

Cesar Damian

Artists Statement

Llama Project

Migration is an issue of great interest to me and has been the focus of my artwork over the last few years.

In my series "Those Who Stay Behind", I address the dilemma of men (mostly) migrating from Mexico to the United States to find work. Without the presence of men in the communities, the demographic that are left behind, specifically the women, children and elderly, face a particular set of struggles.

There is a complex world of immigrants living in Mexico. To truly understand this world, I became a migrant myself, experiencing fear, trepidation and insecurity as I crossed the US border illegally. As a result, this project has become far more personal and important to me, both conceptually and aesthetically. I found myself compelled to find and photograph other immigrants.

With "Diasporas", I began to fracture the images of the bodies and faces of these migrants, and during this process my own feelings of hopelessness, solitude and fear, (those I had experienced during my own small migration), surfaced. This work deconstructs the human form in order to create something else, something distinctly different and unique. I experiment with the notion of what is real and shift these portraits from reality into the imaginary. I wish to reveal what lays hidden, perhaps a deeper sense of the erotic, the absurd or the profound.

I have also worked on a series that documents the lives and stories of some of the migrants who were caught illegally traveling from central/south America through Mexico en route to the USA. I traveled with immigration officers for 3 months, as they intercepted and arrested these people—usually riding the trains illegally. These illegal migrants were deported to their native countries.

My proposal for Yukon.

The body of work I will create will be an extension of my "migrants" series. I plan to interview, photograph and interact with individuals from different countries who have immigrated to Canada and settled in the Yukon.

The potential to develop projects in collaboration with other artists is exciting and inspiring for me. As an artist, I often work in isolation, so is important to spend time with other creative beings that are also on a path of reflection and creation.

I plan to work and collaborate with Joyce Majiski, learning printmaking techniques and with Haruko Okano, learning ephemeral installation techniques and materials. Above all I am excited by being in the Canadian north and building a new awareness of nature and environment.

Yukon will be a place where I will focus on creating new work as well as having the opportunity to experiment and learn new techniques (electronic media, multimedia, sound, poetry). I am eager to engage with other artists, for the potential of exchanging ideas, discovering and learning. In immersing myself in this foreign environment, I am open to the possibility of a totally new subject matter to emerge, and I am excited by that.

I am also eager to explore new venues to exhibit my work and engage with a new audience. The relationship of artist-work-audience is important to me.