

KEVIN RIVERA

BFA MANIFEST 2023 SHOW



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

May 12-June 6, 2023

OUT OF THE BASEMENT: 2023 UNDERGRADUATE FINE ARTS THESIS EXHIBITION

Out of the Basement: 2023 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition features the works of thirteen BFA candidates in Columbia's Fine Arts program. The exhibition, which includes paintings, drawings, sculpture, prints, books, garments, video, performance, and installation works, represents the culmination of four years of development of a cohesive body of work for each artist while earning their degrees.

Participating artists: Jacob Ashba, Charlotte Briskin, Daniela Castro, Michelle Goldshmidt, Amairani Martinez, Ariaunna McCloud, emmalyn mueller, Kevin Rivera, Carolina Romo, James Ross, Sofie Way, Cordelia Weatherby, Emma Wilmarth.

Out of the Basement: 2023 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition is presented in conjunction with the Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS) and the Art and Art History department, and Adam Brooks, Professor at Columbia College Chicago.

KEVIN RIVERA

Kevin Rivera's art follows the theme of Redefining Masculinity in a Hispanic/Latin Household, a body of work that tackles the toxic masculinity traits of machismo in many Hispanic and Latin families. Society pushes young adolescent men to be raised as leaders and take control of their families through dictatorship characteristics due to Mexican cultural expectations. His artwork highlights what machismo has done to the mental health of young men. Rivera's passion to change the standards of masculinity and help foster an environment that allows men to be emotional or feminine without judgment motivates his practice. Rivera's work contains symbolism in paintings and sculpture, and performance of positive masculinity through video documentation. . As the conversation of masculinity becomes a mainstream topic, Rivera's work showcases how a man interacts with their feminine side and pushes the normalization of men wearing dresses and putting on makeup. Rivera offers viewers a deeper level of understanding that toxic masculinity in a Hispanic/Latin household must be abolished and transformed into what can and should be positive masculinity.

Kevin Rivera is a Hispanic mixed media artist who focuses upon masculinity in a Hispanic/Latin household. His work includes painting, performance, spray paint and other combinations of techniques.

Throughout his youth he experienced the toxic expectations a man has to express within a Hispanic household. After taking charge of their choices and embracing the feminine world Kevin introduces his journey, highlighting toxic masculinity and redefining what is positive masculinity through his feminine experience. Kevin will earn a BFA at Columbia College Chicago in Spring, 2023.

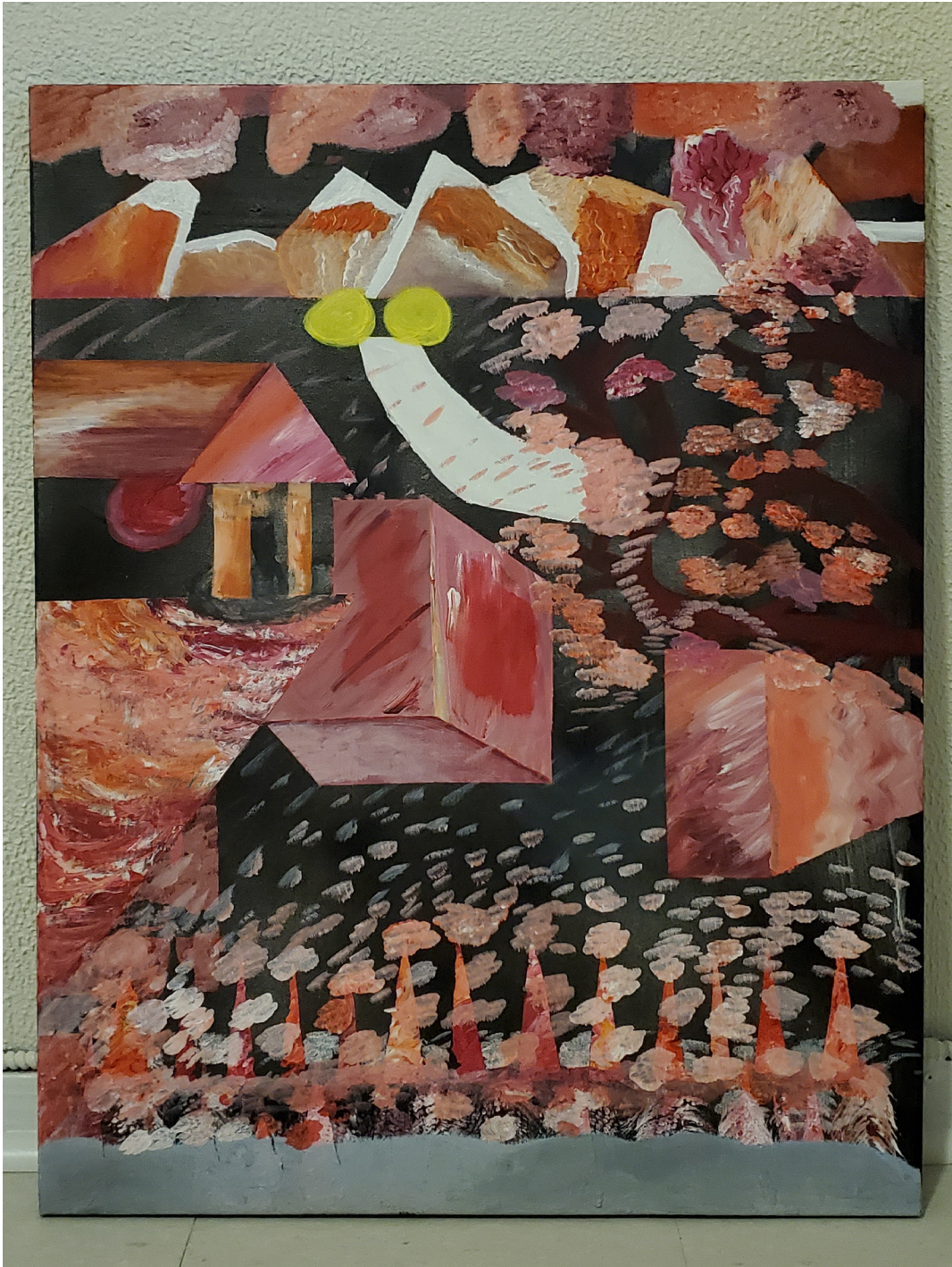
Instagram: [@kevilions_arts](https://www.instagram.com/kevilions_arts)



Stop She is crying, 2022, spray paint on paper, 9' x 11'



Graffiti Rose, 2023, spray paint on paper, 20" x 18"



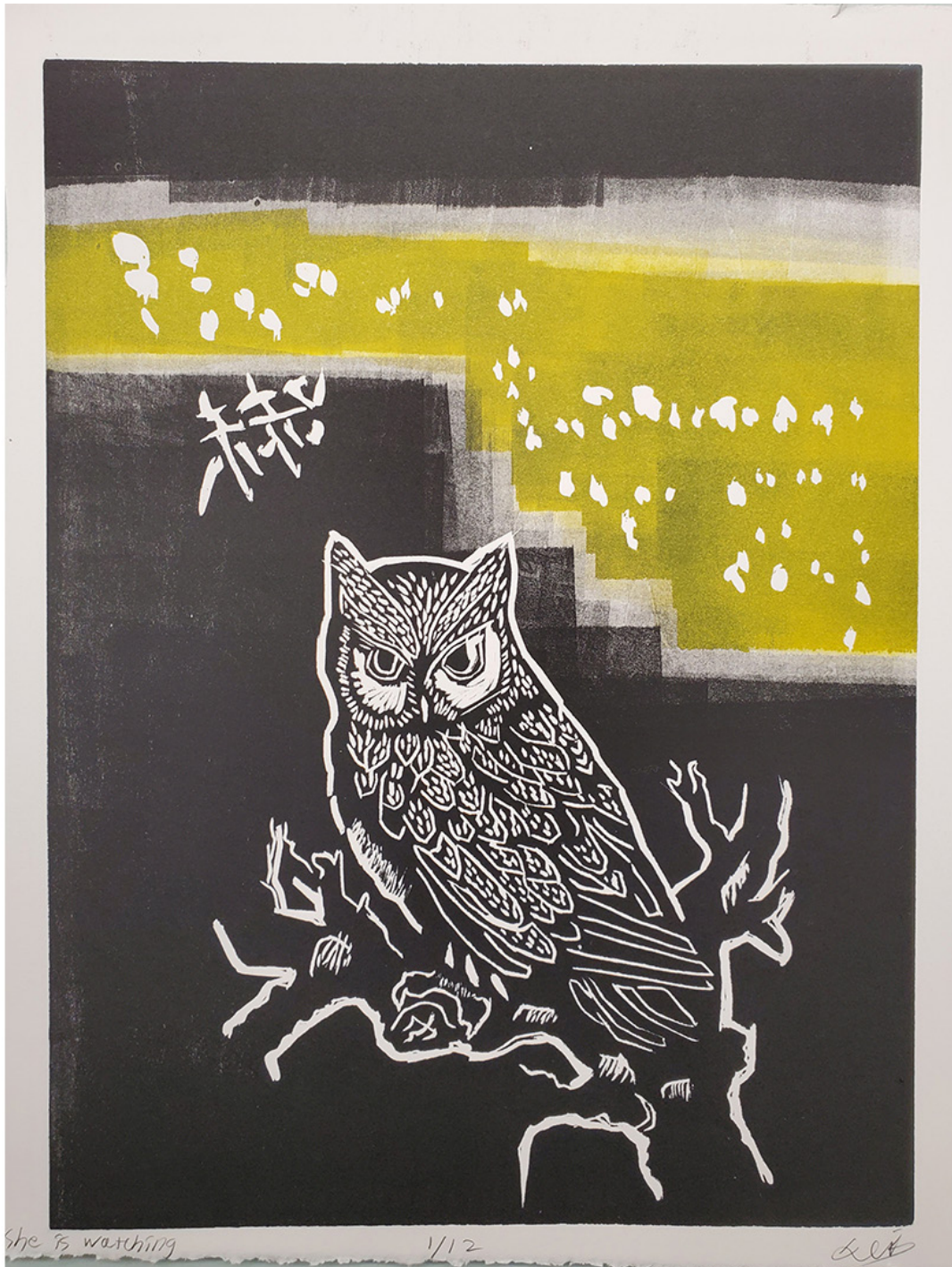
Evaporation, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 20" x 16"



*F*ck your standards, 2022, photographic documentation*



Project Identity, from photographic documentation series, #4, 2021



She is Watching, 2021, relief print, 18" x 16"



Sadness, 2023, heavy duty acrylic on canvas, 17" x 11"

INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN RIVERA

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

Rachel Manlubatan: What audiences do you want to reach the most as you explore toxic masculinity, and why? Would you say your artwork has been readily accepted by specific groups, or have you been met with challenges from viewers?

Kevin Rivera: I like to refer to my targeted audience as the Hispanic and Latin communities. Machismo is heavily rooted from religious affiliations and cultural backgrounds. I want to foster a new kind of environment for the next generation about how to express yourself as a young Hispanic boy through positive masculinity because we are still struggling with pulling back and forth on what is positive masculinity to the communities and what is considered toxic masculinity. By the end of my semester I will have enough content to demonstrate to my audience about redefining masculinity in a Hispanic/Latin household. I'm looking forward to meeting challenges from viewers.

RM: Can you elaborate on the differences between the definition of masculinity in Western culture versus machismo in Hispanic/Latin cultures? How do you highlight the distinction between the two in your artwork and the materials manipulated in each piece?

KR: I'm currently writing a thesis on redefining representations of masculinity in Hispanic/Latin communities. With this I have acknowledged the proper research and from what I can say the difference of masculinity in Western culture versus machismo in Hispanic/Latin cultures is the beliefs and values the Mexican and Mexican American people have. The Hispanic communities in America are more in the positive way of thinking of masculinity because they aren't told how to act as a man through the patriarchal system established in Mexico. In America there is no system asking the Hispanic/Latin people to

act the stereotypical requirements of men and women. By utilizing video documentation and performance I'm allowing myself to demonstrate what toxic masculinity has done to the youth and challenge it through the usage of femininity and with these two combined elements construct the presentation of positive masculinity.

RM: Your techniques and composition vary throughout your art, as you play with contrasting palettes and the idea of texture and flatness. Where would you say you are within your artistic journey of discovering your style? Where did you begin and where are you planning to go?

KR: The more I discover different ways of artmaking and how I can infuse that into my art practice is quite the journey. A lot of my work tends to be with chosen bright colors that can mirror the actions that are presented within the context of my content. I try to be precise on the color because I believe it reflects not only the artist but also the work that is presented, for example, I have a canvas piece that is painted with multiple layers of pink. The brush strokes are more fluid than rigid which helps bring the emotional element of calm. With this flat style is how I feel where I stand on my artistic journey. I'm planning on going even bigger and bringing more color elements within my performances.

RM: Throughout your wide breadth of media, your photography and videos often involve you as the model or performer. Can you walk through the process of creating a piece by yourself when you're the subject in it? What are you trying to communicate by exposing your own identity and personality?

KR: I always love answering this question, the reason why I'm the subject of my work is because it's my story. As a man we aren't given

INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN RIVERA

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

the accessibility to understand the feminine world. We don't know how makeup works or how to style ourselves with vibrant bright colors. Men are always seen with colors such as blue, black, and red because retail stores claim it's aligned with our gender. However, when a man wants to discover the feminine world, they have no idea what they're doing, that is the idea behind my reason. I'm trying to represent a man's journey through the feminine world and how they react and act upon discovering this new world that they enter. By exposing my own identity and personality I'm setting the example on how a man such as myself discovers this feminine world because I personally never got the chance in my youth on how makeup and such are utilized. If a man within my audience sees another man putting on makeup and critiquing toxic masculinity, I'm setting the bar, the example by communicating and saying. It's 2023. I think it's about time Mexican boys can wear a dress.

RM: What is positive masculinity to you, and what does it look like in relation to what masculinity is right now? How do your other techniques, such as spray paint and sculpture, portray this same concept in a different manner?

KR: Masculinity right now; no crying, be a man, don't show any emotions. Machismo in Hispanic/Latin culture contains male dominance, aggressiveness. We can't teach the next generation that Machismo is the right way of being a man. It's too toxic and there's research behind the idea of Machismo being a representation of toxic masculinity. Positive masculinity looks like a man who isn't afraid to be emotional, one who isn't afraid to express their feminine side by wearing makeup and isn't afraid of being open-minded. I like to view spray paint as a masculine tool, spray paint is used more in the construction side, the

side where the Hispanic/Latin men are with their jobs such as construction, spray painting cars and furniture. For a masculine tool to be used through a feminine lens is an intriguing element because previous spray paint artists used this tool to create a more design-based art practice. However, I'm using it in a more contemporary direction, spray painting isn't hard but it's also not easy which is the fun behind it.



THE DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

The DEPS Artist Profile Series presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community. The DEPS Artist Profile Series is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan and Sierra Delamarter. Graphic design is also managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at: colum.edu/deps

Contact information: Mark Porter, mporter@colum.edu / 312.369.6643

Follow us on [Instagram!](#)

Like us on [Facebook!](#)

Glass Curtain Gallery: 1104 S Wabash Ave, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60605

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.