



Tony Ortega
American (born 1958)

Kitchen Help
2001
Print on found poster

East Events Gallery

Inform: Tony Ortega prints on found posters. He sees them as evidence of the life of community:

“Posters placed in public areas reveal the activities, rituals and events in a neighborhood, community, city, etc.” (from correspondence with the artist).

Ask: What do you notice about this poster that might reveal something about the life of the community? (Possible answers: It’s primarily in Spanish, it advertises a rodeo, the multiple pictures of people and groups show that it’s advertising an event with many contributors—not just one person, etc.)

Inform: The artist leaves the faces of those he depicts nondescript.

“The people in my artwork are part of the family, workers, students, groups, community, the collective. Also in our daily life we fail to see or recognize individuals, especially the people who work in the service industry such as migrant workers, janitors, maids, cooks, gardeners, child care givers, construction workers, etc. These people pick our fruits and vegetables, clean our homes, clean our work places, make our meals, watch our children, and build and repair our homes.” (from correspondence with the artist).

Inform: *Kitchen Help* is a part of a series depicting “workers in the service industry that [the artist] created between 2001 and 2003” (correspondence with the artist).

Inform: The animal in the foreground is a coyote. Ask: What associations does the coyote bring to mind? (Possible answers: trickster and shape-shifter in some Native American cultures, name for the person who brings undocumented people into the US, seen as a nuisance to some. Accept all answers) Inform: The layers of associations provide a glimpse into layered approach the artist takes.

Inform: The artist purposefully chose images with layers of meaning, echoing the layered nature of the print itself. *“The viewer of the artwork gets a glimpse, into the workers and what is going on in the community”* (correspondence with the artist).

About the Artist:

Tony Ortega holds an MFA in drawing and painting from the University of Colorado and is currently an associate professor for Regis University. He is the recipient of the coveted Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1999) and the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1998). He has been a working artist and teacher for the past 36 years and is known for his vibrant, colorful artwork. Tony Ortega’s lifelong goal is to contribute to a better understanding of cultural diversity by addressing the culture, history and experiences of Chicanos/Latinos through his art. His work can be found in Denver Art Museum, Los Angeles County Museum and the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center. He has exhibited extensively in United States, Latin America and other parts of the world.

<http://www.tonyortega.net/>

Related Pieces:

Tony Ortega

American (born 1958)

Aztlán

1992

Acrylic and collage on panel

Located in West Events Gallery.