My full name is Rigoberto Jaimes Flores. I was born in Guerrero, Mexico. My family immigrated to the U.S. in the 90’s and have lived in the state of Arizona ever since. The work I make involves politics, immigration, cartel violence and religious themes. I’m interested in presenting these challenging and difficult concepts, to have them remain in the public consciousness. The work I produce involve charcoal drawings, textiles, print, and painting. The work I create is intended to address inconstancies in established ideas, usually involving government violence. Throughout history art has been used to promote institutional propaganda. I am searching to do the same, but to oppose those structures. I look to similar thematic artists for inspiration.

Tres tristes tigres tragaban en un trigo

Dia Uno: Viajamos muchas dias en el carro de de un de mis tias. Mi mama dice que yo llora por me abuelita, lo creo pero no me acuerdo de nada, solo cuando cruzamos. entramos por Nogles, Arizona el el 94 creo.

The greatest influence on my work comes from my family and culture. I’ve included family members in some of work to tell their stories. Stories that so many immigrants can relate to. I’ve created drawings of participating family members of their arms where their vaccine scars are visible. The marking that is characterized as being an immigrant. Citizenship application documents were used in a recent work. The documents were filled out incorrectly to tell the story of a family member that answered honestly to a visa working permit but was denied for it.
One of my priorities is to stay connected with the Mexican immigrant community I came from. For the time being I see representational imagery to keep that connection. Representational images were used during the Mexican revolution to spread their message to a wider audience, rather than just the educated public. I find having the ability to present ideas legibly very useful in my practice, when required. I use culturally recognizable imagery to present some of these ideas.

Another piece I’ve recently created was performative. The work consisted of portrait drawings of 43 students that were murdered by the local police in Guerrero, Mexico. The drawings were placed on and low table. The table was covered by a traditional Mexican tablecloth. The cloth has the instructions embroidered “escoje uno, rompelo, devuelvelo”. The audience was instructed to select a drawing and tear it. I wanted to implicate the audience to violence. I’m interested in our complacency in violence and wanted to create a connection to violence that we are so separated from. The compliancy of murder/violence is stated in an article which I feel the BIPOC communities relate to. English’s statement reads:

“It’s just the thing that keeps happening to black people” That means, not a thing that’s happening to us as a community, to us as a society, not a thing that’s being done in their name. It’s just the thing that keeps happening to black people.” (p. 1-2)¹

Referencing the murder of black people by police in the United States. I feel like this statement highlights the general disconnect to violence.

¹ Darby English. Introduction.
Una tardé: Olivia, soy tia. Quería saber si estabas ahi, para ver si ibas a vener comer?

The work I’ve made has varied throughout the years. In recent work I’ve been experimenting with the concept of immediate effects of art. Art has always received the criticism of not having any tangible effect on the world. The way I’ve chosen to approach this was to include more performative aspects to the work. For one performance piece I presented all my work in Spanish in an English-speaking institution. The piece created a disruption in the accustomed way of the institution.

Para Rellenar

I’m inspired by many artists, like Ai Weiwei, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Julio Cesar Morales, Rafa Esparza, Kehinde Wiley, among others. I admire Wiley’s capacity to communicate with a wide audience and stay connected to his cultural heritage. I am also influenced by artists that can make compelling statements in a simple manner. While researching artist producing similar work, I’ve been attracted to artist that are having real in-depth conversation that seem imperative to our time.

Julio Cesar Morales’ work explores being raised along the border. Julio’s work employs different material according to his concepts. His ink drawings are images of people inside piñatas. The images are addressing immigration policies and how visas are awarded to immigrants that are innovative. The U.S. sentiment to the policies is of only to accept the best and brightest immigrants. The work represents the immigrants’ ambitious innovate attitude to cross the border for a better life. Some of the drawings has figures stuffed in cars and home appliances to further illustrate innovation. Along the same themes some of his video work
displays anonymous figures stuffing sacks of drugs into a hollowed-out log. The log is then sealed using scarps of the tree to completely disguise what is inside. The logs will eventually be crossed over the border.

Ai Weiwei’s work address a contemporary form of colonization. A recognizable work of Ai is his Coca-Colas vases. Weiwei’s Coca-Cola vases present the concept how capitalism is taking over his homeland of China. The represents an older dynasty and the coca cola logo painted over the ancient vase is the colonization of a traditional form of culture.

Rivane Neuenschwander a Brazilian Artist that I’ve been influenced by works in a variety of media. One piece that I often refer to is a slideshow projection that circulates images of hotels and tourist destination that are in the Americas with European country names. They remind the viewer of the remnants and false promises of colonization.

Rafa Esparza is among one of the other artists I’ve researched. Their work is also political that addresses exhibition spaces. For some of his work he fills the space with adobe bricks that completely cover the white gallery walls. The work is an argument against the white cube and art institutions. The space is then presented as a nontraditional space.

For some time now, I’ve been concerned about how I could approach my work more effectively. There hasn’t been a time when art doesn’t seem necessary. I am researching artist that are concerned with such topics. There seems to be too many voices in a post truth era and a lack of the necessary credentials/knowledge can at times hold back the imperative ones. Additional education can alleviate some of those shortcomings. I feel it’s my purpose as an artist to document our time in history.
Quiro olivadar en la manera que pensaba

The new work that I’ve been tratando is textiles. Comence with un triptych, which consisted of El Diablo card image with fluorescent green background. The work is about 4x6. I use that size a lot in my work to reference the size of family photographs that were the living room space of where I was raised. Behind the image of the chamuco is the halo version of the virgen de Guadalupe. El chamu is holding a Spanish weapon to reference the conquistadors when they colonized Mexico. The middle piece is an image of juan diego. The head is cropped off. The background is also fluorescent green. En la istoria de juan diego the virgen de Guadalupe appears to juan diego from his shall when he picks flowers for her. The flowers are roses most of the time. La virgen de Guadalupe is said to be of mixed race, half indijena and European. This was said to persuade the natives to convert to catolicos. The piece on the right is the virgen de Guadalupe fully rendered with embroidery floss, but the work is facing backwards facing the wall. After the triptych was done, I decided to add another piece to it. The piece is of jesus Malverde, a narcoculture saint. The bust is decorated with roses and a halo to reference la virgen. The background is painted a solid fluorescent pink. I use the pink to use the same colors used on gift items along the border entries. I see it as making trinkets for the artworld. The polyptych was a way for me to experiment with narrative and learn how to use embroidery floss.

A piece I created right after that was a charcoal drawing. The work consisted of one large piece in the middle and four smaller images surrounding it, two on each side. La imagen era una Aguila, which was bent over dead. The smaller works are of nopales and one el nopal carta sin words. I wanted to recreate the Mexican flag sin la culebra. I wanted to represent the current narco violence in Mejico.
In other works, I’ve been experimenting with installations. One work that I’ve made was an image of opium flores with the virgen de Guadalupe halo. I used thread to create lines/rays coming out of the piece. Where I was born in the state of Guerrero opium is grown for heroin. Guerrero has the highest production of opium in the country of Mexico.²

I wanted to continue with developing installations with thread. I created a piece using Mexican cartel drug routes data to create an installation piece. I made thread exploding/expanding out of the map where the 43 students were murdered by the local police.

A recent work that I’ve just completed was created based of research that was being done on another project. I’ve been researching humanitarian organizations that do water drops along the U.S./Mexico border. The water is meant for migrants crossing the border through the desert. When researching this I learned that U.S. border patrol agents were vandalizing the gallons of water and the canned foods left for the migrants.³ A very hateful act that I was in disbelief when I first read about this. The border patrol agents claim that they are necessary because they provide human aid. This act says otherwise. There is footage of them kicking the gallons of water and puncturing holes in the containers. My response to this was to create work about it to inform more people. The work is embroidered and shows a patrol agent pouring out the water from a gallon. In the piece the water keeps pouring out and does not stop. I wanted to depict what I felt was that somehow something supernatural occurred and the water became infinite. The act of pouring out the water is so absurd/hate filled that the only way to make it right is to have something beyond reality to intervene. A fantasy of course. The piece also included an

² James, Fredrick. On The Hunt for Poppies In Mexico.
³ Wang, Amy B. No More Deaths.
image of three chicks yelling obscenities at the agent (!Que esta hacienda ese Guey?! !pinché kara de Verga! Proclaman los pollitos. I wanted to represent the visceral response I initially felt.

Currently work on a sculptural piece. I am building a street vendor cart from cardboard. I’ve been painting popsicles to go along with the cart. I’m planning on selling the popsicles to raise funding for the humanitarian group doing water drops. I want my work to have a real effect in society, even if it’s a small one.

Ultimamente, si hecho que lluvia.

La Reinterpretación

30. Have you EVER:

A. Been a habitual drunkard? si

B. Been a prostitute, or invested in one? si

C. Sold or smuggled controlled substances, illegal drugs, or narcotics? si

D. Been married to more than one person at the same time? si

E. Married someone in order to obtain an immigration benefit? si

F. Helped anyone to enter, or try to enter, the eeuu illegally? si

G. Gambled illegally or received income from illegal gambling? si

H. Failed to support your dependents or to pay alimony? si
I. Made any misrepresentation to obtain any public benefit in el norte? si

31. Have you EVER given any eeuu.GOV officials info or doc that was false, fraud? si

32. Have you EVER lied to any eeuu.Gov officials to cum inside the U.S.? si

33. Have you Ever been removed, excluded, or deported from el eeuu? si

34. Have you Ever been ordered removed, excluded, si

35. Have you EVER been placed in removal, si

36. Are (redacted) pending against me? Si

I’ve been escuchando musica Mexicana para major entender perspectives que no me enseñaron en la escuela creciendo en los estados Unidos. Las cumbias en veces cantan sobre temas de fantasias que son medias comicas. Quiero expiereentar con esta tema de comedia en mi trabajo. Encunto que las cumbias como de La Culebra, El Buey de la Barranca, La Chona, y la de la Cumbia Sobre El Río estan influenciando mi trabjo mas y mas. Ahi una canción que se trata de que un oso polar se escapa de su jaula en un zoljico y se lleva al cantante. También ahí otro canción de Rigo Tovar que canta sobre un sirena y que se juntan y tienen un sirenito. Me interesan estos temas porque se me hacen chistos. El humor creo que me ayuda hacer trabajo difícil facil de explicar o no ser tan siero. Creo que la realidad puede ser muy absurda a veces que tienes que encontrar el humor en todo para afrontar la realidad.

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4 DJ Cumbia. “Oso Polar”
5 Tovar, Rigo. “La Sirenita”
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#losbukis #rigotovar #69 #huarache #lachancla #elnopal #lacasuela #lahoya #aguacate #mango
#elpinchepuerco #housekeeping #losjumilesdepachivia #chucho #paletro #elsuperpollero
#caguama #oxxo #operationwetback #operationfastandfurious #molcajete #laresortera #elcamote
#nanche #chilaquiles #rabano #chocomil #greaseract #jumex #puertopeñasconorockypoint
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#molerojo #laleña #landscaping #mazorca #elchicharron #yerbabuena #eltorito #esemihuicho
#eltrinche #frijolelperro #lachona #elpirruris #pirrureishon #coralillo #ciruela #papaya #confless
#vaporu #elserro #loscochosdegueerrero #elplatano #arrozconleche #soytutia #olivia
#queriasabersiembasahiparaversiibasaveneracomer #elcomal #puropinchepedogueyalaverga
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Bibliography