

## Aneurysm: the mutation

Visual Arts Gallery exhibit offers journey into self

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The Battalion

Cross a smiling snake's head in a top hat, a human heart and a sheep's head. Blend together. Make art. This is exactly what visitors will find in the Visual Arts Gallery, thanks to the efforts of the Visual Arts Committee and its newest presentation, Benito Huerta's "Aneurysm: the Mutation."

The student-run organization's goal is to make the campus more aware and appreciative of art. Lalaine Little, Visual Arts Committee adviser and gallery curator, said that goal is achieved by bringing art to the gallery and promoting the exhibit around campus.

"There are about 30 people on the [Visual Arts] committee," Little said. "Their jobs are to find art to bring to campus [and] work with the artists on the details of the show, as well as the installation, the advertisement, and the education [of the exhibit]."

Because there are only seven exhibitions at the gallery each year, Little said, selecting artists can be a competitive process.

"I get announcements from galleries all over, and I post them [in the office]," she said. "Students on the committee come in here, and if they see something they like, they can pull it off the wall and try to contact the artist. Since there's only seven slots [for the exhibitions], the selection process tends to be very extensive."

For the past month the gallery has exhibited the work of Benito Huerta, an assistant professor and curator in the Department of Art at the University of Texas-Arlington. Huerta said the exhibition incorporates reoccurring images and symbols from his past.

"You do see a lot of repeated themes," Huerta said. "These are symbols I started using when I first began painting, and [they] have continued to evolve."

Some of these symbols include the human brain, dominoes, and even some hidden human anatomy. One piece, "Brave New World," shows an eye breaking through a swirl of cloudy smoke. Huerta said the painting is a visual manifestation of his creative consciousness and the violation an artist experiences as viewers catch an illustrated glimpse into his private thoughts.

Laurie Kidd, external relations director for the Visual Arts Committee and a junior biomedical engineering major, said Huerta's exhibit was chosen because of the statement it makes.

"We try to pick art that makes statements and Huerta's paintings are bold, large, colorful and controversial," Kidd said. "When people walk by the gallery they're going to see it and say, 'Hey, what's that?' VAC also tries to bring multicultural exhibits, and at the one-on-one [artist discussion] Thursday he explained that he is an artist and he is Mexican, but he is not a Mexican-artist. He makes a good statement."

Huerta said all artists move through periods in which they emulate the works of other artists as they try to find their own creative styles and energy.

"I think earlier in my work I was most affected by Pablo Picasso, Francis Bacon and Marseille du Champ," Huerta said. "But now I would say I am mostly influenced by my friends, because some of these friends are now artists who travel all over the country and show their work in museums. I really respect their work and listen to their opinions. As an artist, it's beneficial to have that personal connection."

Huerta's artistic career did not begin until late in his life. He did not discover his passion or talent for art until he was in college.

"I only started painting my last year of college at the University of Houston," Huerta said. "It felt so natural — I'd been drawing, not very seriously, for a while. Then I began painting for a class, and all of the sudden it became my career."

Little said sometimes the artists chosen are uncomfortable about speaking about their works to groups, but Huerta has been very cooperative and fun to work with.

"Benito's really a neat guy," she said. "He has stories for all of his paintings. Sometimes I get artists who, when you ask them to come speak aren't shy, really, but just aren't comfortable with public speaking. But this year we haven't had much of that. Benito's been very receptive to what people have to say."

Kelly Dees, chair of the Visual Arts Committee and a junior biomedical science major, said she is not an artist, but she does greatly appreciate art and what it can do for culture.

"I've had a lot of business experience from working with professional artists," Dees said. "But art can be utilized for the rest of your life and can enrich it in a very positive way. It's important to have these galleries, because it's very easy to have that art experience without having to be an artist yourself. Here at A&M, the galleries offer a safe environment for students to come and just learn about art."

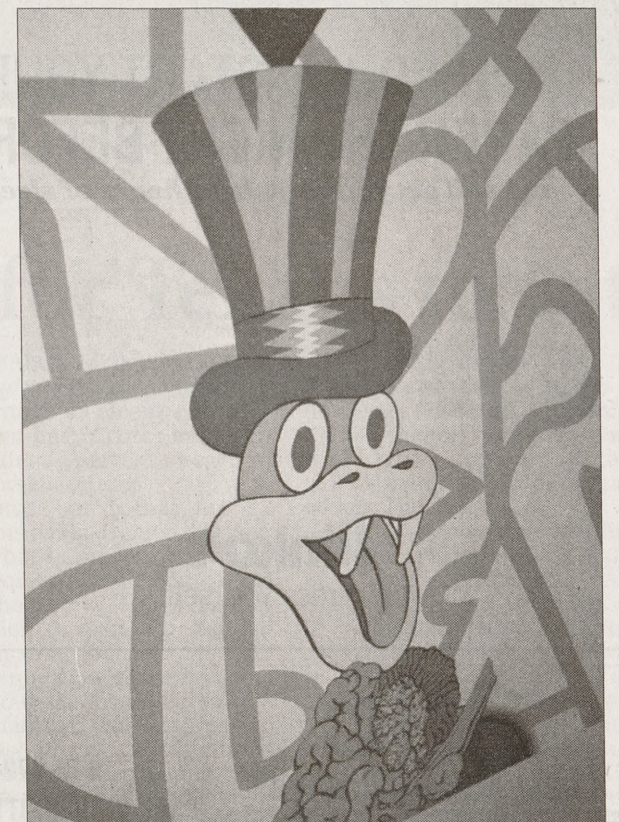
Huerta also said art is culturally important and can help to better society.

"I think it would change a lot if art were as mandatory as English," he said. "Kids today need an outlet and rather than grabbing a gun and shooting somebody, a more positive outlet, would be to paint something. I feel like this would create more art appreciation."

"If children were raised around it, people may be less intimidated by it. In other cultures it's integral, a part of everyday life."

Students interested in the work of Benito Huerta should hurry to the exhibit. "Aneurysm: the Mutation" ends Nov. 2 and will be replaced by Iraq native Lahib Jaddo's exhibit titled "Bound and Released," Nov. 8.

To participate in a one-on-one presentation with Jaddo, visitors can meet in the Visual Arts Gallery Nov. 10 at 7:30 p.m.



Three works from **Aneurysm: the Mutation** (above and background) represent Benito Huerta's approach to art  
PHOTOS BY ANTHONY DISALVO/THE BATTALION

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- Shawn Anderson
- Cindi Armer
- Michelle Bailey
- Sara Barnes
- Amanda Bartosiewicz
- Bea Benavides
- Tiffany Biehl
- Jennifer Bishop
- Mary Blackford
- Lindy Bohlke
- Sally Boyd
- Meggan Bradberry
- Lisa Brandenberg
- Meghan Brauen
- Sarah Broach
- Becky Brock
- Kristin Brockman
- Angela Brown
- Leticia Brown
- Dee Burgess
- Katie Burns
- Jackie Calkins
- Kasie Callaway
- Tiffany Clay
- Mandy Coburn
- Kim Colby
- Leighann Collins
- Amanda Crump
- Katie Culbreth
- Jennifer Curry
- Elizabeth Degen
- Carol Del Bosque
- Marie D'Englere
- Amanda DeWitt
- Tara Doyle
- Allison Dozier

- Jina Dunmire
- Ingrid Edge
- Ann Edmond
- Crystal Eldridge
- Wendy Evans
- Suzanne Fox
- Cristina Frith
- Sarah George
- Carol George
- Crystal George
- Ashley Geyer
- Devin Gonzalez
- Hailey Goodman
- Katie Graves
- Jamie Griffin
- Elizabeth Grossenbacher
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- Shannon Hall
- Miranda Harris
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- Kelly Hendrick
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- Leigh Justice
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- Lynn Kelly
- Elizabeth King
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- Mandy Koerber
- Angela Krause
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- Julie Nobles
- Rachel O'Brian
- Aubrey Orozco
- Brooke Overton
- Marisa Pacey
- Sarah Parker
- Kelly Patton
- Danielle Pazzagliani
- Amanda Perez
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- Kelly Pickard
- Diana Pollard
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- Jennifer Ray
- Renee Rea
- Sarah Rebecca
- Brandee Reeves

- Stephanie Rendon
- Jessica Robinson
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- Melissa Seigle
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- Amanda Sheffield
- Lynley Shults
- Lauren Smith
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- Sarah Stew
- Kasey Stunz
- Brooke Swindle
- Stephanie Theiss
- Meghan Thomas
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- Christina Torres
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- Bethany Wheller
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- Lucy Wood
- Laura Wong
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- Lana Wright

LET US STRIVE FOR THAT WHICH IS HONORABLE, BEAUTIFUL AND HIGHEST