Cintía Rodríguez
EL OBSERVADOR

La exposición de "Maíz y Mas De Madre a Monstruo" en el Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (MACLA) está llegando a su cierre. Se estará presentando hasta el 14 de febrero durante el regreso del norteamericano "Primer Viernes Paso de Arte".

"Esta exposición se adoptó particularmente para un programa aun más grande relacionado con alimentos que se ha estado llevando acabo en MACLA desde el otoño", dijo Catherine Nueva Espriña, coordinador de pruebas para MACLA.

Maíz y Más no sólo toca el tema de alimentos, sino temas en torno a la cultura, la identidad y la diferencia entre los países desarrollados donde hay abundancia de alimentos y los países que no disponen de las mismas fuentes de alimento. MACLA ha explorado estos temas en la última mesa.

MACLA invitó a un jurado de artistas de diferentes partes de los Estados Unidos para hablar del tema del maíz. En particular, su lugar muy especial en las Américas en tiempos precolombinos como también su uso actualizado para rituales y se le conoce como un alimento sagrado.

"El maíz es un cultivo que existió en las Américas desde hace mucho tiempo y creó una cultura cultural con características”, dijo Nueva Espriña. "Se les pidió a los artistas que exploraran estos diferentes temas y los artistas proporcionaron una amplia variedad de piezas de arte muy interesantes."

Piezas en la exposición incluyen una madera hecha de diferentes tipos de maíz nativo, una Virgen María hecha de maíz nativo, y torpillas de maíz que asemejan los caras de autoras famosas y mujeres latinas.

Las Tortillas de Milagro, por la artista Yuko Ota, basada en San José, es una versión actualizada y feminista de la tortilla. Ella dice que ella hace homenaje a las mujeres que han sido personalmente influyentes y a las mujeres que se sacrifican en el maíz y tortillas que son tradiciones culturales. Su trabajo también nos recuerda que a diferencia de cómo se hacían las tortillas se hacen en casa.

"El arte de Guerra" juega con la idea de la adivinación y los milagros espontáneos y muestra el contenido mágico del maíz como cultivo – un fenómeno alivio milagro que garantiza el patrimonio cultural y la supervivencia humana. Ella estará en MACLA el 7 de febrero a las 7:00pm para hablar acerca de su trabajo y de la exposición.

Para terminar su serie relacionada con los alimentos, MACLA contará con Amor, Alimento, Amor, el evento final en un esfuerzo por programación de más de duración centrado en la comida, la cultura y la identidad. La producción será presentada por Cocinero del Pueblo, un grupo de interpretación / educación sin fines de lucro, con Robert Karimi como "Mero Cocinero" el 14-15 de febrero.

El programa de cocina incluye un programa adecuado de cocción, una actuación de teatro, palabra hablada, y la interacción con el público. La idea es involucrar a los miembros de la audiencia y re-conectar con la cultura y recetas familiares con los hábitos de alimentación saludables y distintos. Además de la serie, Robert Karimi va a hacer una demostración con un hombre al aire libre en la Casa de Adobe Perú, el sábado 8 de febrero a la 1:00pm.

Para boletos, visite: www.maclaarte.org

llame al: (408) 266-8738 ext. 28.
Someone Who Inspires: Jorge Rojas

Jorge Rojas, *Tortilla Oracle*, 2013, Photo credit: Guy Nelson

Almost accidentally, but perhaps by no accident, Jorge Rojas became the *Tortilla Oracle*. On a whim, and because he had to scratch a more elaborate plan for a performance he was supposed to do that day (of course the longer story involves a pregnancy and impending childbirth), he decided to read tortillas at an art event. It was a fun game that he played with friends at dinner parties over food and wine – why not try it out with complete strangers and call it art?

And just like that, it happened. He became the *Tortilla Oracle*.

Maybe it’s when we don’t notice what we are doing that we are doing our work. I remember another artist telling me, “make sure to look at what you are throwing
away, because sometimes this is where your real work is.” In some ways Rojas had been tip-toeing around the role of the Tortilla Oracle for some time. His performance work brings people together, offering a space to create, paint murals, and commune. He transforms materials like an alchemist in his paintings and sculptures. He is the kind of person you feel safe to share your story.

When I first heard of Rojas’ project and upcoming performance at MACLA in San Jose, I knew I had to talk to him. The project captured my imagination – both it’s silliness and earnestness. There were also similarities to the Pep Talk Squad – so I felt a sort of kindred connection to him. We are both interested in giving permission to people to be heard and seen in public spaces. But I was also fascinated with and truly inspired by the way he has embodied this role.

I use this space to periodically interview artists and people who inspire me. Rojas generously answered a few questions I sent him about his project. I hope you enjoy learning more about his practice as much as I have.

The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths (Bruce Nauman), Image courtesy of Jorge Rojas
Kernal of Truth Portrays Corn as Art

By Allison McCarthy on November 02, 2013 10:00 AM

Yvonne Escalante has spent a lot of time with corn. Her grandfather was an Iowa corn farmer, and some of her best childhood memories are of summertime meals. But the food that was once so highly revered in Aztec and Mayan cultures that gods were created in its honor has different implications today. As the basis of most processed foods, corn is a source of obesity and other health issues.

Fed up with negative feelings about the soiled icon, Escalante, 34, wondered “whether I could still cherish my favorite summertime meal.” The question spurred an investigation that would become the basis of her master of fine art thesis at San Jose State University. Kernal of Truth portrays the once-sacred cob as a weapon of attack, with dried native corn encased in polished resin and a glossy brass bullet-like shell.

The piece, most recently in a group show at Root Division, won her an award at the de Young Museum’s “New Generations: Student Showcase” this past April and will be on view next month in “Maíz y Más: From Mother to Monster?” at San José’s MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana).

Calling all SF creatives! For a chance to be showcased in 7x7, submit your original art.
First Thursday and Friday Round-ups

Posted by Sarah Dragovich on Wednesday, December 4, 2013 - Leave a Comment

Friday in San Jose
The SoFA district in San Jose is very abundant, and growing every year, with arts venues and institutions to visit on First Friday. Many galleries are open until midnight or at least until 10pm. These three exhibitions are truly worth spending the entire night with.

MACLA

510 South First Street
On View: Maiz Y Maíz, a group exhibition
Cover Image for this article: Yvonne Escalante, Maiz Y Maíz: From Mother to Monster (and a pretty epic one, too. A virgin Mary made of corn, a huge mandala, the tortilla fortune reader, and many more artists like Yvonne Escalante’s corn chines. In other words don’t miss it.)
Maize Y Mas: From Mother to Monster?

Corn was at the heart of Meso-American culture. It was more than a staple food, but a part of the majority of meals and festivals and rituals were organized around its planting and harvest. Similarly, today, corn plays a central role in U.S. farming economy and in U.S. diets, although its role in the food we eat is hidden—we don’t eat the whole food but its processed by products, as an ingredient in food we buy or, as the main food for the animals we eat, even when it’s not good for them, we substitute on it through meat. Whereas corn comes in hundreds of varieties and was represented by deities colored blue, white, red and yellow to honor the wide variety of corn, today in the U.S. we basically eat the same corn cobs over and over and over: nearly 100% of corn in the U.S. is GM—and is actually registered as a pesticide with the EPA. The wind doesn’t follow the confines of geopolitical borders and GM pollen has spread into Mexican corn crops. What was once celebrated as both creator and mother has been processed into something terribly unhealthy and dangerous for consumers. Mexico has recognized this threat by temporarily banning GMO corn.

San Jose’s MACLA has also recognized this shift in corn from giver of life to threat in its current show, Maize Y Mas: From Mother to Monster. In the curated show featuring Yvonne Escalante, Yolanda Guerra, Fernande...
Mastrangelo, Viva Paredes, and Jorge Rojas, MACLA explores corn's place in our culture across time.

Mastrangelo presented *This Too Shall Pass*, a stature of the Virgin Mary made entirely out of corn. Corn kernels form the base and her body and yellow corn meal adds more detail to the top of her. It is a commentary on the blending of Mesoamerican and Catholic ideologies—both corn and the Virgin Mary play an important role in origin myths and are good omens and the two became mythologically linked in some cultures. A subtler layer of meaning in the piece points to the Spanish Conquest and the contemporary conquest of agribusiness over corn in the making of GM corn.

Paredes made a series of glass vases which suggest the shape of corn and filled each of them with the kernels of different corn varieties. She fills an entire wall with them, and the kernels are of all different shapes, sizes and colors—from red to blue, yellow, white and all shades in between. It makes me realize that, besides how dangerous GMO corn is, just how bland the corn is which we have access to in this country. Paredes' installation also suggests a seed bank of sorts, a living memory of the long, rich history of corn but also the delicate state that corn is in right now as GMO corn pollen can be contained about as easily as the wind.

Across the room, the flip side to Paredes' heirloom kernels is a series of small jars containing the toxic products of corn—items which are no longer considered food, but ingredients: corn syrup, cornstarch, the kernels of GM corn. Items which are not healthy to ingest yet infiltrate our food system.

Escalante presented a series of pieces which combine the essence of corn and their place in our culture with weapons—bullets, missiles and grenades. With this combination, she comments on the ease of destruction corn now has on our society and culture.

In her popcorn stand, instead of filling it with popcorn, she fills with casts of corn to which she had added the fins a missile has. They are falling out of the popper, much like popcorn does as the kernels puff open and spill over, but these missiles are hitting the floor and exploding. Then, in *Kernel of Truth*, Escalante makes bullets, filling resin with corn kernels and setting them in metal casings. From a distance, they look just like bullets but up close they contain life. Her combination of life and creation in the corn and destruction and death of the weapons perfectly sums up the state
that corn is in--it is still a staple in our food and still a part of our culture but as more and more of it is GMO, it is no longer something which promises health and life, but disease and danger.

posted by michelle marie at 1:16 AM
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