

For Immediate Release
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Identity Based Vertigo
Walter Maciel Gallery
Showroom B261, Pacific Design Center
20 May – 25 June 2010

Walter Maciel Gallery presents a group exhibition entitled *Identity Based Vertigo* that features works by gallery artists with a sense of unbalance, excitement and exuberance. The selected work investigates each artist's identity resulting from gender, ethnic origin, sexuality, community, language and environment. The show includes work by **John Bankston, Rebeca Bollinger, James Buckhouse, Margarita Cabrera, Carolyn Castaño, Freddy Chandra, Andrea Cohen, Oscar Cueto, Archie Scott Gobber, Cynthia Ona Innis, John Jurayj, Hung Liu, Maria E. Piñeres, Robb Putnam, Frank Ryan, Lisa Solomon and Jil Weinstock.**

John Jurayj presents paintings of architectural remnants affected by the civil war in Lebanon. The images are depicted from journalistic photos and recreated in a vibrant palette on canvas and colored plexiglass. Jurayj's father was born and raised in Beirut and although he left before the civil war began, many of his relatives stayed behind to deal with the aftermath. Commenting on her own cultural identity, Hung Liu paints imagery about her experience growing up in Communist China. Having lived through the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, Liu creates images from found photos of different revolutionary periods over the past 150 years. Included in the exhibition is a painting entitled *Meal* depicting an older peasant woman in painterly strokes and markings with areas of drippy, thinned out washes over the entire surface.

John Bankston works in oils using a comic strip style that references pages from children's coloring books. Bankston's grouping of paintings form short narratives about masculine behavior and male stereotypes. The paintings tell the story of a central male character who is introduced to various types of men dressed in specific drag or engaged in certain activities all within imaginary locations. The work explores and challenges conventional views on sexuality, race and gender. Sexuality is also the topic outplayed in Carolyn Castaño's collaged works on paper. Featured in the show is a piece entitled *Quiet for the Sirens* that includes three masked females dressed in sexy attire and posing promiscuously for the viewer. Behind the figures are a cluster of green swirls made of feathers, glitter and rhinestones that are arranged like a peacock flexing in full glory.

Oscar Cueto works in different mediums to express a dialogue with himself interacting with art and the art world. On view is a miniature sculpture showing a suited man pointing at four fallen beheaded clowns. The title of the sculpture is *A Critic and 4 Artists*. A series of short animations depicting the artist being physically beaten up by art or eating pages of an art book will also be on view. Like Cueto, James Buckhouse works in video animation as well as painting. A series of watercolors entitled *Friends and Strangers* is on view in the project room begging the viewer to guess which portraits are friends and which are strangers. A digital animation entitled *Conversation* is included detailing the adventures of Buckhouse's fictional character Serg Riva.

Cynthia Ona Innis presents a large abstract painting influenced by her experience living in a rural environment from winter into spring at a MacDowell Colony residency on the East Coast. Pod-like forms and root-like structures make abstract compositions while referencing the new life lines of nature. The painting is done on satin which creates an ephemeral presence and a slight transparent surface. Rebeca Bollinger's work is also based on environment but in terms of the mundane surroundings of her community.

Bollinger is a digital media artist whose work encompasses video, photography, sculpture and drawing. A photo entitled *Oasis with a Black Spot* is included from a recent series shot with a large telephoto lens from the 60s and manipulated in hand with no computer enhancements to blur out the image. A circular pattern exists randomly over the surface as a result of the reflection of the mirrors within the enlarged lens. Frank Ryan also explores his community but in more documentary format. Included are two works from his series of paintings derived from street photography in Los Angeles in the middle of the night. One image entitled *Bus Stop* details an urban intersection with two homeless figures shown sleeping under blankets. The painting is done in a warm moody palette with thick areas of the oil paint adding to the dramatic ambiance.

Maria Piñeres works with cotton threads stitched on acrylic sheeting to create images of celebrities and pornography. Included in the exhibition are two works containing repeat images of a 70s gay nude male model referencing Pop Art ideals with exaggerated patterns and designs. Similarly, Margarita Cabrera's sculptures are presented in a Pop style reminiscent of Oldenburg but with a political message. Made of border patrol uniforms and uncut threads, Cabrera reproduces plants native to the desert in her home state of Texas where immigrants illegally cross over the border from Mexico to the US. The plants are domesticated with traditional Mexican terra cotta planter pots. Andrea Cohen is another sculptor who works with cut layers of Styrofoam to create abstract versions of traditional Chinese scholar rocks. The forms are carved using various tools and presented on colorful enameled pedestals made to fit the uneven edges of the sculpture. The work presents a cross cultural identity of an American artist working with the intensity of her medium in comparison to the laborers of ancient scholar stones by Chinese artisans.

The use of language creates the topic of Archie Scott Gobber's work who paints words and phrases juxtaposed over carefully changed letters to evoke political commentary. Included in the show is a work on paper that overlaps the phrases "Gol Darn America" and "God Damn America" using different colors to outline the letters. The second work simply reads "Drink" in a billboard format like an homage to Ed Ruscha. In comparison, Lisa Solomon's thread drawings are based on a code of language in a direct visual context. Done with both stitched line and intimate drawing, the works look like a link of decorative doilies spread over the page in a precise formula. In reality the colorful markings are the genetic codes for poisonous and toxic materials. Robb Putnam uses a variety of stitched fabrics to create his playful sculptures of oversized stuffed dogs. Starting from the inside core, Putnam builds his animated pets allowing them to start to take form and become unique breeds. The show includes two nine foot sculptures entitled *Stray* and *Mascot* that both horrify and charm the viewer at the same time.

Jil Weinstock casts gender specific articles into geometric shapes of rubber and presents them in distinct groupings for contrast and comparison. The show includes a work entitled *Group Portrait* that features five cast rubber cubes with male and female vintage clothing incorporated into each form. The drapery hangs loosely out of the bottom of each mold representing a family portrait with a father, mother, son and two daughters. Likewise, Freddy Chandra uses molds to shape rectangular shapes of pigmented resin and organizes them into horizontal compositions. Each piece is scrutinized into patterns with specific gaps and linear breaks forming a visual display of objects laid out like a fragment of Morse code. The works play off of natural and artificial light with a layer of plexiglass embedded in each part to trap the light and create an intense glow.

The showroom is open from Tuesday through Friday, 12 to 5pm and by appointment. For further inquiries please contact Jake Martinez at 626 354 7616 or by email at jake@waltermaciellgallery.com. Please visit the gallery website at www.waltermaciellgallery.com.