

# ARTILLERY

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**MARNIE WEBER LACMA GLENN KAINO WESTERN PROJECT ART KANE**



## LOS ANGELES AREA ERIC WESLEY

356 S MISSION RD  
BY JOHN DAVID O'BRIEN

Eric Wesley loves to kid around and unbalance the viewer. In this survey or rearrangement and reworking of objects from his production dating back a decade, he checks in with a wide variety of works distributed in a clock pattern throughout the spacious warehouse floor of 356 S. Mission. He anchors the

(Opposite page, left to right) Eric Wesley, *New Realistic Figures (Sleeping): Confucius*, 2015, Photo courtesy the artist and 356 S. Mission Rd.

exhibition with *I Beam U Channel* (2015), a central monumental steel piece that transforms from I-beam on one end to U-beam on the other (a previous iteration of this work was made of camouflaged painted wood). This once trompe l'oeil beam that spins, ominously suspended on a single steel thread, mimics the trajectory of an invisible monster burrito—*Inch-Alota* (2015)—spanning the entire space and visible only in cross-sections exiting the building on each side as stained glass inserts.

Other disassembled series appear transformed throughout. A trio of overturned and variously positioned little forklift-like carts, *D'Cart X, Y and Z* (2010–15) mirror the Cartesian X, Y, and Z coordinates and are situated next to *Entangled Pictures 1, 2 and 3* (2010–15): canvases splattered with primary colors and attached to larger unprimed canvases. The artist's use of space and references to Cartesian mathematics serves to unite the series and suggests a meaning encoded in the physical placement of objects in space. It is as if he were looking for a site-specific definition where the space of his array in the larger world could be a crux. And then he upends any site specificity with the spatial equivalent of a shrug in his representation of the "Spa" series.

Originally a single work, *Spa-Versation*, *Spa-Brary*, *Spafice (Balzac Gigante)* and *Spa-Cial* (all 2007–15) are presented as separate units. Each work with its light steel framework and white tile inlays seems a cross between spa equipment and a not always benign restraining device for office workers. *Spa-Versation* provides a seat for someone where they get blasted by a small but powerful flame gun. *Spa-Cial* is a tipped over dribbling fount to bathe or rinse in that isn't working, destroyed (literally in NY by Hurricane Sandy) and reconstituted as ruins.

Miniature pedestal-mounted figures—*New Realistic Figures (Sleeping)* (2009–15)—cast in plastic and painted or with faux finishes are placed here

and there. Wesley adds to his 2009 renditions of contemporary white philosophers like Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault, ancient figures such as Confucius and Plato, who are portrayed as dark-skinned. Some are missing sections of their arms, and all appear to be asleep. Could this be Goya's "Sleep of Reason"? Maybe, but I suspect the artist prefers to let our imagination run rampant. His much ado about nothing and special effects of sound and fury add up to a Dadaist feat and are good fun, too. Perhaps he is asking "What is all the hubbub about," as in the ungainly, quasi-industrial obelisk in the entrance of the gallery, which announces with its title: "WTF."



RECONNOITER

# Francesco X. Siqueiros

INTERVIEW BY JOHN DAVID O'BRIEN

➤ FRANCESCO X. SIQUEIROS IS AN ARTIST/PRINTMAKER, FOUNDER OF EL NOPAL PRESS, PUBLISHING FINE-ART LIMITED-EDITION PRINTS SINCE 1990 IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES. THE FOCUS OF EL NOPAL PRESS IS TO UNDERSCORE THE HETEROGENEOUS NATURE OF CULTURE AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE ITS BORDERS AND THE COMPLEX NATURE OF THAT NEGOTIATION.

**ARTILLERY:** Given it's your 25th anniversary—can you tell me a little about the history of El Nopal Press and how you came to envision it?

FRANCESCO X. SIQUEIROS: As a kind of unexpected offshoot of participating in *Aquí y Allá* in the late '80s, early '90s, El Nopal Press became a place where I imagined setting up a conversation about questions of the internationalization of art (beginning on the border of California and Mexico), and therefore going beyond the market and more local, vernacular issues. It evolved organically without a heavily predetermined path.

**Looking back, could you sum up the best thing that happened for you at El Nopal and the worst thing that happened.**

The best thing was being in that conversation with artists and then in the dance of printmaking itself—a repetitive activity and a set of challenges that I enjoy. The worst thing that happened was when the paradigm shifted and I felt like I couldn't play all the roles that belonged to me: *either* artist *or* printer *or* curator—not *and*.

**With the advent of digital imagery a lot has changed in the rationale that historically guided the creation of fine-art prints. How do you see the role of that now?**

I integrate digital advances in the work of the press. Printing has always been about evolution and technical advances. For instance, I have been working with continuous tone film-printing recently. I don't think there is a problem so long as digital doesn't entirely replace printing processes with their physical properties.

**How does the pricing of a print work, since this medium generates multiples; and since there are multiples, does that make prints less collectible?**

Actually prints are limited editions, which I do in small runs anyway, and so they tend to retain their value. Paradoxically, as print shops and presses vanish, what I do becomes a rarity, which in the arts is worth more.

**Who have been the favorite artists you have worked with at El Nopal?**

All the projects that challenge me to solve problems, technical or in the content, are my favorites. Once I had to print a Harry Gamboa image of his daughter on fire and get it just right in a 115°F LA summer. Not easy. Then there were other favorite projects like: Anita Bunn, John Baldessari and a Paris exchange project that was particularly complicated. Anything that pushes the art and me is what I look for. ☺

Francesco X.  
Siqueiros, photo  
by John David  
O'Brien.

