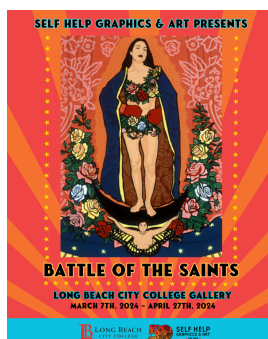




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SELF HELP GRAPHICS & ART AND THE LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE GALLERY PROUDLY
PRESENT 'BATTLE OF THE SAINTS' EXHIBITION OPENING MARCH 7



Los Angeles, Calif. – Self Help Graphics & Art is proud to present *Battle of the Saints*, an exhibition curated by Natalie Godinez and Lulu Urdiales, opening Thursday, March 7, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the [Long Beach City College Art Gallery](#) (LBCC). The exhibition will be on view through April 27, 2024. The LBCC Art Gallery is located at 4901 East Carson St. Long Beach, CA. 90808. The gallery is open weekly Tuesday-Thursday, from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

"*Battle of the Saints* is an homage to Self Help Graphics' 50th anniversary by highlighting themes seen across our print archive while setting the organization in its current contemporary context by pairing serigraphs from our Professional Printmaking Studio alongside local artists," said Natalie Godinez, Community Engagement & Youth Programs Manager and co-curator of the exhibition.

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Pt. 2 - Battle of the Saints

Battle of the Saints highlights everyday icons worshiped across cultures. Their images and likeness have become so ubiquitous that they appear in our daily lives, from billboards to candles, key chains, murals, t-shirts, toys, and more throughout our world. Revered figures like wrestlers, saints, gods, artists, political activists, and athletes are a few of the cultural icons whose likeness instills a profound sense of community pride and empowerment.

The artists in the exhibition have all used iconography as a powerful storytelling tool. Some subvert the image of cultural and religious icons. In contrast, others elevate an everyday hero into a holy figure by appropriating symbols from religious depictions of saints, including La Virgen de Guadalupe. The image of La Virgen acts as a bridge to create a dialogue between tradition and current culture. She is portrayed as a powerful boxing champion by artist Alma Lopez or a cultural icon worthy of memorializing on the skin, as seen in Delilah Montoya's serigraph. A print by Isabel Martinez showcases her as the divine mother, linked to the powerful creation deity Coatlicue. Jacqueline Valenzuela uses votive candles featuring La Virgen in an installation inspired by her memories of visiting Mexico.

Additionally, some artists bring attention to influential figures through unique and innovative perspectives. Josiah O'Balles elevates the luchador (wrestler) in his painting, *Chicano Power* as a Saint, taking a stand against oppression. Joseph "Nuke" Montalvo reimagines the revolutionary figure Emiliano Zapata as a sci-fi hero for the new generation. On the other hand, Nao Bustamante uses performance and gaudy aesthetics to memorialize Walter Mercado, a television astrologer integral to many homes across Latin America and its diaspora.

In a symbolic "Battle of the Saints," we playfully bestow a sense of "sainthood" upon pop culture icons while revisiting traditional religious symbols and figures in a contemporary context. The exhibition acknowledges these characters' elevated status within immigrant communities as symbols of hope, empowerment, and cultural connections to the motherland.

This group show will highlight prints from the Self Help Graphics Professional Print Studio, including artists Alma Lopez, Delilah Montoya, Frank Ybarra, Isabel Martinez, Jose Roberto Barrero, Yreina Cervantez, Victor Gastelum and Chaz Bojorquez, and Joseph "Nuke" Montalvo, alongside local artists in Los Angeles and Long Beach, including Adriana Carranza, Aneesa Shami Zizzo, April Bey, Carolyn Castano, Dewey Tafoya, Ernesto Vazquez, Jacqueline Valenzuela, Jose M. Loza, Josiah O'Balles, Mike Alcalá, Nao Bustamante, Rey Vargas, and Sayon Syprasoeuth.

(More)

Pt. 3 - Battle of the Saints

About Self Help Graphics & Art

Since its incorporation in 1973, SHG has produced more than 2,000 art print editions, including 65 atelier projects and exhibitions worldwide. The organization remains dedicated to the production, interpretation, and distribution of prints and other art media by Chicana/o and Latinx artists, and its multidisciplinary intergenerational programs promote artistic excellence and empower the community by providing access to working space, tools, training, and beyond.

Now, nearly a half-century later, SHG continues to foster emerging Chicana/o and Latinx artists through its world-class printmaking practice and supports the role of artists as leaders within its organization and the community. For more information, visit www.selfhelpgraphics.com.

For interview requests or to inquire about press materials, please contact Self Help Graphics at 323-881-6444 or info@selfhelpgraphics.com with "Media Request" in the subject line.

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