

Artweek



■ Tony Labat ■ Susan Robb ■ Mark Smith ■ Rachell

gong this display of pure punk-rock attitude, not because it was bad—which of course it was meant to be—but because it made a mockery of *The Gong Show* and all who participate in it as judges/viewers; continuing to watch would be like looking closely as you are mooned. But even as that gong strikes, it makes one wonder for whom the gong tolls: Is it the deliberately, audaciously awful performers, the inflated celebrity egos that can't possibly take a joke at their own expense, all the actors in the theater of humiliation that is reality TV, the masochistic voyeuristic society that docilely sits through commercial messages to get to the painfully bad stuff? This piece, like the retrospective as a whole, is frustratingly clever, and cleverly frustrating—in other words, classic Labat.

—Alison Bing

Tony Labat: *Trust Me* closed October 22 at New Langton Arts, San Francisco.

Alison Bing is a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

Omar Chacon and Jose Sarinana at Lincart

Up-and-coming artists generally embrace the newest art-making gear, and modern MFA programs bend over backwards to deliver students the latest digital software or computer-assisted technologies. Now and then, though, these young painters and sculptors succeed in creating something singularly new with *old* technology, breathing fresh breath into established media, techniques or processes. At Lincart this autumn, Jose Sarinana and Omar Chacon achieved something novel with acrylic paint, melding the spirits of abstract expressionism and sculpture with the rich history of Hispanic art-making into an exhibition of simple and disarming originality.

Instead of applying it in the normal fashion, the artists poured or dripped acrylic onto some smooth surface, waited for it dry, peeled it off and used the bright-colored strips to “paint” in three dimensions. Chacon was the tidy one, creating meticulously ordered works by layering the acrylic in thick lozenges on canvas or board or applying it in neat strips to form collages. For *La Casa Rosada*, he painted hundreds of discs, like buttons or eyeballs, cascading in colorful chaos—the viewer recalled a recent San Francisco stunt in which 10,000 Superballs cascaded down precipitous Russian Hill—from a pink and white ground. In contrast, *Variations of Tocapu*

Peruano was vertical and stoic, and *Tocapu a la Colombia* more organic, a blooming, blossoming splay of short-cut chips of paint arranged to grow organically up the



Above: Jose Sarinana, *Puppy Love*, 2005, mixed media; below: Omar Chacon, *Asiatica ... Southern Ivory Union*, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 45" x 52", at Lincart, San Francisco.

canvas; it called to mind ornately inlaid wood, or intricate basketry, but composed of richer colors. Of several untitled works, the most beautiful was a foot-square painting in which acrylic ran down the face in neat, layered rivulets, like the scalloped skin of some exotic reptile.

If Chacon labored precisely and carefully, Sarinana, a recent student of Lincart founder Charles Linder at the San Francisco Art Institute, was sprawling and crude: *Black Splash*, formed by a huge splash of white-spattered black acrylic that hung on the wall like a tapestry—or, more accurately, an animal skin—was marvelously raw, as were *Happy Ending* and *Another Happy Ending*, a pair of papier-mâché witches' hats, hung “at ass height” upon request by the artist, like twin horns of some sodomizing rhinos. Sarinana also appeared to be canine-obsessed: *Puppy Love*, the show's most intriguing piece, was a creepy, loose-limbed dog suit of sorts, formed over an endoskeleton and draped upon Rebar—a work which, were it not so damned funny to behold, would have appeared some poodle-y homage to serial killer/epidermal aficionados like Ed Gein or Jeffrey Dahmer.

Pant, which featured twenty red acrylic doglike “tongues” hung over a long branch, was similarly whimsical—but its homage to Salvador Dalí, and his drooping clocks, spoke to the show's larger ramifications. Conscious or not, Chacon and Sarinana tapped a pair of established traditions in Hispanic folk

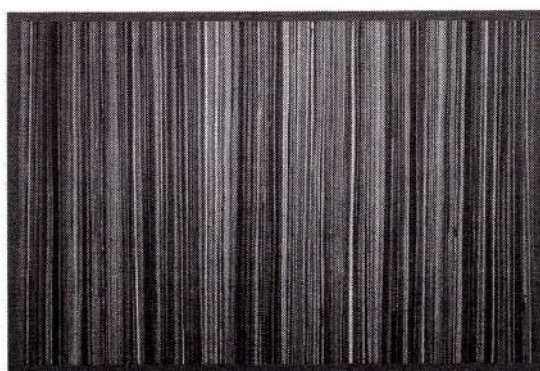
art: the creative re-use of the leftovers from the art-making process, and the bright palettes of so many other Spanish-flavored objects, from blankets and painted dishes to tiles and papier-mâché sculptures. For Colombian-born Chacon and Mexican-born Sarinana, color and texture were paramount, and resourcefulness (as in places where supplies are scarce) the key to their work. These were *drips*, after all: the paint's remainder, its detritus, its shed skin. To find inspiration in such fragile, elegant strips—most of them magnificently rich in color, like melted beads—connected Chacon and Sarinana to countless generations, placing them in a camp with dozens of other artists, from Teo

González and Rupert García to Isis Rodríguez and Felipe Dulzaidés, dedicated to faithfully reinterpreting Hispanic art. That the two succeeded in making so much from so little was testament to their creativity, and their bloodlines.

—Colin Berry

Omar Chacon and Jose Sarinana closed October 16 at Lincart, San Francisco.

Colin Berry is a contributing editor to *Artweek*



'Paper Cuts (again)' at Fetterly Gallery

White out is always visible on paper. It is not corrective in a traceless sense, but, rather, is just another mark with slightly disguised boundaries.