

Dos Caras Two Faces

Visual Arts Gallery portrays Mexican, European cultures

STORY BY KIFFEN COLLINS • PHOTOS BY JP BEATO

The beaches of Mexico and the cities of Europe are dream spots on the long list of places to go for spring break.

However, the amount of money that can be crunched up for the trip plays an important factor in whether the voyage will be made. A cheaper alternative to Europe or Mexico can now be found on campus.

The MSC Visual Arts Gallery's newest exhibit is one combining Mexican and European cultures, producing a wide variety of mixed art works.

"Dos Caras/Two Faces" displays the work of Ruben Trejo, a nationally-recognized artist and professor from the Eastern University of Washington. The exhibit was brought to Texas A&M by the MSC Visual Arts Committee (VAC).

Born in 1937 in Minnesota, Trejo was raised by his mother and father, originally from Spain and Mexico respectively.

His artwork is a tribute to his cultural heritage.

"I incorporate the Mexican-Chicano experience with the Anglo-European experience," Trejo said. "I am also interested in using ready-made objects that other people can identify, and I use these images in my work."

Trejo moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1975 and continues to reside there. His travels to Mexico to visit his family remain an inspiration for his work.

Trejo includes the landscapes and environments of Mexico throughout his work and bases his themes on the cultural systems of South America.

Agnieszka Mlodnicka, director of promotions for the VAC, said the exhibit includes a variety of art works.

"Dos Caras is a collection of unique sculptures, collages and mixed media incorporating both cultures," Mlodnicka said. "Much of the artwork has recurring themes and symbols such as shovels, snakes eating their own tails and different [Roman] Catholic icons."

Trejo said his art includes many variations due to research into different religions and cultures.

"I use my research to add to my interpretation of

the feelings and memories of the past rather than the facts of the past and translate them into images rather than words," Trejo said. "It is a very abstract process."

The exhibit is divided into four groups. The first is the "Night Mask" series which consists of wall assemblages incorporating painted wooden panels with define objects fixed on them.

"The Fly in the Milk" is the second series including wall assemblages resembling puppets or skeletons.

Next are wall-mounted aluminum constructions, and the fourth group includes Trejo's most recognized drawings and collages.

"Dos Caras/Two Faces" is being displayed in conjunction with the 12th Annual Southwest Student Conference on Latin Affairs presented by the MSC Committee for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture (CAMAC). The exhibit was organized by the Gallery Program at Eastern University of Washington.

Laura Huerta, CAMAC officer and a senior liberal arts major, said she is excited about the exhibit. "During my four years here, this is the first time I have seen Latin artwork in the gallery," Huerta said. "It is great to have in conjunction with the conference."

Mlodnicka said she is also enthused about the exhibit and is proud of the crowds it has attracted. "A lot of people have come through to view the art," she said. "The exhibit is very popular and students are enjoying the presentation of 'Two Faces.'"

"Dos Caras/Two Faces" is on display in the MSC Visual Arts Gallery, located on the second floor of the MSC until March 20. The exhibit is free and open to the public. For more information about this exhibit contact the VAC at 845-9251.



"Self Portrait" by Ruben Trejo, composed of cast aluminum and welded metal, is part of the exhibit.



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