

Know Your Artist, Know Your Art

Carbondale Arts believes in the power of art and we know you do, too. There is a deep connection that happens when you purchase a piece of art, and getting to know the artist makes that connection even deeper. Carbondale Arts hosts over 10 art exhibitions every year. Find some art you love and dive in.

We have launched a [“Know Your Artist, Know Your Art”](#) campaign, as Carbondale Arts works to build relationships between artists and patrons. Inspired by the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model of Investing in local food, this Community Supported Art movement promotes the investment of local artists making a living in and around the newly established Carbondale Creative District, where Carbondale Arts makes its home.

Acknowledgements

“Identidad y Libertad” is generously sponsored by Binbilla Landscaping, Inc. Based in the Roaring Fork Valley, you can learn more about Binbilla Landscaping [on Facebook](#).

Special thanks to David Thickman and Shawn Tonozzi for gallery preparation, and to Gayle Embrey and Vanessa Porras for gallery installation assistance.



June 4 - 24, 2021

Identidad y Libertad

curated by
Gayle Embrey
& Vanessa Porras

Sponsored by Binbilla Landscaping Inc.

At the Carbondale Arts R2 Gallery
in The Launchpad (76 S 4th Street)
carbondalearts.com | 970-963-1680
Open weekdays 10am - 5pm & Saturdays 10am - 2pm

From the Curators

“Identidad y Libertad” explores the issues around identity & freedom for those who are Spanishspeaking immigrants as well as those native to the United States yet are presumed, because of their heritage, to be undocumented immigrants. Featured artists include Claudia Bernardi, Tony Ortega, Fanel Reyes, and José Luis Lopez. Joined by youth immigrant detainee muralists from the *Walls of Hope* project, each of these artists examine the questions that arise around identity and what it means to be free. Their works tell the stories of the varied experiences of Latinx people in this country and of those south of the border.

Learn more about this exhibition and visit the space virtually at carbondalearts.com/exhibitions



About the Incarcerated Teen Immigrant Murals Facilitated by *Walls of Hope*

Walls of Hope is an international art and human rights project of art, education, conflict resolution, crime prevention, diplomacy building, community development and preservation of historic memory.

The organization was founded after internationally recognized artist, Claudia Bernardi, assisted the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team in El Mozote, El Salvador where a massacre of over 800 civilians, including 136 children under the age of twelve, occurred during their civil war in December 1981. Bernardi began to envision what it would be like to create a school of art in the same area with children the same age as those who were massacred. From this, *Walls of Hope* was born in Perquin, El Salvador, a town not far from El Mozote.

Walls of Hope artists Claudia Bernardi, America Argentina Vaquerano Romero, Claudia Verence Flores Escolero and Rosa del Carmen Argueta have facilitated mural projects in several countries including El Salvador, Argentina, Colombia and the United States.

The *Walls of Hope* artists began working with incarcerated immigrant youth in a US prison in 2014 and have facilitated a mural project every year since then, including one they did remotely with the youth during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The incarcerated immigrant youth who painted the murals in this exhibition come primarily from countries in Central America, although some participants are from Mexico. At the border on the Mexico side, these youths were introduced to narco-trafficking. Many of the girls were abused by the narco-traffickers, and many of the boys felt forced into the narco trade.

Upon crossing the border into the United States, many of these same youths felt it was safer to turn themselves over to the border patrol rather than continue involvement with narco-traffickers. The participants in these mural projects are being held in a maximum-security prison in the United States. They often feel little or no hope for their futures.

Details on the Murals in the Exhibition

In both murals, there is a border around the edges. Their purpose is two-fold. First, the borders help connect everything together in the mural. Second, some of the participants are not comfortable working collaboratively on the larger mural images. Each rectangle around the border is created by an individual artist allowing them the opportunity to create an image that tells their own story. Bernardi says that after creating a border image, participants often join in the painting of the larger work.

The murals on exhibition were painted by over 50 artists but only in groups of no more than 8 people at a time. Males and females were always separated. Everyone made sketches first which were shared with the other participants. The youth learned how to negotiate with people they would never meet in person by meeting in the mural where they communicated through the painting of the images in the large communal area of the mural.

To learn more or contribute to the work of *Walls of Hope*, go to www.wallsofhope.org.



Let Me Flower One More Time

Let Me Flower One More Time, was named when one artist began painting an anatomically-correct heart which he titled the same as the mural. When the other participants saw this sketch, they were very moved and felt that this was their story as well, so this became the central image of the mural. A recurring image in this mural is that of the broken heart, always in pain.

In the top of the mural, just to the left of center, there are tombstones to represent those who started the journey to migrate with the participants to the United States but who died along the journey, causing the survivors' hearts to bleed. In a lower section of the mural is a woman undergoing chemotherapy for cancer treatment. This image was painted by a young man who knew he would never be able to go and see her again.

On the far right, images of butterflies float on a background of yellow, blue and reddish brown. The young man who painted this section asked Bernardi many questions while he painted. During that time, she told him about the disappeared people of Argentina and he internalized this new information. He related to the disappeared in Argentina, believing they are lucky because they are still being searched for yet he and the others in the prison with him are the disappeared that no one is looking for and no one will ever find.

There Is More In Life Than What I See Now

In this mural, the participants gravitated toward the image of eyes. In the center of the mural there is an eye inside a tree, but the image that speaks clearly to the idea of being separated from one's parents is the eye in the right lower section of the mural.

There is a girl behind bars with a toddler on the other side. The young woman who painted this image came from El Salvador with her toddler. She was separated from her son and had no idea where he was or how to find him at the time of the mural being painted. Her son is one of about 1,400 kids who are missing after crossing the border.

Above this eye is the image of a young couple with a baby, painted by a young man from Mexico who said that being present at the birth of his baby was the happiest moment of his life and he didn't know when he'd see the child or the mother again. He left to make a living in the US, believing he wouldn't be able to make a good living in Mexico.

Above and to the left of the eye in the tree there is someone who is choosing to do drugs and an angel flying right above – a way the teens chose to talk about drug use and their hopes for a different future.

CLAUDIA BERNARDI

Artist Statement

In a fresco, the pigments are not painted on the wall, they are embedded in plaster in such a way that the pigments become the wall. In my work, I depart from the same principle: the pigments become the paper. I use pure pigments that are embedded in the paper by the pressure of a printing press. No binder, oil or medium is used in this process allowing the pigments to maintain their purest intensity. Each fresco on paper is the result of multiple runs through a printing press where layers of pure powdered pigments are pressed into wet paper. The coloration, oftentimes, is a process of subtraction, a scraping away from the layers, a patient uncovering of colors reacting among themselves alchemically.

For the last fifteen years I have collaborated with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team in investigations of violations of Human Rights. The task of the AFAT is to perform exhumations of mass graves investigating crimes against the civilian population. I participated in exhumations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina and Ethiopia. My artwork is profoundly influenced by these experiences. Not only in the narrative aspect of the piece but, most importantly, in the conceptual realm of finding images through the searching of layers of colored dust. I scratch the surface of the piece identifying human figures that interact with the world of the hidden images. The pigments convey the essential material prima. The intensity and the fugitive condition of pigments, so fragile yet persistent, are metaphors of the elusiveness of life and the never-ending determination of hope.

The installations are frequently created upon testimonies recovered during the exhumations. I conceptualize each installation as a documentary, departing from the reports presented by the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team to the Supreme Court of the country where the investigation

takes place. The reports narrate, chronologically, the findings of human remains and associated objects constructing a historical account of the massacre. The creation of artifacts and associated objects resembling the actual findings convey my visual response to the violence that I had witnessed. My intention goes beyond political criticism. It is a way of retaining the communal memories of the survivors.

Biography

Claudia Bernardi is an internationally known artist who works in the fields of art, human rights and social justice. In her work over the past two decades, she has combined installation, sculpture, painting and printmaking. Additionally, she has focused her art praxis in developing and facilitating community and collaborative art projects working with/and in collaboration with communities that have suffered state terror, violence, forced exiles and who are victims of human rights violations.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Bernardi lived through the Argentine military junta that ruled the country from 1976 to 1983. As a result of this system of repression over 30,000 Argentine citizens disappeared. The desaparecidos are the victims of the so-called “Dirty War”. She left Argentina in 1979. In 1984, a forensic anthropology team was established in Argentina to supply evidence of violations of human rights carried out against civilian populations. Bernardi participated, as mapmaker, and collaborated with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team in exhumations of mass graves in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, and Ethiopia. Emerging from this experience, Bernardi recognized that art could be used to educate, elucidate, and articulate the communal memories of survivors of human rights atrocities.

In 2004, Bernardi was awarded the Honorary Degree, Doctor of Fine Arts, Honoris Causa by the College of Wooster, Ohio. Bernardi received an MFA from the National Institute of Fine

Arts in Buenos Aires and an MA and her second MFA from the University of California at Berkeley. She has taught at the Universidad del Salvador, California College of the Arts, Mills College, San Francisco Art Institute, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. She was a California Arts Council Artist-in-Residence from 1990-1993 and 1994-1995 creating and directing art projects with political refugees and survivors of torture from Latin America.

In 2010, Bernardi was awarded the International Beliefs and Values Institute Sustainable Visions and Values Award, James Madison University, Virginia. In 2015, Bernardi was awarded the Social Courage Award provided by The Peace and Justice Association, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Bernardi has worked in association with Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Bernardi has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally. Amongst the many venues, it can be highlighted: The International World Peace Center in Hiroshima, The Centre for Building Peace, Donegal, Northern Ireland, The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, The Sonoma Museum of Contemporary Art, The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, The Tokushima Modern Art Museum, The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, DAH Teatar in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro; The University of Haifa, Israel, MACLA, Center for Latin American Studies at UC Berkeley, Carl Gorman Museum at U.C. Davis, Tucson Museum of Art, The Snite Museum at the University of Notre Dame.

Bernardi is the founder and director of the School of Art and Open Studio of Perquin El Salvador, serving children, youth, adults and the elderly. The approach of this unprecedented art, education and human rights initiative is rooted in the partnership created between art, artists and local institutions and NGOs. The art projects are designed and created in

response to the demands, hopes and desires of the members of the community. This model of education and community building through art known now as the “Perquin Model” has been successfully implanted in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Northern Ireland and Argentina. For the last five years, Bernardi has been working with unaccompanied, undocumented, Central American migrant minors, currently detained in maximum security facilities in the United States.

[Here is a link to watch an interview with Claudia Bernardi](#) talking about *Walls of Hope* and the murals on exhibition at the R2 Gallery. (Running time is 12’12”)



JOSÉ LUIS LOPEZ

Artist Statement

Since its inception, the mezcal graphic has been a sincere tribute to those symbols that identify us as Mexicans. Just as we have many varieties of agaves that only grow and reproduce in our territory, we also have crafts, festivals, traditions, herbalism and rituals that give us identity.

All these symbols will always accompany us wherever we go. Those images that remain etched in our memory are vestiges of that place to which we once belonged. See children play marbles, see the porters and vendors in the markets, the village aunts sitting in the plaza talking, the rituals and offerings for the day our dead visit us, the masks and dances that are used in our parties; All these images that we grew up with are important because while we walk through other towns, other regions, and even if we cross borders, they function as those small traces that we leave behind in order to return to the origin.

In the same way, this selection of images serves as a tribute to all those characters who, like Marichuy (Maria de Jesus Patricio Martinez, traditional doctor, defender of indigenous rights and in 2018 spokesperson and representative of the National Indigenous Congress in Mexico) have exercised their freedom and the right to defend our languages, traditions and symbolisms with dignity that give us our identities.

Biography

After studying Communication and Journalism at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), he ventured into a photographic project that changed his life: recording cultural contamination in the Lacandon Jungle. This adventure led him for the first time to what would become his second home: San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. At this stage he did Public Radio and wrote for local media, quickly integrating into the

San Cristobal cultural wave.

He returned to Mexico City to work as a bank clerk and was then able to return with some resources to the Chiapas city where he would live for 15 years, exploring, through his own business, the wonderful world of mezcal. A universe that introduced him to places and incredible people who prompted the need to begin his graphic work, debuting in the mezcal label “Los Amorosos” that remains in the memory and mezcal culture of the city.

Nowadays José is based between Mexico City, Torreón and San Cristóbal, his graphic work continues to evolve within personal folders among which stand out the #mexicana herbolaria, #oficiosnextinción and of course the #graficamezcalera where symbolism, flora, fauna converge and the various characters from the fantastic world of rural Mexico and their spirits, among which the wisdom of mezcal stands out.

Instagram [@jose_lo](#)

Website lugardehuida.com



TONY ORTEGA

Artist Statement

Throughout history, artists have responded to social concerns around them with artwork that depicts culture, social injustice, human rights, environmental concerns and political power. As a Chicano artist my identity, cultural, traditions and geographic background are integral in my art. For numerous artists and myself these experiences, our cultural hybridity, becomes a foundation in our artwork, addressing the distinctions between the worlds we experience or ways that they combine them to form a new outlook of our identity.

I merge abstraction, simplification, and realism. My work combines flat space with cubical space and forms a new ambiguous space. I combine vertical and horizontal elements that produce a solid, confident, and orderly sense of structure. This allows me to juxtapose and superimpose unlikely images, symbols and words to encourage opportunities for the bending of meaning and the warping of time and place.

Biography

Tony Ortega holds an MFA in drawing and painting from the University of Colorado and is currently a professor for Regis University. In 2018 he was the Regis College faculty lecture of the year. He was the recipient of the coveted Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1999) and the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1998). He has been a working artist and teacher for the past 39 years. Tony Ortega's lifelong goal is to contribute to a better understanding of cultural diversity by addressing the culture, history and experiences of Chicanos/Latinos through his art. His work can be found in the collections of the Denver Art Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum and the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center. He has exhibited extensively in the United States, Latin America and other parts of the world. Tony's artwork can be

found in Denver, Colorado at the William Havu Gallery.

For more information on his artwork, please visit his web site at: www.tonyortega.net



Short films featuring Tony!

2017 [“Artist Tony Ortega on #ArtLife”](#) by ArtistsNetwork
Sponsored by Liquitex
(Showing in the R2 Gallery; in English, running time is 3’41”)



2020 [“Printmaking Featured Artist: Tony Ortega”](#)
by Arvada Center
(In English, running time is 4’19”)



FANEL REYES

Artist Statement

I work mainly with a clay called Donají, which is extracted from a mountain near the city. This clay is brown when wet and has beautiful reddish tones when burned at a temperature of 900 degrees Celsius. Another interesting feature is that it is a very very fine clay even though it has not been sifted, which allows making small details and makes it very malleable.

The tools I use come from a teaching of traditional potters: everything is a tool. Like them, I try to buy specialized objects to work in clay, but so far, there are a few that are my favorites: a polished quartz that I use to burnish the pieces, wooden sticks and needles for detailing, sponges to smooth and even out the pieces. pieces, brushes to apply engobes and a circle cutter when I need a more exact shape. I also use thin thread and an awl. This year I added something new: a wooden Pan Pan: a Japanese tool for making uniform clay plates; we hope to achieve new pieces with it.

My workspace is whatever table is available (as long as it’s stable). By storing my little tools in a case my workshop becomes portable.

As for burning, I can diversify the appearance of my pieces using old traditional techniques of the pottery communities: red slips from San Marcos Tlapazola, black with oxygen reduction from San Bartolo Coyotepec or enamels from Santa María Atzompa. I have also experimented a couple of times with the white slip from Amatenango del Valle and I hope soon to make pieces with the techniques of Río Blanco Tonaltepec and Los Reyes Metzontla.

Biography

I was born in Oaxaca, Mexico. My family is from the coast of the state and I grew up surrounded by food made from corn in clay pots and tortillas made on a comal. I am the first generation to be born and grow up in the city, but I always loved my whole life around rural work. Something very important in my life is my roots and my identity.

I have a degree in Graphic Design, since it was the career that most closely matched my interest in all things visual: colors, shapes, art history, drawing and even a bit of architecture. In the professional part I specialize in illustration, editorial design and branding.

When I finished university I became independent and I was working in an advertising agency in Mexico City but despite enjoying it, I longed for Oaxaca. After three years, I went back and started working with the clay. My education in ceramics was not formal at all, I took a small workshop (for children!) In the House of Culture of the City at the age of 25 and from there I took a little bit of clay home to start practicing.

The rest I have learned by watching and living with traditional potters. In Oaxaca there are about 70 pottery communities from the coast to the mountains and that is the type of knowledge that interests me: that which is inherited from one potter to another. The potters taught me that it is not necessary to have a large workshop, many specialized tools and professional kilns. My hands and a small space to make an open burning are enough.

Eventually my clay work has been progressing slowly. My next apprenticeship will be making utilitarian pieces. My maxim is: think of everything that I would like to exist and do it with my hands.

The latter also applies to the illustrations and engravings that I make for myself or as part of commissions from clients and friends.

Website fanelreyes.com

Instagram [@fannnel](https://www.instagram.com/fannnel)



ARMANDO SILVA

There is a NEW MURAL in the Carbondale Creative District by Greeley-based artist Armando Silva! Armando spent 4 days in town in early June this year to create a 25+ foot tall mural at Stepping Stones in Carbondale, located at 1010 Garfield Ave near Highway 133.

Biography

Armando Silva is a painter, muralist, and performer who uses his artistic superpowers to tell powerful stories, build community, and inspire youth through art. As a recipient of a Governor's Creative Leadership award from Colorado Creative Industries in 2018, Armando has been celebrated for his collaborations with cities, non-profits, businesses, and educators across the state and beyond.

Armando was born in Sombrerete, Zacatecas, Mexico. At age 5, his family moved to Northern Colorado to pursue the American Dream, and Armando submerged himself into visual and performing arts as a way to communicate and find his identity as an ESL student. After developing his talents throughout high school, he decided to invest in them and received a BA in Fine Arts from The University of Northern

Colorado.

Armando believes his artistic abilities come with the responsibility to lead, educate, and give back to the community. His artistic practice focuses on compelling portraits that tell personal stories, sometimes created on canvases in his studio, or other times created through live performance in front of thousands. Armando's large-scale mural installations give communities a way to communicate messages that can't always be said in words.

Armando currently lives in Greeley, Colorado and is deeply embedded in creative leadership throughout the community. He co-directs the Colorado Dance Collective, a non-profit adult dance company. His art studio space contributes to the revitalization of Downtown Greeley, and he serves on the Greeley Creative District board. Armando is on the Think360 artist roster, an agency that places working artists in schools for workshops, residencies, and performances.

Website artmandosilva.com



About Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones provides essential services and support to underserved youth who would not have access otherwise. Every youth is entitled to services and programming that enable them to thrive socially and emotionally. Stepping Stones is committed to providing free services to youth, young adults, and their families in order to meet the needs of

the community and each individual we serve.

Strong relationships with positive adult role models is crucial to the future success of the youth we serve. Our mentorship program is based on a continuity of love and care with a focus on meeting the individual needs of the mind, body, and spirit of each individual.

Stepping Stones instills in youth a love of learning and an appreciation for individual pursuits throughout life. We are dedicated to teaching the skills youth will need to become self-sufficient, happy, and healthy.

Learn more at steppingstonesrfv.org.



R2 Gallery Committee Members

Staff: Brian Colley, Staci Dickerson, Amy Kimberly

Board Liaisons: Nicholas DiFrank, Leah Swan

Non-staff: Lindsay Jones (Chair), Savanna LaBauve, Vanessa Porras, Kirk Robinson, Laura Stover, David Thickman, and Matt Vickers

