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**More than Words: Text-Based Artworks**

On view March 5 through April 25, 2015

RUIZ-HEALY ART 201-A East Olmos Drive, San Antonio Texas 78212

Opening Reception Thursday March 5, 2015, 6 – 8 pm

Art Talk with guest lecturer Ruben Cordova, Ph.D. Saturday, April 11th, 1 pm

Ruiz-Healy Art is pleased to present *More than Words: Text-Based Artworks* featuring works by Jesse Amado, Ricky Armendariz, Marifer Barrero, Nate Cassie, Alejandro Diaz, Andrés Ferrandis, Chuck Ramirez, Ethel Shipton and Julie Speed. The exhibition will open March 5, 2015 with an artist’s reception 6 - 8 pm. Arts writer and curator Ruben Cordova, Ph.D. will present “History of Text in Visual Art,” a talk contextualizing the exhibition, at 1 pm Saturday, April 11th, at the gallery located in historic Olmos Park.

From snippets of newsprint in works by Picasso, Braque and Gris to Robert Indiana’s and Jasper Johns’ embrace of signage and type fonts as sources of their signature gestures, text-based art was a recurring hallmark of modern art, and a fleet vehicle to ride the passage into Pop art and beyond. Often a transgressor, a not-a-brush-stroke, text can jostle our composure when its presence demands we read the visual composition of a painting or sculpture and read bits of language simultaneously. Used deftly, it can disrupt our passive consumption of media--digital and analog. Or, it can heal the rift between the seemingly eternal, and other, world outside us and our fretful experience of our short, linear lifespan. Born through the conjunction of matter and sound, text is the visual body of language; letters in their many fonts or script, the variegated hair and skin of that body. The nine artists in *More than Words: Text-Based Artworks* make text works that run the gamut from subversive social comment to rapturous meditation. Each will give you an unexpected occasion to pause.

Marifer Barrero was born in Mexico City and received her MFA at University College London. She currently lives in Monterrey, Mexico. Known for her delicate works of cut, incised, and formed white paper that she transforms into small three-dimensional botanicals and room-filled environments, Barrero maps the overlapped spaces of poetics and ecology. She has sculpted small sculptural forms of plant life from newsprint, but more recently text is placed as impressed instructions, geo-coordinates, or assertions raised from or pushed into the paper’s white surface. Though never flat, her pieces evoke books--or more accurately, Borges’ Library of Babel: a place where every book that can be written is collected, all possible choices are made. She writes, “everything is part of a whole and a whole itself, life is not fragmented … boundaries are illusory.”

Originally from San Antonio, and founder of noted alternative space Sala Diaz, Alejandro Diaz is a trickster with a penchant for conceptual art who retains a *rasquache* sensibility--the delight in flamboyantly making do with little. He first began making pieces with text when he moved to a new studio in Brooklyn and found himself without art supplies, but plenty of cardboard boxes--which he cut up to make signs. Standing on a street corner in affluent Midtown Manhattan, Diaz quickly sold his new collection to tourists. Now, the message is, *SIESTA,* *I’M WIRED!* and *unSOLD*, neon works featured in the exhibition in collaboration with David Shelton Gallery of Houston.

Described by critic Dave Hickey as “one of the best artists in the country,” Jesse Amado is from San Antonio. Wide ranging in his expression, his works encompass investigations in abstract forms, poetry, performance, installation, film and video, and use a plethora of mediums, including flowers and lard. In a 2013 interview, he was asked, “How important is it that the viewer ‘get’ your art?” to which he responded, “If they do get it, then they’ve gotten the allure of the ambiguous.” Among His work in the exhibition is a sculpture composed of stacked letters that would form, if unpacked: *WILL WORK FOR FREE AND FOREVER.*

Chuck Ramirez was one of San Antonio’s most beloved artists and lived in the Southtown duplex that houses Sala Diaz, before his untimely death several years ago. A photographer and designer known for his use of advertising and packaging design tactics to expose the tenuous fragility of life, his pieces in this exhibition are disparate photographs emblazoned with a single word that the photo illustrates. Over lucha libre figurines appears *LIBRE;* a masculine face under a platinum wig is emblazoned with *QUEEN*. Resignation and resistance to social injustice are blurred in dark humor, but acknowledgment of the facts is keen--the words are red, and burn like an epithet.

Nate Cassie was raised on the East Coast and in the Midwest and received his MFA from the University of Texas at San Antonio, where he now resides. Accomplished in painting, drawing, sculpture, video, and digital art, Cassie’s new works employ text as implied value that reveal figurative forms and shapes of gold leaf in positive and negative plays that read *END* and *the end.* Cassie’s recurrent theme of dark humor can be found in the reflections of surface and recessions of space.

Ethel Shipton was born and raised in Laredo, Texas and received her BFA from the University of Texas at Austin. Her practice is informed by a strong conceptual base that encompasses text in a playful manner. Her new works are visual displays of information processing found in the colloquial, familiar, mind teaser—the crossword puzzle: no.1 down, untroubled = undisturbed; No. 4 Across The “Hood” = Neighborhood.

Ricky Armendariz is known for his carved paintings and text-based imagery embedded in stormy skys, and his large color-saturated woodblock prints that weave anthropomorphic narratives with tales of turmoil. Spanglish and song lyrics are frequently centered in his concepts. Armendariz was born in El Paso, and he earned a MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Andrés Ferrandis uses both intricate collage and sultry text in his signature style. His pieces are void of English and Spanish interplay, as he was born in Valencia, Spain and academically trained at the University of Seville,. His lyrical phrases read, *YO PIENSO EN TI EN COLORES QUE NO EXISTEN*—I think of you in colors that don’t exist, and *de cuando en cuando las nubes acuerdan una pausa para los que contemplan la luna*—from time to time the clouds agree to pause for those who contemplate the moon.

Julie Speed, a sure draftsman with a hand that can fool the eye, makes works that recall text-based art’s roots in Dada. Merging old engravings with drawings of her own, her annotations to found etchings are often impossible to sort out from the original work--driving viewers to distrust the truth of their vision. This is quite a gift, and a good setup to viewing Speed’s pieces in *More than Words: Text-Based Artworks. Skate,* executed in found paper and gouache, exalts in the play of dancing forms and rich material. Three bits of text-covered paper, one in print, two with cursive, are joined by a solid triangle and a twist of line. Is it a mouse, or a tribute to the collages of Kurt Schwitters? Yes.

Founded in 2004, and located in the historic Olmos Park District of San Antonio, Ruiz-Healy Art specializes in contemporary and modern art with an emphasis on Latin American artists and artists living in or with a connection to Texas. To request high-resolution images and more information about the exhibition, please contact the gallery at 210-804-2219.