

GEORGE  
RODRIGUEZ

*URBAN GUARDIANS*

*AUGUST 2020*



FOSTER/WHITE GALLERY

# GEORGE RODRIGUEZ

## URBAN GUARDIANS

The Rat and Pigeon are the titular sculptures for this show. To me they symbolize, perseverance, grit and resourcefulness, qualities that are important when building a strong community of people. They are also animals that often get dismissed and criticized but are integral to the make-up of a city. They are the guardians of the urban landscape and I wanted them to resemble entrance guardians in scale, posture, and prestige.

In the exploration of statuary and figurative memorials, I often find myself gravitating towards objects that feel cross-cultural or multi-cultural. Those objects feel like a representation of who I am. I want to give people the opportunity to see and create their own "idol". The interchangeable heads and headless figures in Urban Guardians make that possible. It is playful, absurd and empowering to be able to place a luchador head on the body of the sphinx, to have the Venus of Willendorf with a Benin head or a skull on a rat body. Each combination changes the embodiment and texture of the sculpture. Each combination is as unique as the individual who chooses it. Each combination births a new community member in our urban environment.

As I have worked on this project, the power of a headless statue has also become apparent to me. As monuments around the world are being taken down and destroyed, people are searching for better representations for their communities. Impossible as it may be to represent all different viewpoints, there must be an effort made to make our public art world as unique as the citizens who feed and live within it. The Vessels in this exhibition are tied to a series of icons that I have been looking at for some time and are loosely based on some wonderful masks from Mexico (Michoacán) that depict a devil, angel, king, jaguar and other forms. All of the figures are guardians of morality and mortality. I have translated those figures into vessels, and in doing so, I am playing with the long traditions of utilitarian ceramics and also making them containers of life and the natural elements that affect life. These vessels remind us of the ways in which urban life is inextricably connected to the natural world that persists underneath, around, and within us. Even in the concrete jungle, fire, water, earth and air remain our Urban Guardians.



Sphinx  
ceramic with glaze  
12 X 11 X 28 inches

Urban Guardians





Urban Guardian: Rat  
stoneware with underglaze and glaze  
61 X 36 X 27 inches

Foster/White Gallery



Urban Guardians

Rat and Pigeon Basket  
ceramic with glaze  
31 X 25 X 15 inches











Ancestor  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7 X 8 inches



Aztec  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7 X 8 inches



Bedouin  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7.5 X 8 inches



Benin  
ceramic with glaze  
11 X 7 X 8.5 inches



Blue Rat  
ceramic with glaze  
17.5 X 10 X 15.5 inches





Bowery  
ceramic with glaze  
8.5 X 7.5 X 9 inches



Calavera Antigua  
ceramic with glaze  
7.5 X 6.5 X 8 inches



Calavera con Corona  
ceramic with glaze  
7.25 X 6 X 9 inches



Chola  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7 X 8 inches







Calavera del Aire  
ceramic with glaze  
14.5 X 7.5 X 9 inches



Calavera del Fuego  
ceramic with glaze  
14 X 7.5 X 8.5 inches













Faraway  
ceramic with glaze  
7.5 X 7.25 X 8.75 in.



Ghost  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7.5 X 9 inches



Luchador - Blue Demon  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7 X 8 in.



Etruscan  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7.5 X 9 inches







Miracle Princess  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 8 X 9 inches



Luchador - Santo  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7 X 7.5 inches



El Niño  
ceramic with glaze  
7.5 X 6.5 X 8 inches



Primary  
ceramic with glaze  
8.5 X 7 X 8.5 inches



Mascara Roja  
ceramic with glaze  
8 X 7.5 X 8 inches







Urban Guardians

*Red Pigeon*  
ceramic with glaze  
18 x 10 x 12 inches





Foster/White Gallery

*Seven Indulgences*  
ceramic with glaze  
62 X 36 X 36 inches



George Rodriguez

*Silver Laced Rooster Vase*  
ceramic with glaze  
36 x 23 x 16 inches











George Rodriguez

*Guardia de la Tierra*  
ceramic with glaze  
14.25 X 8 X 8 inches

## GEORGE RODRIGUEZ

### Education

- 2009 MFA Ceramics, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- 2006 BFA Ceramics, University of Texas, El Paso, Texas

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2020 'Urban Guardians,' Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2019 'George Rodriguez: Embellished Narratives,' Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR  
'Reflect and Gather,' MADArt, Seattle, WA
- 2018 Seattle Art Fair, Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA  
'Guardian,' Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, Bainbridge Island, WA
- 2017 'Where is Our Exile?' Stanlee & Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX  
'Sanctuary,' Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2016 'Beneath the Surface,' Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2014 'Here After,' Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2012 'In Costume,' Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA  
'End of the Trail,' Pottery Northwest, Seattle, WA  
'Instrumental Divide,' Rainier Tower, Jeffrey Moose Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2011 'GEORGE,' Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA  
'Symbiotic/Parasitic,' KOBO at Higo, Seattle, WA
- 2009 'The Belle of the Ball,' Ceramic Metal Arts Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2006 'Recess,' Memorial Triangle, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX

### Group Exhibitions

- 2018 'Clay & Politics,' Pottery Northwest, Seattle, WA  
'Stories of Identity: Contemporary Chicana/o artists of Seattle,' Northwest Folklife Festival, Art Not Terminal Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2017 'Convergence: Contemporary Mex-Xicano Art in the PNW,' Schack Art Center, Everett, WA  
'50 Years of Pottery Northwest,' National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, Portland, OR
- 2016 'Artist Trust 30th Birthday Exhibit,' Artist Trust, Seattle, WA  
'#30 Dia de los Muertos: Journey of the Soul,' National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL  
'Offering,' Gallery One Visual Art Center, Ellensburg, WA  
Koch Gallery, Vashon Center for the Arts, Vashon Island, WA  
'Beyond Aztlán: Mexican and Chicana/o Artists in the Pacific Northwest,' Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, WA
- 2015 SOFA Exposition, Navy Pier, Chicago, IL  
Samsøen collaborative sculptural installation with Mark Cooper, Seattle Art Fair, Paul Allen Living Computer Museum, Seattle, WA  
'FEAT: Fellowship Exhibit Artist Trust,' Galvanize, Seattle, WA  
'Out of Sight,' King Street Station, Seattle, WA  
'Ceramics Invitational: Northwest Clay,' Traver Gallery, Seattle, WA  
'Art in True Fashion,' Abmeyer + Wood Fine Art, Seattle, WA



- 2014 'Tree of Life,' Helen S. Smith Gallery, Green River Community College, Auburn, WA
- 2013 'Mostra/UGA,' Palazzo Vagnotti, Cortona, Italy
- 'Cute,' Blindfold Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 'Maneki Neko: Japan's Beckoning Cats- from Talisman to Pop Icon,' Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA
- 'Beyond the Brickyard,' Archie Bray Foundation, Helena, MT
- 'Speaks Volumes,' SPCS Gallery, Seattle Design Center, Seattle, WA
- 2012 'Flattery,' The Nicklas Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 'Clay Lives Here,' NCECA, Seattle Design Center, Seattle, WA
- 2012 'Stations of the Cross,' St. James Cathedral, Seattle, WA
- 'The Potter and the Urn,' Greg Lundgren Monuments, Seattle, WA
- 2011 '360 Collaboration,' Pottery Northwest, Seattle, WA
- 2010 'MADArt Redux,' Foster White Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2009 'MADArt Windows Exhibition,' Madison Park Shops, Seattle, WA
- '2009 University of Washington MFA Thesis Exhibition,' Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 'Mentoring,' SAM Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 'Ouch My Eye Annual International Invitational,' Ouch My Eye Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 'International Cup,' The Clay Studio of Missoula, Missoula, MT
- 2008 'Heads(dis) Embodied,' Kirkland Arts Center, Kirkland, WA
- 'Flash Forward: Coupling VI,' Ouch My Eye Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2007 'Reality and Fantasy – the art of play,' Gallery at Mars Hill, El Paso, TX
- 'From the Ground Up XXIII,' Las Cruces Museum of Art, Las Cruces, NM
- 'Contenido Neto (a rational play on the possibilities of an intercultural world),' 301 W. Overland, El Paso, TX
- 2006 'The Value Show,' 910 Texas St., El Paso, TX
- 'Action of the Heat,' Union Gallery, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX
- 2005 'National Society for Arts and Letters Exhibit,' Glass Gallery, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX
- 'Fresh Talent '05,' Crossland Gallery, El Paso, TX
- 2004 'Art from the Epicenter,' Project Space, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX

## Awards

- 2016 MoNA Luminary Award, Patty Warashina Award for Emerging Artist, Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, WA
- 2015 Fellowship, Artist Trust, Seattle, WA
- 2011 Grants for Artist Projects (GAP), Artist Trust, Seattle, WA
- Resident Artist Project (RAP) Grant, Pottery Northwest, Seattle, WA
- 2009 Bonderman Travel Fellowship, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- Individual Artist Projects Grant, 4 Culture, Seattle, WA
- smART Ventures, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle, WA
- 2007 Graduate Opportunities & Minority Achievement Program Research Assistantship, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- 2006 Regina Brown Undergraduate Student Fellowship, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, Erie, CO
- New Mexico Potter's Guild Award, Potter's Guild of Las Cruces, Las Cruces, NM
- Award of Excellence for Sculpture Student, University of Texas, El Paso, TX
- 2005 Catherine Crowell Belk Art Scholarship, University of Texas, El Paso, TX
- 2004 Manuel Acosta Memorial Art Scholarship, University of Texas, El Paso, TX

## Publications

- 2020 STORYTELLERY'S Episode filmed by Craft In America. Aired on PBS. December 11, 2020.
- 2019 Johnson, Jennifer. 'Museum welcomes Spanish speakers to new ceramics exhibit,' Willamette University News. April 23.
- 2018 Perez de la Rosa, Enrique. 'Sculptor George Rodriguez celebrates and transcends his Mexican heritage,' Crosscut. August 2.
- Gyuro, Lisa. 'UW Alumnus to be Featured at the Seattle Art Fair,' UW Daily. July 27.
- Steward Foster, Anne. '5 Seattle Artists You Should Know,' Seattle Business. July.
- 'Bainbridge Island Museum of Art Spring Exhibitions,' City Arts. March.
- Barr, Amanda. 'George Rodriguez: Sanctuary,' Ceramics Monthly. February. pp 54-56
- Shafkind, Erin. L. 'The Venus: A Legacy in Clay,' Ceramics Monthly. February. pp 57-58
- 2016 'Emerging Artist 2016: George Rodriguez,' Ceramics Monthly. May. pp.54
- Upchurch, Michael. 'There and back again- a sculptor's trip around the world,' Seattle Times. April 12. pp. 25
- Kangas, Matthew. 'George Rodriguez- Profile,' Art Ltd. March. pp 72.
- Erickson, Anne. 'Seattle ceramic artist makes bigger than life sculptures,' King 5- Evening. February 2. 2.24s.
- Graves, Jen. 'Are George Rodriguez's Heads Alive?' The Stranger SLOG. April 19, 2016
- 2015 Hanus, Julie. "Let it Grow" American Craft. August/September 2015. pp 48-57.
- Harnetty, Jennifer. "Studio Visit: Deborah Schwartzkopf and George Rodriguez." Ceramics Monthly. March 2015. pp 30-34.
- 2014 Smith, Nan. "500 Figures in Clay Volume 2." Lark Books. Sterling Publishing Co. 2014.
- 2013 Upchurch, Michael. "Flower Power with a Philosophical Twist." The Seattle Times.
- 2012 "Seattle Artists ReDesign the Waterfront." The Stranger. Seattle Art & Performance Fall Issue. September 5, 2012: p. 13.
- Webb, Dan & Matthew Offenbacher. Jeffry Mitchell – Closed Fist Open Hand. "Joy in Repetition, 1991" La Norda Press. 2012.
- Davis, Branglen. "Local Rock Stars of Clay." Seattle Magazine. March 2012.
- Kangas, Matthew. "Symbolic/Parasitic." Ceramics Monthly. February 2012. pp 62-63.
- 2011 Faigin, Gary. "Heads Up: George Rodriguez at Foster White." Artdish Magazine. November 25, 2011.
- "Famous Georges make for fun sculpture." Narr. Gary Faigin & Jeannie Yandel. KUOW Presents. 94.9 KUOW Seattle NPR. November 21, 2011.
- "George." Sheila Hartley. Art Talker. 98.1 KING FM. November 5, 2011.
- Upchurch, Michael. "Storefronts Seattle puts art and life in empty retail spaces." Art Review. The Seattle Times. August 25, 2011.
- 2009 Lambert. Ken. "Ceramic work is music to your eyes." The Seattle Times. June 6, 2009.
- Stoesz, David. "If it walks like art..." Seattle Weekly. June 02, 2009.
- 2008 Norris, Molly. "Heads (dis) Embodied." Art Access, Volume 17. June 2008, pp 10-11.
- Farr, Sheila. "Here's a heads-up for a must-see." The Seattle Times. May 16, 2008. p. 41

## Professional Experience

- 2017 Instructor, North Seattle College, Seattle, WA  
Visiting Lecturer, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, Sitka, AK  
Instructor, Seward Park Clay Studio, Seattle, WA
- 2016 Instructor, GAGE Academy of Art, Seattle, WA



- Instructor, Sculpture Week, GAGE Academy of Art, Seattle, WA
- 2014 Visiting Lecturer, School of Art, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Visiting Lecturer, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, Sitka, AK  
Selection Committee Member, Bonderman Travel Fellowship, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Instructor, Moshier Community Clay Studio, Burien, WA  
Instructor, Seward Park Clay Studio, Seattle, WA  
Instructor, Redmond Clay Studio, Redmond, WA
- 2013 Visiting Lecturer, Lamar Dodd School of Art, University of Georgia (UGA) Studies Abroad Program, Cortona, Italy  
Visiting Lecturer, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, Sitka, AK  
Lecture, Pecha Kucha: Luck of the Draw (May 3, 2013), Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA  
Selection Committee Member, Bonderman Travel Fellowship, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Selection Committee Member, Grants for Artist Project (GAP), Artist Trust, Seattle, WA  
Instructor, Teen Art Studio, GAGE Academy of Art, Seattle, WA
- 2012 Visiting Lecturer, Green River Community College, Auburn, WA  
Visiting Lecturer, School of Art, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Lecture, NCECA Invitational (Feb 3, 2012), Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA  
Selection Committee Member, Bonderman Travel Fellowship, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Selection Committee, Tile Heritage Foundation Prize, Artisan Tile NW, Seattle, WA  
Artist in Residence and Instructor, Pottery Northwest, Seattle, WA  
Invited Artist, Set the Table, Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
- 2011 Visiting Lecturer, School of Art, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Visiting Instructor, Nathan Hale High School, Seattle, WA
- 2009 Instructor, Kirkland Art Center, Kirkland, WA  
Graduate Student Teaching, School of Art, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

## Collections

Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA  
Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR  
MADart, Seattle, WA  
National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL  
Sam and Anne Davis, El Paso, TX  
Swedish Medical Center, Seattle, WA

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