

Interview: Rogelio Gutiérrez (with Anna Farmer)

April 2016

What do you consider your greatest success?

Being able to make a living making art and teaching people about art.

Where were you born? What was life like there? What was your family like? Big? Small? What did your parents do for a living? What was school like etc.?

I was born in San Jose California. It was nice...a diverse place. My family was young; my mother and father were recent immigrants from Jalisco, Mexico and they had their three boys. My father has been a short order cook for most of his adult life and my mother worked in the hotel industry. School in the Bay Area was diverse and I remember having great teachers. We left the Bay Area when I was ten and we relocated to the Central Valley in California, a very conservative, rural, and agriculturally filled area. Most of my upbringing was in a small migrant town called Farmersville, California.

What kind of education do you have? What did you study?

I have a BFA with an emphasis in Printmaking from California State University-Long Beach, and an MFA in Visual Arts and Public Life with an emphasis in Printmaking from Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis Indiana.

Why did you leave your home town? Where did you go first? How did you get there? What made you decide to go there?

I left my hometown because it was small and had very little art and opportunity for artists. I went to Los Angeles because I transferred to Long Beach State. Los Angeles is a cultural hub and it was an easy decision for me. My work is heavily influenced by my experience as a first generation Mexican American and Los Angeles was a great place for me to meet artists with similar ideas and backgrounds as myself.

What kind of work do you do? Or do you principally work as an artist?

I am an Assistant Professor of Art at Arizona State University where I teach printmaking and focus on contemporary Latina/o art. I am a teacher and a working artist.

What was your parents' reaction to your career choice?

They are still kind of confused about what I do...they did not grow up with a lot of art. Besides not understanding it, they are completely supportive and are proud that I can make a living doing what I have a passion for.

Who had the most impact on you and your life/career choices? Why did you choose your career? How long have you been an artist?

My parents, because of their hard work effort. That is hard to answer but I guess I first called myself an artist as an undergrad but I have been making things since I was quite young.

What is your favorite work?

That is also difficult but I guess an artist I really appreciate is Pepon Osorio. I am a big fan of “Scene of a Crime,” a very powerful installation.

What inspires your work?

My experiences as a first generation Mexican American. Also, my parents’ story of immigration.

Which piece was the most challenging?

In my personal work, probably “Bienvenidos a Indianapolis” a public art project that allowed me to work with local community members, business owners, and the mayor’s office of Indianapolis.

<http://www.rogliogutierrez.com/bienvenidos-a-indianapolis/>

<http://www.rogliogutierrez.com/exhibitioninstallation/>

What is your current life like? What do you do in your free time? Any hobbies?

I live in the Phoenix Metro area and I am currently working on a project that I organized called “ Ni De Aquí Ni De Allá/Neither Here Nor There: Contemporary Printmaking on Both Sides of the Border.” This is a printmaking portfolio exchange featuring Mexican printmakers from both U.S and Mexico which will travel to Museums and Galleries in both countries through 2018. In my free time, I like to visit my family and watch the Lakers play as much as possible. My hobby is watching the Lakers.

Link to website:

<http://www.rogliogutierrez.com>