

DARIO S. BUCHELI NOT WITHOUT A COST

LAWNDALE ART CENTER
GRACE R. CAVNAR GALLERY

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

DARIO S. BUCHELI PRESENTS "NOT WITHOUT A COST", A SITE-SPECIFIC PAINTING IN LAWNSDALE'S GRACE R. CAVNAR GALLERY. IN HIS MURAL WORK, BUCHELI SEEKS TO ELICIT AN EMBODIED EXPERIENCE OF SYMBOLIC, INTUITIVE, AND POETIC THOUGHT THAT TRANSCENDS RATIONALISM. FURTHER, THE ARTIST SHARES THAT HIS WORK REFLECTS "CULTURAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC FORCES THAT DEFINE THE CONTOURS OF [THE ARTIST'S] EXPERIENCE LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES. THE PAINTINGS BRING TOGETHER ELEMENTS OF PRE-COLONIAL MEXICAN CODICES, WITH REFERENCES TO CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE AND POLITICS. THIS INTERPRETIVE PROCESS IS ALSO CHARACTERIZED BY THE DESIRE TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT MOMENT WITHIN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF AMERICAN HISTORY."





Grace R. Carnal Gallery



THE STORY OF THE RABBIT ON THE MOON

LESLIE MOODY CASTRO

WE DO NOT TALK ENOUGH ABOUT THE MOON. WE DO NOT DISCUSS ITS SURFACE, ITS TEXTURES, ITS MYTHOLOGIES, ITS SOFTNESS. WE DO NOT DISCUSS ITS PLACID AND QUIET, SEMI-SECONDARY ROLE IN THE ROTATION OF PLANETS, ITS SECONDARY EFFECTS ON ECOSYSTEMS, ON NIGHTTIMES AND THE BEAUTY OF DARKNESSES, OR THE IMPORTANCE OF REFRACTIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF MILD LIGHTS.

ACCORDING TO LEGEND, QUETZALCOATL—PLUMED SERPENT, CREATOR OF MANKIND, AND DEITY DEVOTED TO THE WIND—CHOSE TO SPEND SOME TIME ON EARTH WITH THE BEINGS THAT HE CREATED. ONE DAY, HE DEPARTED ON A JOURNEY, AND, AFTER WALKING FOR SOME TIME, HE BECAME HUNGRY AND TIRED AND COULD SEE NEITHER FOOD NOR WATER ANYWHERE NEARBY; THEN, A SMALL RABBIT CROSSED HIS PATH. REALIZING HIS FAMISHED AND DEHYDRATED STATE, THE RABBIT OFFERED HERSELF AS FOOD AND NOURISHMENT TO SAVE THE LIFE OF QUETZALCOATL. MOVED BY HER SELF-SACRIFICE, THE DEITY RAISED THE RABBIT TO THE MOON, WHICH WAS IMPRINTED WITH THE PROFILE OF HER FORM, PROMISING THAT HER SACRIFICE WOULD BE REMEMBERED ETERNALLY.

IN THE HANDS OF ARTIST DARIO BUCHELI—including his mural at LAWNDALE ART CENTER—THE STORY OF THE RABBIT ON THE MOON PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE. ON ONE SIDE OF THE MURAL, THE RABBIT SITS ON THE MOON AGAINST A DARK PURPLE BACKDROP DOTTED BY STARS AND OPPOSITE A SERPENT SHEDDING ITS SKIN.

BUCHELI'S STORY OF THE RABBIT AND THE SERPENT IS A STORY OF SACRIFICE AND GENEROSITY TO ANOTHER COUNTRY; IT REFERENCES OF THE CODEX BORGIA'S STORY OF THE MOON AND THE RABBIT, BUCHELI'S OWN LIVED EXPERIENCE AS AN IMMIGRANT RAISED BY IMMIGRANT PARENTS, AND THE MOUNTAINOUS LANDSCAPE OF NORTHERN MEXICO AND THE BORDER REGION OF SOUTH TEXAS. THE RABBIT AND THE SERPENT HOVER OVER A MOUNTAINOUS LANDSCAPE, FLOATING LIKE A MYTHICAL SCENE IN THE HEAVENS. BOTH OF THEIR TORSOS HAVE BEEN PIERCED BY THE STAFF OF TWO FLAGS AND STREAMS OF SACRIFICIAL BLOOD POUR OUT FROM THEIR BODIES. THE SNAKE IS SHEDDING ITS SKIN, A SYMBOL OF TRANSFORMATION AND RENEWAL. EACH STREAM OF BLOOD FLOWS INTO THE CENTRAL IMAGE OF THE MURAL, POURING INTO WHAT IS THE GROUND FROM WHICH GROWS A TALL, HEALTHY STALK OF CORN.

THIS CENTRAL IMAGE IS AKIN TO A SYMBOL OF PATRIMONY, BUT ONE THAT BLENDS THE ICONS OF MANY COUNTRIES AND THEIR LEGENDARY STORIES. AN EAGLE—REPRESENTATIVE OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO—HOVERS ABOVE THE STALK OF CORN. A RING OF STARS (A DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE ORIGINAL UNITED STATES FLAG BY BETSY ROSS) ENCIRCLES THE EAGLE AND THE CORN, ENCIRCLED BY A CONCENTRIC RING OF FLOWING WATER. THE SACRIFICE OF THE SERPENT AND THE RABBIT ARE OF REGENERATION AND REBIRTH, A CELESTIAL OFFERING THAT ALLOWS SUSTENANCE TO CONTINUALLY GROW FROM THE LAND.

BUCHELI'S STORY IS OF NOT ONE, BUT TWO COUNTRIES AND CULTURES, WHICH BLEND TOGETHER TO CREATE, SUSTAIN, INFLUENCE, AND IMPROVE. IT IS A STORY OF GENEROSITY FOR THE GREATER GOOD, FOR A COLLECTIVE PROSPERITY. THROUGH IMAGES AND ICONS PULLED FROM ANCIENT TO PRESENT TIMES, BUCHELI TELLS THE STORY OF TWO COUNTRIES THAT DEPEND ON EACH OTHER FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

MUCH LIKE THE LEGEND OF THE RABBIT ON THE MOON, PERHAPS IT IS ALSO A GENTLE REMINDER TO RECOGNIZE THE SACRIFICES THAT ARE BOTH VAILLANT AND OFTEN UNSEEN.





ABOUT THE ARTIST

DARIO S. BUCHELI WAS BORN IN MONCLOVA (COAHUILA, MEXICO) AND IS CURRENTLY LOCATED IN BEAUMONT, TX. HE RECEIVED HIS BA FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS AND HIS MFA FROM TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, BOTH IN STUDIO ART WITH A FOCUS ON PAINTING. HIS MOST RECENT SERIES OF PAINTINGS REFLECT ON HIS EXPERIENCE LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES AND COMMUNICATE THE DISTINCT CULTURAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC SPACE HE OCCUPIES. HIS WORK HAS BEEN EXHIBITED THROUGHOUT TEXAS AND ABROAD IN SOLO AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS.

ABOUT THE WRITER

LESLIE MOODY CASTRO IS AN INDEPENDENT CURATOR AND WRITER WHOSE PRACTICE IS BASED ON ITINERANCY AND COLLABORATION. SHE HAS PRODUCED, ORGANIZED, AND COLLABORATED ON PROJECTS IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES. SHE IS COMMITTED TO CREATING MOMENTS OF EXCHANGE AND DIALOGUE WITHIN EXHIBITIONS, IS A CO-FOUNDER OF UNLISTED PROJECTS RESIDENCY, AND CO-LAB PROJECTS, AND IN 2022 SERVED AS INAUGURAL CURATORIAL FELLOW AND CURATOR IN RESIDENCE AT NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY AND CASA OTRO RESIDENCY, RESPECTIVELY. SHE HAS BEEN AWARDED TWO GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT OF THE ARTS FOR HER CURATORIAL PROJECTS AND A FELLOWSHIP FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR HER RESEARCH ON BORDERS. MOODY CASTRO HAS PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS RESIDENCIES INCLUDING THE NARVA ARTIST RESIDENCY, ESTONIA, THE GALVESTON ARTIST RESIDENCY, CASA LÜ RESIDENCY, TEPOZTLÁN, MARSO CDMX, AND FOUNTAINHEAD, MIAMI. SHE HAS CURATED BIENNIALS INCLUDING THE AMARILLO MUSEUM OF ART BIENNIAL IN 2021, THE TEXAS BIENNIAL IN 2018, AND CO-CURATOR OF THE AURORA BIENNIAL IN 2024. MOODY CASTRO WAS GUEST EDITOR OF GLASSTIRE MAGAZINE FROM 2021–2024, IS THE FOUNDER OF ATRAVESARTE AND BELIEVES MARIACHI MAKES EVERYTHING BETTER.

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MY COLLABORATORS: SOL DIAZ-PEÑA, GONZALO ÁLVAREZ AND DAVID COBB.

Y AL AMOR DE MI VIDA, CAITLIN CLAY

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