

“Scream and Shout”

The art of Carlos Bautista Biernay,
at City Lights Gallery

This online exhibit is sponsored by CT Humanities

Over the years, Carlos has exhibited in group shows at City Lights, most recently in “Neo-Latinissimo” and “OUTworks”. The complexity, content, and abundance of his work made the choice of his art for a solo exhibit an obvious one.

We chose to open this exhibit on 9/11 because of the impact events happening on this date have made on him throughout his entire life. The events on 9/11 in NY reinforced the memories of horror and hardship that Carlos grew up with under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. The military coup in Chile took place on September 11, 1973.

The title "Scream and Shout" aptly describes Carlos' dualistic psyche, coping with the absurdity of life while trying to live with joy.

Left: Self Portrait, embroidery





Comments from the curator and executive director of City Lights, Suzanne Kachmar:

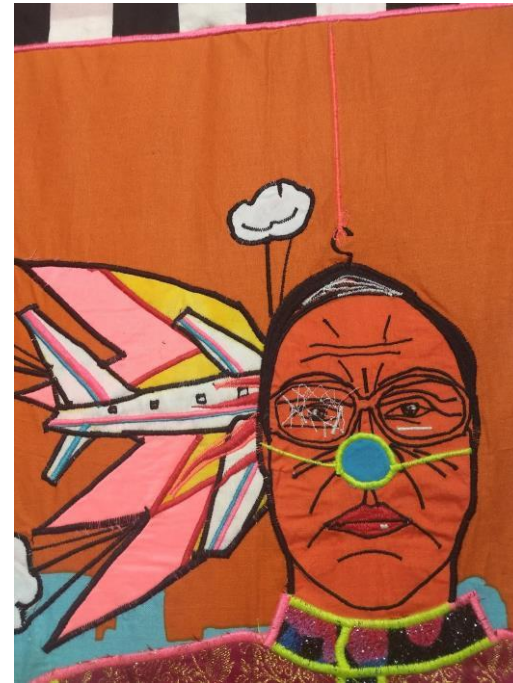
This online exhibit includes commentary to enhance your viewing and understanding of the artist's work. The more you look and approach viewing his art as a scavenger hunt or a puzzle that expresses feelings and ideas, the more you understand the art. You will find things that support your own feelings and ideas or provoke you to think and question.

Viewing art is interactive: art often starts a dialogue with the viewer. This online exhibit offers opportunities to look at and appreciate art at your own pace. You can view the art without the support of this text or use the text as a tool to discover the art of Carlos Bautista Biernay and perhaps some insight on how to look at other art you will encounter in the future.

As the curator of this exhibit, I had the opportunity to enjoy several conversations with Carlos about his art and his work. He pointed out details and shared anecdotes that I offer to you in this online exhibit.

[Watch](https://youtu.be/ASD-E-5_qnk) this taken out from an interview. Carlos explains why he chose white backgrounds instead of color and texture for a series of paintings he created during the Pandemic. https://youtu.be/ASD-E-5_qnk

Left: Acrylic on canvas



“Scream and Shout,”
Textile Collage

Through a combination of instinct and intellect, man makes order out of chaos to survive. Life is one big scavenger hunt, where we use clues to learn and discover things, survive and thrive. If we consider a piece of art as a new place, or story, with new reality and sets of conditions and clues, we can have an interactive experience of appreciation and discovery.

Look at the whole composition as well as the details of the textile collage “Scream Shout.” Consider the materials and the symbolism of the objects.



Notice the orange strings in both details



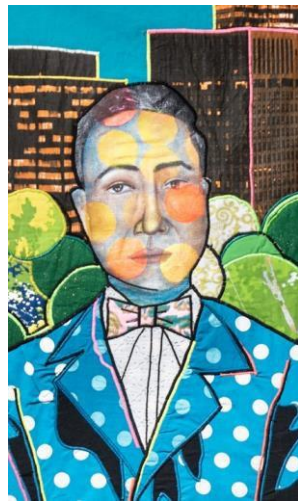
To make sense of a piece of art that you've never seen before, ask yourself the obvious question. What catches my attention first? What is the largest shape or thing, the most dominant form in the piece? That is probably the first important clue about the content, telling the viewer what the piece of art is about.

In this artwork, the largest form is placed in the center, between two iconic New York landmarks. The 'monster,' as Carlos calls it, is larger than the towers, as if this figure with the artist's face and clown nose is also a tower, a potential victim or target like the towers on 9/11.

The monster manipulates puppets. Notice that one puppet resembles Carlos as a boy, being controlled by the dominating figure. However as you see in the detail, the monster is also a puppet. Who is manipulating the monster? Is there a higher power controlling the monster? If so, why?



Carlos often inserts his self-portrait into his art. It may be the focal subject matter or a detail. Here are some details, as you look at the work, see if you can find him.



Absurdity and Dadaism are recurring themes in Carlos's work. Childlike playfulness competes with macabre imagery and a menacing mood, depicting an existential struggle between happiness and tragedy. The viewer is enticed into the art by the colors, textures and whimsical details while being confronted by harsh subject matter.

Dadaism rejected logic and reason. In the early 20th century it was a reaction to the absurdity of war, consumerism and the follies of society, questioning mainstream values and conventions. Avante garde artists of Dadaism include Man Ray, Marcel Du Champ, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, and Kurt Schwitters.

Humans are blessed to have artists/empaths like Carlos Bautista Biernnay who are on this planet to hold a mirror to our actions, motivations and feelings. They absorb the pain and joy, the beautiful and the ugly. Their release is to synthesize what they have collected and to create art, the reflection of humanity. These creations are opportunities for all of us to meditate, assess our perceptions and motivations, remember our true heroes, and find the gentle hero within.

Notice the iconic symbols of pop-culture.

Last Supper, Textile Collage



DADA

or Dadaism is a cultural **movement**

that began in neutral Zürich, Switzerland during World War I and peaked from 1916 to 1922

THE movement primarily involved

visual arts
literature
graphic design
theatre

and concentrated its **ANTI-WAR POLITICS** through a REJECTION of the prevailing **STANDARDS in ART** through **anti-art** cultural works

DaDa Dates

- 1913 Duchamp makes the first 'readymade' - a bicycle mounted on a stool.
- 1916 Cabaret Voltaire opens in Zurich on 5 February. It soon takes the name 'Dada'.
- 1917 First issue of 'Dada' periodical published. Issues 1-4 of '391' published by Picabia.
- 1918 Tzara publishes his first manifesto, in 'Dada' issue 3.
- 1919 Kurt Schwitters makes the first Merz works. Ernst & Baargeld found Cologne Dada.
- 1920 Ernst & others stage the 'Spring Awakening' exhibition in Cologne.
- 1921 'New York Dada' periodical published, edited by Duchamp and Man Ray.
- 1923 Duchamp finally stops work on The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors Even.
- 1924 Brenton publishes the first manifesto of Surrealism.

DADAISTS

kurt schwitters
marcel duchamp



Last Supper, Textile Collage by Carlos Bautista Biernnay

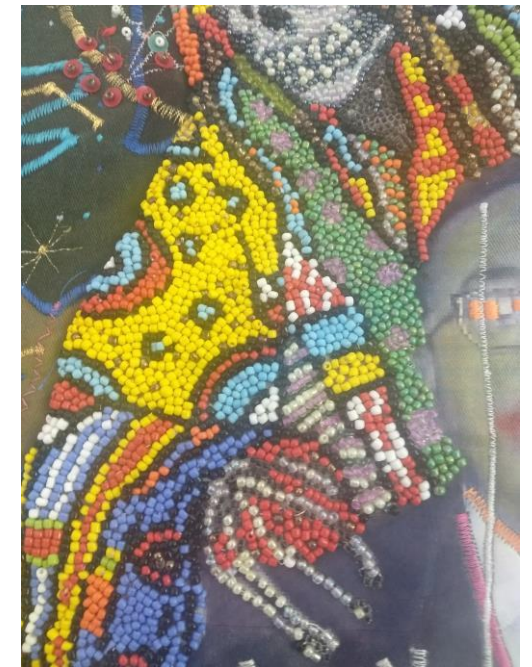


Carlos incorporates imagery from his childhood into his art. Here are some details you will see in his work. In this piece on the left, Carlos dressed himself in his school uniform, with his toys on his lap, a favorite super-hero toy standing guard, his childhood pet is at his feet. In contrast to the youthful sentiment and nostalgia is the shocking image of the angel of death done in bead embroidery.

Listen to Carlos talk about a childhood memory:

<https://youtu.be/kdRwXGfo9QI>

Bead embroidery is a time consuming, meticulous process. Carlos' makes art as a release to cope with his preoccupation with the absurdity of life which includes much happiness and the inevitability of pain and death. He suffered the loss of his father and grandfather when he was a young boy.





“Between Good and Evil”
Embroidery on Blue Velvet



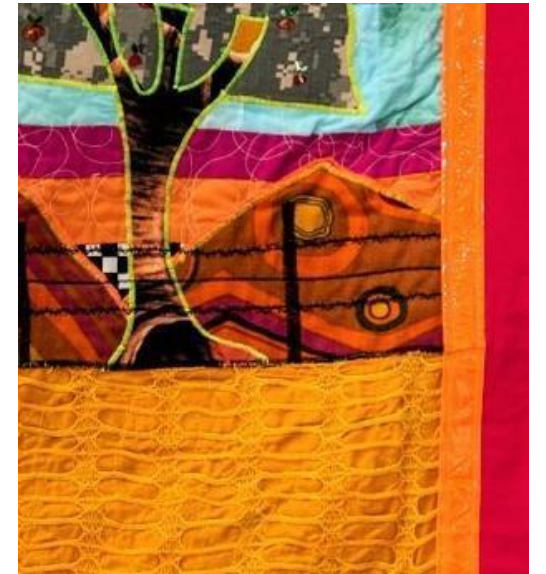
“Immigration” This art quilt expresses the disorientation and loss of self caused by immigration.



Translation of the title- “The Day Was Cold and Cloudy.” Carlos defiantly presents a tragic event with an unrelated statement, lacking feeling or concern in contrast to the image. This is an example of absurdity.



“Memories”
Textile collage and embroidery

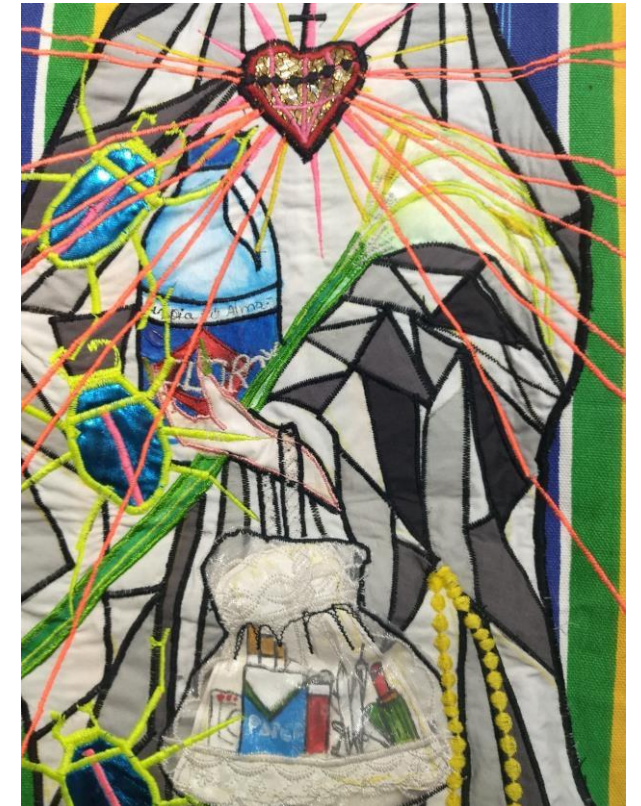


“Aliens”

This image of humanoid extraterrestrials depicts another reference to immigration. The figure on the left transports their memories and culture from another place, presenting their mystical milagros. The figures are contained on an uneven, harsh orange ground, separated by a black stitching suggesting barbed wire.



“La Culpa, Tan Culpa,” translation: “The sin or fault, the severe fault.” Carlos uses Catholic imagery and pokes at moral ideology, socio-cultural stereotypes and expectations. Notice the details of the eyes watching and judging. The nun or perhaps girl on her first communion day is holding a bottle of bleach to purify her stained soul and a gift bag of her preferred vices. Carlos remembers confronting Catholic guilt as a young boy, expressed by his inclusion of Felix cat, a reference from his childhood.



Absurd Portraits based on Classical and Neoclassical imagery include “Queen Marianna.” Carlos modernized the 15th century portrait by Diego Velasquez, the court painter for the powerful King Phillip who reigned over Spain, the Netherlands, and parts of France and Italy. He combines his education in painting with his childhood connection to textiles. [Watch](https://youtu.be/8TY1H_ozcrg) Carlos talk about his choice to work in textiles. https://youtu.be/8TY1H_ozcrg



Absurd Powdered Wigs, these fashionable wigs of the 1700's harken to the historic era of change that ended monarchies through revolution. The artist combines his love of fashion with his personal understanding of dictatorship and pandemic. Notice his references to other fashion throughout history, like earlobe gauges. Carlos painted this portrait on the right during the Pandemic. Not only does she precariously balance an egg on her head, she wears a nose mask. This accessory is inspired by the Plague Doctors' Beak Mask used as protection during the resurgence of the Black Plague of the 1600's.



[Listen](#) to Carlos talk about his art.



The intention of this commentary is not to distract you from looking at the art or bog you down with words that may impair your personal discovery. Consider these thoughts as a springboard to dive into “Scream and Shout,” the art of Carlos Bautista Biernay. If you want to read more, [click here](#).

Watch 2 interviews with Carlos Bautista Biernay.

[News 12 interview.](#)

<https://youtu.be/Pw9WT6EPg4o>

