

lilly albritton
diane durant
june owens
lupita murillo tinnen

charley r. a. bevill
cynthia miller
giraud polite

curated by Marilyn Waligore

January 25 – March 2, 2013

This exhibition includes the work of seven Creative PhD graduate students in Aesthetic Studies at The University of Texas at Dallas who are writing dissertations informed by documentary photographic practice. They often embracing personal perspectives while connecting to concerns that involve geography and sense of place, cultural rituals and celebrations, imagined and real borders, experiences informed by race, gender and class, and concepts of identity. These artists use the camera to create records of contemporary life, records informed by their research, to add to our collective archive of shared histories.

The Creative PhD at UT Dallas

Merging theory and practice, artist-scholars locate research areas that inform their creative work, in order to place their artistic productivity within a larger social, cultural, historical, theoretical context, and to contribute to and expand upon contemporary dialogues in the arts.

Lilly Albritton

Los Angeles, California,
20" x 24", archival
digital print, 2012

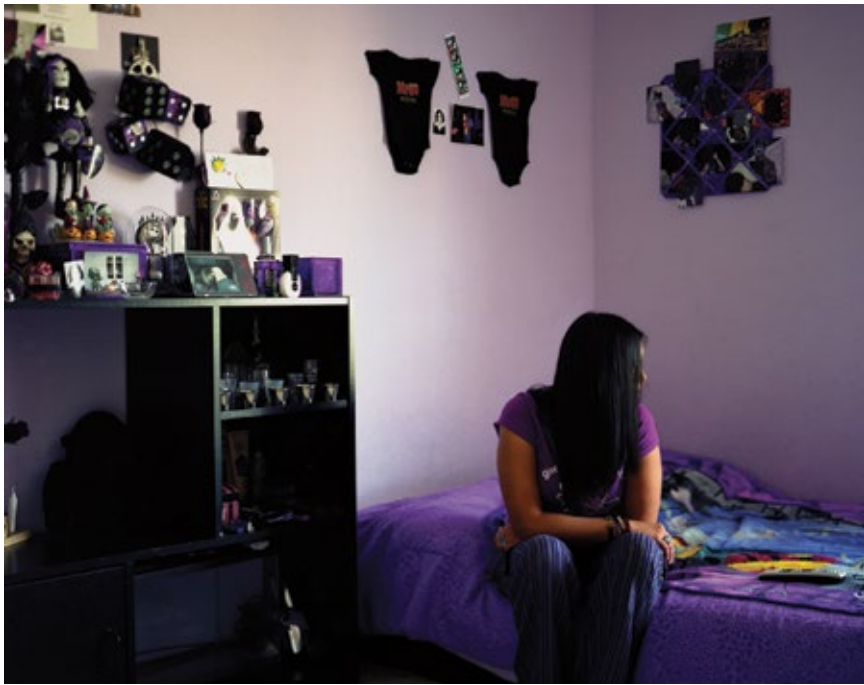
¡Qué Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe! Documenting Guadalupean Devotion Along the US-Mexico Border



¡Qué Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe! is a photographic essay that documents popular devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe across the Southwestern United States. My reasons for creating this work are twofold. First, by bearing silent, visual witness to the ritual practices of ceremonial dance, singing, religious processions and pilgrimages across multiple communities along the US-Mexico border, I will help preserve this enduring—but ever evolving—devotional practice for the participants. Second, it is my hope to introduce this ceremony of faith to a new audience. My aim for this exhibition is that the images will incite analysis and that the viewers will come to appreciate this cultural practice through their own participation in the gallery space. Ultimately, the work in ¡Qué Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe! may provide a counterbalance to the images of violence that dominate the news from Mexico. These unique acts of popular devotion that have spread across the Mexican border and into American society carry with them spiritual, vibrant and altogether beautiful cultural expressions.

I took these images using both a digital camera and a traditional medium format film camera. Color and form are significant to the strength of an image. Color conveys the vibrance and emotion of an event, while black and white gives me the ability to strip the event down to its essence by concentrating on form. It is my hope that these photographs will stand as visual documents of this popular devotion while maintaining a sense of the poetic in the beauty that is inherent in these rituals of piety.

Reframing Documentary:
Creative PhD in Progress



Lupita Murillo Tinnen

Age 14, American Sign Language, Framed, Giclée Print, 2010, 30"x40"

American DREAM

Throughout my photographic career, the subject of my work has been the Mexican immigrant and undocumented community. It is special to me because my parents are Mexican immigrants. While I was raised in American culture, I was also raised in an undocumented culture and my parents lived in fear for many years. The focus of my work is on undocumented college students. Year after year, thousands of law-abiding high school students, who are undocumented, graduate without being able to plan for the future, and others are removed from their homes to countries they barely know.

I am very passionate about the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act and I use my photography to give these undocumented students an

identity. The DREAM Act is a bipartisan proposal, which would create a pathway to citizenship for thousands of young students who were brought to the United States years ago as infants and young children and through no fault of their own, are undocumented. Each of these otherwise law-abiding students came to the United States from different countries at different ages and they all want to be allowed an opportunity to pursue a pathway to be American. The United States, for many, is the only country they know.

Through the details and objects found in the bedrooms, I show how they are American in every sense except for one. Unlike the average American student, once these undocumented students graduate from college, they will be unable to obtain a job. I have chosen not to show their faces so as not to disclose their true identity—yet I want to show their existence. In addition, I have added text to some of the images to give each person the opportunity to share their personal stories and feelings. Each image is titled with the age they were brought to the United States and their college major. All of the students I photograph have demonstrated a commitment to hard work and are currently attending various colleges around North Texas. These educated students want nothing more than to be able to contribute to the only country they know and love.



Family Album

As an artist, I examine the construct of identity through the fragile interpersonal link between the Self and the Other. On a quest of Self-discovery, it would be easy to ignore history (Other) and focus only on the present (Self); however, we must also consider from where we came. An interesting question – “Who’re your people?” Do we identify, and if so, how do we fit into that familial line?

Freud worked from the premise that all which appears is a sign subject to interpretation. Consequently, these signs ultimately tell stories that contain the same dramatis personae and the same narrative functions for all of us. On the surface, the images in Family Album (re)create an intimate portrait of family, snapshots in time. Created as part of a larger work examining the question of Self-identity in relation to familial-identity, Family Album provides a family history that intertwines with larger sociopolitical and feminist issues. Simply – Are we as women fighting the same battles as our grandmothers? Through a fusing of history and fiction, the public and the private, the images are no longer one family’s story. Family Album is a journey through what we have in common, instead of what separates us.

Charley R. A. Bevill

Family Album (detail), mixed media, size variable, 2012

June Owens

My Granny Used to Pick Cotton in the Depression, archival digital print, 2012

Afterimages and Echoes: Drawing Parallels between the Depression and the Recession in Rural America

Several strengths in my project include the reflection on economic conditions (the Depression and the Recession) through an emphasis on locale, and my inclusion of verbal records, that in a way parallels Dorothea Lange's practice. Given that many individuals comment on the relationship between our own economic conditions and those of the Depression era, I am able to participate in and extend that dialogue, by creating new photographic images and documents and a new historical record.

These images were made in my hometown, Snyder, a small town in Southwest Oklahoma with a population of around 1500 people. Living on a farm while growing up--as my entire family were farmers--allowed me to understand farming and country living firsthand. I know the cultural history and life of the community. The residents are willing to talk with me and allow me to photograph them, so I'm an "insider". As I currently do not live there, I'm also an "outsider." I left the town to attend college but continued to go back to visit my grandma and to document the town. Beginning in 2010, the area experienced a drought and, as a result, also wildfires. I documented these conditions and how it affected the farmers and the town people. I document the lives of women in the town as well. The relationship between the artist and subject remains very important to me.

I reflect on memory as well as sense of place. Since I don't travel with a writer, I include video and sound recordings to record what people say (and how they say it) and the conditions around them. I find this approach works well, especially when documenting memories. These memories may be real, elaborated (constructed/re-constructed) or completely false. I find that the presentation of memories reveals the humanity of my subjects and how they cherish time and place.



Between Here and Cool: Double Literacy and Image-Text in the American Road Story

As Americans, we drive; and the road trip, as both freedom and exploration, is a very American notion. "Between Here and Cool: Double Literacy and Image-Text in the American Road Story" examines the relationship between image and text, the book form, photoconceptualism, and the postmodern narrative as each element travels, captures, relishes, and reinvents the blue highways and wide open roads of the American landscape and the American Dream. Like the great documentary photographers and postmodern storytellers who have come before, "Between Here and Cool" is also a road story itself. Based on my own 18-day trip around the country this past summer, image and text combine in various forms to re-tell the true story of what happened to one solitary traveler between Cool, Texas, Cool, California and Cool, Iowa.

Diane Durant

Christopher and Randy, Wal-Mart Tire & Lube Express, Farmington MO (2011). Gelatin silver print, 6x6", 16x20" framed



Giraud Polite

The Sacred Image, mixed media, size variable, 2012

The Sacred Image

Working in the areas of digital photography and multimedia arts, my projects explore themes such as race, cultural ritual, memory, and celebration. My current imagery explores the photograph as a sacred and reproducible object. Presented as a relic or artifact and departing from the conventional photograph on paper, I choose to use industrial materials, such as aluminum, stainless steel, and bronze, in an attempt to create permanence within the story of the image, in a sense to fix the image by adding weight and mass, to affirm the existence of the photograph as a sculptural object. Meanwhile, I also underscore the visual and tactile qualities, to illuminate the reverence I have for its physical nature. Through my binding of the transitory memory of the event with the enduring nature of the physical materials, I believe that my images will engender the essence of a true narrative.



Motherhood and Identity

As the mother of young children, I am confined by the constant demands of everyday life. I have turned my camera from a focus on the exterior world to the domestic, interior one in which I find myself. My subject matter has become my children and our daily activities, and I am an artist, not in spite of my children, but because of them.

Seeing with a mother's eye does not mean just looking at my children, but looking at the world from the perspective of a mother. I make my photographs to voice my lived experience in a way that empowers me and links my experiences to those of other mothers who create their own family photo albums.



These images are made using a plastic Holga camera, which allows me to advance the film at my own pace. Layering the images through double exposure and purposeful mis-winding of the film takes control of the image away from me, countering the tight control available with a digital camera image, and mimicking the loss of control I have over my children's lives. The snapshot quality of the work mimics the family photograph album, while the size of the prints take it out of the domestic sphere and into the art gallery. There is also a sense of the family home movie in the doubly exposed, repeating figures. These sequences are meant to tell more than just one second of the story; they tell a longer tale.

Cynthia Miller

Home Safe, 24"x39", archival digital print, 2012

opening reception: Friday, January 25, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Artist panels: 7:00 p.m. and 8:15 p.m.

AS 1.105, Visual Arts Building

Gallery Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9am-10pm, Sat. 9am-6pm, Sun. closed.

For more information, call 972-UTD-ARTS. For assistance call 972-883-2982 or Texas Relay Operator 1-800-RELAYV. UTD is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



The University of Texas at Dallas
Visual Arts Building, Main Gallery

ah.utdallas.edu