HABLAMOS JUNTOS together we speak

Contemporary Latinx Broadsides Project
Museo Eduardo Carrillo & Young Writers Program

YSABEL MARTINEZ

Hellbilly #3, pen+ink, gouache & pen on bristol board, 11” x 14” 2017

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They’re Coming, watercolor, gouache, conte, painters tape, illustration board, 20" x 26" 2017

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Excerpt from Imageination Zine, mixed media, 4” x 6” 2018

YSABEL MARTINEZ

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Ysabel Martinez

Born in Santa Cruz 1992, Ysabel has been making art since a tender age. After her stint in community college, it would take Ysabel another 3 years to “unlearn” and exercise her intuition. If a career doesn’t work out she plans on marooning herself in a pleasant forest.

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?

Cultural Heritage- Growing up in an insular rural community, I was the outlier. Although I have no conspicuous Chicano influence, both parents understood the importance of cultural heritage. I identify as intersectional, an outlier of both my American as well as Chicano cultures. I was raised in a Christian household, my Grandfather was a priest.

Mentors- Both my mother and father have fully encouraged and supported my artistic endeavors. My father’s Chicano heritage, indoctrinated the astute belief that artists were messengers of the people. As a writer, my mother understands the importance of art.

Influences- Culture is my biggest influence. Continuously I’m influenced by sentimental figures, baroque art, religious art, kitsch, American folk art, and Dada. The diverse cultural makeup I possess allowed for my childhood to be influenced by art and culture from complete opposites of the spectrum. Low brow and alternative comics, collected by my mother, were at my disposal as a child. My pieces are reactionary and at times research based, I find inspiration by simply visiting my local library.

Education-The majority of my education has been in a public school setting. My private high school education afforded me critical thinking, and a hunger for learning. I attained my Associates Degree in Fine Art at Montgomery College of Art and Design, Takoma Park, MD.

Art Practice- Involvement in after school and week-long summer programs did not seal my fate as an artist. It seemed that I would be on the path to an art career, but an artist to me seemed like a selfish lifestyle. What is accomplished by a painting or drawing.... It wasn’t until my junior year of high school, that I decided to pursue an art career.

Advice for Young Artists- The artist is sometimes known as the intuitive character. The role of the artist today is to be aware of our highly polarized surroundings. Take inventory of yourself and those around you. As with every creative practice, all young artists should practice introspection as well as abstinence from distractions.
**Selling Art**- I’ve never sold a piece of art, only bartered or given to loved ones or even strangers. I make a living wage working in the temp child care industry and am comfortable with income and art separate.

**Piece #1:**
Hellbilly was constructed out of necessity. One in series of four, each scene satirically portrays the American South. Acrylic paint, sharpie, ink and brush and a Bristol pad were my pragmatic choices. I like for my materials to reflect my reality; a working artist.

Doubtful as to where I was headed in my artistic career, I felt I had hit a barrier. I was preventing myself from exploring my instincts. These “instincts” were not welcome in my formal art education. I now celebrate these influences; comics, underground art, and Mexican folk art.

A highly political, reactionary piece, I wanted to portray the “Southerner” as the savage trope that many believe them to be. The repulsiveness of the figures, through the alcohol inflamed nose, the clenched fist, and other common affectations, I digested and regurgitated. Contemporary liberal culture, seeped in formal logic, will decry (rightfully) the oppression of People of Color, but the same compassion is not shown for those who are white.

**Piece #2**
Highly influenced by cartoons and comics, I wanted to communicate with a broader audience the cultural shift that affects many; gentrification. Using narrative, symbols pulled from a common Christian authority, and mainstream tropes I illustrate the event. At the time of construction I was studying Chicano murals. I wanted to create a plane that would visually draw the viewer in while simultaneously creating a disconcerting imbalance intensified by over-saturated pigment. While teetering on the potential for abstraction, I wanted the piece to be easily digestible. The population gentrification most greatly affected do not possess the language, therefore isolating them from the enjoyment of art.