

## **Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Next Nasher Public Exhibition Artist, Giovanni Valderas**

*Dallas-based artist will consider the role of car culture and the American dream for installation in the Nasher Store Gallery*

DALLAS, Texas (November 9, 2020)—The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the second exhibition for Nasher Public in the Nasher Store gallery, *Grit/Grind* by Dallas-born artist Giovanni Valderas, on view from November 12 – December 6.

Valderas' *Grit/Grind* takes its point of departure from the American dream of freedom, mobility, and success that owning a car has traditionally represented. Valderas will place a single object in the gallery—a large, brightly colored piñata he created as a full-scale replica of the 1986 Nissan Sentra that was the first car his Guatemalan mother bought and in which she learned to drive.

Valderas's project draws upon his memories of the independence having a car of their own granted to his family but also offers reflections upon the more sobering consequences of life among working poor families. For these communities, a car may be emblematic of a transitory life of frequent moves when the rent becomes too high or may even serve as a possible dwelling itself when other options are exhausted. These layers of meaning are apparent in the work's title, *Grit/Grind*, as Valderas explains: "The grit is what we all have coming from working class families; we get it done no matter what. Our bills need to be paid, so we are going to figure out a way to do that. But it is also the grind that takes a toll on us through constantly driving or constantly working low paying jobs, and we see that reflected in our health and our socio-economic status. We have brown and black families that have shorter life expectancies than, say, a white family in North Dallas."

Valderas has made piñatas for, in his words, "guerilla site-specific" projects concerned with the gentrification of neighborhoods in Dallas, including *Casita Triste* (in English, "sad little house"), in which he placed piñatas in the form of small houses around various locations in the neighborhood of Oak Cliff to draw attention to issues of fair housing, displacement, and gentrification. As both a tribute to these communities and a protest of their treatment, his use of the piñata speaks not only to a recognizable form found in such neighborhoods at moments of celebration but also makes use of an enduring tradition of vernacular papier mâché sculpture that has long been employed to create religious statuary, architectural decoration, and other types of objects.

In *Grit/Grind*, Valderas draws upon the humor and pathos generated by the impressively large, vividly colored effigy of an automobile made from inexpensive and readily available materials that is nonetheless as vulnerable to its environment as its inhabitants might be.

### **About Giovanni Valderas**

A native of Dallas, Giovanni Valderas is the Exhibition Manager at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center. Previously, he was the Assistant Gallery Director at Kirk Hopper Fine Art and the Gallery Director at Mountain View College. Valderas graduated from the College of Visual Arts & Design at the University of North Texas with an MFA and has taught painting and drawing courses at the University of North Texas, Richland College, and Mountain View College. A former member of 500x gallery, one of the oldest co-op galleries in Texas, he has had work featured in the 2013 Texas Biennial; *New American Paintings Magazine*, issues

# Nasher Sculpture Center

PRESS RELEASE

#108 and #132; *Impossible Geometries*, Field Projects, New York; and 14x48's temporary billboard public art project. A recipient of the Moss/Chumley Award and a microgrant from the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Valderas has also served as an appointee by the Dallas City Council as Vice Chair of the Cultural Affairs Commission. In 2018, he resigned from his reappointment to the Cultural Affairs Commission to run for Dallas City Council to represent the neighborhood he grew up in; he led a grassroots campaign and placed a strong second.

**For high resolution images, please follow [this link](#).**

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**About the Nasher Sculpture Center:**

Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Thursday and Friday 11 a.m to 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. Visitors must book a timed ticket in advance. For more information, visit [www.NasherSculptureCenter.org](http://www.NasherSculptureCenter.org).

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