



Julio Cesar Morales, *Pinatas*, watercolors

Morales gets it. Narco-tunnels and smuggler-piñatas are not aberrations of the global economy; they are the economy. In a world gone deliriously pirate, the arts of contrabando are the arts of the future.

- Josh Kun, from the exhibition catalogue -

MEDIA ALERT:

Julio Cesar Morales

Contrabando

April 2 – May 28, 2011

Gallery Reception: Saturday, April 2, 4:00 to 7:00 pm
Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern,
161 Jessie St. (at New Montgomery)
San Francisco, CA 94105

- San Francisco based artist, educator and curator.
- Debut exhibition at Frey Norris.
- New watercolors, architectural drawings and models and video work on display reflect challenging ambivalence around legal and illicit movement of contraband across porous US/Mexican border.
- 20 page catalogue with essay by Josh Kun, professor in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at USC.

“History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme.” - Mark Twain -

SAN FRANCISCO, CA. *Contrabando* is a multi-media exhibition that references the larger sociological phenomenon in which immigrant economic strategies come to infiltrate urban landscapes. The adaptive nature of immigrants is seen the world round and throughout time, but Morales focuses on the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the Latin American immigrant labor force in California.

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Contrabando is a study of the realities and consequences of exploited labor that simultaneously aims to record the living history of labor. Morales is interested in the way consciousness shifts as it moves between languages, cultures, and political systems.

Included in *Contrabando* is the on-going series Undocumented Interventions, a project that utilizes hand-colored watercolor on paper paintings to depict human trafficking documented through smuggling themselves into the United States. The images are culled both from the artist's memory of growing up in the Tijuana/San Diego area and actual photographs from the U.S. Customs website. The paintings are an archive of the multiple adaptations and customizations that have taken place when people alter vehicles, piñatas, washer/dryers, and various equipment as they attempt to cross the border.

Another project called *Narquitectos*, takes its name from architects in Mexico that are commissioned by drug cartels to create tunnels underneath the Mexico/US border. Inspired by documentation of discovered sites, the resulting pencil drawings read as blueprints that reveal the location and adjacent tunnel. A series of wood architectural models depicting the above and below ground scenes accompanies the renderings.

Additional new works will take the form of video and sculpture.

A 20-page catalogue is available with an essay by Josh Kun. Josh Kun is a professor in the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism and the Department of American Studies & Ethnicity at USC, where he also directs the Popular Music Project at the Norman Lear Center.

For additional information and images please contact the gallery (415) 346-7812 or email melissa@freynorris.com