

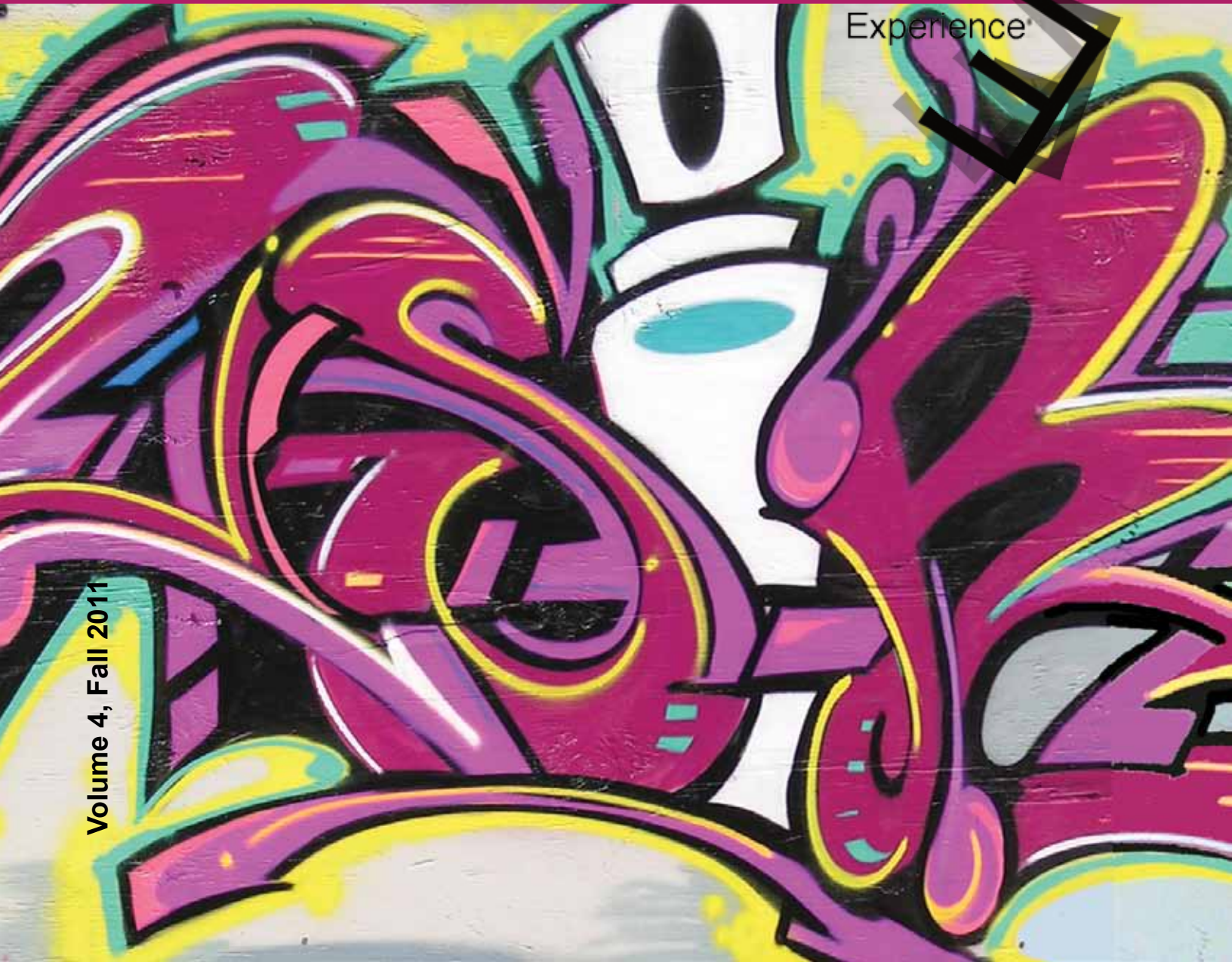


art E

Experience



Volume 4, Fall 2011



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Art: \ärt\ , -noun

1. the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.
2. the class of objects subject to aesthetic criteria; works of art collectively, as paintings, sculptures, or drawings: a museum of art; an art collection.





www.mcallenartscouncil.com
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The McAllen Arts Council is dedicated to supporting and encouraging the development of a city wide arts culture and infrastructure that includes all disciplines of the arts. This support and encouragement will improve the city's quality of life through promoting and enhancing creativity, education and the appreciation of the arts.

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Art E Magazine

Editor

Linda Lewis

Magazine Design & Layout

Linda Lewis

Contributing Writers

Dr. Jack Carroll
Linda Lewis
Nancy Moyer
Michelle Rowe, IMAS

Advertising

Nora O. Bollman

Art E welcomes proposals for articles that support the mission of the McAllen Arts Council. Inquiries should be addressed to lewis1997@hotmail.com.

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Anatomy

By Linda Lewis

In a previous issue of Art E, I told you about the Public Art Committee and the first three artworks commissioned by them. On March 4, 2011, the second of the three commissions was dedicated. The finished artwork began as an idea in the mind of Nancy Moyer, and this is the story of how that idea played out in a process that took two years.

Moyer's original idea was to have sculptures of jackrabbits on the grounds of the Convention Center. Since Douglas Clark is the preeminent sculptor in the Valley, she asked him if he would consider applying for a PAC commission and making them.

of a public art commission

He accepted the challenge, but only if Nancy would collaborate with him. Although Moyer is known as a jeweler, she initially studied sculpture at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette.

For a public art commission, the artist, or artists, is also a collaborating partner with the granting entity: in this case, the City of McAllen. Being able to communicate is a prime skill for all parties involved, because they have to effectively integrate their goals and objectives. The city sets goals for the commission that include its obligations to the community and relevance for the chosen site. Generally, public





art commissions, have established sites for artwork before the grantees are chosen, because the artists need to respond to the environment as they create their designs.

Moyer and Clark submitted their application in May 2009 and subsequently made a total of three additional presentations throughout the period.

For their initial application to the PAC, they presented images of their previous work relating to the project, drawings, and a schematic for creating a bronze sculpture plus a three-page budget proposal, and requested the Convention Center as the installation site.

Once the finalists were chosen in January, PAC asked them to make a presentation in person, and Moyer and Clark created a Powerpoint presentation with a revised version of the rabbits made with steel

rods instead of bronze. Having had additional time to think about the project, they thought they had a better idea. They showed images of a ten foot sculpture Clark had made with steel rods, representing the new approach to the project.

The Moyer/Clark team received their contract from the PAC in June 2010, a year after submitting their first proposal.

Their third presentation was a progress report. They showed one finished rabbit and provided some additional site recommendations.

After about a year, the artists were asked to give a presentation to the board of the Convention Center. They showed them one finished piece, one unfinished piece, and the plan for the third piece. The presentation was enthusiastically embraced by the board. Later, City engineers scouted for a site that would satisfy both the artists and the board. The artists requested a garden area by a wall, because they felt the sculpture could be seen better. Some-

Left Page: *Jackrabbits* installed at the Convention Center
Upper Left: Keith Arney, Chair of The Public Art Committee
Upper Right: Composite view of one of the *Jackrabbits*

one from the city suggested that it face an inner walkway. The Director of the Convention Center, Omar Rodriguez, made the final decision on the location.

The concept for the piece was finalized for this presentation. Because of the placement, Douglas and



Moyer installed the Jackrabbits as a participation/discovery piece: find the *Jackrabbits*. As you walk down the sidewalk - coming or going - past the sculptures, each *Jackrabbit* will come into focus, but then suddenly visually fragment and disappear, just like real jackrabbits. It makes it a fun artwork for children and the young at heart.

You can visualize this more clearly when you understand that there are three separate sculptures. Two of the sculptures have five separate parts and one has six parts. When the separate parts are laid on top of each other you can see the complete image of each rabbit. They were made from welded steel rod that was powder coated in a pewter color requested by the city.

According to Moyer, her collaboration with Douglas Clark worked very well. They each brought complementary skills to the project. Moyer drew the two-dimensional

composites of the rabbits and Clark figured out how the image could be divided into separate parts and cut and welded the pieces. Moyer then made sure the connections were smooth, and prepared the pieces for sandblasting and powder coating.

The final step was installing the sculpture. It was a long journey from start to finish, but now that the sculpture has been installed, it can be enjoyed by the many people who visit the Convention Center on a daily basis.



Upper: Douglas Clark

Bottom: The commission was created at the UTPA sculpture studio



Working in the UTPA sculpture studio:

1. Laying pieces of steel rod on the drawn out design.
2. Douglas Clark welding the pieces together.
3. One piece all welded and sprayed with water for cooling.
4. Douglas Clark holding up the cartoon (a cartoon is a drawing used in the preparation of an artwork).
5. Nancy Moyer using the grinder to smooth out rough areas.

EARTHWATCH REDO

By Dr. Jack Carroll, Drama Coordinator, STC

The original script of my play, *Earthwatch*, was commissioned by the Looking Glass Theatre of Providence, Rhode Island. At the time, the Looking Glass Theatre was nationally recognized for its innovative participatory theatre for young audiences.

Although I had a great deal of creative freedom developing the story and characters, there were specific requirements to be fulfilled: the play was to be performed by six professional actors (three female and three male), and up to 250 children per performance. It had to be designed to travel. *Earthwatch* was performed all over New England for 110 performances including performances at the Kennedy Center in December of 1976.

Since I had never written a play for young audiences, the whole experience was a tremendous learning project. The fact that it was regarded as a “hit” only added to my new regard for the possibilities of original children’s theatre productions and innovative production techniques.

The Drama major degree program at STC has a required course, DRAM 2389, designed to showcase the skills Drama majors have learned during their course of study. Since I had learned so much working on the original production of *Earthwatch*, I believed working on a brand-new revised production of the script might have a similar positive effect on our students’ education. In addition, it would introduce them to working in Theatre for Young Audiences, a specialty where many young professionals begin their theatre careers. The grant allowed me to design a course that would enable students to develop an entirely new production of *Earthwatch* to be produced by the South Texas College Players in the Cooper Center’s Black Box Theatre in May 2011. The original script was the “textbook” for the course. The entire class worked on revising and updating it. The basic script was sturdy, but it was from another era, when developing

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alternative energy sources was a relatively new idea.

The rewrite involved many phases.

1. Revising and rewriting the

script to move it into the 21st century. Out of this process came the addition of two fully developed principal male and female characters. This was a major improvement over the original 3 + 3 script.

2. Auditions--the members of the class selected the actors. All DRAM 2389 members were required to audition--even the "techies!"

3. Assigning jobs--whether a cast or crew member, each student had the responsibility for another artistic aspect of the show (i.e., actors and "techies" were also on the Production Staff). Students took on the following tasks: Set Design, Lighting Design, Sound Design, Costume Design, Hair/Make-up Design, Graphic Design, Music Composition, Publicity/Public Relations, Prop Design, Stage Management and House Management/Box Office. In addition to myself, students worked with STC's other Drama faculty and staff: Joel Jason Rodriguez (Faculty Director), Jason Huerta (Technical Director/Facilities Manager) and Valerie Johnson (Faculty Costume Designer).

4. Rehearsals and technical production work.

5. "Tech Week"--when all aspects of the production are brought together for a final "polish."

6. "Performance Week"--the STC production of *Earthwatch* was presented for five performances May 4-8, 2011. Both children and adults participated in each performance.

7. "Strike" and "Post-Mortem Critique Sessions."

I hope this demonstrates how an original script became the foundation for a series of processes designed to allow students to use their theatre skills and collaborate on a full production for the public.

My thanks to the McAllen Arts Council for making this project possible.

The class determined the "look" of their production. The original was fairly realistic in terms of set, costumes, props, etc. The STC production was highly stylized and much more elaborate than the original. This gave the class more artistic freedom because the STC production was not designed for touring.

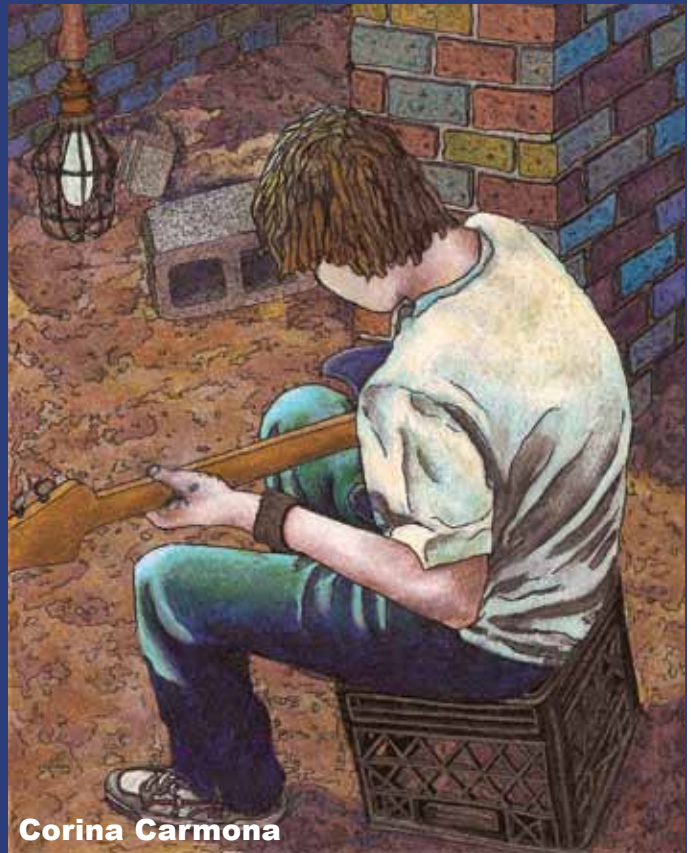
Top Left: Roberto de Hoyos as "The Alien"
Bottom Left: Kimberly Castillo as "Maggie"



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 3rd ANNUAL MCALLEN ARTS COUNCIL/FESTIVA FINE ART EXHIBITION



Jessica Monroe



Corina Carmona



Irma Garcia



Raul R. Perez III



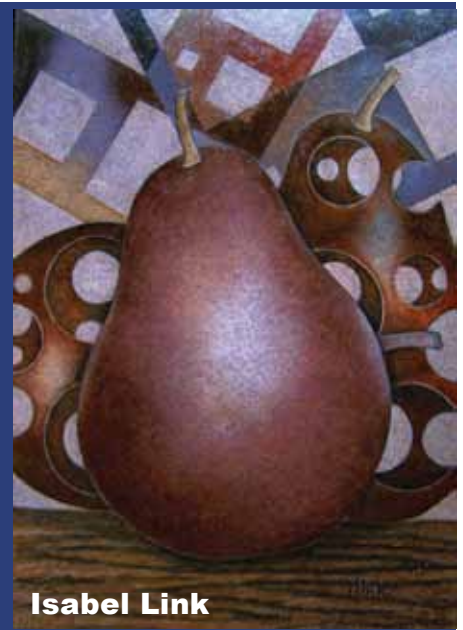
Anna Marie Varela



Lisa Saldivar



Isai Mireles



Isabel Link



Marco Antonio Sanchez



Lilia Deanda Cabrera



Steve Franklin



Chris Brown

By Michelle Rowe

What do 106,000 aluminum cans look like? What about 200,000 packs of cigarettes? It's a simple fact that numbers more than a few thousand become increasingly difficult for the average human mind to comprehend. For this reason, even statistics — which are meant to simplify data — are subject to being futile. Enter Chris Jordan, an American photographer with a unique solution to understanding the dry nature of statistics: visual representations through the art of photography.

What may seem like an unlikely match — photography and statistics — has started a much needed conversation about cultural phenomenons, environmental catastrophes, collective and individual responsibility and most of all, has become a visual spectacle. Based in Seattle, Chris Jordan was a practicing commercial lawyer for several years before taking on photography (a hobby for over 25 years) as a full time profession.

In his series *Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait* Chris Jordan focuses on the unique relationship between the individual and the collective. This relationship comes to life in each portrait as Jordan presents large-scale collages of digitally manipulated photographs to explore themes of American mass consumption and materialism. In his highly identifiable *Cans Seurat, 2007*, Jordan mimics the famous pointilism painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* by the late french painter George-Pierre Seurat. “As you approach the image slowly, almost up until the point were you are touching it, you are able to see the individual representation of the

image, and the issue” —106,000 aluminum cans, which depict the number used in the US every thirty seconds.

Nonetheless, shocking crowds with mysterious depictions or representing statistics through images is not the artist's only objective.

“The idea is to try to represent these statistics not in a one-dimensional way, but to put in layers of meaning, *meta-messages*, as a way of honoring the complexities of these issues. My goal is to translate these statistics out of the dry, incomprehensible language of gigantic numbers into a more universal visual language that allows for some comprehension, and possible feeling,” explains Jordan.

Still, according to Jordan, the missing piece to the puzzle is “feeling.” The message only makes sense once people begin to feel something. Nevertheless, one individual's *feeling* isn't enough and that's where the notion of collective behavior is key. “Collectively we have this tremendous power, and the way things are going now is that we are behaving collectively in an unconscious way, incredibly wasteful...it is profoundly important for us to comprehend these issues because they are catastrophic in nature,” says Jordan.

A selection of works from the *Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait* series will be on display at IMAS beginning September 1, 2011 through January 1, 2012.

Shipping Containers (detail)
Depicts 38,000 shipping containers, the number of containers processed through American ports every twelve hours.

60” x 120”

2007

chris jordan

Running the Numbers:
An American Self Portrait





JAN SEALE

2012 TEXAS POET LAUREATE

The Golden Rain Tree

Around Columbus Day a constellation descends,
covers lawns in the Valley with millions of yellow stars
like the cool light film of a solar eclipse.

Maybe these trees begin their reign as wood deities.
Maybe they rain their version of “cats and dogs.”
For sure, they are not reining themselves in.

Days later delicate pill boxes appear with seeds
that soon enough medicate our grass and flower beds.
Some declare the golden rain tree a noxious invasive.

We know this, but we have other labels.
While northerners revel in the color show of forests
and children stick oak cut-outs to classroom windows,

winter crops line our roadways with electric green.
In the Australia of Texas, we need some assurance
that the earth is indeed tilting on its axis.

We look to the golden rain tree, its clustering pods,
first golden, then pink, turning orange, oranger, orangest.
Here is our seasonal salvation, eye candy for autumn.

—Jan Seale

By Linda Lewis

Jan Seale has received numerous awards and honors for her talent as a poet throughout the years. For example, she received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and awards from the New York Poetry Forum and the Poetry Society of Texas. Her poetry and other writings have been published extensively. She has dedicated herself to teaching and service to the arts community. It is this background that has uniquely qualified her for selection as the 2012 Texas Poet Laureate. This capstone award signifies that the artist has made a significant contribution to the arts.

This level of distinction is rarely achieved by chance. The recipient is likely to possess essential personal characteristics that facilitated their success. Jan says that “tenacity and passion for the work” are necessary. Discipline is probably the most important characteristic. Any natural talent a person has can only be developed if he or she has the discipline to buckle down and work. The ability to focus and keep your eye on the prize (tenacity) is an important aspect of discipline. Once the prize has been identified (becoming a great poet and writer), native interest, or passion, can be cultivated through involvement and commitment.

I asked Jan if she has faced obstacles in her career and what characteristic allowed her to overcome it. She says “Every writer faces many rejections along the way. It’s the nature of our line of work. I try to embrace what may be positive and valuable in a rejection, and learn from it. Stubbornness helps!”

“Another obstacle, particularly for women, is how to ‘have it all.’ Can we have a rich family life and relationships with friends and still have adequate time and energy for art? The position is difficult. But I feel that my family and friends have given me a joy

in life, and things to write about, that are essential and invaluable.”

Jan’s professional life is full, and she’ll soon be traveling about Texas, meeting with poetry groups and doing presentations and readings in schools, clubs, community and cultural arts centers, libraries, and universities. She hopes to encourage writers across Texas—not only poets but writers of prose as well. Since we have no state artist in fiction or essays, the poet laureate title in a sense represents all the literary arts.

She has several books that will be published this fall: a new poetry book based loosely on spirituality titled *Nape*, a second edition of her poetry book *The Wonder Is*, and a book of short stories called *Dearness Happens*.

Presently, she is working on three projects: a new poetry manuscript, a book about her family’s creative endeavors, and a collection of essays.

There are options available for anyone interested in trying his or her hand at poetry. The Valley International Poetry Festival in April of each year is a vibrant entity. Poets can check with their local libraries for groups of writers meeting there. And there are undergraduate and graduate classes offered in poetry at the University of Texas-Pan American. Nationally, a good place to seek out like-minded folks is the internet, with its many chat groups, online publications, and tutorials.

The seed pods of the Golden Rain Tree appear like hanging paper lanterns.



GRAF WARS

By Nancy Moyer

The passageway between two First Baptist Church buildings was filled with energy, excitement, and remarkably bold and powerful designs. The challenge was on. "Paint Your Soul" was the theme of Graf Wars, McAllen's first Graffiti writing competition. This area's finest Graffiti writers gathered together, and within seven hours – between 9am and 4pm on April 9, created masterful pieces. Using spray paint, each writer came prepared with a personal design reflecting his personal identity. Many observers watched for hours as the pieces developed. There were also airbrush demonstrations. Hector Guerra, operator of Street Time Customs, who began as a graffiti writer, displayed work and created a fascinating airbrushed image.

Twenty Graffiti participants had been invited to compete based on the quality

From the top down
1st Prize-Omar "2ser" Deleon
2nd Prize-Leo "saten" Rivera
3rd Prize-Christian "serc" Deleon



of their body of work; many of them have been developing their skills and identity in this genre for several years. These artist/writers produce pieces or murals that are legal works carefully planned with color, detail, and aerosol skill. Because this genre requires scale, local businesses and individuals provided 4' x 8' sheets of plywood mounted on supports for height, along with many cans of aerosol paint.

Omar "2ser" Deleon created the winning piece in the competition. Deleon's exuberant design was a dynamic and visually aggressive work. He explained that design is the most important aspect to him, but his use of color proved decisive in the judging. "This one I pushed up, declared Deleon. "Mostly I go with blues, greens, and oranges. With the purple, I decided to do an experimentation kind of piece with an array of purples." Deleon has been working in the genre for twelve years, which is not an unusual period of time for these writers, and explains the high quality of work that was on display. Along with eating and sleeping, Deleon draws every day. His future plans involve working with sculpture. "Maybe cybertronic," he mused.

Leo "saten" Rivera's brilliantly executed mural-style work placed second, and Christian "serc" Deleon's explosive piece with distorted face took third place. Nancy Moyer, Chair of the McAllen Art Council, and Hugo "PROPS" Vela, music producer and respected Graffiti writer, served as judges. Dr. Caleb J. Garcia, Pastor; Judith Bollain of Recycled Dreams; and Yvonne Bollain organized the event.

Having begun as street art, the style is now finding its way into museums in the US and abroad. It was good to see McAllen being a part of this movement.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 3rd ANNUAL
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Participating Artists Not Pictured

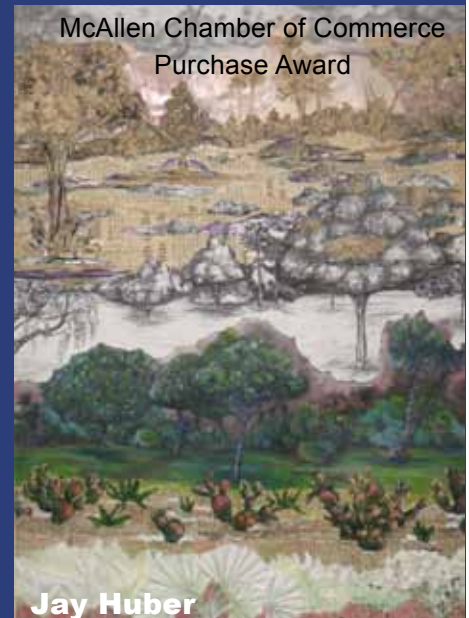
Jason Valdez, Melanie Glasper, Audrey Jo Cisneros, Chris Moore, Cristina Ann Correa



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Nilda Valle



Rina Roberts



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