

Oscar Rodriguez's Artist Statement

My work explores the intersections of quilting, fabric collage, and sculpture. I combine techniques such as collage, piecing, applique, and quilting to forge works of art rich in color and texture. Juxtaposing technical aspects of quilting with the free-motion expressionism of "thread-painting" allows me the freedom to approach each piece without any certain fixed expectations. Allowing the material to create its own contrast adds to the visual interest of each piece.

Using primarily fabric and thread, I arrange the transferred fabric images and then assemble the pieces by machine. When I'm ready to quilt, I "thread-paint" over portions of the image to create additional layers of color, texture, and detail. This allows for the work to take on the qualities of movement and depth.

My inspiration comes from many sources; a particular fabric, a fixed memory, observations and interactions with people, landscapes and cultures that I experience while traveling or in my own Los Angeles neighborhood. My work captures a moment in time that left an indelible impression on my mind.

My current work focuses on the more personal intersection of portraits and moments in time that speak to the Latinx experience. This work portrays the ways in which families, partners and communities are interconnected through the process of fabric collage.

I encourage the viewer to look closer; the medium of fabric itself is more approachable than painting. There is a comfort and familiarity in blankets and fabric that allows the viewer to step closer, to feel less intimidated by the presentation and therefore become more open to the work's narrative. The use of fabric and threading enables the translation of the work, regardless of the subject matter represented, to be accessible in a manner that invites introspection and connection to the art.

I want to challenge the viewer's perspective of who or what the subject of art can be. Who do they expect to see in a gallery or museum? I want to expand our idea of what representation in art looks like and bring to the forefront people and subject matter that a viewer may not typically see represented in an art space. There is a strength in the everyday experience of both the communities I have grown up in and now live that influence this desire to engage the viewer to recall their own memories