

Nuevas Transgresiones

FEBRUARY 19 – MARCH 19, 2022

A SHOW BY

Roberto Tostado

CURATED BY

Summer Bernal
& Carlos Rittner



Nuevas Transgresiones

SOLO EXHIBITION

Nuevas normas sociales se establecieron con la llegada de la pandemia. Estructuras que buscaban dar orden al caos entre lo desconocido y lo incierto, pero que al tiempo implementaban una nueva forma de regulación social: uso de cubre bocas, de gel antibacterial y la llamada sana distancia. Sin duda, el uso de la mascarilla representa la norma más sustancial: media cara cubierta que nos convierte en hombres y mujeres sin rostros, protegidos sí, pero sin la mitad de quienes somos.

Estas normas también establecieron formas de conducta, así como nuevas transgresiones, porque "la norma y la transgresión han sido dos aspectos en el comportamiento de las sociedades humanas, que existen paralelamente. La norma se hizo y a la vez nació la transgresión, de otra forma no podría ser norma" (Dalton, 2002).

Las piezas que presenta Roberto Tostado en "Nuevas transgresiones" cuestionan la norma, pero también la transgreden; hoy en día un cuerpo desnudo ya no es un desacato moral, lo es cuerpo sin máscara. No portarla representa una nueva forma de cuestionar lo político, lo económico, lo social e incluso lo científico, pero también representa una nueva forma de ser juzgados en el espacio social.

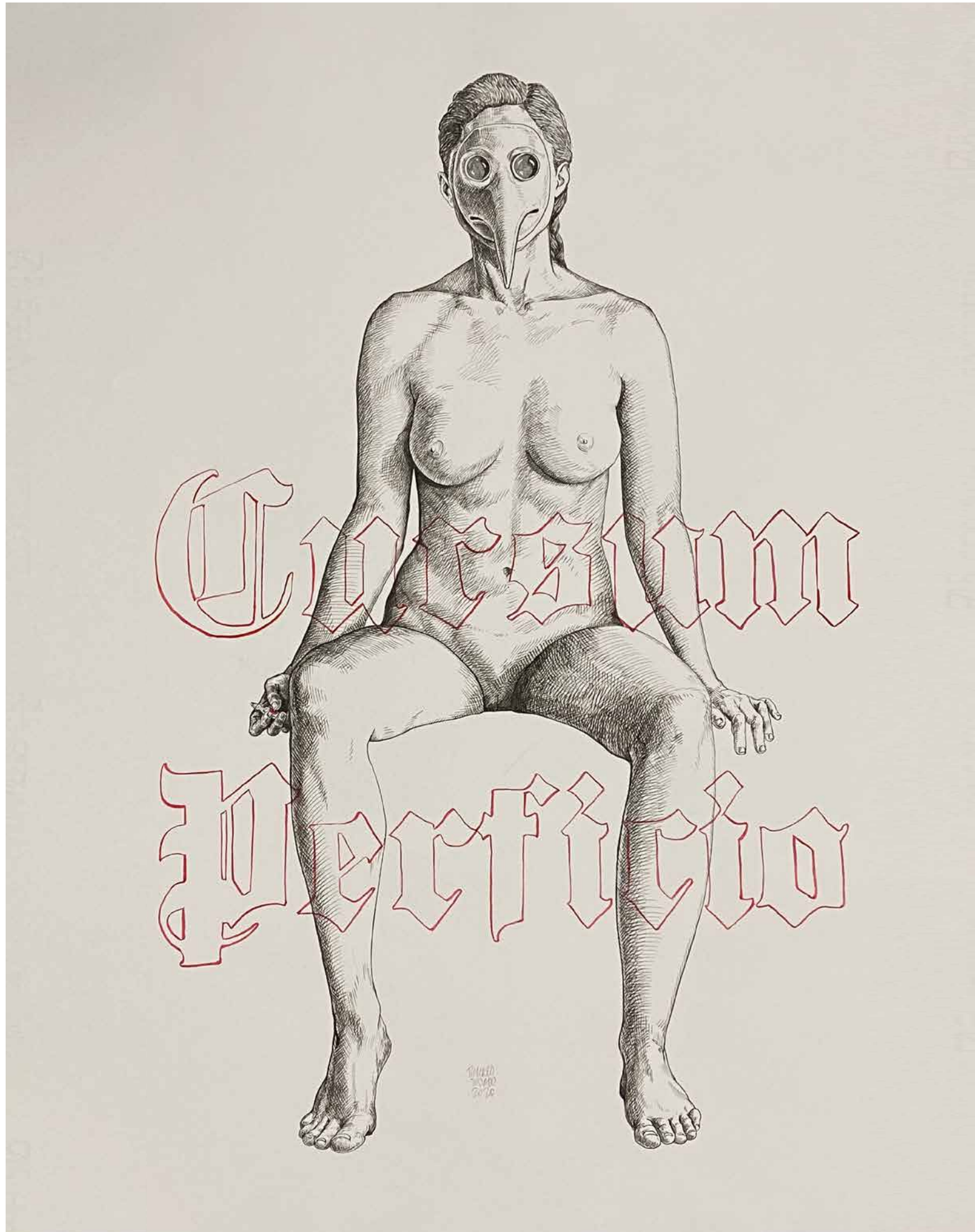
Desde esta exposición, el autor también ironiza la norma y rompe con las estructuras establecidas desde el juego caótico y transformador; las máscaras son en Roberto una transgresión que, desde la teatralidad, la ficción, la alteridad nos muestran mujeres ave, viento, gato, conejo, venado, en un acto de representar lo que hoy somos, en medio de este carnaval social que vivimos en tiempos de pandemia.

La vida te da sorpresas, 2021.
Oil on canvas, 140 x 110 cm.



Roberto Tostado

FEATURED ARTIST



Cursum Perficio, 2020.
Chinese ink on paper, 100 x 70 cm.

Roberto Tostado Viesca was born in Torreón, Coahuila in 1980. In Guadalajara, he joined Iñaki Beorlegui's workshop in 2002 as a workshop assistant, where he began to take drawing lessons. He moved to aguascalientes in 2003 where he entered the free class of maestro Moisés Díaz Jiménez at the school of visual arts, where he had his first solo exhibition "Diálogos Blandos" in 2004. In 2005 he studied engraving in Torreón, coahuila with maestro Miguel Canseco.

The following years he lived between Guadalajara and Aguascalientes. He was selected in 2005 in the National Print Contest of Guanajuato, the First Biennial of the Americas in 2006, in 2007 in the Salón de Octubre of Guadalajara and Arte Club of the Mural Newspaper and in the Enrique

Guzmán Biennial of Aguascalientes in 2008.

In 2009 he has a solo exhibition "Apócrifo!" where he exhibits 20 large-format portraits at the city gallery in Aguascalientes. In 2012 he began to study painting techniques with maestro Santiago Rebolledo and participated in a small collective at the Machado Gallery in Mexico City. In 2014 he obtained an honorable mention in the Biennial Joaquín Clausell. In 2017 he took a drawing workshop with maestro German Venegas.

He currently works between Aguascalientes and Mexico city where he has had 3 one man exhibitions and diverse collective exhibitions and in december 2019 he has his solo exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Aguascalientes.

TEXT BY
Roberto Tostado

Me gusta cantarle al viento, 2021.
Oil on canvas, 140 x 110 cm.

"I have never written anything but fictions.
However, I do not mean to say that it falls
outside the truth". - Michael Foucault

I met Roberto almost a decade ago in
an eclectic group that sketched models,
and while I traced deformed lines that tried
to somewhat resemble the model's body,
Robert displayed, with subtle grace, his
incredible talent as a sketcher and painter.
Throughout these years I have watched as
Tostado's work has gelled with a personal,
disciplined, intelligent style that also
displays an exquisite sense of humor.

This artist, that now resides in the land
of Jalisco, is an example of how painting is
still a powerful and decisive force in
contemporary art. In his work,
fundamentally figurative, what stands out is
the body and the expression of our human
quality. Playing between truth and fiction,
he travels in the ambiguity of the real and
the fantastic, moving lightly and always
ironically through the tragic.

In this state of ambivalence, the work
of Roberto Tostado seems to cast doubt on
the notion of the human condition,

criticizing everything indiscriminately,
without attempting to elaborate new
figurations but only questioning the idea of
individuality.

This collection assembles a group of
works that, even if they allude to classical
sketches of naked figures, in reality they
represent sudden appearances in an
assumed normality, diluting the lines that
divide the factual from the imaginary; and
thus, we see the portraits of these perfectly
delineated bodies, these naturally relaxed
poses soaked in caustically sarcastic hues.

In Tostado's work we don't see an
attack on a specific value nor open
declarations carving moral or political
criticisms, but simply a deep questioning of
what is the human being in its traditional
sense. This leads us, inevitably, to
reevaluate traditional, conservative
aesthetic norms. One of the most notable
aspects of this collection may be the
absence of faces; they are hidden, erased



Máscara #4, 2021.

Colored pencil and acrylic on paper, 70 x 49.5 cm.

or covered by masks.

Usually the mask is associated with the theatre or the carnival, or, in another environ, with the superhero of comic books, be it the villain or the hero, who wears a mask to hide their true identity. But since 2020, the mask, that visor, that no-face, has acquired a very different connotation. In this new normality, an uncovered face is a transgression. We are forced to cover ourselves and that simultaneously limits and frees us. To cover one's face is a paradoxical action that allows, on the one hand, to hide one identity while, on the other hand, it allows us to assume a second one. That identity might well be the one that we are hiding, although distorted. The Greeks' "prosopon" was a mask that helped the actor to project his voice, but that didn't mean that it replaced the original voice; on the contrary, it was simply an alteration that enhanced it.

In that progression between the hidden and the visible, the work of Roberto

confronts us with the idea that revealing what should not be seen is a transgression. To make public what should be private (secret), is, as Eugenio Trías put so well, "sinister"; but if what must be hidden is shown to us in a "veiled", or "masked", as in this case, way, it not only generates more attention, but it forces us to reflect on that which we don't see, on that which is hidden.

Today our faces are hidden, we walk through the streets in face masks and shields that protect us; but those masks that we are forced to use only manage to reveal what we are hiding. Whether it be a mask with the face of a cat, or of a parrot, or that of a bunny, the representation of the fantastic is, at the same time, a revelation of what we truly are. And thus, Tostado keeps creating fictitious beings, that, in the end, turn out to be much more real and forceful than the factual, in this present reality that has been transformed by a very tiny particle that is "strana e profunda".





Sin máscara #2, 2021.
Pencil and acrylic on paper, 70 x 49.5 cm.

Images also think and speak. In the collection that Roberto Tostado presents under the title of New Transgressions at Art Bug Gallery, (Los Angeles, February 19th to March 19th), images dialogue. The questions arising are: what is being spoken, what form of communication is at stake and in which direction Tostado's art is thinking?

Among the great subtleties of Art are the analogies that, we know, capable of articulating a perfect similarity of relations between distant things, non similis. The cautious gaze through Tostado's work will appreciate that, in the polyvalent exchange of bodies and faces, the analogies of the power of life and its negation transfigure the character of the identity of the individual in the midst of a burnout society.

When the face of a woman is veiled by the mask of a crow or the mythical flower of cempazuchitl germinates the head with the mystery of death, or a frail face transgressed by the robust bestiality of the bear, the analogy transports the incognita from its distance. Ancient and well-known elements displace the production of new aesthetic meanings with an ethical diligence that places us in the synthesis of a common border: in the midst of a permanent tension between the laws of necessity and freedom. For example, in the exchange of these elements, what was once absent manifests itself as a reflection of the boldness of our experience of being in the world and the fragility of our identity.

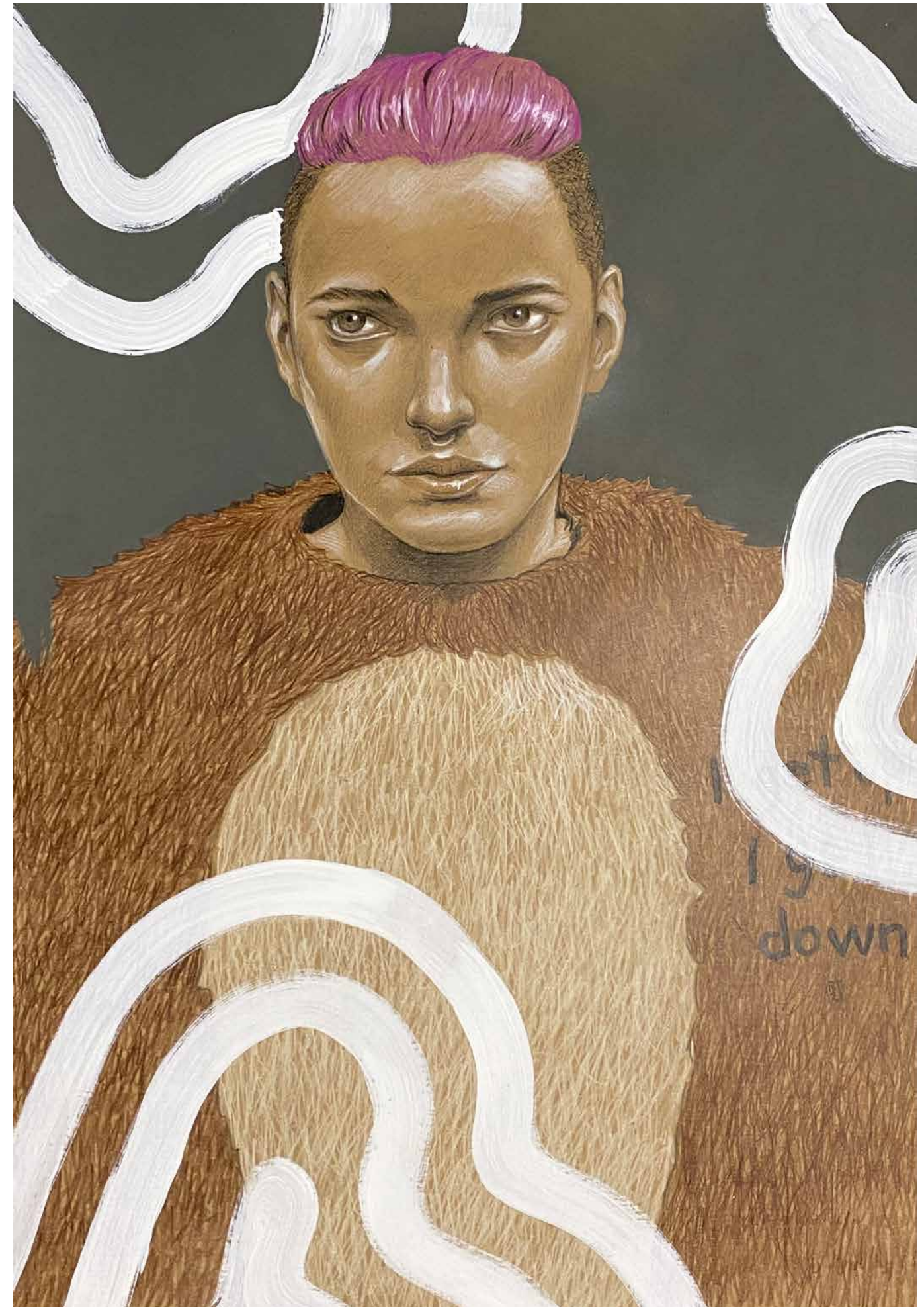
No one could say that Tostado is indifferent to the times we live in. In the

Sin mascara 1, 2021.
Pencil and acrylic on paper, 70 x 49.5 cm.

common twilight of the much-maligned articulation of Pan, Demos and Time, where the social obscurantism of our present takes the form of a pandemic, moralists suggest that we are all intertwined by our common decrepitude and mortality. Tostado, on the other hand, rescues the living satire from the tension of the analogies that inspire him as a way to rescue his art from the formalism that hijacks us from the common, the ordinary and plural life, which makes a living artist someone unusual and disturbing. Hence, the authentic title of New Transgressions.

A proof of this is the production of

dialogues between skulls painted on pieces of fabrics and floral tapestries that account for the anarchist power of Tostado who declares with a satirical degree "[...]under anonymity we become criminals of new offences: coughing, sneezing, talking and laughing without a mask." From this it is understood that, among the works of Tostado, underlies the common demand to restore the sensual character of things, that fragmented and distant remain invisible to our consciousness, through analogies that dialogue offering the viewer emotional resonances with our identities.



ARTBUG

Special Thanks to...

TRANSLATIONS

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PRESS

Joseph Treviño

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ARTBUG is a brand-new, LA-based art gallery with a clear mission: to enhance the visibility of Latinx artists and curators, through a multi-platform project located in the heart of the Arts District.

We aim to host different and diverse voices by showcasing projects, exhibitions and events. We want to fill our physical space with the interest and participation of new visitors and collaborators.

COSMOS NEON

Juan Ordaz

TOP FRAME LA

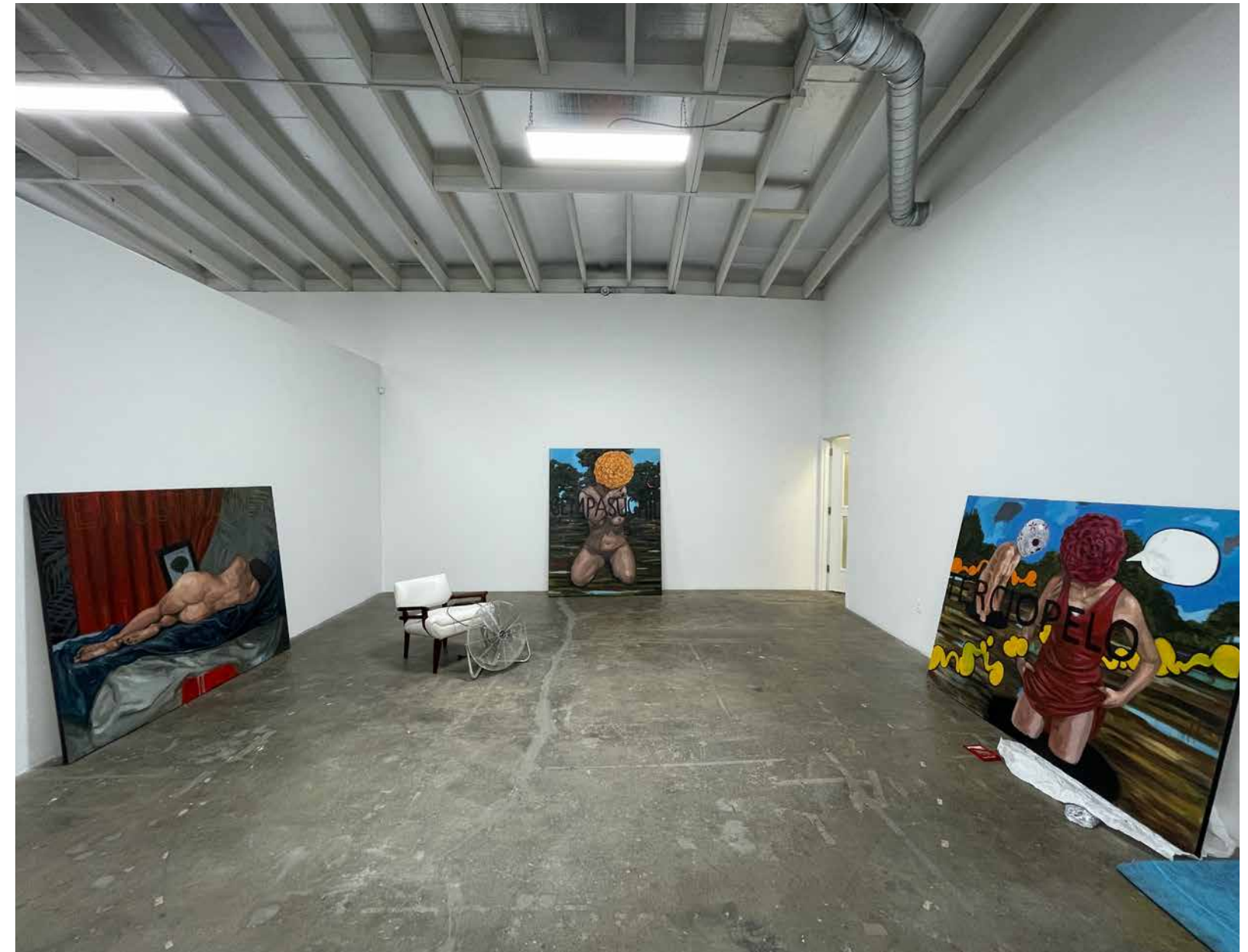
**Levon & Nagapet
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Artbug es un proyecto multiplataforma situado en el corazón del Distrito de las Artes de la ciudad de Los Ángeles, California.

Nuestra misión es comunicar la pluralidad de voces de artistas, investigadores y curadores latinxs, recibiendo y desarrollando proyectos, exhibiciones y eventos en nuestro espacio.



ADDRESS

2441 Hunter Street, Unit B
Los Angeles, CA 90023

GALLERY HOURS

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info@artbug.net