



Kings in Converse,
mixed media, 48"x64"

CONSPIRING

BEAUTY'S MEANING

Lyle Carbajal Brings His Resplendent Series
to Art League Houston

BY MEGHAN HENDLEY-LOPEZ

OPENING JANUARY 27, 2017 AT ART LEAGUE Houston, Lyle Carbajal's latest exhibition *Romancing Banality* features a visual synthesis of folk and contemporary themes straining through the essences of art history along with references in the realms of culture, economics, and geography. The additional layer of personal references and experiences from travels will create an all-encompassing installation of substantially layered mixed media paintings. Carbajal's lucid yet unpolished style further propels his narrative from a nomadic viewpoint through not only his paintings but also through his work in sculptural formations that forge found materials to new visual traditions. Images found in the paintings are all familiar to a viewer but the way Carbajal presents them elevates their meaning while still adhering to their original vibration in the culture that created them, the culture that cradles their meaning and allows for a lingering imprint of their existence from interactions.

As an artist, Lyle Carbajal has had the continuous opportunity to elevate what an average person can or is willing to do over time. After shedding the staleness of his work as designer and editorial illustrator in Silicon Valley, Carbajal found himself drawn to being on the other side that cultivated ideas and visuals

verses cranking out cogs into a corporate machine. Around this first initial twinge outside the daily grind, Carbajal was asked by a client to take part in a solo exhibition of his more detailed work.

"I always had told myself that if an opportunity arose to show as a painter, it would qualify as some sort of signal that would allow me to fully realize my potential...", says Carbajal. "This new chapter in my artistic career enabled me to begin the process of building a concept and developing the visual language seen in my work today. In those first few years, I attempted to juxtapose illustration and fine art by developing them simultaneously."

Although his own hand was being developed and expressed outside the confines of his day to day, Carbajal quickly realized the vast abyss between his corporate work and his fine art work. Attempting to keep all the plates spinning, he quickly noticed that both endeavors began to wear on his creativity. Carbajal decided to quit his illustrative position in order to fully develop his love and talent in the realms of visual arts.

This newfound freedom has led to an intricate live bound together by travel and experiences, something that is fluidly and beautifully expressed in his work. When asked about the drastic change from one life to another, Carbajal notes that he made the

right decision: "In that world, I found myself doing a whole lot of floating so to speak. I'm now swimming. It's a different way of looking; a different way of living your life."

Carbajal has held steadfast to the promise to not just travel but live and settle in various cities. His reverence for regionalism has had an impact on his personality and artwork for the better. Through physical moves across landscapes, Carbajal has found flow in his life rippled into his pieces. "I've always envisioned a life for myself moved by arts and culture; art in the sense of what I understood the word to mean at an early age, and what that life would look like which turned out to be needing to change.

Impressionable experiences in various cities Lyle Carbajal inhabited shifted his perception on art. Specific appreciation of the cumulating of cultures has transported him from city to city, region to region. In the early 2000s, Carbajal began to unearth a side of California that was far removed from the corporate clutter. One particular gallery propelled him forward, igniting his imagination and desire to travel.

"During the summer of 2001, a friend introduced me to La Luz De Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles' now trendy Silverlake neighborhood, an area home to an eclectic gathering of hipsters, artists, and members of the city's creative class. The gallery's objective has been to introduce underground artists and counterculture to a larger public."

Through this conscious collision with this populist art movement, Carbajal found himself moving towards a different direction than where he started. About a year later after his time in L.A., he found himself in Tennessee after being invited to exhibit with a small gallery in Nashville's growing Hillsboro Village. One weekend turned into four years and with this southern stint, Carbajal had newfound appreciation for the appeal of ordinary objects. Objects that were without an author or single creator whose significance to their surrounding culture were overlooked in the day to day.

In 2011, Carbajal settled in Seattle where he first started prepping ideas for his continuous series that will be featured here in our city.

"I found myself surrounded with people, friends, and colleagues whom first encouraged and then enabled what has become this traveling project so Romancing Banality is really modeled after my lifestyle with the city then acting as both subject and muse... it is a combination of these early impressions along with a recent trip to the Philippines that find their way into this latest project to be featured at Art League Houston."

The result of this series combines cultural heritage both drawn from Carbajal's background and through his interaction with other regions reflected upon through his journeys. Graffiti-style imagery unencumbered in nature dance with a primitive hand as



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a colorful palate becomes the conversation that vibrates through the work. Subtlety and nuance hide within the shadows of the lines as the collaboration of culture including ideas and esthetic challenge the meaning of context.

"One of the challenges I sought out for myself when first developing Romancing Banality was to have it be a sight specific installation that would grow in size and scope with every iteration or city. This increase in dimension serves two purposes: to consistently challenge my ability and perceptions as an artist and also to incorporate the projects new location and regional culture by utilizing its elements and talents like local writers, artisans, and musicians.

The Houston iteration of Romancing Banality will have an entirely new film broader in scope and length than the project's previous film but similarly filmed entirely in Juarez Mexico. I developed the film along side Jaime Fernández, an artist and colleague whom among the job of shooting and editing the film, was responsible for the prop creations and recruiting the films extras. The film will be an important aspect to the project in similar way the 20+ paintings, musical rap opera or environmental and structural builds are."

Viewers will have the chance to see how the presentation of this series will be framed within the constructs of our city's cultural configuration, something that has presented a visual test for the artist and will yield a bountiful display of both visual and imaginative configurations that revere the origins of cultures.

The exhibition is on view until March 11, 2017.

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