

The Dallas Morning News

'Good Heaven/Bad Heaven'

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Published: December 8, 2000



2. *Los de abajo/Los de arriba* by **Rosemary Meza**, human hair, gouache, graphite and colored pencil (2000)

WHAT: "Good Heaven/Bad Heaven," new work by **Steve Cruz**, **Rosemary Meza** and Tony Schraufnagel at 500X Gallery.

BACKGROUND: Dallas artists Mr. Cruz and Ms. Meza sport a sense of humor as dry as a crisp saltine. It's no wonder they're married. Their erotically loaded artwork, however - his stylized acrylic paintings of Mexican pop stars and her frantic, swirling sketches of cherubic figures - are about as syrupy as paintings get.

Her love of Renaissance art and draftsmanship combines with a fascination with Mesoamerican civilization and a belief that "the erotic and the sacred" have been intertwined for millennia. His interest in low Hispanic culture - wrestling, low-riders and barrio machismo - melds with a comic-book feel and a vivid, contemporary, somewhat feminine palette.

Mr. Schraufnagel of Denton has impressed area audiences with his architectural metal sculptures for years.

HOW IT LOOKS: Mr. Cruz and Ms. Meza's trip to Spain last summer - an artistic pilgrimage to see great works - has clearly influenced the work of each.

She has combined images and sketches she made of Spanish and Flemish masterpieces into several typically majestic, provocative wall mosaics. Think of your favorite 17th-century painting and substitute shadowy, voluptuous women using sometimes-suggestive gestures. Ms. Meza has also used human hair - mostly her own - as sewn lines in six small drawings.

He's added bullfighters, Centaur-like bull-humans, smarmy art snobs and gun-toting femmes fatales to the excitable wrestlers, female nudes and loud backgrounds of his works on wood. Film noir-inspired stills cement his exploration of gender roles within Mexican - and Spanish - life. Look for influences from the trip in the Peter Paul Rubens references in *Cojones* and *Tres Muses*, and the Italian futurist forms in *Cumbia Toro*.

Mr. Schraufnagel's two works include *Double Chair*, a 12-foot-long iron chair-bench hybrid, and *See Through*, a voyeuristic installation involving doorknobs, theater seating and fluorescent light.

DETAILS: On display through Dec. 17 at 500X Gallery, 500 Exposition Ave. Hours: Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment. Free. 214-828-1111. Mike Daniel

PHOTO(S): 1. *Mexican Standoff* by **Steve Cruz**, acrylic on wood (1999) 2. *Los de abajo/Los de arriba* by **Rosemary Meza**, human hair, gouache, graphite and colored pencil (2000); LOCATION NOTE: These photos were not sent to the library for archiving.