

RESILIENCE
UNCERTAINTY

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February 22 - April 14 • 2022

Dominie Nash • Eric Finzi • Patricia Encarnacion
Mildor Chevalier • Ezequiel Taveras • Felix Angel

Curated by Julio Valdez

Resilience & Uncertainty

Curatorial Statement

History shows that artists are unlikely to use resilience as a tool to help them adapt to uncertainty. Instead, they use uncertainty as a solution to their adversity, thus creating a paradigm for achieving resilience.

In her thesis on how to develop resilience, the psychologist Edith Grotberg maintains that it is of primary importance that people be aware of their limitations. This will enable them to expand their individual capabilities exponentially and reconceptualize the methods they have used in the past. In this way, rather than adapt to the adversity (or conflict), they will be able to use it to their benefit to find new alternatives and solutions.

Her basic slogan was:

I have - I am - I can

The last two years have been an epoch of mandatory confinement. As shut-ins, we have all been going through extended periods of anxiety and anguish. Many of us have had to call upon a variety of help and solutions to deal with the insecurities caused by the confinement and loneliness. According to Immanuel Kant, an individual's intelligence can be measured by the amount of uncertainty that person is able to bear. However, it is understood that artists have different formulas for resolving uncertainties that arise in one or another part of their lives. Artists tend to turn such states of conflict and misfortune into art, thus incorporating them as an element of resilience.

This period of abstinence from human contact has given rise to an introspection that has taken place in artists' lives in countless ways. Our enforced solitude has proven to be a catalyst for introspection. The renewed encounters we have had with ourselves during this time have subjected many of us to states of anguish from which only art could set us free.

Today, we present a group of artists: Felix Angel, Mildor Chevalier, Patricia Encarnación, Eric Finzi, Dominie Nash and Ezequiel Taveras. All six have overcome adversity and inner conflict, channeling these trials into amazing works of art.

Julio Valdez

Curator

Resilience and Uncertainty

by Felix Angel

Artists are accustomed to working in self-imposed isolation. Creativity not always but frequently requires the effort of focusing and concentrating on questions for which there is no simple answer, solution, or method, and that is part of what artists set out to elucidate. In the evolving nature of this process, the creator may control solitude, or that is the way it used to be. Artists were able to decide when, how and under which circumstances they wanted to work. However, the conditions created by the pandemic have changed all that.

Working in solitude has not been the most difficult aspect for the lives of artists, who have had to create while immersed in a toxic and infected environment. There are other kind of infections, such as tyranny, for instance. When a democratic society such as America is threatened by false ideas, its fragility is revealed. And Acts of God are rarely announced in advance. During the last two years, for artists, solitude became a familiar refuge where they could shelter while examining how society was bearing up while weathering the unpredictable.

Of all the challenges artists had and still must face because of the pandemic, the hardest of all is the difficulty of making their work available to the public and establishing a dialogue with the viewer, since it is the interaction between both that brings the creative act to consummation.

It is true that a sizable number of artists, some more willing or resourceful than others, have tried to palliate such a handicap through social media, an impact limited to a number of followers: friends, not-so-close friends, colleagues, collectors, and the like. The fact remains that a significant segment of the artwork still produced today needs to be seen and appre-

ciated in real time. A luckier few could claim the assistance provided by galleries through appointment-only viewings, and even fewer have struggled to make a comeback at recent art fairs by targeting specific clients.

Physical, visual, not virtual, contact must take place between the art and the public, since such an interaction concludes the creative cycle implicit in the creation and the dialogue resulting from the confrontation of a work of art. Thus the sensitive can resonate with the intellectual as they emerge at various levels of comprehension, arriving at some degree of satisfaction or understanding, whatever the work may provide. Otherwise, it is like looking at a transfer of the Mona Lisa on a souvenir plate.

The opportunity to allow the public to interact with the art of the six artists included in the present exhibition is one of the aspects that makes this exhibition relevant under the current circumstances. For that reason alone, the artists are grateful for the opportunity it affords them. More important, however, is the reception each artist seeks by reaching out, as the work touches an elusive chord in the viewer's unbiased disposition, a crucial step in the silent conversation with the artwork. None of the artworks included in the exhibition arises from an elementary, linear narrative, as the impact of good visual art does not rely on any script. Rather, each work depends on the viewer's capacity to dispose of preconceived ideas and allow the imagination to reveal perspectives about matters he/she/they think they know, recognize, or perhaps have no idea about, whatsoever.

Attempting to "read" these works of art may trigger a range of responses, as well as questions, reflecting on factors as diverse as the individuals that observe them, as is usually the case.

For instance, the viewer encountering Dominie Nash's images should not stop at the obvious. Love for nature has been a constant in her work for long time, not in a passive, idyllic fashion but implying a profound respect for the environment, neglected and abused as it is. Nash's interest in motivating the viewer to connect with nature goes beyond taking it for granted, enticing the observer with the sophisticated, exquisite handling of her technique. All that is supposed to push our senses to a higher state of consciousness and appreciation, leading us to bond with nature through the illusion of recreating something as simple as a leaf, the unassuming yet colossal universe encapsulated in the humblest of components. Form is recognizable to the eye, for sure, but the refined, understated treatment enhances the splendor of the configuration, whatever it may be, as well the meaning of a tangible and noble existence, independent from all that is human. Such a realization represents a departure of attention from our often petty concerns. Not everything in life is about the human being. Even when we feel alone, as has been the case lately, we are not lonely if we bother to take note of the world around us, and concede that is important, not only because is vital, but because it is just beautiful.

Ezequiel Taveras's installations made from ceramics, rope and metal are strong and crumbly at once. From the point of view of the material, they are destined to outlast the passage of time with better chances of survival than those drawn on paper or painted on canvas, just as the human heart has done through millennia enduring great ambition, impossible love, immeasurable compassion, and betrayal. At the same time Taveras's hearts are inherently delicate and poetic, breakable, susceptible to deception, entangled in a web of lies or trapped unceremoniously as sometimes indiscriminate harvesting claims unwanted casualties, yet capable of remaining functional, however scarred. Taveras suggests that the heart is as ancient, stout and brittle as uncertainty and resilience themselves.

Mildor Chevalier's approach to painting may be misleading at first glance. The apparent predominance of architectural forms is not the result of a structural desire to compose, but an accidental outcome of using paint freely and randomly on the canvas, mixing brushstrokes and color without any premeditated idea that the progression would generate shapes and forms we believe we recognize, or at least are familiar. His works in the exhibition, executed during the hardest part of the pandemic, allude to the sudden introspection that isolation forced us all to rely on, as individuals, while still aware of a collectivity out there wondering about how others were coping with the very same issues. The polyptych may give us a hint in that direction.

There are worlds that exist, both real and imagined, but it is for the heart to explain them when reason cannot do it. Sometimes our perception mixes them up, leaving us with a degree of awareness without knowing precisely how the experience came about. Eric Finzi's images sprang into his own perception after looking at photographs inhabited by children stripped of their childhood, forced into labor, engaged in occupations that have diminished them as human beings. There is sense of indignation that leaps out of principle and conviction in the attempt to envision the drama going on in the minds of these children who have lost basic rights and opportunities. The artist's use of epoxy resin is not capricious. It endows the representation with a sense of intentional artificiality, reminiscent of passages of life we cannot be sure we dreamed or lived, which, regardless, leave us with the sensation that something is deeply wrong with the way human beings manage the world.

The photo-collages by Patricia Encarnacion, I am from where you vacation, belong to a considerable body of work in which many ideas converge, some related to an exotified and trivialized perspective on the Caribbean, its land, and its people. The many issues that affect the

population of the entire region in the social, the economic, the political and cultural spheres, to name a few—not to mention how ill-prepared it is for situations such as a pandemic—are disguised on stage sets of idle and harmless leisure, mostly for the sake of foreigners, who can afford a lifestyle most people do not and cannot have, struggling to survive as they do. Such a state perpetuates a status quo dominated by power on all fronts, in which a vast majority of people do not benefit from the advantages provided by the natural resources that belong to all, and revenues are concentrated in the hands of a few at the cost of worsening conditions for the native inhabitants.

As for me, an artist enamored of Washington for forty-five years, I have tirelessly dedicated my entire life to the arts. Art has been my inseparable companion, constantly demanding the best from me without concessions, always difficult to satisfy or come to terms with, knowing its lack of sympathy for failure, turning each day into a challenge, and dismissing everything else as secondary. At times, I have felt that I was drowning, almost asphyxiated by the steady reminder of art's deceptive greatness, its intolerable indifference to commitment, persistence, and even talent. At this point, I can say I have endured everything an artist goes through just for being one: the never-ending, night-into-day working sessions, the unwarranted, disappointing rewards for remaining faithful, the fear of abandoning principles or weakening integrity; the perennial doubts, the unintentional, occasional neglect of those one cares about for the sake of mystified achievement, the dislodged, erratic judgment from appointed or spontaneous critics, the unpleasant kindness of condescending, casual audiences. I am not complaining; I guess all that comes with the territory.

I have also enjoyed the support provided by colleagues, friends and the accidental bystander, the appreciation of collectors, the maverick reviews by the brave and uncompromised,

the occasional opportunities and fleeting moments of unexpected success. I know I am not alone. Without hesitation. I can say that I am proud and feel privileged. We live in strange times, to say the least. I never imagined that in a crisis of world proportions fueled by the hysteria, stupidity and irresponsibility of theoretical conspirators, art could provide, to me and to others, such sanity, stability, and reassurance.

The linoleum prints in the exhibition are working proofs made originally for the novel *Tantas Vidas, Miguel*, (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CPBtNV-DfOQ/>), my ninth book, written during the pandemic and published in 2021; and for a separate portfolio I titled *Friends and Lovers*, also from 2021. All the prints were stamped by hand on Strathmore Sketch paper and non-toxic, water-based ink. None of the images has been edited.

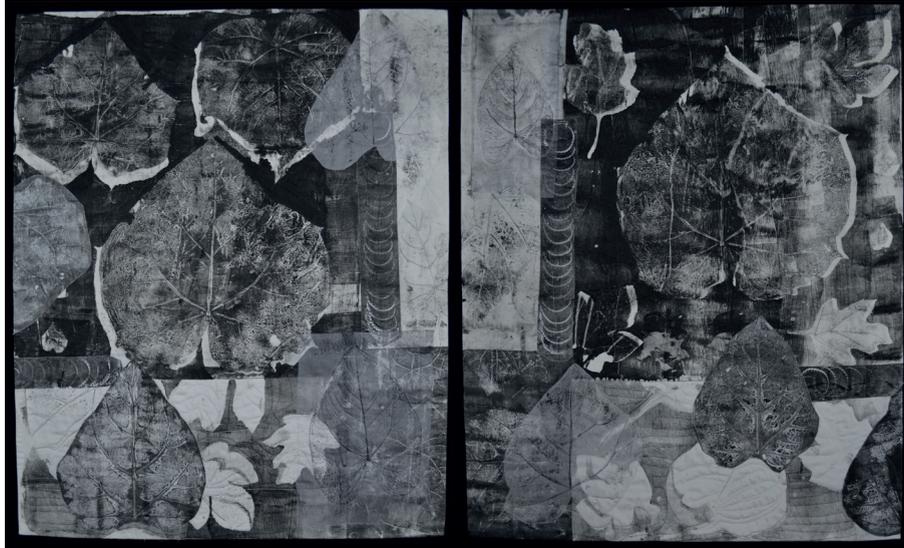
As the curator, Julio Valdez, indicates in his curatorial rationale, the whole exhibition is thought-provoking. We the artists hope the audience will agree with him, and find it visually powerful, conceptually intriguing, and intellectually rewarding.

Dominie Nash

Dominie Nash is a full-time textile artist working in a studio in Washington DC. Her work is included in the collection of the International Quilt Museum, Renwick Gallery, International Monetary Fund, Brantree District Museum (England), Kaiser Permanente, San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, and DC Art Bank. A recipient of 2001 and 2012 Individual Artist Awards from the Maryland State Arts Council and a 2010 Creative Projects grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (MD), she has received several awards in juried exhibits in recent years. She has exhibited widely in solo and group exhibits, nationally and in Europe and Japan. She has had numerous solo exhibits in the DC area and around the country. Her work has been published in *Art Quilts Unfolding*, *Artistry in Fiber: Wall Art*, *Art Quilt Portfolio: The Natural World*, *Quilting Art* by Spike Gillespie, *500 Art Quilts*, *Surface Design*, *American Craft*, *Embroidery*, *Quilt Art* by Kate Lenkowsky, *The Art Quilt* by Robert Shaw, and *Fiberarts Design Books 2-7*.







Big Leaf 35 - 36 / Textile Art / Diptico 39" x 32" c/u

Statement

In difficult times like the one we have recently gone through (and still are experiencing in many ways) it is hard to find a purpose in making art. However, if one pushes oneself over this hurdle, it can be a great comfort and source of joy amidst the anxiety. I discovered that art is essential to get me through the days. Focusing on the constancy and beauty of nature has been especially helpful to me, something I have turned to many times over the years.



Eric Finzi

Eric Finzi was born and raised in New York City. His art career started at age ten after his teacher accused him of cheating on a book cover project. She believed he must have stencilled a copy of the Egyptian mummy he drew free hand. To convince her, he created a new cover in a different size. His parents then decided then to get him lessons in oil painting. When he turned 13 he received a scholarship to a life painting class at Pratt Institute and at 15 scholarships to the Arts Students League and Greenwich House School of Pottery. At 16 he enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania where he studied fine arts and biology. After obtaining an MD and PhD he worked as a molecular biologist at the National Cancer Institute until he was kicked out of the laboratory for taking sculpture classes on the weekend.

Since using his skills as a bench scientist to teach himself how to paint with epoxy resin he has had 25 solo exhibitions around the world including New York, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Baltimore, Phoenix, Cologne, and Toronto. Recently, he has had solo museum shows at the National Museum of Italian Judaism and Institute of Contemporary History in Ferrara, Italy , Radford University in Virginia, and Ohio State University.

He is also a writer whose work has been reviewed by the NY Times, Time magazine, Newsweek, New Scientist and other publications.







She jess works fer pleasure / epoxy resin on wood / 42" x 66"

Statement

How does one enter the mind of a child forced to work in field or factory? Through images of child labor from the early twentieth century I have visited the mental states of these young and sentient beings.

In the solitude of a studio, distanced from my painting by hazmat gear, guided by the chemical properties of polymerizing epoxy resin, I have used the uncertainty of flowing resin to help explore the uncertainty of a life mining coal, shucking oysters or picking cotton. Different emotions are embedded, like flies in amber, in the resinous faces of children too young to work but not too young to feel resignation, shame, loss and sometimes, pride.

Sometimes their faces are doubled, each expressing a different way forward, a different path. Sometimes they seem resilient. And yet.

Breaker boys / epoxy resin on wood / 84" x66"



Patricia Encarnacion

Patricia is she/her Afro-Dominican Artists, who explores the idea of being from the Caribbean through reconstructing quotidian objects, landscapes, and aesthetics she was exposed to while growing up in her homeland (the Dominican Republic). Her work intends to dismantle impositions of social roles and biased history by showcasing their effect on herself and her surroundings.

Encarnacion began her BFA education in 2009 at the School of Design Altos de Chavon, receiving an AAS in Fine Art two years later. She continued her studies in the Communication Art program, getting her associate degree in 2012. After getting a full-tuition scholarship, in May 2014 completed her degree at Parsons The New School of Design, New York. Later she participated at The Centro Leon Jiménez Biennial and won the prize awarded by the city of Cadiz for cultural immersion. A couple of years later, she participated in multiple residencies with MuseumsQuartier Vienna & Kovent Catalonia. In 2018, Encarnacion was selected again to participate at The Centro Leon Jiménez Biennial, winning the special nomination by the French consulate in Martinique. Encarnación is currently based in New York, recently awarded a full-tuition scholarship for the graduate program in the Caribbean and Latin American Studies at NYU.







Appropriation / Digital collage, 2020 / 30" x 40"

Statement

The idea of global tourism has been transformed in the last two years. Despite being a designated space for entertainment and a "paradisiac" escape for the global north, the Caribbean was forced to take measures for the well-being of its people. But these measures have been questionable and used to control the people.

Through collages, I create tropical scenes centering on the Caribbean figure, resiliently claiming the space it deserves while at the same time creating surreal landscapes that depict the constant uncertainty that the region suffers. The series "I am From Where You Vacation" portrays the resilience of the Caribbean entity in the face of the current uncertain time and the polarized reality between tourism and the agency of the locals reclaiming what belongs to them.



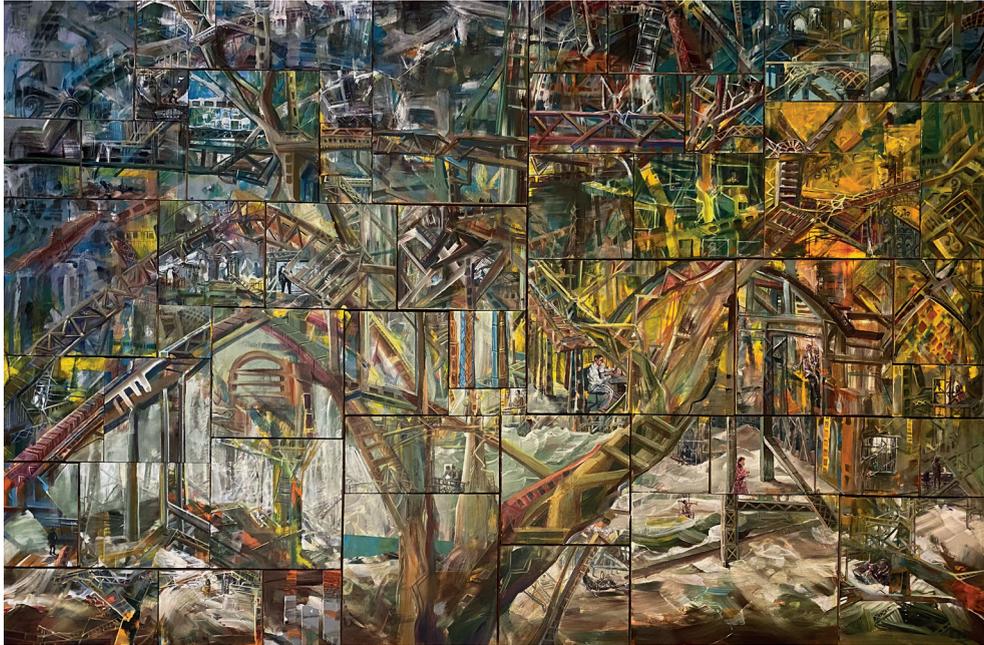
Mildor Chevalier

Mildor lives and works in New York City. His work deals with themes such as migration, memories, belonging, individual and collective identity. He is a graduate from Altos de Chavon School of Design, Dominican Republic with an Associate degree, from Parsons The School For Design in New York City with a BFA. He also earned an MFA at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City.

Through his work, Mildor constructs metaphorical narratives by bringing together architectural, organic forms, and sometimes the figure; offering the viewer what he calls a situation-scape to experience. His multi-cultural experiences give him access to the world of global art and he has become an international artist with individual and collective exhibitions, biennials, triennials and art fairs from his country Haiti to Quebec, from New York to Shanghai, from Paris to Santo Domingo. His work has been shown in different galleries and museums, including Museum of Modern Art in the Dominican Republic, the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum in New York City and the Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art in Wausau, WI. His work is in private collections in the Dominican Republic, China, and around the world.







Untitled / Mixed media on canvas / 48"x76"

Statement

I had to travel to the Dominican Republic a few days before the world shutdown and went on confinement. There, I was stranded with one luggage for six months. My daily routine, creative process, goals had to be quarantined with me. This experience of being away from home intensified my constant wondering of normalcy. I felt the irrelevance of territories, a time of complete chaos and uncertainty. The pure act of painting became a window through which I see the world with a sense of hope and a refuge that gives me strength.

Untitled (detail) / Mixed media on canvas / 48"x76"



Felix Angel

Felix Angel is a painter, draftsman, printmaker, curator, writer, architect, and culture manager. He has lived in Washington since 1977.

Throughout a career that spans fifty years, Félix Ángel has presented more than 100 solo exhibitions and participated in more than 500 art fairs, collective exhibitions, and international competitions; executed several public commissions, including four murals for Medellín's Metro System (2002, 2006), and the National University of Colombia, his Alma Mater.

Felix Angel has received awards at the biennials of Mexico City (1980), and Montevideo (Uruguay, 1981); DC Mayor's Award for Visionary Leadership in the Arts (2011). In 2014 was honored by the main art museum of Medellín, as "master" of his generation. In 2018 the Superior Council of the National University of Colombia declared him as Distinguished Alumni for his contributions to culture. He collaborates with the Library of Congress as Contributor to the Handbook of Latin American Studies (HLAS). In 1992 he implemented the creation and operation of the Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank, in Washington, D.C., becoming its Curator, and serving as Director from 2000 until his retirement in 2011. He has published nine books to date.

Public collections include those of the Bass Museum in Miami, the Blanton Gallery of the University of Texas, the San Francisco Museum of Art, The Detroit Institute of Art, the San Diego Museum of Art, New York Public Library; Riverside Museum of Art, Washington D.C.'s Art Museum of the Americas (OAS), and Essex Collection of Latin American Art, in England.







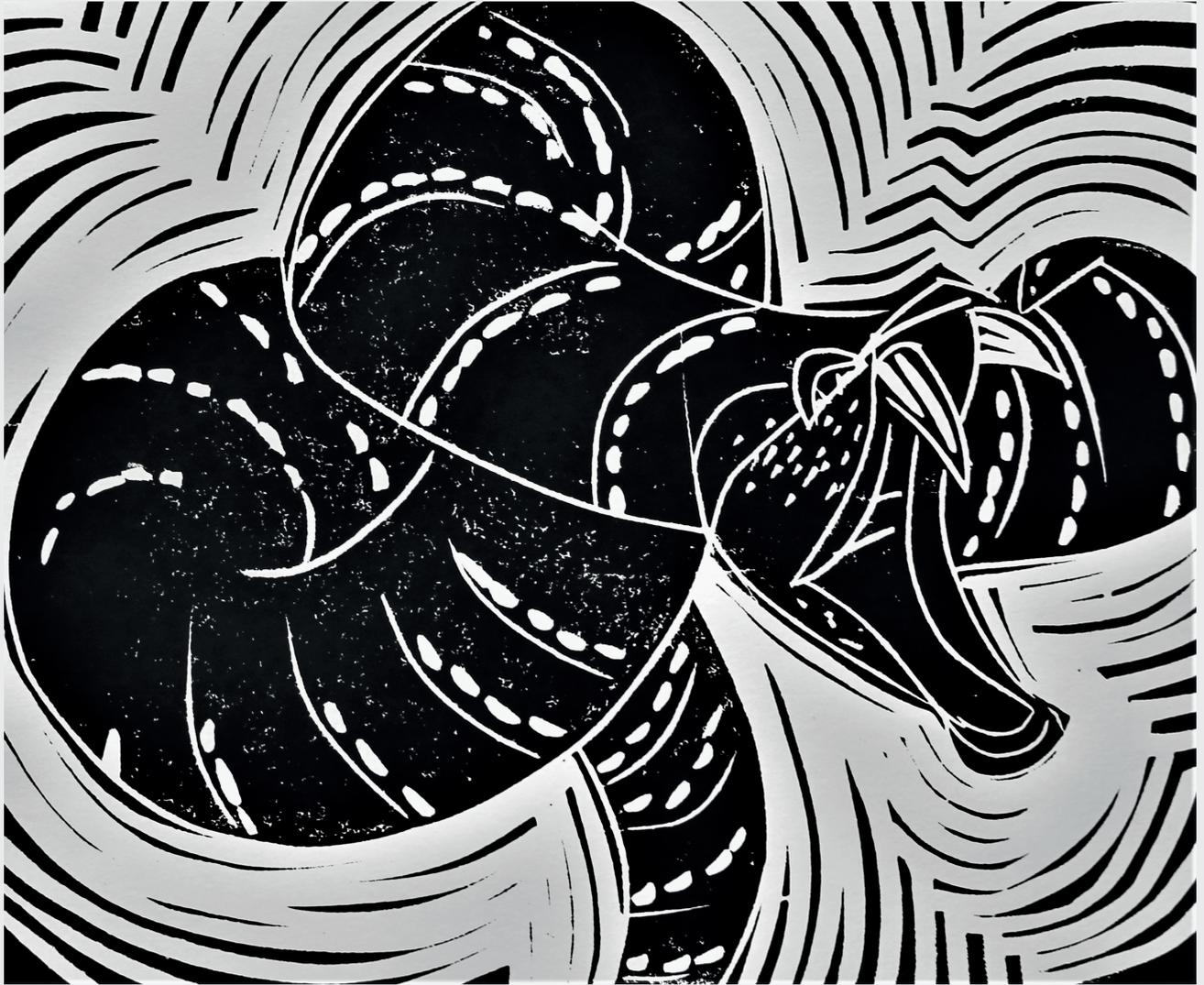
Images for the Book *Tantas Vidas*, Miguel (linocut Prints polyptych) 49 prints / variable size

Statement

In the solitary confinement induced by an invisible enemy, I reflected on my life in the context of what I have done as an artist, and those who I care about and have loved. It was not an exercise. It became a state of mind. I focus on what I deemed important, concluding that I must consider myself a lucky person because of the incredible people I have had the opportunity to meet throughout life, the emotional support we have provided to each other, and in some instances, accompanying a common destiny.

I wrote a novel about a man whose life was entangled in uncertainty since childhood, eventually becoming successful and learning about the complexity of love. Panel 1 represents a small fraction of the more than two hundred linoleum prints I produced for the book I wrote in 2020 which was published in 2021.

As part of the same examination, I spent many hours wondering about the value of friendship, and the importance of love. Panel 2 corresponds to a selection of more than fifty linoleum engravings I worked on in 2021 triggered by the input provided by both the novel and the engravings illustrating the story. This group of prints relate to the idea of individuals who in life cross our own path or join us on the trail. The theme may sound obvious but touches every human being aware of their nature. Those memories of people with whom I have shared extraordinary experiences will be with me forever, in my mind and heart.



Images for the Book Tantas Vidas, Miguel, Detail (linocut Prints polyptych) 49 prints / variable size

Ezequiel Taveras

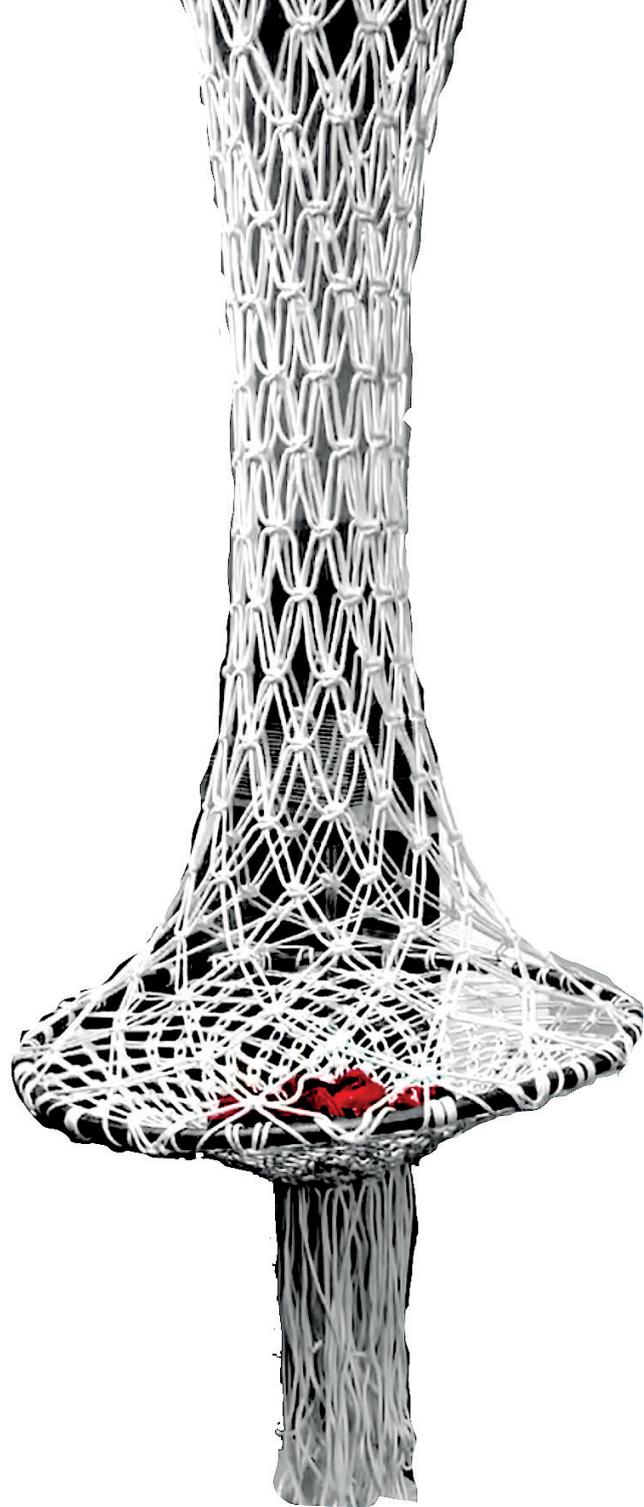
Born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in 1965.

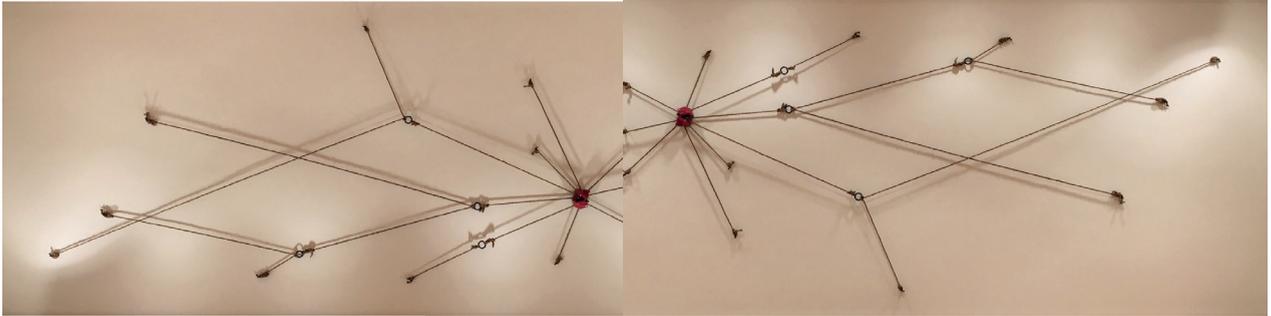
He has had 12 solo national and international exhibitions, including the last solo show, "The Language of the heart", IDB Art Gallery, Washington DC. And "Pi", Centro Cultural Español (CCE), Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom.

Taveras works have received numerous prizes in biennials and contests, including: Best Work of Art by a Foreign Artist, at the San Juan Association of Art Critics Contemporary Art Show, Puerto Rico, 2006, and Second Place in the 2nd Latin American Printmaking Biennial, at the Printmaking Museum in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2002. He has been recognized by Universidad Iberoamericana, one of the most prestigious universities in the Dominican Republic, for his life's work and contributions to the fine arts. Taveras represented the Dominican Republic at the Venice Biennale 2019, He has participated in more than 100 contests and group exhibitions in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Peru, Japan, Bulgaria, Spain, Cuba, Ljubljana (Slovenia), Norway, Brazil, Belgium, Luxembourg and United States, among others.

He has been Artist in Residence at the Ceramics Department of Hunter College at the City University of New York four times, he is Curator of JVS Project Space and Adjunct Curator at the New York Triennial of Latin American Art, both in the city of New York. where he lives and works.







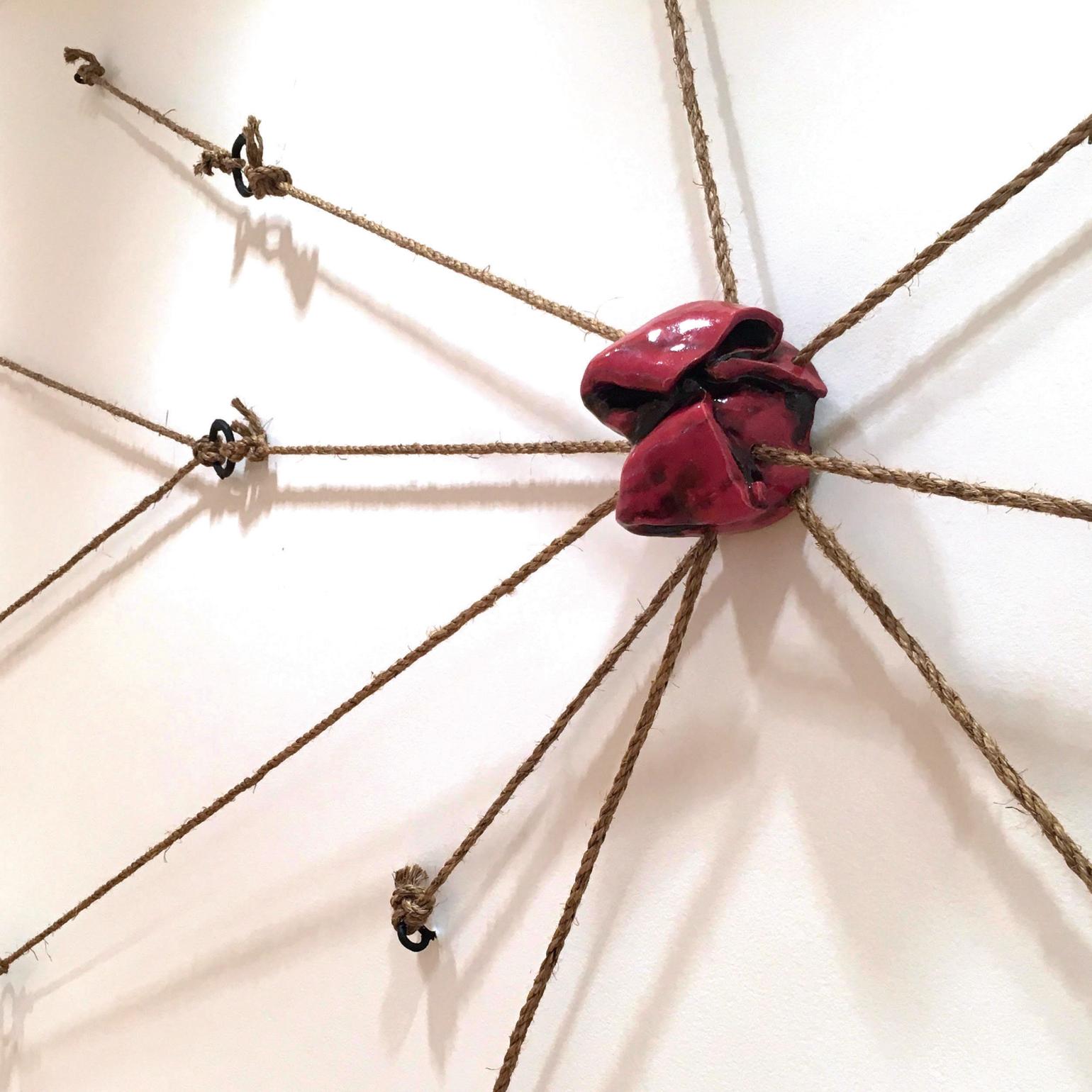
Connection / Ceramics, rope and tensors Installation, variable size / 4' x 18'

Statement

An epistemological analysis of chaos and uncertainty throughout history shows that these states are precursors of new beginnings. So it is in these unpredictable times we have been living through, which have helped us assess the true value of all we have been struggling for. Watching it all slide toward the edge of the precipice, we have wondered if it truly was so important.

As sentient human beings, what we most need for our physical and mental stability is contact with other human beings; we must open our hearts. The heart has no boundaries, race or color; it has no prejudices. It does not discriminate, make us vain or glorify us. The heart knows this basic truth: that to confront the great challenges, we need strong coalitions that erase our differences and make us one, as it was in the beginning.

Connection (detail) / Ceramics, rope and tensors Installation, variable size / 4' x 18'



Resiliencia e Incertidumbre

por Félix Ángel

Los artistas estamos acostumbrados a trabajar en aislamiento autoimpuesto. La creatividad no siempre, pero con frecuencia requiere el esfuerzo de enfocarse y concentrarse en preguntas para las cuales no hay una respuesta, solución o método simple, y eso es parte de lo que los artistas nos proponemos dilucidar. En la naturaleza evolutiva de este proceso, el creador puede controlar la soledad, o esa es la forma en que solía ser, capaz de decidir cuándo, cómo y bajo qué circunstancias quería trabajar. Las condiciones creadas por la pandemia, sin embargo, han cambiado todo ello.

Trabajar en soledad no es el aspecto más difícil que aporta a la vida de los artistas, y a la vez crear, inmersos en un ambiente tóxico e infectado. Hay otro tipo de infecciones, como la tiranía, por ejemplo. En una sociedad democrática como Estados Unidos la libertad, amenazada por el peligro que representan ideas y conspiraciones falsas demuestra cuan frágil es. Pero los actos de Dios rara vez se anuncian con anticipación y, al menos para los artistas, la soledad se convirtió en los últimos dos años en un refugio familiar donde resguardarse mientras se examinan los efectos que la sociedad debe soportar para capear lo impredecible. De todos los retos que tenemos y aún debemos afrontar los artistas a causa de la pandemia, el más difícil de todos es la dificultad para ofrecer la obra y ponerla a disposición del público, estableciendo un diálogo con el espectador ya que es la interacción entre ambos lo que lleva a la consumación del acto creativo.

Es cierto que un número considerable de artistas, algunos más dispuestos o ingeniosos que otros, han tratado de paliar tal desventaja a través de las redes sociales. El impacto se limita al número de seguidores: amigos, amigos no tan cercanos, colegas, coleccionistas y similares. El hecho es que, un segmento significativo de la obra de arte producida hoy día necesita ser vista y apreciada presencialmente, en forma real. Unos pocos afortunados pueden reclamar la asistencia proporcionada por las galerías con cita previa, y otro aún menor recientemente en las ferias de arte, que continúan luchando por mantener su vigencia social y solvencia económica sobre la base de clientes específicos.

El contacto físico visual, no virtual, es necesario que tenga lugar entre el arte y el público, ya que tal interacción concluye el ciclo creativo implícito en la creación, y el diálogo resultante de la confrontación entre ambos. En esa forma lo sensible reverbera en el intelecto y juntos elaboran sinergias en diversos niveles de comprensión llegando a un grado de satisfacción, o comprensión, cualquiera que sea el que proporciona la obra. Puede que en el futuro el comportamiento cambie, pero por el momento las cosas son así. De lo contrario, es como mirar una calcomanía de la Mona Lisa en un plato de recuerdo.

La oportunidad de permitir al público interactuar con el arte de los seis artistas incluidos en la presente exposición es uno de los aspectos que hace que la exposición sea relevante, dadas las circunstancias. Solo

por esa razón, los artistas estamos agradecidos por la oportunidad que nos brinda. Más importante, sin embargo, es la recepción que cada artista espera, pulsando la cuerda esquiada en la disposición imparcial del espectador para lo cual una conversación silenciosa con la obra de arte es crucial. Ninguna de las obras incluidas en la exposición responde a una narrativa elemental, lineal, puesto que el impacto que el arte puede producir, el buen arte, no se sostiene en un guion sino en la capacidad del espectador para deponer ideas preconcebidas y permitir que la imaginación, a través de lo visual, lo sensorial, revele otras perspectivas sobre asuntos que él / ella / ellos creen saber, reconocer, o no tener idea.

Intentar "leer" estas obras de arte desencadena una serie de preguntas y respuestas, reflexionando sobre factores tan diversos como los individuos que las observan, como suele ser el caso.

Por ejemplo, el espectador que se encuentra con las imágenes de Dominie Nash no debe detenerse en lo obvio. El amor por la naturaleza ha sido una constante en su trabajo durante mucho tiempo, no de una manera pasiva e idílica, sino con profundo respeto por el medio ambiente, tan descuidado y abusado por el hombre. El interés de Nash por motivar al espectador a conectarse con la naturaleza va más allá de darlo por sentado, atrayendo al observador con el manejo sofisticado y exquisito de su técnica. Todo eso supone que el resultado empuja nuestros sentidos a un estado superior de conciencia y apreciación, uniendo a la naturaleza a través de la ilusión de recrear algo tan simple como una hoja, el universo modesto pero colosal encapsulado en el más humilde de los componentes. La forma resulta reconocible a los ojos, sin duda, pero el tratamiento refinado y discreto realza el esplendor de la configuración, sea cual sea, así como el significado de una existencia tangible y noble, independiente de lo humano. Tal realización representa una parte de la atención de nuestras -a veces, mezquinas preocupaciones. No todo en la vida tiene que ver con el ser humano. Incluso cuando nos sentimos solos como ha sido el caso últimamente, no lo estamos si nos molestamos en tomar nota del mundo que nos rodea, y admitimos que es importante, no solo porque es vital, sino porque es simplemente hermoso.

Las instalaciones de Ezequiel Taveras hechas de cerámica, cuerda y metal son fuertes y delicadas a la vez. La contradicción la plantea con el material versus las connotaciones que acarrea. Desde el punto de vista de lo material, están destinadas a perdurar el paso del tiempo con mejores posibilidades de supervivencia que los dibujos en papel o la pintura sobre tela, justo como el corazón humano ha hecho a través de milenios arrastrando grandes ambiciones, amores imposibles, compasión inconmensurable y traición. Los corazones de Tavera son intrínsecamente tiernos y poéticos, y por ello quebrantables, susceptibles de engaño, vulnerables a la mentira en la que pueden quedar atrapados como sucede indiscriminadamente con las redes de los pescadores en el mar. Sin embargo, la fortaleza innata es atavismo que les permite continuar palpitando,

no importa las cicatrices. Taveras sugiere que el corazón es tan antiguo, potente y frágil como igual lo son la incertidumbre y la resiliencia.

El enfoque de Mildor Chevalier a la pintura puede ser engañoso a primera vista. El supuesto predominio de formas cuasi- arquitectónicas no es resultado de un deseo estructural de componer, sino un fenómeno accidental al utilizar la pintura libre y aleatoriamente sobre el lienzo, mezclando pinceladas y color sin una idea premeditada que en la progresión genera formas que creemos reconocer, o identificar como familiares. Sus obras en la exposición, ejecutadas durante la parte más dura de la pandemia, aluden a la repentina introspección a la nos llevó obligados y confiados el aislamiento sin dejar de ser conscientes de una colectividad que afuera deambulaba preguntándose cómo otros lidiaban con los mismos problemas. El políptico puede darnos una pista en esa dirección.

Hay mundos que existen, tanto en coordenadas reales como imaginarias, pero corresponde al corazón explicarlos cuando la razón no puede. A veces nuestra percepción los mezcla, dejándonos con una medida de conciencia que no logra esclarecer satisfactoriamente cómo se produjo la experiencia. Las imágenes de Eric Finzi surgen de su propia percepción después de mirar fotografías habitadas por niños despojados de su infancia, obligados a trabajar, ocupados en oficios que los disminuyen como seres humanos. Hay una sensación de indignación que aflora por principios y convicciones cuando se trata de imaginar el drama que está sucediendo en la mente de estos niños que han perdido derechos y oportunidades básicas. El uso de resina epoxi por parte del artista para realizar sus imágenes no es caprichoso. Ella dota a la representación y provee al ojo con un sentido de artificialidad intencional, que recuerda pasajes de la vida que no podemos estar seguros de haber soñado o vivido, y a pesar de todo, nos deja con la sensación de saber que algo no marcha bien con la humanidad.

Los foto-collages de Patricia Encarnación, soy de donde pasas vacaciones, pertenecen a un considerable cuerpo de trabajo en el que convergen muchas ideas, algunas relacionadas con una evaluación exotificada y trivial del Caribe, su tierra y su gente. Los muchos temas que afectan a la población de todo el archipiélago en lo social, lo económico, lo político y lo cultural, por nombrar algunos, para no hablar de lo mal preparado que está para situaciones como una pandemia, se disfrazan con un atuendo de ocio, superficial e inofensivo en beneficio de visitantes extranjeros que pueden permitirse un estilo de vida que la mayoría de la gente en la región no tiene y no puede tener, luchando por sobrevivir. La situación perpetúa un status quo dominado por el poder y el interés económico en todos los frentes que impiden a una gran mayoría de personas aprovechar las ventajas proporcionadas por los recursos naturales que pertenecen a todos, concentrando la rotación en manos de unos pocos a costa de empeorar las condiciones para los habitantes nativos.

En lo que a mí respecta, artista enamorado de Washington desde hace cuarenta y cinco años, he dedicado incansablemente a las artes mi vida entera. El arte ha sido un compañero inseparable que me exige constantemente lo mejor sin concesiones, difícil de satisfacer conociendo su falta de simpatía por el fracaso, convirtiendo cada día en un desafío y descartando todo lo demás como secundario. Me he sentido ahogado a veces, asfixiado casi por el recordatorio constante de la grandeza engañosa de la historia del arte, la intolerable indiferencia hacia el compromiso, la persistencia, incluso el talento como pasaporte a ser tenido en cuenta. A este punto puedo decir que he soportado todo lo que un artista puede aguantar solo por serlo: las interminables sesiones de trabajo noche a día, la falta de incentivos justificada por permanecer fiel al destino, el miedo a traicionar principios o debilitar la integridad; las dudas perennes, el abandono involuntario y ocasional de aquellos que se preocupan por nuestro bien, la sorpresa de un logro impremeditado, el juicio errático de críticos designados o espontáneos, la amabilidad desagradable de las audiencias condescendientes y casuales. No me quejo. Todo eso, supongo, viene con el territorio. También he disfrutado del apoyo brindado por colegas, amigos y espectadores accidentales, la estima de coleccionistas, las críticas inconformistas de los valientes e intransigentes, las oportunidades eventuales y los momentos fugaces de éxito inesperado. Sé que no estoy solo. Sin dudarlo estoy orgulloso de ser artista y me siento privilegiado. Vivimos en tiempos extraños, por decir lo menos. Nunca imaginé que, en una crisis de proporciones mundiales alimentada por la histeria, la estupidez y la irresponsabilidad de los conspiradores teóricos, el arte podría proporcionar, a mí y a otros tal cordura, estabilidad y tranquilidad.

Las impresiones de linóleo en la exposición son pruebas de trabajo hechas originalmente para la novela *Tantas Vidas*, Miguel, (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CPBtNV-DfOQ/>), mi noveno libro (2020) y para un portafolio separado que titulé *Amigos y amantes* (2021). Todos ellos fueron impresos a mano en papel Strathmore Sketch y tinta no tóxica a base de agua. Ninguna de las imágenes ha sido editada.

Como indica el comisario de la exposición, Julio Valdez en su razonamiento curatorial, el conjunto invita a la reflexión. Nosotros, los artistas, esperamos que el público esté de acuerdo con él y encuentre la exposición visualmente potente, conceptualmente intrigante, e intelectualmente estimulante.

Exhibition Checklist

Dominie Nash

Big Leaf 16
Textile Art
52 x 37"

Big Leaf 27
Textile Art
52 x 49"

Big Leaf 35 / 36
Textile Art
Diptico 39 x 32" c/u

Big Leaf 41
Textile Art
41 x 43"

Big Leaf 39
Textile Art
43 x 35"

Patricia Encarnacion

Appropriation
Digital collage, 2020
30 x 40"

Por la Sombrita
Digital collage, 2019
30 x 40"

Ni Una Más
Digital collage, 2020
30 x 40"

Resilience
Digital collage, 2020
32" x 24"

No Regreso
Digital collage, 2020
24 x 18"

Where is Paradise?
Digital collage, 2020
12" x 18"

Sillas
Digital collage, 2019
12 x 18

Hard Pill
Digital collage, 2019
12 x 18

Dame Tu Mano
Digital collage, 2019
12 x 12

Dame Tu Mano II
Digital collage, 2019
12 x 18

Eric Finzi

Breaker Boy, 2020
Epoxy resin on wood
86 x 66"

She jess Works
Epoxy resin on wood
42 x 66"

Before
Epoxy resin on wood
48" x 48"

Felix Angel

Images for the Book
Tantas Vidas, Miguel
(linocut Prints polyptych)
8 prints 18 x 24"
48 prints 14 x 17"
4 prints 9 x 14"

Friends & Lovers
(linocut Prints polyptych)
15 Prints 14x 17"
8 prints 18 x 24"

Mildor Chevalier

Untitled
Acrylic on wood panels,
48 in x 76 inches

Mapping Chaos
Acrylic on canvas
54 x 60"

Ezequiel Taveras

Connection
Ceramics, rope and tensors
installation, variable size
4' x 18'

Heart -Heart
(Gestation of Hearts)
Ceramica / Macrame-Textile
(macrame-Textile by
Wendy Gonzalez)
installation, variable size
96" x 52"

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH) is an independent agency within the District of Columbia government that evaluates and initiates action on matters relating to the arts and humanities and encourages the development of programs that promote progress in the arts and humanities. As the official arts agency for Washington, DC, CAH is supported by District government funds and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Julio Valdez has lived in Washington, DC since 2006.

As a curator, Valdez believes that exhibitions can help create community around people's contemporary lived experience. Valdez is a painter, printmaker, teacher and mixed-media installation artist. Valdez was part of the representation of the Dominican Republic pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennial in 2019. He has presented 33 solo exhibitions and hundreds of group shows, biennials and related educational programs nationally and internationally.

Valdez has worked in many projects internationally as well as in several US locations, including New York, Connecticut, Philadelphia, Miami, Seattle, Los Angeles and Washington, DC. A new museum exhibition is scheduled for Spring 2022 at the Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, DC.

Credits

Julio Valdez / Exhibition Curator

Sarah Gordon / CAH Curator

Felix Angel / Catalog essay

Eileen Brockbank / Translator

Ezequiel Taveras / Exhibition & Graphic Designer

Luis Pagan / Website & digital marketing

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Resilience and Uncertainty

February 22 - April 14, 2022

Made possible by an Art Exhibition (Curatorial) Grant from the

DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

Government of the District of Columbia

200 I Street SE, Washington DC 20003

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