious Mind: Art of Mario Godinez*
Where: Lobby Gallery, McAllen Public Library, Nolana at 23rd Street
When: Through Nov 22, Library hours

Awareness through Art

Visions from a Subconscious Mind at the McAllen Public Library may be a scary experience for some; the psychological birthplace for creative ideas has rarely been a comfortable place. Mario Godinez takes us there with gusto, believing that it will increase our personal awareness. This exhibit references his Mexican heritage, his artistic influences of Pop Art and Surrealism, and subconscious imagery born from the stresses of everyday life. There are two facets to this show - the physical works themselves, and the change they can affect on the viewer. Originally from Guanajuato, Godinez lives and teaches art in Harlingen.

His Pop inspirations take the faces of iconic artists and expose their inner concerns. “I use popular images,” he explained, “to attract you as a viewer. The fact that I use bright colors? That’s just to attract you. But once you’re there and you’re having a one-on-one with the artwork, then you get to find out a little bit about yourself.” Godinez wants us to think about our own lives. Intertwined monsters portray stress, anxiety, depression, and insecurity. The realistic style and control of the paint medium attract us, and the intertwining of shapes and unexpected details hold our attention. Beginning his paintings with a black and white under-painting, a sienna glaze gives it a warm tone. Additional thin layers of glazes and colors are repeated as many times as it takes to achieve a desired result. The impressive triptych, *La Frida, la Muerte, y el Andy*, depicts Frida Kahlo and Andy Warhol. From separate cultures, the two artists are united through death. In three *Corazon* paintings, Godinez shows portrait configurations built upon the human heart. In *Corazon de Dali*, those multiple drawers and watches of famous paintings are finding their way out of Dali’s mind. Eyes of awareness represent being and becoming everywhere in the paintings.

Eyes are used in Godinez’ images to prod the viewer’s awareness, reminding them to bring their own life experiences into the images. “The use of eyes in my paintings means

you're becoming aware of everything that's been going on with you throughout your life." In his *Pieta*, the Virgin is shown with a third eye, symbolizing her awareness of what was to come. "I want to take you out of your comfort zone," he continued. "Has your life been good or bad?" The good-bad duality appears with *Gods and Demons*. Here, various religions are positively referenced; rotate the painting for a demonic image. *Death and Resurrection of Aaron Absolo*, inspired by the Mexican comedian's comedy show, is also about this duality and represents potential reincarnation. In the painting, the character was so dark that he became a demon. The central splitting cell contains an image of the Virgin offering the hope of positive change in rebirth.

"Art can be a powerful visual message capable of changing lives," Godinez concluded, "and by doing things a little bit different I create more awareness and can change the way people think. Shake them a little bit. Now they're thinking. That's the whole purpose with my artwork."

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