



*Sacrificial Torment* by Iliana Salazar Rodriguez

## SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *The South Texas Women Artists Art Exhibition: Express Yourself*  
Where: McAllen Creative Incubator, 601 N. Main Street, McAllen  
When: Through Sept 30. Hours: daily except Sunday, 9am-5pm  
Contact: 956 369-2114

## Women's Voices

This new exhibit at the McAllen Creative incubator is a curious event. *The South Texas Women Artists Art Exhibition: Express Yourself* is a modest, albeit worthwhile, showing located in the upstairs lounge area and includes selections from a larger exhibit that took place in Corpus Christi this summer. "This show is selected artists from the *Women's* show in Corpus," said Elizabeth Figueroa, owner of The Art Gallery in Corpus where the exhibit originated. "They're artists that I've known for awhile. There are some that I graduated with from UTPA and they belong to the South Texas Women Artists Group." Figueroa organized that group in 2011.

The artworks reflect the female psyche, the concerns and thoughts that surface during daily experiences; some are pleasant, others not so much. Even fantasies have found their way onto these canvases.

Several works are notable for the fact that they express significant feminine viewpoints through skillful execution and concept, while some of the lesser works seem to lack both qualities. A mixed media drawing, "Sacrificial Torment" by Iliana Salazar Rodriguez, reinforces the artist's command of the human face. Her familial concerns again seem to surface; this time a young woman's stress is made visual. Hands pulling at her face, wanting a piece of her attention, appear to be those of a child, a man, and another woman - maybe a mother. However, this image could also represent any working woman who is over-tasked. The close focus of the distorted face and clutching hands

thrusts the viewer right into this tense emotional statement. “Hoarding Memories” by Gabriela Gonzalez, shows a different social perspective. In this work, Gonzalez reflectively and respectfully depicts her parents in their home; everything is made of square patches of space. Gonzalez says that each square represents an aspect or memory of her parents with black squares symbolizing memories yet to be formed.

The photograph, “St. Catherine of Alexandria Faces Truth” by Denise Lecusay, vacillates somewhere between camp, high fashion, and updated reality. The beautiful and magnificently embellished woman in the photograph representing St. Catherine takes on a fashion model persona as mask-like tears surround heavily made-up eyes, and her blond hair rebels against gravity. Ironically, is the truth a falsehood? Veronica Jaeger also reaches into the path of history with her “Medusa,” riffing off the mythological Medusa of ancient Greece. In Jaeger’s Medusa, there is only one snake. It moves from the girl’s mouth through her eye (or vice-versa) and she seems helpless to control it. Maybe this Medusa only inflicts disasters upon herself.

While there are some indisputably excellent works in this exhibit, the title implies a much more comprehensive survey than is actually represented. The range of quality is extreme with artworks falling into two distinct groups: strong visual images that engage us, versus oddly amateurish attempts at visual expression. There is no middle ground.

This exhibit is sponsored by 333 Fireflies Art Studio & Reynaldoism.

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