

Jacqueline Valenzuela

My work is centered around my experiences as a woman within the Chicano world of lowriding. It focuses on women who own their own cars and against all odds are rising up in this male-dominated world. My paintings combine portraits of specific women, within the urban backdrop of murals that are commonly seen in Latinx communities that focus on religion and social issues. Each painting is distinct from the rest because it is precisely made about a specific woman. An interview and research process goes into each painting to make sure each woman's life is highlighted uniquely to who they are, where they live, and their car. The color palettes, architectural references and signage are all from the environments that these lowrider cars cruise through.

The abstract color fields reference the routes lowriders have travelled within these cityscapes while the linework that maneuvers through the picture plane is linked to both the graffiti that defaces murals as well as the lines seen in lowrider patterns. The graffiti itself is used as a symbolic reference to the erasure and camouflaging of women in the lowrider community. By showing the figure and car coming out of the graffiti the viewer gets a sense of the strong identity these women emanate. Through the combination of various materials such as acrylic paint, oil paint, gold leaf, and airbrush I build up layers reminiscent of the various layers of paint on lowrider cars. The various layers and differences in texture also create a surface similar to what you would see on a mural that's been painted over continuously. In terms of materials, panels embody the hard metal surface of a car and canvas the pliability of domestic material. These various materials combined ultimately comment on merging lowrider culture and the more traditional art world. As well as intertwining traditionally, gendered materials as a feminist statement.

My work is an attempt to bring women in the lowrider scene to the forefront as well as bring attention to this aspect of lowrider culture out of the streets and into a gallery setting, encouraging a diverse array of individuals to interact with Chicano and lowrider culture. The various artistic languages that travel throughout the picture plane bring forth the everyday scenery that these women face. The overwhelming amount of different colors and imagery demand that the audience, whether outsiders or Chicano lowriders, do not overlook the real-life experiences of these women, their candied cars and a concrete jungle.