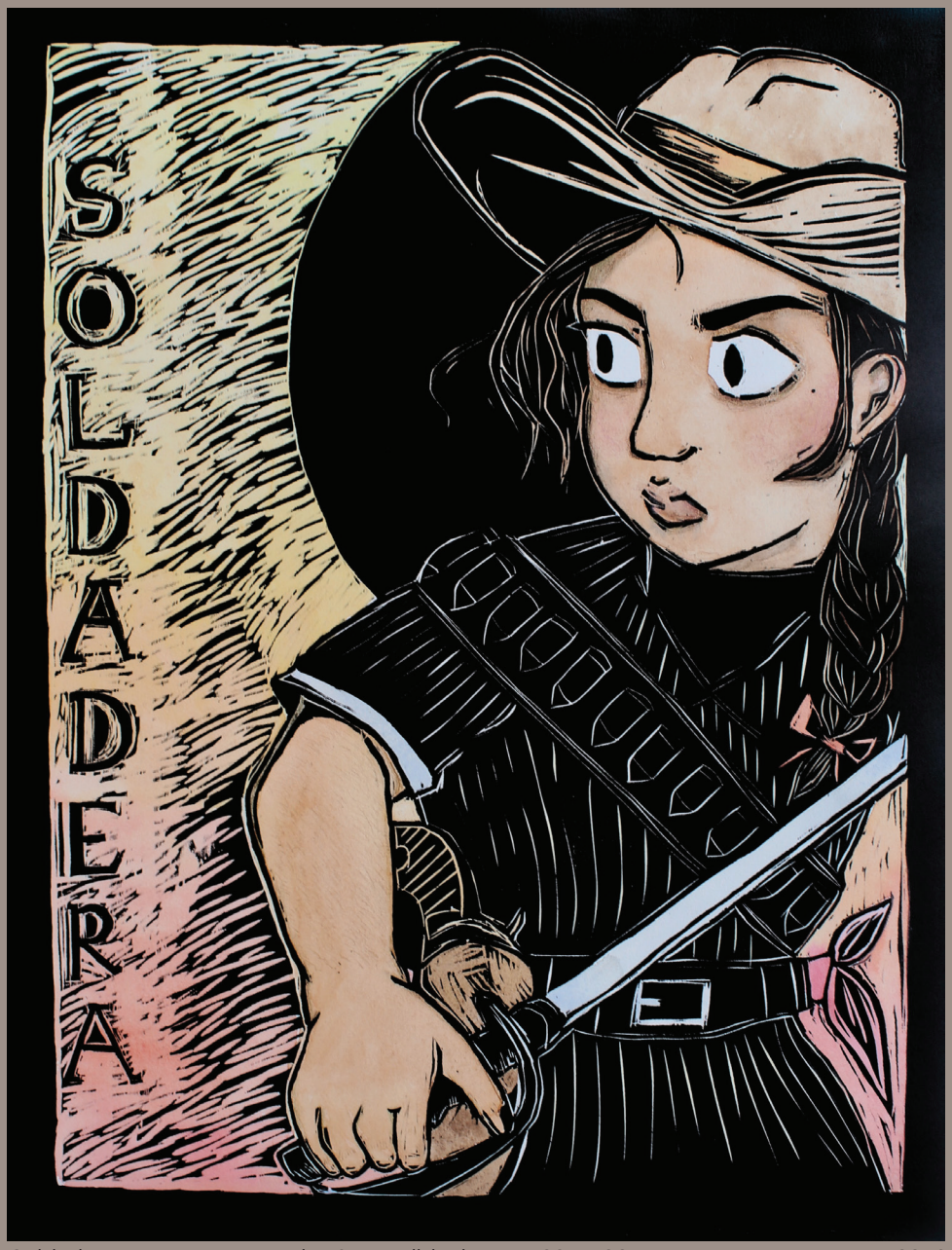
HABLAMOS JUNTOS together we speak



Soldadera at Dawn, watercolor & woodblock print, 22" x 30" 2018

KARINA TAVARES PEREZ

Contemporary Latinx Broadsides Project

Museo Eduardo Carrillo & Young Writers Program

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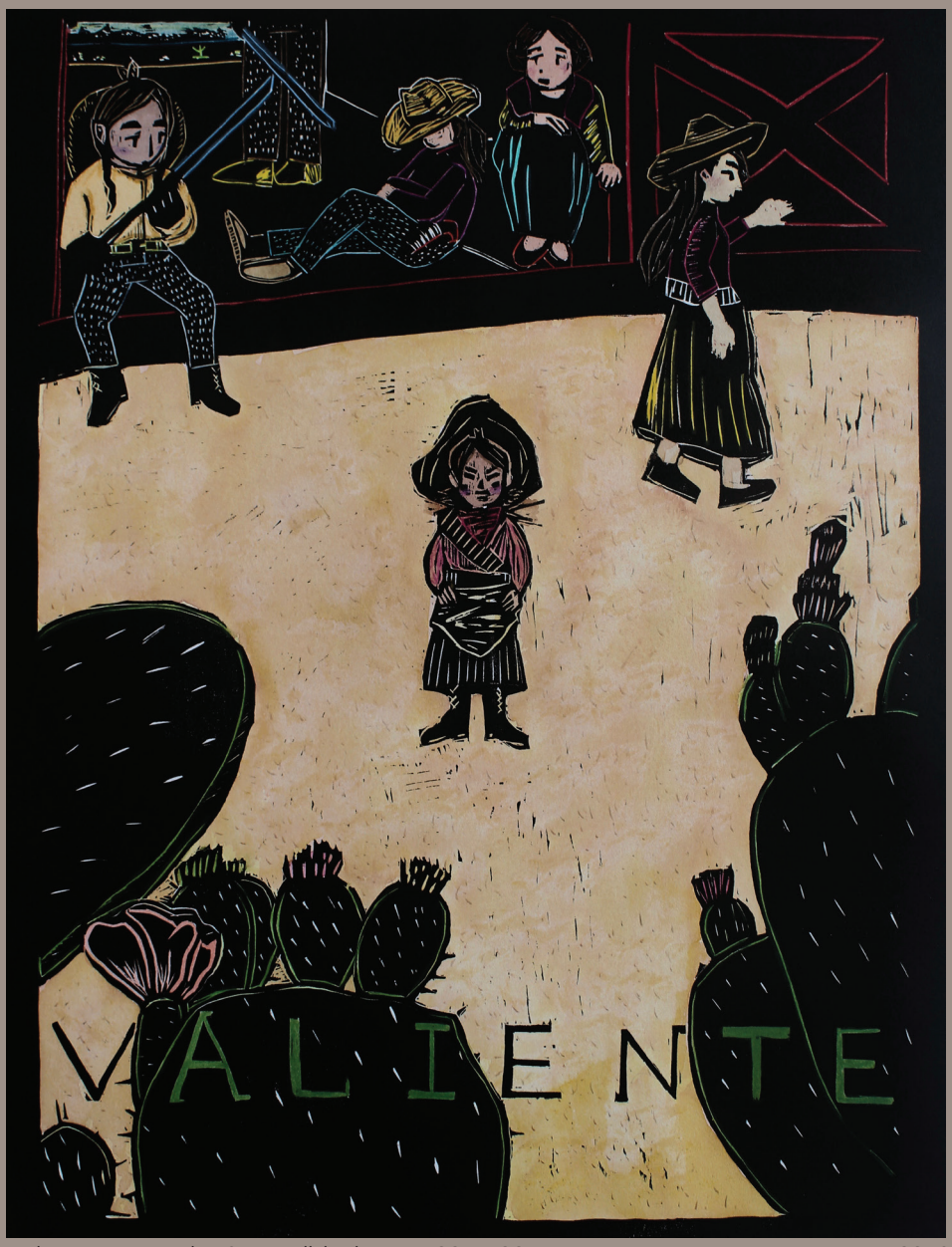

Valiente, watercolor & woodblock print, 22" x 30" 2018

KARINA TAVARES PEREZ

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MUSEO EDUARDO CARRILLO

Karina Tavares Perez

Let's get personal. Tell us about your artwork and the importance of Latino/a artists as role-models. What education and skills are needed for an art career*?*

My cultural heritage is…I identify as Mexican American instead of Chicana due to the activist connotation and generational baggage it carries. Both of my parents are from Mexico. I was born and raised in Oakland, California but studied a year and half in Mexico when I was 12. I taught myself how to read and write in Spanish. In trying to forget their past and live a better present, my parents didn't maintain traditions.

I was encouraged by or mentored by…What really encouraged me to get into art overall was Japanese manga and anime. That world filled with stories what fascinated me since I was 12. I already started self-learning Japanese with the ambition of studying in Japan someday. My printmaking professor, Jimin Lee, was a huge influence. Due to her consistent encouragement to her students.

My education/training included…I'm mostly self-taught. I've been continuously drawing since I was 12 because it was fun and self-reflective. Before I got to do print making in a print studio, I made mini prints that needed no press in my tiny dorm. I use good quality online tutorials that supports artistic skills. It's still tricky to do everything by oneself. The best thing an artist can get from another in person is critique, which is difficult online.

What were/are your major influences?

One of my early influences are from mangakas. At age 12, I always used to practice drawing my favorite characters from cartoons and it was around this time that TV shows got remakes in anime style.

At UCSC I took an intro to printmaking class and I just fell in love the with medium, especially when we got to do woodblock prints. In my second year I started engaging with my heritage. After learning about Mexican Activist art, I got invested in researching the women who participated in the Mexican Revolution, which lead me to start digging into our family history. It is difficult to do so since none of my immediate family members went to school or kept any

memorabilia of the family's past.

How old were you when you started your artwork?
I feel like once I got a taste of the printmaking realm, I found my calling. I felt a rush. It's something that continues to drive me forward and I appreciate how meticulous the planning needs to be for a single print.

What was the reason you started creating art?
I started creating art to help understand myself and my surroundings. I started making art during a time a time of my life where there were many changes happening all at once. Creating art helps me stay grounded.

I turned to art when I felt … **The dramatic experience that made my art have even more meaning to me was** …
So far in my young artistic career, I've turned to art during the lowest moments of my life. It's something that I can count on to help me get through situations emotionally and mentally.

I would tell young artists…I would tell young artist to keep making art despite the disapproval around them. They will find a medium that will help them not only understand the world around them but themselves even more. Art takes time, patience, and practice.

What leadership skill have the arts cultivated in you?
I got to be very familiar with the medium, the studio and the processes overall. When I saw some of my colleagues struggling with a process, I'd help them in the print studio.

When did you make your first sale of your artwork?
As a freshman, I sold a medium sized painting of parrots to my dad, he liked it so much that he bought it from me. My first art piece sold to a stranger was during my junior year at my first print-sale. It was exciting seeing people buy my prints.

Looking at the broader picture, can you help students understand how you developed in the areas of visual literacy, critical thinking, and creativity? Your story will inspire them.
Describe your art medium. I use this medium because ….I'd describe my art medium as a combination of traditional and digital. Using digital art, I create a series of thumbnails to get the feeling and composition of the piece. The traditional aspect of the work uses mixed medium like ink, watercolor, colored pencil, and markers.

I made this piece by (process)… **(the Soldadera print)** I use small 2"x3" drawings (thumbnails) to figure out the composition. I enlarge the scale up to 22"x30" using grid lines and then I trace

it on other paper to then transfer it on to the woodblock. Then I start carving. When finished with carving, I print the block.

What is the intent of the work? How is your art a way to tell your story?
The intent of the Soldadera series was to represent the women who participated in the Mexican Revolution in an honoring why. Most images portray them as “sexy female soldiers” which I find very disrespectful. This series counteracts the current portrayal.

Your artwork creates a dialogue with the student as he/she relates to and interacts with your work. How could a viewer look more closely at the details of your work? How could he/she be more intimately involved with your artwork?
For the Soldadera series, my goal is that my audience’s curiosity about how female soldiers are represented is awakened and for them to recognize the Soldaderas with an honored perspective.

What would you like them to experience and notice? (You might consider hidden clues, seeing something unexpected, connections between facts and feelings, art and life, or how they might be inspired to create their own stories and artworks.)
I would like for them to notice the various forms art can narrate your story. You need to keep looking for that medium that can carry what you want to say to the world. That takes time and practice but nevertheless is fun to explore. Be open to all around you, inspiration arrives when you least expect it!

What (unique) skills have you developed as an artist?
I’ve developed a skill of perception to the visual world and understanding how people communicate. There’s little moments that slip through everyone’s day that sheds light into the “reason of being human”. A key goal as an artist should be how to connect with humans.

How do you think art impacts our culture?
The creation of art is a self-reflection that can transcend our understanding of what we think of as reality.

If a preferred pronoun is important to you, you might include that here.
My preferred pronouns are They/Them :-)