



Dear God

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *IN BETWEEN (No Soy de aquí, ni soy de allá)* by Sergio García
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen
When: Through Mar 4. Hours are Wed-Fri: 1pm-5pm,
Sat: 10am -5pm
Contact: (956) 230-2859

Neither here nor there

BY NANCY MOYER
SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Although there have been many attempts to express bicultural dilemmas, few have succeeded with as much originality and big picture relevance as Sergio García's exhibit, *IN BETWEEN (No Soy de aquí, ni soy de allá)*. On display at Beyond Arts Gallery, García takes us into his belief that the spiritual world is connected with the physical realm, and that in our 3-dimensional world; we are spirits between two worlds. García's bicultural world echoes this pattern through his drawings, sculptures, paintings, and large installations. Born in Brownsville and having lived both in Mexico and the US, he says he feels "in between." "I'm part of both and both are part of me," he declared of his dual background. "It's fun and amazing, but it's difficult at certain points because of the way I speak, my accent. *Lo soy de aqui, ni soy de alla* - that's from Facundo Cabral. He wrote it as a beautiful poem that he later transformed into a song. It means so much to me." In this exhibit, García makes visible the "in between".

A narrative conceit holds court in García's art works; every work is a story that he can tell effectively with images. His past experience as

an actor in Mexico is nuanced in his installations; there is dramatic tension through character placement. With these works, he persuades us to think about non-visible communication; what should it look like? In his installations, articles of clothing being made or cleaned between figures signify constructive action or things that we need to do. "Together" presents two characters, both knitting. Their connection comes from the heart, their hands extending from their chests (this symbolism is repeated throughout the show). The magnificent sweater discernible between them proves the importance of their connection. The centerpiece installation, "¿Te cuento un cuento?" fills the floor area of the main gallery and is awesome in both its concept and execution. At one end, a boy sends pages of a story in slim bottles across a metaphorical ocean. On the opposite end, a young girl eagerly reads each page. "The water divides the people," explained García, "but this character chose the water to put them together, to connect. The same thing that's pulling people apart is the same thing that's connecting them. It's a little boy, but he's trying to connect with his soul mate that he has never met. He's writing the longest love letter ever, thinking that someone will find it. And someone has." Long letters appear again. In "Dear God", a Christ-like spirit symbolized by a unicorn character arduously types a letter whose unending page winds its way into the heavens.

While the masterful construction of his clay figures reference ancient Mexican technical skills, Maze, Sudoco, and other patterns used on each character represent the unnecessary complexities of our everyday life. Solid colors reclaim a clarified and soulful existence. In "Connected," a boy walks along still clinging to a security blanket. Overhead, ancestors and spiritual beings come to him in the form of birds. A metaphorical pitcher, his eyes still unopened, the boy is being filled with pure, soulful, knowledge.

"There's a lot of love behind every single one of those art pieces," García confessed, "I try to leave some space for the viewer to tell their own stories, or finish my stories. I don't like to finish the stories I tell through my art; I want the viewer to do that."

I consider *IN BETWEEN (No Soy de aquí, ni soy de allá)* a must-see exhibit. García has created a brilliant fusion of notable ideas, and we aren't given that experience very often.

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