

José Villalobos
Joto Fronterizo | Border Faggot

A PDF of this guide can be downloaded at www.albright.edu/Freedman.

Artist's Statement

Jose Villalobos juxtaposes distress with a feeling of comfort deriving from patriarchal and religious social structures which marginalize gay identity. Using found objects, he manipulates material through the context of self-identity as he examines gender roles within family culture . He demonstrates that dismantling traditional modes of masculine identity center an interstitial space where materiality softens the virility. In his work Villalobos protests the toxicity of machismo through the use of objects, specifically within the Norteño culture, that carry a history by deconstructing and altering them. Although new forms are created he demonstrates the battle between the acceptance being a maricón and assimilating to the cultural expectations.

Gallery Guide

1. ***F-A-G***, 2019, ceramic, leather, paint, 7 x 7 inches.
2. ***Manicured***, 2019, mounted deer hoof leather whips, Swarovski crystals, nail polish, dimensions vary.
3. ***Skin and Within***, 2015, ceramic with mixed-media, dimensions vary.
4. ***Hebillas (Buckles)***, 2019, leather whips, graphite and gold leaf on four wood panels, 12 x 26 inches.
5. ***De La Misma Piel (Of the Same Flesh)***, 2016, leather belts, nails, belt buckles, satin pillows, 12 x 35 x 2 feet.

This installation is about homophobic slurs the artist heard as a child, coupled with belts, which were used as tools of discipline. On each belt, in place of where a last name should be, a homophobic slur in Spanish is tooled into the leather. Four belt buckles, each laying on a lavender cushion, spell out "JOTO."

6. ***Chain Hat with Western Wear***, 2018, cowboy hat with chains and unaltered western outfit, dimensions vary.
7. ***Sin La "S" (Without the "S")***, 2017, sombreros, fringe, tulle, soil, resin, seeds, dimensions vary.

This installation is about the artist's perceived inability to pass on his last name by blood in a traditional manner to a woman. This work is about

familial pressures and cultural expectations of marriage and the continuity of a bloodline. Each hat holds a letter of the artist's last name, "VILLALOBO" minus the last letter the "S."

8. ***Macho Maricon (Macho Fag)***, 2017, altered western wear, dimensions vary.
9. ***A Las Escondidas (Hide and Seek)***, 2019, performance documentation, single-channel video, 5:32 minutes, video courtesy of Kris Serold.

This performance is about having to do everything secretively. Hiding one's true self. Being dragged by an older man on a horse into a corral, the artist begins to uncover high heels on bales of hay. He sits and put them on, and carries the heavy hay on his back, circling around the corral, and then begins to stack the bales of hay in the middle. Spray painting the tower of hay "Fag/Joto," the artist runs and knocks the bales down, then begins to destroy the bales of hay, stuffing his clothing with the hay to hide it.

10. ***Pureza como las perlas y rosas blancas (Pure Like Pearls & White Roses)*** 2019, mixed-media installation, dimensions vary.

This work is about the idea of purity within the macho culture.

11. ***Almas Fragiles (Fragile Soles)***, 2019, altered Charro attire, boots with clay soles, "Fuck You" knife with ribbon, dimensions vary.
12. ***Almas Fragiles (Fragile Soles)***, 2019, performance documentation, single-channel video, 3:40 minutes, video courtesy of McNay Art Museum.

This performance addresses homophobia in the media; in this specific case, the iconic, legendary *ranchero* singer Vicente Fernandez. Recently Fernandez refused a liver transplant because he feared it coming from a homosexual man. In the performance the artist wears a mariachi outfit, referencing the singer, while destroying clay soles. At the end, the artist pulls out a dagger with a ribbon that says "Fuck You" in golden letters, which he uses to cut through his shirt in order to pull out a liver he then stabs, pinning it to the floor.

Withered Body
Whole and in pieces
Heart
Soul
Blood
Oxygen
Palpitation!
For Vicente Fernández....
My body
Strong and brave

13. **Cultural Reminders**, 2019, twelve color photographs on glass squares documenting performance, each 8 x 8 inches, photos courtesy of Jenelle Esparza/Presa House Gallery.
14. **Cultural Reminders**, 2019, performance documentation, single-channel video, video courtesy of Jenelle Esparza/Presa House Gallery.
15. **Fag**, 2018, altered western wear worn for performance, dimensions vary.
16. **La Carga del la Tradicion: Actuación (The Weight of Tradition: Performance)**, 2019, excerpt from performance documentation, single-channel video, 1 minute, video courtesy of Kris Serold.
17. **La Carga del la Tradicion: Botas (The Weight of Tradition: Boots)**, 2018, concrete filled leather boots, rope, metal clasp, dimensions vary.
18. **Lagrimas Avergonzadas (Embarrassed Tears)**, 2018, mixed-media installation with performance costume, dimensions vary.

Installation and performance touches on the vulnerability men, noting how men are never supposed to show any weakness.

This is my Soul			This is my Soul
Flesh and body	Of the same flesh	But, for the Macho	Flesh and body
Hidden tears	Blood and bone	Tradition is far more	Hidden tears
Ashamed and shy		Valuable than this	Ashamed and shy
			And from within

19. **We Have Always Been**, 2018, mixed-media installation with altered saddle, boot, dimensions vary.

This work is about the pain and repression that comes with identifying as a gay man in a Latino culture. Each yellow flower represents cowardice and courage at the same time. Two deconstructed boots hang in layers, next to a saddle decorated in a flamboyant manner, and in the last layer a dead hummingbird resides to represent freedom and its suppression. Beneath it in its shadow lies a nopal/cactus.

20. **Manos de Hombre (Hands of a Man)**, 2018, performance documentation, single-channel video, 2:25 minutes, video courtesy of the artist.
21. **Sin Los Callos en la Mano (Without Calluses on my Hand)**, 2018, leather, waxed cord, soil, hammer, makeshift knife, 1 x 2.5 x 4 feet.

This work and performance is about how a man's hand should look callused and rough.

22. ***Fragmentos y Suturas (Fragments and Sutures)***, 2019, mixed-media installation, dimensions vary.
23. ***Forty-Nine***, 2016, handkerchiefs and pigment, dimensions vary.
24. ***Botas: #6 & #7 (Boots: #6 & #7)***, 2019, glycerin, boot soles, barbed wire, rose and lavender oil, 10 x 12 x 6 inches.

These boots are made of lavender and rose scented soap. Boots are generally seen as a symbol of masculinity within the *norteno* culture. By pouring glycerin into the boots, it solidifies into the shape of the boot. Once the artist removed the leather, or the layer of the masculine shell, traces of the stitching and designs were left behind in the soap.

25. ***En Paz Descanse tu Libertad (May your Freedom Rest in Peace)***, 2019, mixed-media installation, dimensions vary.

This work makes a statement on burying one's freedom to be gay in order to satisfy familial expectations.

26. ***Ni Blanco Ni Derecho (Neither White Nor Straight)***, 2016, mixed-media on three wood panels, 12 x 12 inches each.