

ACE GALLERY LOS ANGELES

I N S T I T U T E O F C O N T E M P O R A R Y A R T

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THE DATE FARMERS

CELEBRATING THE BICENTENNIAL OF MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE

OPENING RECEPTION FOR THE ARTISTS OCTOBER 30th 8PM-10PM
EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC NOVEMBER 2, 2010 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2011

The Date Farmers coined their name early in their careers, the two joining artistic forces soon after meeting in 1998. Their paintings, collages, sculptures, effigies, installations and videos are infused with both commercial references and political content. Rooted in their Mexican-American heritage and Californian pop culture, their work contains elements influenced by graffiti, Mexican street murals, traditional revolutionary posters, prison art, traditional Oaxacan sign painting, and tattoos. Using found materials such as discarded signs, wood and corrugated metal, the artists often travel across the border, into Mexicali and Oaxaca to scavenge for materials – particularly painted, corrugated iron that is then re-painted and customized, often juxtaposing pirated image and text with their original handwork. Originally from Indio, California, they have been living in the peaceful seclusion of the desert until this year, when the two moved to a Los Angeles studio to create their new and most expansive exhibition to date for Ace Gallery. Through a lens of mescal and mushrooms, and referencing ancient indigenous art, the Date Farmers combine familiar, pop iconography – ranging from “Puto” Mickey Mouse, Darth Vader and Spiderman – to ‘amended’ corporate logos with figures from comics, folklore and Catholicism. In these paintings, desert creatures, such as tarantulas, coyotes, scorpions, and rattlesnakes, are hand-painted on top of seemingly incongruous found signs with collaged lettering, stamps, bottle caps, comic strips and advertisements. Their own brand of “Super Loco” Spanglish, which melds English and Spanish titles, flaunts creative misspellings like “Servicios D.J Pley boy” and the “Superchango” Gorilla king, to create an estranged and sardonic view of commercial American imagery.

Armando Lerma’s father owned a date farm in Coachella where Carlos Ramirez was working picking dates. Carlos’ mother was a migrant who once worked with civil rights leader Cesar Chavez—American activist and co-founder of the United Farm Workers—during the grape boycott of the 1970s. Through the lens of American-born Chicanos, the Date Farmers explore topical subjects with insightful simplicity, which is particularly notable in one painting, designing “Cambio Obama” to distribute in Texas in preparation for the landmark 2008 election. Creating a large body of new work in 2010 for the Ace Gallery exhibition, the Date Farmers have been given free reign to recolonize Wilshire Boulevard, customizing it into their highly idiosyncratic universe.

Works by the Date Farmers have been included in private collections such as those of Arnold Lehman, Director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and Norman Rosenthal, Exhibitions Secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts in London. The pair has participated in numerous art fairs in New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Stockholm, and has exhibited in Tokyo, London and New York.

For further information and visuals please contact Ace Gallery Los Angeles at 323.935.4411
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