

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Justin Favela

Re/Presenting México: José María Velasco and the Politics of Paper

March 29 – May 4, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, March 29th, 6 - 8 pm

Free and open to the public/ Artist in Attendance

Recently traveled from a three-month solo presentation at the Berman Museum, David B. Smith Gallery is pleased to exhibit *Re/Presenting México: José María Velasco and the Politics of Paper*, by Las Vegas-based artist Justin Favela.

Continuing his dialogue with the works of Mexican landscape painter José María Velasco, row by row, Favela meticulously replicates Velasco's iconic works in strips of brightly colored tissue paper. Velasco, recognized as one of Mexico's most prominent artists of the late 19th century, leaves behind a legacy of Mexican nationalism that is still palpable in his affectionate depictions of *El Valle de México* and other famous scenes. In paying homage to the works of Velasco, Favela explores the intertwined heritage of nations and individuals.

Presented in the main gallery, Favela's playful piñata-style works speak to celebration while questioning present-day conversations of identity. Hailing from the land of appropriation, having grown up in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, New York City, and the Pyramids at Giza, Las Vegas has left its mark on the scale and scope of Favela's artwork. His hybrid practice utilizes craft materials and techniques, at times incorporating sculpture, installation, and performative elements to his practice. In *Re/Presenting México*, Justin Favela widens his repertoire of Velasco inspired piñata paintings that add humor and Vegas-style flash to historical dialogues while creating new narratives for contemporary art audiences.



Justin Favela, *Self-Portrait*, 2018, tissue paper and glue, 26 x 20 x 1 in. (66.04 x 50.8 x 2.54 cm)

About Justin Favela

Justin Favela is a Las Vegas native working in the mediums of painting, sculpture, and performance. His work draws from art history, popular culture, and his Guatemalan/Mexican heritage. Selected exhibitions include Crystal Bridges Museum of Contemporary Art (AR), Denver Art Museum (CO), Contemporary Arts Center (NV), the Berman Museum (PA), and the Nevada Museum of Art (NV). When not in the studio, Favela is probably watching television or co-hosting his podcast *Latinos Who Lunch*. He has an upcoming two-person exhibition with Ramiro Gomez at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art (NV), and will be part of *Kissing Through the Curtains*, a group exhibition at MASS MoCA (MA).

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Art in America* and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works" and *The Denver Post* declared that it is the "premiere commercial space" in Denver. The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

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