

ARTWORK IN EXHIBITION (Alphabetical by title)

2012: Super-Bato Saves the World, 2009
Customized slot machine, coins, and payout cups,
edition of 8
Courtesy of Electric Works, San Francisco, CA

Atlas and the Arugulas, 2008
UV-cured acrylic with watercolor on Amate paper,
edition no. 7 of 10
Courtesy of Magnolia Editions, Oakland, CA

Border Patrol on Acid, 2007
Intaglio in 1 color with etching and acrylic paint
hand painting on Somerset Velvet soft white, 3/8 AP,
edition of 26
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

*The Enlightened Savage's Guide to Economic
Theory*, 2010
Acrylic, water based oils, photo transfers and decals
on handmade Amate paper
Courtesy of the artist and Lisa Sette Gallery,
Scottsdale

The Headache, 2010
Etching with chine collé, 1/10 AP
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Homage to the Un-Square and My Cat Frida, 2009
Intaglio in 4 colors with hand-coloring on Somerset
Velvet soft white, 1/6 AP, edition of 23
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

*Illegal Alien's Guide to Somewhere Over the
Rainbow*, 2010
Lithograph, TP
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

*Illegal Alien's Guide to the Concept of Relative
Surplus Value*, 2009
Color lithograph
Private Collection

My Cat Santos had a Nightmare, 2010
Intaglio in 2 colors with hand-coloring on Revere
Suede warm white
Courtesy of the artist

One Recession Watchdog (Instant Update), 2011
Mixed media with embedded electronics and wooden
case, edition no. 2 of 8
Courtesy of Magnolia Editions, Oakland, CA

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Enrique Chagoya was born in Mexico City in 1953. He immigrated to the United States in the late 1970s and graduated with a B.F.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute, then went on to receive an M.A. and an M.F.A. from the University of California at Berkeley. Since 1995, Chagoya has been teaching printmaking at Stanford University. He is a prolific artist whose works hang in some of the nation's most esteemed galleries, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Los Angeles County Museum.

SUPPORT

This exhibition was made possible through the generosity of donors to The Fresh Art Fund, members of the di Rosa Collectors Council and *Onward!* Young Collectors. We wish to thank all the lenders to the exhibition, including Enrique Chagoya, Gallery Paule Anglim, Electric Works, Magnolia Editions and a private collection. Ine for the opening reception provided by Ceja Vineyards. Food provided by C CASA.

Orozco Meets Victor Hugo at the Auction House,
2009

Intaglio in 2 colors with hand-coloring on Somerset
Velvet soft white, edition of 8 APs
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Pyramid Scheme, 2009
Archival pigment prints on cans, edition of 40
Courtesy of Electric Works, San Francisco, CA

Return to Goya No. 9 (No te Escapas), 2010
Intaglio with letterpress in 2 colors on Revere Ivory,
edition of 10 APs
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Thinking of Ensor and My Cat Diego, 2007
Intaglio in 1 color with etching and acrylic paint
hand painting on Somerset Velvet soft white, 3/6 AP,
edition of 22
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Time Out, 2009
Charcoal and pastel on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Too Big, 2009
Charcoal and pastel on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Untitled (Homage to José Clemente Orozco), 2010
Sumi ink and acrylic on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Untitled (Homage to José Clemente Orozco), 2010
Sumi ink and acrylic on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim

Untitled (I am levitating), 2010
India ink, acrylic on archival vintage paper with the
ghost of an etching
Private Collection

Untitled (I had a dream), 2010
India ink, acrylic on archival vintage paper with the
ghost of an etching
Private Collection

When Paradise Arrived, 1988
Charcoal and pastel on paper
#867 (1988, di Rosa collection)

ENRIQUE CHAGOYA



Surviving Paradise/Sobreviviendo el Paraíso

February 12-April 16, 2011



All You Need is Love?

It is within the context of family that love becomes most entangled with deeply felt and often-conflicting impulses such as sadness, disappointment, support, critique, worry and hope. On a larger scale—that of the human family—the urge to love becomes even more fraught and difficult to navigate. We are complicated and flawed creatures, and loving one another is a bittersweet proposition. I do not think Enrique Chagoya would dedicate so much time to holding a mirror up to humanity if he did not feel the type of concerned, familial love that demands radical intervention, frank discussion and an occasional snap-out-of-it slap to the back of our collective heads.

This larger family Chagoya speaks to (whether we/they listen or not) is one burdened by the weight of Paradise. Paradise as a critical lens has been a preoccupation of Chagoya’s throughout his artistic career, and extends to the name of this exhibition, abbreviated from the title of his most recent codex *Surviving Paradise/A Noble Savage’s Guide* (2010). The weight of the paradisiacal in his work seems to be less about the distance between humanity and the idea of the divine, but rather about what Raymond Williams called “the older classical contrast between *humanity* and that which was less than *human*, whether *animal* or (significantly) *barbaric*.”¹ Throughout Chagoya’s work, we see the often-tragic results of a dominant culture’s unyielding will to transform all other cultures through its own politics, economics, culture and religion. As Chagoya has pointed out in reference to the arrival of Europeans in North America, there was already an advanced civilization here. His iconic work *When Paradise Arrived* (1988) is a poignant commentary on this meeting of peoples. From Spanish Conquistadors to contemporary politicians and economists, history is a constant restatement of the urge to subdue, reform and civilize cultures perceived as less evolved, or barbaric. In Chagoya’s work, “cannibals,” “illegal aliens” and “savages” are characters that appear with regularity, yet these terms are often turned around to point back at those in the dominant position.

I do not think the Paradise we see in Chagoya’s work springs solely from an untouched Arcadian or Edenic pastoral utopia, but rather represents the strivings, obligations and impositions of today’s complex global economic and political forces. Traditionally, the notion of Paradise is one of longing for a lost and perhaps unrecoverable past. Chagoya’s oeuvre shows us that in practice, the paradisiacal is a powerful and often dark tool for the construction of a future that denies alternate, more humane possibilities for moving forward. In the corporate vision of a globalized world that Chagoya observes, that future is increasingly heralded by a universe of product logos, standardized pop-culture and purveyors of adjustable rate mortgages. Consumption becomes the default goal to strive for, and despite the existence of alternatives, entrenchment of the current system makes it a beast that is difficult to move.

Chagoya is a master of appropriating symbols of culture, politics and commerce, creating a complicated juxtaposition of narratives that destabilizes the viewer’s point of view. He combines the mainstream with the subjugated and forgotten to encourage a useful cognitive dissonance that raises questions about the structure of the world around us. Importantly, he asks us to consider the actual costs of Paradise in human, cultural and ecological terms. Without preaching or overtly pushing any agenda other than sanity, Chagoya encourages us to surrender the luxury of a single perspective. As some of Chagoya’s recent work with maps elucidates, the West and East, the global North and global South are inextricably linked in a chain of dependency that for better or worse is persistent and perhaps irrevocable. We are all in this together; yet seem incapable of acknowledging this simple fact.

Recent events on the national political and cultural stages have generated much-needed discussion about the balance of vitriol and civility in public discourse. In this context, part of the importance of Chagoya’s artwork lies in its ability to challenge us to be better. Like certain artistic predecessors—Francisco Goya, Honoré Daumier and José Clemente Orozco spring to mind immediately—Chagoya applies an observational and poetically critical eye on the follies of society’s institutions. This is a vision that encompasses a very *human* combination of sadness and horror, tempered (perhaps necessarily so) by satirical wit and the fantastical. Whether addressing the foibles of politicians, the burdens of economic collapse, impending global warming or irrational fear of immigrants, Chagoya’s body of work seems driven by an abiding sense that despite a seemingly inexhaustible supply of madness, our human family is one that we can and should fight for. A cookie-cutter Paradise designed in a boardroom or on a battlefield is not what we need. Yet, it is what we are getting. In the end, if the human family is to survive this Paradise, I believe it might require a lot more of the tough love offered by Chagoya’s artwork.

-Robert Wuilfe, Curator

1. Raymond Williams, *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 149.

Image on front: Enrique Chagoya, *Untitled (Homage to Jose Clemente Orozco)*, 2010. Sumi ink and acrylic on paper, 92” x 140”

¿Todo lo que necesitas es amor?

Es dentro del contexto familiar donde el amor se ve más involucrado con impulsos profundamente arraigados que, a menudo, nos conflictúan, tales como tristeza, decepción, apoyo, crítica, preocupación y esperanza. En una mayor escala —que la de la familia humana— la necesidad de amar llega a ser aún más intensa y difícil de navegar. Somos criaturas complicadas y dañadas, y el amarnos los unos a los otros es una propuesta amarga y dulce, a la vez. No pienso que Enrique Chagoya dedicara tanto tiempo a sostener un espejo ante la humanidad si él no sintiera el tipo de amor familiar, que se preocupa, y que exige la intervención radical, la discusión franca y una bofetada ocasional en la parte posterior de nuestras cabezas colectivas que nos haga reaccionar.

Esta más extensa familia a la que Chagoya le habla (sin importar si escuchamos o no) es una que lleva el peso del Paraíso. El Paraíso como un lente crítico ha sido una preocupación de Chagoya a lo largo de su carrera artística, y lo extiende hasta el nombre de esta exhibición, abreviada del título de su código más reciente *Sobreviviendo el Paraíso/ Guía de un Salvaje Noble* (2010). El peso de lo paradisiaco en su trabajo parece estar menos relacionado con la distancia entre la humanidad y la idea de lo divino, sino más bien con lo que Raymond Williams llamó “el viejo clásico contraste entre *humanidad* y aquél que era menos *humano*, ya sea *animal* o (significativamente) *barbárico*.”¹ Por medio del trabajo de Chagoya, vemos los resultados a menudo trágicos del deseo implacable de una cultura dominante por transformar a todas las demás culturas a través de su propia política, economía, cultura y religión. Tal como Chagoya ha precisado en referencia a la llegada de europeos a Norteamérica, aquí ya existía una civilización avanzada. Su trabajo icónico *Cuando el Paraíso nos Llegó* (1988) es un un doloroso comentario sobre la reunión de esta gente. Desde Conquistadores Españoles, hasta políticos y economistas contemporáneos, la historia es una constante reafirmación de la necesidad de someter, de reformar y de civilizar las culturas percibidas como subdesarrolladas o barbáricas. En el trabajo de Chagoya los “caníbales”, los “extraterrestres ilegales” y los “salvajes” son personajes que aparecen con regularidad. Sin embargo, estos términos son cambiados a menudo para señalar a aquellos que están en la posición dominante.

No pienso que el Paraíso que vemos en el trabajo de Chagoya salte solamente de un arcadian intocable o de una utopía pastoral Edénica. Más bien, representa los esfuerzos, las obligaciones y las imposiciones propias de la compleja economía global actual y las fuerzas políticas. Tradicionalmente, la noción de Paraíso es una que anhela un pasado perdido y, probablemente, irrecuperable. El oeuvre de Chagoya nos demuestra que en la práctica, lo paradisiaco es una poderosa y, por lo general, oscura herramienta para la construcción de un futuro que niega posibilidades alternativas, mucho más

humanas, para seguir adelante. En la visión corporativa de un mundo globalizado que Chagoya observa, ese futuro es anunciado cada vez más por el universo de logotipos de productos, por una cultura pop estandarizada y por los proveedores de las hipotecas de tarifa ajustable. El consumo se convierte en la meta por la cual esforzarse, y a pesar de la existencia de alternativas, el atrincheramiento del sistema actual lo convierte en una bestia que es difícil de mover.

Chagoya es experto en apropiarse de símbolos de cultura, política y comercio, creando una complicada yuxtaposición de narrativas que desestabilizan el punto de vista del espectador. Él combina la corriente principal con los subyugados y los olvidados para fomentar una disonancia cognitiva que sea útil, y que plantee preguntas sobre la estructura del mundo que nos rodea. En gran medida, él nos pide que consideremos los costos reales del Paraíso en términos humanos, culturales y ecológicos. Sin el afán de sermonear, y sin abiertamente comprometer ningún otro tema que no sea la cordura, Chagoya nos alienta a renunciar al lujo de una sola perspectiva. Como algunos de los trabajos recientes de Chagoya con los mapas nos lo aclaran: el oeste y el este, el Norte global y el Sur global están ligados inextricablemente en una cadena de dependencia que, para bien o para mal, es persistente y quizás irrevocable. Todos estamos juntos en esto; pero aún no somos capaces de reconocer este simple hecho.

Los acontecimientos recientes ocurridos en escenarios políticos y culturales nacionales han generado una anticipada discusión sobre el equilibrio entre la aspereza y la cortesía en el discurso público. En este contexto, parte de la importancia del arte de Chagoya se encuentra en su capacidad para desafiarnos a ser mejores. Como ciertos predecesores artísticos —Francisco Goya, Honoré Daumier y José Clemente Orozco saltan inmediatamente a la mente— Chagoya emplea un ojo crítico muy observador y poético en las locuras de las instituciones sociales. Ésta es una visión que abarca una mezcla muy *humana* de tristeza y de horror, templada (quizás necesariamente) por ingenio satírico y por lo fantástico. Así se trate de resaltar los puntos débiles de los políticos, el peso del colapso económico, el inminente calentamiento global o el miedo irracional a los inmigrantes, la esencia del trabajo de Chagoya parece estar regida por la fija sensación de que, a pesar de ser un aparente suministro inagotable de locura, nuestra familia humana es una por la cual podemos y debemos luchar. Un Paraíso “mandado a hacer”, diseñado en una sala de juntas o en un campo de batalla, no es lo que necesitamos. No obstante, eso es lo que estamos consiguiendo. Al final, si la familia humana debe sobrevivir este Paraíso, me parece que podría requerir de mucho más de ese amor resistente que ofrece el arte de Chagoya.

-Robert Wuilfe, Conservador
Traducido por Jimena Motta