

Pow, Boom, "Shazam!" sums up Ruben Nieto's solo show at Cris Worley Fine Arts

By Todd Camplin

Nieto is a retro, comic book Pop, abstract painter. Nieto's coined the phrase "comic abstractions," which perfectly describes his work in subject matter and the process involved in creating the works. Drawing from iconic source material, Nieto digitally assembles disparate fragments from various comic books and popular culture. These digitally derived sketches serve as the starting point to what ends in an explosive composition of color and movement on the canvas.



Clyfford I've Got a Plan...

I thought that Nieto's paintings were impressive at the Dallas Contemporary last year. Interestingly, Nieto managed to out do himself with a "smash-up" of more abstractions that maintained a feeling of the comic book, without revealing some of the heavy laden iconic imagery.

Comic books tell a sequential story through the use of panels and Nieto artfully navigates this key element through his obvious reference to the form and the disjunctive story telling that is so Rauschenberg random.

Painting titles, "Saving Clyfford", "Aiming at Motherwell", "Andy got shot!", and "Motherwell's Disappearance", Nieto pays tribute to the Modern Masters of painting. Visually recycling motifs and images, Nieto shows he is schooled in Pictures Generation like Richard Prince.

Nieto's big advantage over his predecessors is the tool Photoshop, which he uses to help him morph, simplify and reduce images. In the Warholian tradition of working with assistants and as a conceptual and directorial strategy he says, "I send my finished digital images overseas to be transformed into an oil painting, making final modifications on the canvas myself." Nieto has the formula to be the next Takashi Murakami.

Ruben Nieto was born in Veracruz, Mexico. He holds a BFA from the Universidad de Guanajuato, an MFA in Arts and Technology from The University of Texas at Dallas, where he is now a PhD candidate. Nieto is also the new assistant director at CentralTrak, an artist residency program through UTD, where he has also been a resident in recent years. Besides showing in the US, Nieto has also exhibited internationally in Switzerland, Germany, Spain, France, Canada and Mexico. In the fall of 2010 he had a solo exhibition at the Dallas Contemporary. Ruben Nieto's show will be up until August 20.