

Exhibition takes viewers on a journey through visual styles and thematic experience of the landscape



Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, *Border Platicas with Flowers Listening*, 2024, Acrylic paint and permanent marker on heavy canvas, 23 x 32 in, 58.4 x 81.3 cm

SAN ANTONIO, TX.- Ruiz-Healy Art is presenting Madre Tierra, a group exhibition of works by Nate Cassie, Alejandro Diaz, Andrés Ferrandis, Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, Matt Kleberg, Leigh Anne Lester, Constance Lowe, Katie Pell, Chuck Ramirez, Daniel Rios Rodriguez, Frank Romero, Eric Santoscoy-McKillip, Ethel Shipton, and Einar and Jamex de la Torre, on view until September 7th, 2024, at the San Antonio gallery. From representational paintings, surrealist works on paper, photographs, silkscreens, and intimate mixed-media abstractions, Madre Tierra takes viewers on a journey through visual styles and thematic experiences of the landscape.

Landscape paintings, a genre that spanned cultures and centuries, have evolved significantly since their peak during the European Renaissance. Initially serving as a backdrop to narrative subjects, these paintings showcased an artist's technical skill in portraying the detailed beauty of nature. Over time, the genre transitioned from literal, naturalistic observations to personifying the Earth and its elements, effectively becoming the subjects of works like the ones featured in this exhibition. The visage of Madre Tierra, present among the depictions of flowers, trees, mountains, valleys, and other natural views, invites the audience to consider their relationship with the planet and forge a deeper connection.

Nate Cassie's approach to capturing the natural world through photography, printmaking, digital editing, and encaustic techniques results in otherworldly stills in everyday locations. With his head turned toward the sky, Cassie reveals the mysticism and intrigue of organic forms and their undervalued presence in our lives, challenging the uniquely human perspective of mundanity with an effervescent perspective. The digital altering of the image is countered by its physical printing application and illustrates the human desire to seek meaning and express understanding through reimagining and inner machinations. Similarly, Consuelo Jimenez Underwood weaves elements of spirituality from a historically Mesoamerican approach. Jimenez Underwood uses acrylic paint and a permanent marker on a stained, unstretched canvas reminiscent of treated hides to illustrate a modern recreation of ancient stylization and narrative visual language. Even without great detail and definition between foreground and background, the artist still frames the two opposing figures with the necessary elements for symbolic interpretation.

Chuck Ramirez's Words Series explores the relationship between text and its impact on the viewer's interpretation of an image. In addition to photography, Ramirez had a strong background in graphic design and was involved with contemporary poetry and music. While the physical aspects of the image remain unchanged by the bold yellow lettering, the viewer subconsciously interprets the relationship between the word and the scenery and, thus, the impact of human cognition on personifying or relating to the world around us. In contrast, Andrés Ferrandis' sculpture Sunrise utilizes abstract found objects of differing materials to create a metaphorical view of the sunrise and its cast light. Straight lines,

separation layers, and contrasting textures create an artificial landscape view determined by the viewers and the artist's relationship to the chosen objects. With wood transformed through painting, the manufacturing process and disposal of the other elements tie together the one-sided symbiosis of humanity on the Earth's surface and how our perspective of its value is often determined by the materials we can extract from it.

Eric Santoscoy-Mckillip contemplates memory, place, and identity in a telescopic way.

Santoscoy-Mckillip's stuccoed pieces are clusters of signifiers, such as a serape, a rock formation, or abstractions of NASA space photographs that inspire him. The colors in the work reflect those ubiquitous on the Southern border: a saddle blanket, neon flake flowers, and the garden's soil he remembers from his grandmother's house. Similarly, Matt Kleberg's work is characterized by a bright color palette and unique forms that echo architectural elements.

Blurring the lines between Byzantine, Renaissance, and modern design, Kleberg's work transports you into a liminal space where the mundane is celebrated, "I'm interested in the mechanic shop with an overly ornamental facade or the fish market with the elaborately arched gate" says the artist. In Constance Lowe's works, the artist draws upon elements rooted in the "ground truth" of empirical evidence and personal history. Through her multi-layered process, she employs tactics of collaging to tease abstract pictorial structures from her visual records of transitory landscapes seen from the air and lapping sea foam. Lowe maintains a conscious engagement with composite structures that are further activated by the interplay of color, ambiguities of space and scale, the immediacy of tension and play in the viewing experience of map intersections, rifts, and transitional zones between the human-constructed world and natural phenomena.

The featured artists in the exhibition, each with their unique visual language, capture the essence of their environment, inviting the viewer to explore tonality and emotion through varying layers of elevation, capturing liminality, and abstracting the terrain.