

RUBY CITY

For Immediate Release

RUBY CITY TO HOST PANEL OF ARTISTS FEATURED IN *LOS BRILLANTES* FOR XICANX MONTH



Installation image of *Los Brillantes*, 2024. Photograph by Jorge Villareal.

When: Saturday, August 10, 2024, from 2–3:00pm

Location: Studio at Ruby City (inside Chris Park, 111 Camp St.)

SAN ANTONIO, TX, (July 25, 2024) — Ruby City is thrilled to participate in Xicanx Month, a city-wide celebration commemorating the Chicano Arts Movement which has its roots in San Antonio, by hosting artists depicted in Celia Álvarez Muñoz’s exhibition, *Los Brillantes* currently on view in Studio at Ruby City, for the Semejantes Personajes/Significant Personages Panel Discussion moderated by Mia Lopez, McNay Art Museum Curator of Latinx Art.

For 44 years Celia Álvarez Muñoz (b. 1937, El Paso, TX; lives Arlington, TX) has been making conceptually driven works of art. Incorporating a wide range of mediums including photography, installation and texts written by the artist, Muñoz’s works reflect family stories and her bi-cultural background, having grown up on the Texas border. Additionally, she is known for collaborating with, and highlighting, the experiences and historical demographic dynamics of populations that have changed over time either by politics or natural consequences.

One such population that she worked closely with were San Antonio based Latinx artists who she featured in her 2002 series, *Semejantes Personages/Significant Personages*. Many of those portraits are featured in *Los Brillantes*. A selection of these artists will discuss their experiences being photographed by Muñoz and the shifting cultural landscape they have encountered throughout their careers.

Muñoz has a deep reverence for this place and these artists in particular because she continually finds them symbiotically supportive and inspiring. “These artists are a strong, informed and politicized

community,” as Muñoz often remarks. “They are important,” she declares, “stars in our arts’ universe, los brillantes.”

Ruby City invites the public to this event which is sure to be full of vibrant discussion regarding the experiences of the artists as subjects for Muñoz and as creatives navigating their careers and the shifting cultural landscape of the art world.

Space is limited, guests interested in attending are encouraged to RSVP at Rubycity.org.

Participating artists and moderator, whose biographies are detailed below, are, Jesse Amado, Ana de Portela, Jim Mendiola, Cruz Ortiz, Ethel Shipton, Terry Ybañez, David Zamora Casas and Mia Lopez.

Jesse Amado received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin and an MFA from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Amado’s work is imbued by the symbolic power of image-making and its formal or stylistic potentialities. One of his recurring themes centers on a precise choice of materials that allows him to transform those into something entirely different, and with the purpose of conveying the human experience. His work is grounded in his Mexican-American heritage, South Texas aesthetics and conceptual practices that are anchored in social realities, history and politics. Amado is recognized as a pioneering conceptual Latino artist. His work can be found in various public collections throughout Texas and the United States including the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington D.C.; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; San Antonio Museum of Art, TX; Ruby City, San Antonio, TX; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX and El Museo Del Barrio, New York, NY.

Ana de Portela is a San Antonio and New York based artist and writer who has strong ties to various San Antonio arts and culture organizations. As a high school student, she was awarded a sculpture scholarship to attend the McNay Art Institute which led to her to attend San Antonio College where she studied under Mel Casas. She further pursued her studies as a student at the Maryland Institute College of Art after which she moved to New York and began work as an editor and assistant curator for art historian Barbara Rose. After her move back to San Antonio, she held various creative positions, one of which was working at San Anto Cultural Arts, which she credits with informing her art practice with socially engaged principles. Her current projects are inspired by translations of Nahuatl poetry and animal symbolism entitled *Texas Historical Omissions: The Camino Surreal*.

Jim Mendiola is a San Antonio based writer/director. His award-winning film *Pretty Vacant*, about a Sex Pistols obsessed Chicana punk rocker, has screened in numerous film festivals, museums, and colleges in the U.S. and Mexico. His one-hour movie called *Come and Take It Day*, was funded by Independent Television Service and developed at the 2000 Sundance Filmmaker’s Lab. It was broadcast nationally on PBS in the fall of 2002. At his 2001 Artpace residency, in collaboration with visual artist Rubén Ortíz Torres, Mendiola completed *Spaztec Goes to the Alamo*, which the duo claims to be “the world’s first Chicano 3-D movie.” A 1997 Rockefeller Intercultural Media Fellow, Mendiola is a regular contributor on television, soap operas and all things Latino and pop for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and other publications. He has just completed his first feature film, a rock and roll digital movie called *Speeder Kills*. His favorite band is Bon Scott-era AC/DC.

Cruz Ortiz is an American contemporary Artist who uses multiple mediums examining connections to nature, hope, healing, beauty, endurance, and the cosmos. He produces bold graphic screen prints, figurative abstract portraiture, dream-like landscape paintings, temporal guerrilla installations,

utilitarian machines, multi-media sculptures, large scale public art, video and performance art. Ortiz has committed himself to creatively collaborating with non-profit organizations for most of his career. He was also a public high school instructor for 15 years. Ortiz has had solo exhibitions at: ARTPACE in San Antonio, TX; Contemporary Art Museum in Houston, TX; the University of Texas in Austin; The Museum of Contemporary Art in Santa Barbara, in Santa Barbara, CA; and the Judd Foundation in Marfa, TX.

Ethel Shipton is a longstanding member of the San Antonio arts community. Shipton has forged a successful career as an artist, arts organizer and an independent, professional art handler. Conceptually based with a focused on “space and time, movement and place,” Shipton’s work reflects a playful approach, her Laredo/border upbringing and binational mentality. Working in prints, painting, photography and text her work can be seen at Ruiz Healy Art. She currently holds the role of Lead Preparator & Facilities Manager at Ruby City. Additionally, Shipton has a deep commitment to celebrating and engaging with communities of artists, arts organizations and art supporters. She currently serves as the Director of Sala Diaz, a volunteer position at that storied art’s space.

Terry A. Ybañez is an artist and educator. She has exhibited her paintings and prints in the US, Mexico, Argentina, France and Kuwait. She is an art educator of 35 years and has illustrated three children’s books: *Hairs/Pelitos* by Sandra Cisneros, *The Christmas Tree/El Arbol de La Navidad* by Alma Flor Ada and *It’s Not Fair/No Es Justo* by Carmen Tafolla & Sheryl Teneyuca. She served on the boards of the Contemporary at Blue Star (1986-1987) Say Si! (1993-1999) and was Vice President of Friends of Mission Library (2011-2009). Additionally, she presided over the boards of Jump Start Theater (1993-1990) and was on the City of San Antonio Cultural Arts Board 2004-2008.

David Zamora Casas is an award-winning autodidact genderfluid man focusing on LGBTQ+ and all marginalized communities. They describe their life/art practice as a conscious, radical decision to create and advance dialogue that strives for an inclusive, eco-friendly, empathetic world: “This is my spiritual ritual honoring my culture and family.” As a painter, performance activist, and installation artist they have engaged audiences under the pseudonym Nuclear Meltdown since 1985. Zamora Casas’ work draws on their queer creative energy which refuses to be marginalized by mainstream, conservative, heteronormative systems. Their practice is also informed by the experience of living in the US-Mexico borderland of Aztlan, and presents layered manifestations from a queer Tejano, American-Xicanx perspective.

Mia Lopez is the inaugural Curator of Latinx Art at the McNay Art Museum. She has worked with artists and leading contemporary art institutions across the United States for over 15 years. Lopez has previously held curatorial positions at DePaul Art Museum in Chicago and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Exhibitions she has contributed to include *Remember Where You Are*, *LatinXAmerican*, and *International Pop*. Lopez is an alumnus of the Smithsonian Latino Museum Studies Program and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Leadership Institute. She holds a BA in Art History from Rice University and dual MAs in Art History and Arts Administration from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

[Ruby City](#) is a contemporary art center in San Antonio, TX, dedicated to providing a space for the city’s thriving creative community to experience works by both local and internationally acclaimed artists. Envisioned in 2007 by the late collector, philanthropist and artist [Linda Pace](#), Ruby City presents works from the Linda Pace Foundation Collection of more than 1400 paintings, sculptures, installations and video works. The building which opened in 2019 is designed by [Adjaye Associates](#) and is part of a campus, which also includes a sculpture garden, [Chris Park](#), a

one-acre public green space named in memory of Pace's son, and Studio, an auxiliary exhibition space which presents curated shows and [programming](#) throughout the year.

Ruby City is open Thursday through Sunday, 10am to 6pm. Admission is always free; reservations are recommended. Information and reservations are available at www.rubycity.org.

For further information please contact: Patricia Morales, Head of Public Engagement & Communications, pmorales@rubycity.org

###