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## TIEMPO DE HIBRIDOS

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# **TIEMPO DE HIBRIDOS**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts

in

The school of Art

by

Paul Acevedo Gomez  
B.F.A, California State University Stanislaus, 2018  
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## Abstract

*Tiempo De Híbridos* is a body of work that celebrates the multiplicity of my shifting identity. It navigates back and forth between two different worlds, each packing different experiences that become a crossbreed or hybrid of information. Using historical references, pop culture, and personal experiences, I create a narrative story that maneuvers through familiar and foreign spaces.

The images suggest a celebration of cultural identity, vitality, but also psychological pain. I purposely combine objects that can be perceived as conflicting, altering their function to reference elements that are both playful and painful. The viewer should question the combination of objects and the potential danger behind their function. Through the process and creation of new forms, I question my identity and embody myself and experiences.

## **Introduction**

Tiempo de Híbridos is a story that narrates my personal experience as a Mexican American artist. The intention is to celebrate a diverse conversation of experience, I use words such as crossbreed or hybrid to identify myself in a moment of transformation. It's important to recognize my identity through a unique duality. Part of the narrative goes back and forth between the English and Spanish language, as a way to navigate issues family dynamics, the feeling of otherness, and personal heritage. The story is told in chronological order as events unfold in my life. Each instance speaks of a joyful or somber moment, explaining my personal relationship with my family members, companionship, and isolation.

## ***Tiempo De Híbridos: A Story***

### *El Renacimiento*

Little by little he begins to lose control over his future. The unfamiliar terrain slowly takes over his body, like the outside of a house slowly eaten away by the overgrowth of vegetation hiding it away. He was uprooted from his land a long time ago, feeling dry on the inside, he becomes unrecognizable to his family. In the peak of the foreign celebrations and parades, he is reborn a crossbreed, a mixture of different soils, mud, and plastic. Fear sinks into his eyes as the poison accumulates inside him, the transformation is imminent, and he embraces it.

## *El Grito*

The destiny of his family was predetermined as he moved away to this foreign land. First the mother, brought to her knees by the father, she develops hatred for his actions against her. Blindly following her daily rituals, she wears a crown of steel thorns, causing her to become desolate, tired, beaten by her inner struggles not by choice but by obligation. She often cries for help and receives little to no answer.

*Pero No Me Dejes Nunca, Nunca Nunca...* the hybrid son tells the mother these words to ease her anxiety. She carries these experiences that sink deep into the soil where she stands on and eventually into her body. Just like rich nutrients seeping through her roots, she begins to yield an evil fruit on her back that weighs her down. Joyfulness becomes the pain inflicted by the crown of thorns. The hybrid son sings these words in a ritual, to help slay her inner demons. These words are cherished by the mother as she accepts her fate, knowing she is favored by the gods through her son.

*Tu me sabes bien cuidar.*

*Tu me sabes bien guiar.*

*Todo la haces muy bien*

*Tu, ser muy bueno es tu virtud.*

## *San Juditas Tadeo*

Often times the new hybrid wonders about his behavior, mannerism and lack of communication. He sees himself as a reflection of his father, this figure that some have described to be saint like and others a martyr. The hybrid often asks himself, who am I? Is he a reflection of the father Or a new version of himself as he ventures into a different path?

The father often greets his son with the same ritual. First they speak of the desert and its scarce vegetation. They speak of the water that doesn't replenish thirst. How the pores on your skin open and breath in the cold breeze of the night. They speak of the seeds that the father gathers from the ground to bring into his care. Hundreds of descendants sprout and rejoice just like the original children once did. He passes down his teaching to his son, in an attempt to continue his legacy.

Before the ritual ends the father claims a sacrifice, he looks at the first born, examining his spine, waxy skin, and shallow roots. He claims what belongs to him and forgives any trespasses. The distance keeps the father and his son close, but the price the son pays only favors the father. The life of the son is forfeited to the foreign land.

*My Dad: Que trais?*

*Yo: Nada*

*My Dad: Si te conosco, mejor manda dinero del cel...*

*Yo: No*

*My Dad: Si*

*Yo: Pagalo tu*



*My Dad: No tengo dinero*

*Yo: Tampoco yo...*

*Yo: Ya te lo mande*

*My Dad: Okay*

*Yo: Porque tienes esa foto mia*

*My Dad: Ese soy yo a los diez años*

*Yo: Me paresco un chingo a ti*

*My Dad: Eres my clón.*

### *Halo Papi (El Masterchief)*

Third comes the brother and sister. Born many moons ago, the two brothers share the same ground, the same water, and the same fruit. Over the course of a year after their birth, the fire around their jade color like skin grows strong, keeping all the enemies at bay and protecting them from any curses. The fire grows only brighter and brighter, only to form into an intense red pigment that would form the ground they lay in. Thriving in their environment, the two brothers grew strong until a moon later they learned to share their fate with their younger sister.

Their lives were destined to be shared with one another until they knew they needed to part ways. Uprooted from the red soil they laid in, they grew with uncertainty of their future as their fire was almost put out. They learn to grow in different soils, and each sibling bred a different color fire.

The sister, with her strong will and cinnamon skin grew a beautiful pink Jazmin flower, and her fire is a yellow ocher that matches her soil. The brother grew charcoal like thorns and his fire is of a royal blue that matches the cold weather and soil he lays on. The oldest has white thorns and became unrecognizable to the siblings as he grows the farthest apart, his fire became a mixture of green, yellow, and purple. The ground he lays in becomes mud and water that often times floods his body. Each one of them, for the rest of their remaining lives collect different experiences and rejoice together only a few moons at a time.

## *Birdie*

It's not long before the hybrid begins to long for a familiar presence. The voices in his head devour his sleep during the night. He dreams of a son that sprouts out from his roots, and the experiences he shares with him as he grows stronger by the minute. The hybrid slowly becomes anxious since the time they spent together is only an illusion, a project of his own imagination that comes to an end when he wakes from his sleep.

The hybrid grows melancholic, unable to fill the void inside him as he repeats the cycle every night. He begins to search for a companion, a new spirit that could bring his essence back as it fades away. Someone that could match his character, courage and determination. Someone that could never fail in the darkest of rituals. In his most desperate hour, he stumbles upon a hound with the fur that resembles the coating on the God *Tepeyóllotl*. He knows this hound will share the strength of a thousand horses, capable of protecting the hybrid with the raw force of an alligator, and sharp claws of a jaguar that can bring down any of his enemies.

This hound becomes the loyal companion he was searching for. Together they form a strong bond that keeps their enemies away, a bond that guarantees a successful campaign that will last for many moons to come.

*Yo: Que paso mi firulais?*

*Birdie: ..... (wags her tail in Spanish)*

*Yo: ¿Dónde está la galleta?*

*Birdie: ..... (wags her tail in Spanish)*

*No Contaban Con Mi Astucia!*

The hybrid grew fond of his environment, the food, culture, and the native species that roamed in the land. He remembers a time when he was described by many as the reincarnation of a mythical and legendary hero who spoke in different languages, was more agile than a turtle, stronger than a mouse, more noble than a lettuce, his shield crest was a heart. He was the legendary *Chapulín Colorado*, and he embraced the name as it reminded him of his childhood.

He realized that the soil he stood in transformed his experience. He looked back at the stories that unfold over the years and rejoiced. He knew that this transformation made him bloom, creating new and better versions of crossbreed experiences. The transformation was favorable. He grew long yellow thorns that would host Spanish moss that complemented the texture of his bright red skin. The hybrid felt welcome by his environment, the species that surrounded the area were also very responsive to having his presence around. He learned to become part of them, and still remain himself.

*¡El Chapulín Colorado!*

*¡No Contaban con mi Astucia!*

*¡Sígueme Los Buenos!*

## Process

Using multiple mediums such as printmaking, drawing, and sculpture, I portray past and present experiences living in Mexico and the United States. Each piece is a different take on my hybrid identity, which is in turn compiled of historical references. These include compositions such as Bernini's Ecstasy of Saint Teresa, Rodin's Thinker, Gabriel Orozco and Diego Rivera's murals, pop culture, Piñatas, and native plants to the USA and Mexico like prickly pear cactus, century plant and cholla cactus.

For example, *El Renacimiento* (fig.1a) tells the story of a figure that is taken down by a blue figure wearing an eagle head dress of an Aztec warrior. The laying figure is presented as a dried cholla cactus, symbolizing the dryness and hollowness of the figure as it is bashed open like a piñata. The Aztec figure encounters a snake like piñata in a small pile of beads that proceeds to hint at a Mardi Gras experience, and speak directly to my present experience. The composition references the legend taught in Mexican history of the foundation of the Aztec city and empire. The eagle, the cactus and the snake play an important role in the discovery of once a great empire, which in turn plays to the importance of nationalism and individualism.

I create a moment of ecstasy as the figure is bashed open, and the blue figure threatens to club the cactus like figure. However, the spotlight aids to separate the laying figure from the danger as the club hides in the shadows, signifying comfort and relief between the two figures as they embrace change. The title of the piece *Renacimiento* (Rebirth) hints to the creation of a new foundation, describing self-growth and normalizing what is now considered home.

I pair the drawings with the sculptural pieces that become unconventional piñatas. These are constructed of various materials, welded barbed wire connected in different points to create organic forms, and handmade paper made from a mixture of fibers like Agave, palm tree, hibiscus, and cotton. I construct cacti shaped like vessels, that reference back to family heritage of caring for cacti but also piñata making. By incorporating other familiar elements like nails, yarn, text, and pencil shavings, I make each piece have a different finish to represent multiple instances of experiences.

The fibers can address the extensive history of piñata making in Mexico. Piñata makers used to create the body of the piñata by using a vessel of fired clay, and *Papel Mache* to decorate the piñatas. They eventually shifted the interior as the piñatas became heavy and dangerous for kids to break. I wanted to push the boundaries of conventional piñata making, and bring my own interpretation to its ephemeral properties, relating back to the idea of a vessel that can hold multiple items inside. The piñatas give out a sense of discomfort by their outward physical appearance, giving subtle religious undertones like washing out the sins of the body as one hits and breaks a piñata.

When making *Los Tres Hermanos*, (fig.2a) during the making process there is a continuous physical struggle between myself and the materials. The barbed wire for example would often times fight back as I manipulated it into the organic shapes I created. This becomes a visceral process as I get punctured by the spikes, just like cacti would fight back with their ferocious thorns when being touched. This is a moment of self-realization. As I mold the forms and they transform, I find myself thinking and suddenly brought back to reality. The sensory pain inflicted by the spikes become

momentary marks on my limbs. The forms begin to sense my influence on them and they start fighting back.

*Los Tres Hermanos* becomes a piece about the relationship I have with my siblings. The yarn that wraps around the forms becomes a material that I associate with embrace. Typically from having a grandmother that would crochet scarfs or sweaters. The tightness of the yarn creates an uncomfortable feeling with the forms. It can be interpreted as the three of us welcoming the embrace for one another, knowing that we are all different and yet we stay very close to each other.

The narrative story helps me to navigate the struggle of family dynamics, the feeling of otherness, and personal heritage. The constant use of the hybrid or crossbreed, hints to the practice of grafting cacti as means of propagation. This helps me to construct a foundation for myself, and speak directly to this combination of experiences as belonging to one entity.

Each part of the story explains my personal relationship with my family members, desire for companionship, and feelings of isolation. In a place of otherness, I surround myself with items and people that become familiar. This makes my experience easier to navigate, as I build richer bonds with family, friends, and the environment around me.

## Discovery

As I navigate through the writing, the body of work, and my personal experience, I find myself moving forward. Through the cathartic process of making I fought the physicality and opposition of the material. In the intimacy of the studio space I was able to create a process of healing for myself. I realize that the relationship between the pieces of my parents are in relation towards themselves rather than to me. I found closure after examining their relationship and the values they taught me and my siblings.

I understand now that it is up to me to figure out what to call a home. It doesn't exist in one particular place, it exists in multiple places at the same time, whether in Mexico or the US, I find a feeling of enrichment by thinking that my experience heightens because of it. I am part of two different worlds filled with rich history, and therefore I am able to share this experience through my work.

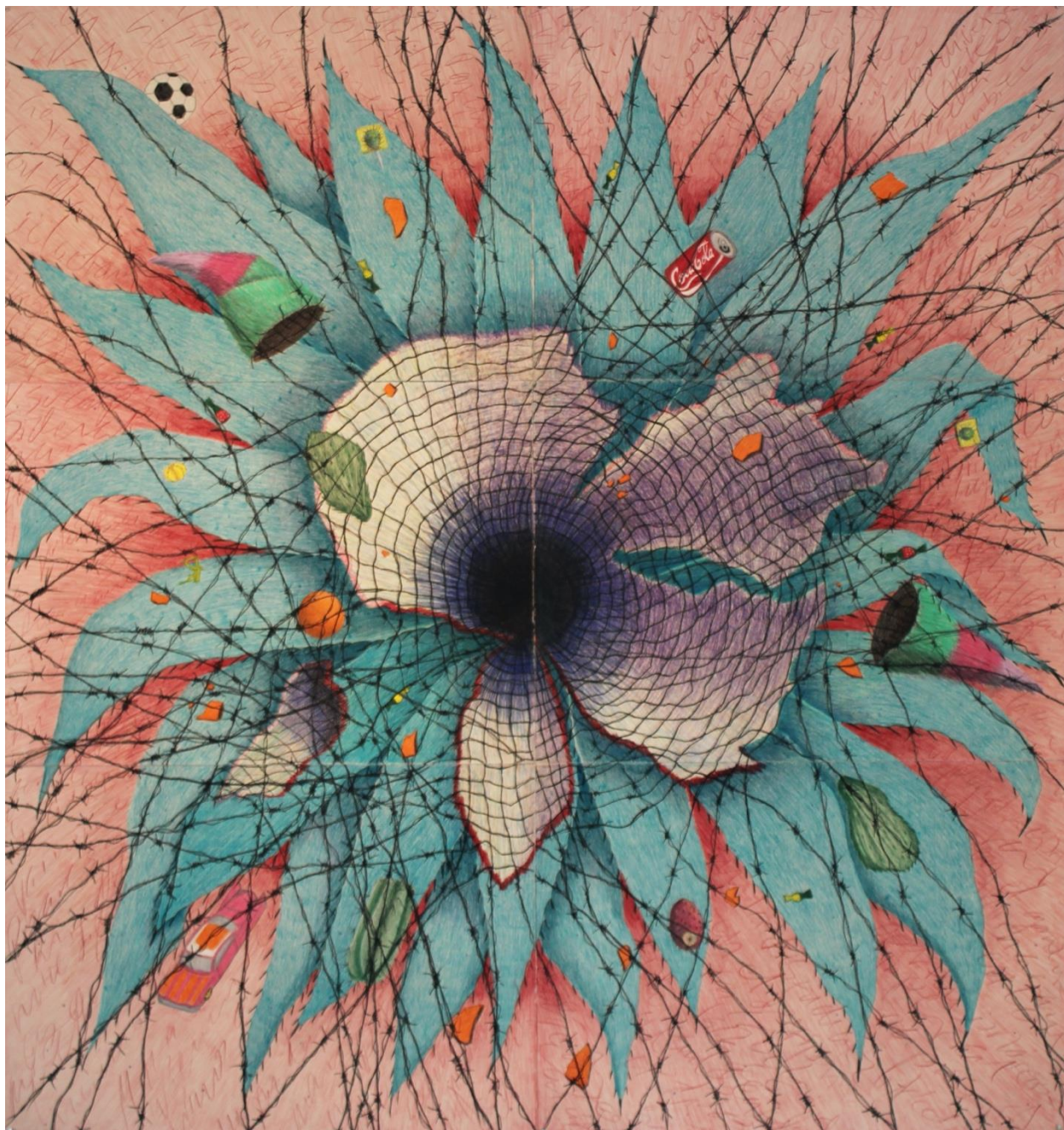


**TIEMPO DE HIBRIDOS  
WORKS BY PAUL ACEVEDO GOMEZ**



(fig.1a) *El Renacimiento*, 2022, Color Pencil Drawing





*El Rich And Delicious Bounty*, 2022, Color Pencil Drawing





*El Mexican Thinker*, 2022, Color Pencil Drawing



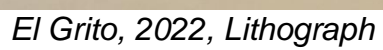


*Man Carries Within Himself The Enemy Of Man, 2022, Color Pencil Drawing*





*Ahi Que Jugar Ping Pong, 2022, Color Pencil Drawing*







San Juditas Tadeo, 2022, Lithograph





*Halo Papi, El Masterchief, 2022, Lithograph*





*Blue Americana*, 2022, Lithograph





*Fibras De Cholla*, 2022, Lithograph





*No Contaban Con Mi Astucia, 2022, Lithograph*





*El Sol*, 2022, Lithograph





*El Diablito*, 2022, Lithograph



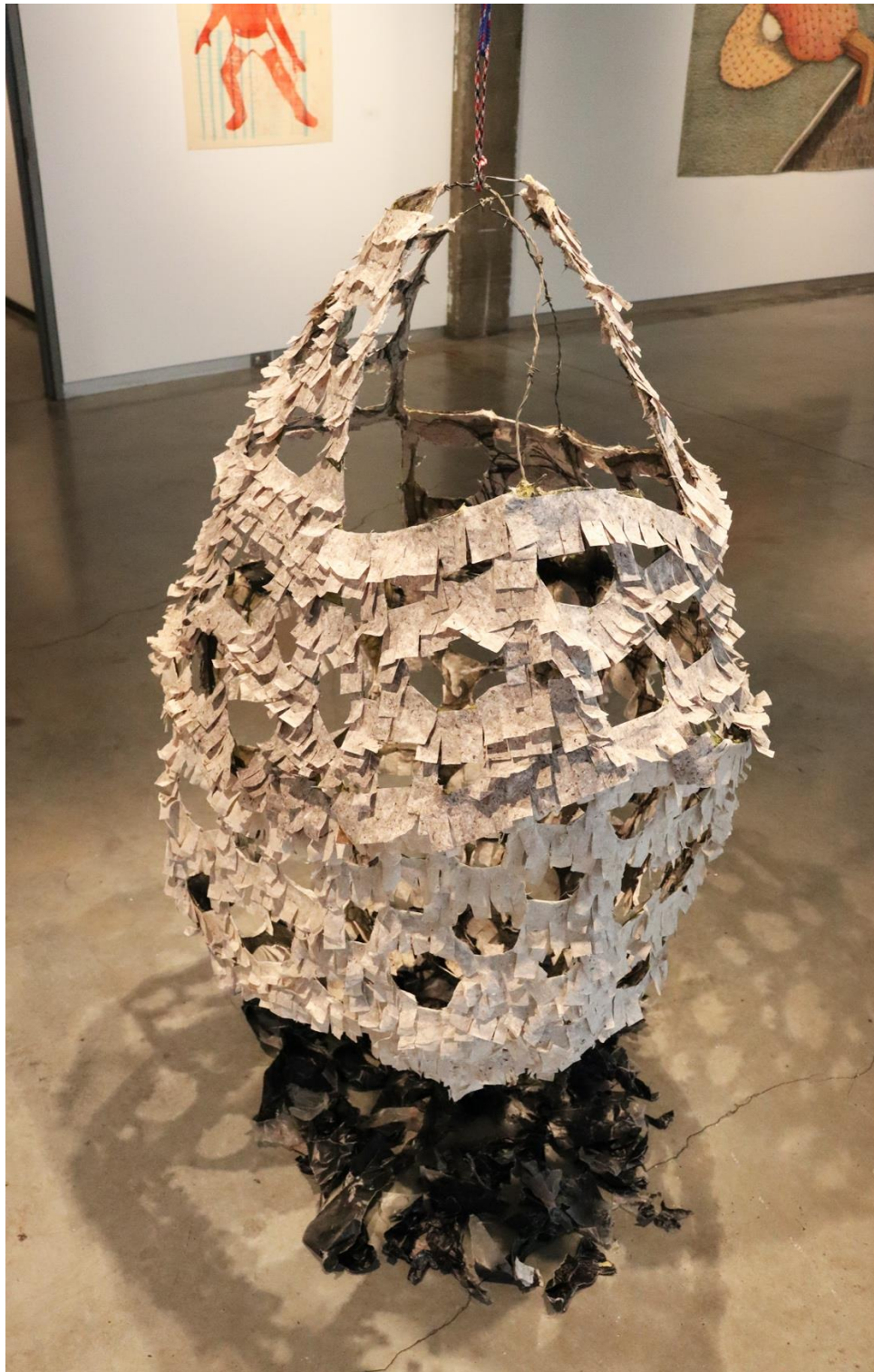
*Ya Mero?* 2022, Lithograph





Vessel No.1, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Nails





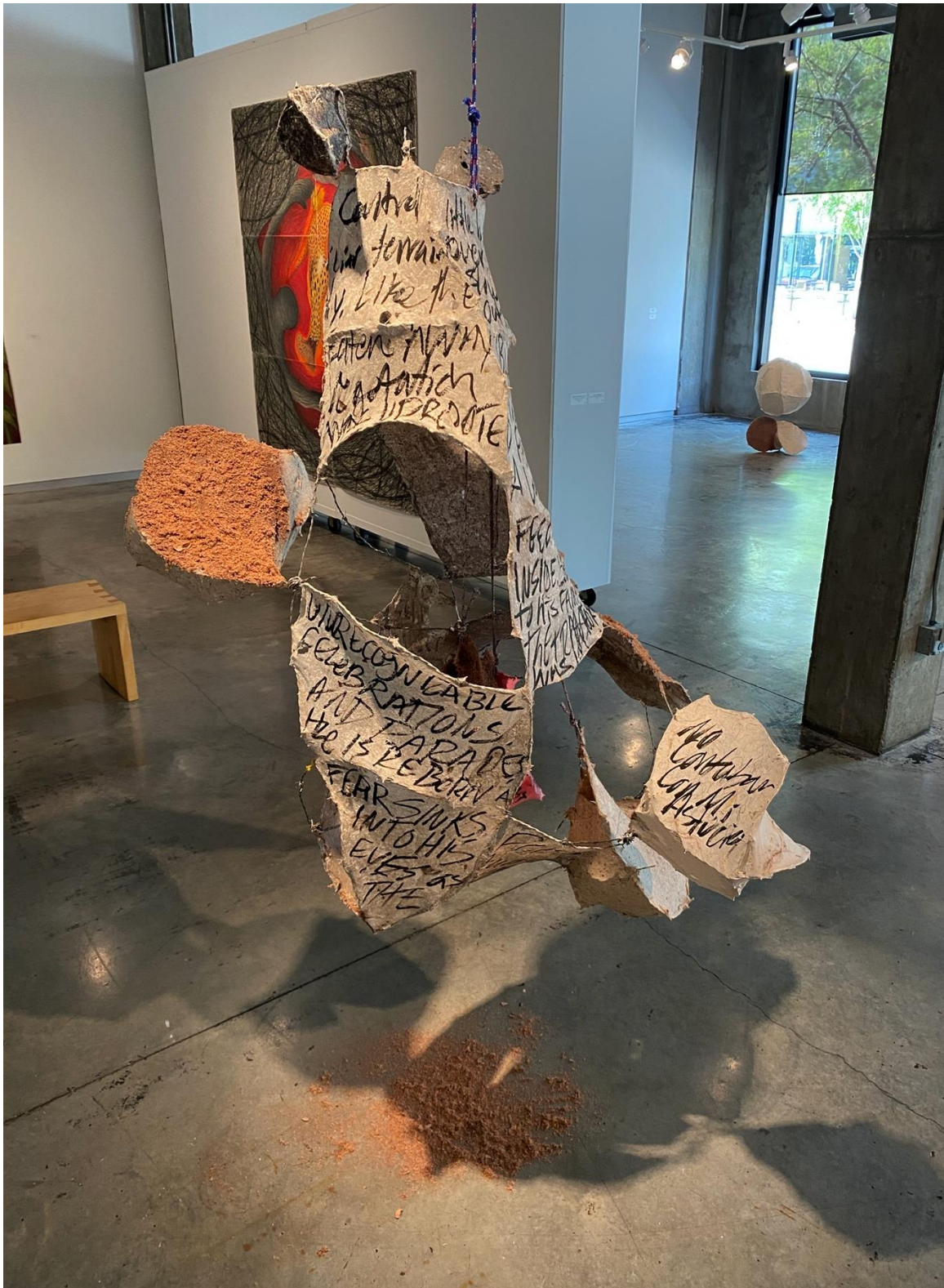
*Vessel No.2*, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Wax Paper





*Strawberry Oxide*, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Red Oxide Pigment, Rope





*Inhertado, inhtered, Grafted, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Rope, Pencil Shavings*





(fig.2a) *Los Tres Hermanos*, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Yarn





*Hermano Elmo, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Pencil Shavings*





*Tradition, 2022, Barbed Wire, Hand Made Paper, Rope, Yarn, Nails*

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## **Vita**

Paul Acevedo Gomez is a Mexican American artists currently residing in Baton Rouge LA. He plans to receive his Masters of Fine Arts with a focus in printmaking in August 2022 at Louisiana State University. He specializes in lithography to create his colorful and isolated compositions. Even though his work is compiled of childhood memories, social interactions in rural and urban settings across multiple locations. He is currently being Influenced by the surreal Louisiana landscape. Which has been a key factor to the development of his identity as an artist and individual.