

The Chicano Moon Landing of 1968
Abel Alejandro

October 28 – December 2, 2023
Opening Reception, Saturday, October 28th, 5 - 8pm

LAUNCH Gallery
170 S. La Brea Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036

LAUNCH Gallery proudly presents *The Chicano Moon Landing of 1968*, featuring new paintings by celebrated Mexican-American artist Abel Alejandro. In this new series, Abel delves into themes such as conventional masculinity, valor, patriarchy, the connection to one's surroundings, and the capacity to gaze ahead with purpose and assurance. Born in Mexico and raised in Southern California, Abel draws upon his immigrant experience as he reflects on a bygone era and an uncharted timeline. Art making serves as a vehicle and medium for him, allowing exploration of his past while interpreting the dynamics of contemporary American society and his role within it.

This current series of paintings introduces us to Xicanoland. This majestic place and its alternative history honors real and imagined ancestors in a society that acknowledges past miss-steps while embracing hope for a better future. This personal story shares years of thought and introspection through his art practice and visual language told here.

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Welcome to the vibrant landscape of Xicanoland, a modern-day marvel that spans an entire continent! Immerse yourself in the dynamic youth culture, where unique vibes, personal aesthetics, and colloquial vocabulary create an atmosphere brimming with pride and a touch of entitlement.

As you explore, you'll discover a fascinating interplay between generations. With their contemporary flair, the youth stand in contrast to the older generation, who passionately romanticize past conquests, embrace national pride, and uphold cherished customs. It's a living testament to the rich history and diverse narratives shaping Xicanoland. Our narrative embraces the tapestry of small nations merging into larger entities, woven with trade threads, wars, treaties, tributes, and even arranged marriages. This mosaic of nation-states reflects a modern society grappling with complexities of inequities, machismo, corporate greed; universal challenges faced by every nation.

Ebbs and flows of various demographics and competing traditions posing constant challenges to scientific, commercial, and space exploration advancements have marked the journey into modernity for Xicanoland. Yet, this collection of nation-states remains resilient, actively engaging in the political arena to secure deals and favors that align with their interests.

While embracing progress, Xicanoland is committed to preserving the self-sufficiency of its local communities. Through aggressive tourism campaigns, it opens its doors to the world, inviting visitors to experience the authenticity and uniqueness that define its diverse regions. Soft power is wielded skillfully through cultural exportation and market dominance, with a subtle nod to military might. The historical "Chicano Moon Landing of 1968," highlights the indigenous empire's crowning achievement. Xicanoland is a living, breathing first nation.

Internally, Xicanoland grapples with the complexities of its national identity and soul; simultaneously challenging the perception of being a monolith by outsiders. It's a nuanced journey of self-discovery, where the echoes of the past harmonize with the present's rhythm. Yes, it is indeed complicated, but within this complexity lies the beauty of Xicanoland, waiting to be explored and understood.

About Abel

The first seven years of my life were spent in a remote, rural region known as Tierra Caliente in Michoacán State, Mexico. I recall no running water nor electricity. Our immediate and extended family lived in Apatzingán, the nearest bona fide town. It was from here that my family and I emigrated to Los Angeles in 1975. It was, in many ways, akin to traveling from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, given the rudimentary conditions to which we were accustomed. This experience – of leaving one land for another, having to constantly redefine what it means to be a human being, a man, a part of a community – is a constant and central theme within my work. I am interested in narratives and vignettes about the seemingly discarded or unimportant moments that shape our culture. I believe that these discounted moments harbor importance and, in isolating these moments, I endeavor to stimulate reflection.

To my mind, artists' particular style – their mark – has more significance than their fingerprint or their signature. It is, in point of fact, one of the building blocks of the artist's DNA. It must be etched with purpose, signifying commitment. It matters not if the mark is smudged or dragged or pushed or erased or redrawn. If that is the imprint, so be it. Think of the act as a tattoo that impregnates the surface. Should you attempt to remove it, it will resist. My marks are calculated to fuse certain images, anointed spaces.