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Andrew Alba

*Lifted Labor*

September 29 - December 2, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, September 29, 5-7 PM



**Andrew Alba riffs on neo-expressionist visual history with raw, unfiltered paintings that resist the intellectualization of art via frank depictions of labor.**

**(September 2023) Art is labor, and nowhere is this more apparent than Andrew Alba’s newest show *Lifted Labor*, which features roughly-hewn and boldly-colored paintings created with construction materials instead of traditional artistic media. The descendant of Mexican migrant workers and a construction worker himself, Alba is keenly aware of the politics of hard labor—and its effects on the body. “Alba’s artistic approach is based on his experience growing up in Salt Lake City, Utah as a descendant of Mexican migrant workers. Through his use of non-traditional materials collected from his day job in construction, Alba communicates anti-establishment narratives to the working class,” says Kelly Carper, the curator of *Lifted Labor*. “Alba’s work is raw, anti-academic, and frank in its depiction of contemporary politics and society.” The solo exhibition opens with a reception at form & concept on Friday, September 29, 5-7 PM.**

“*Lifted Labor* is a progression and continuum of *Weighted Home*, my previous body of work. *Weighted Home* established a deep, solemn connection between the soul of my stylized figures and their environment,” says Alba. “In this new exhibition, I complicate this paradigm by elevating my figures and the abstract labor they have come to represent.” Historically, Alba’s egalitarian artistic approach has boldly confronted contemporary issues surrounding politics and labor. His confrontational style attracted the attention of Ogden Contemporary Arts, where Alba met Carper. The art center’s inaugural exhibition featured Alba’s artwork, ushering the Salt Lake City-based artist onto the national art stage.

However, *Lifted Labor* is a clear departure from Alba’s earlier work, featuring deeply personal paintings laden with magical realism that illustrate the interdependent relationship between humans and their environment. Clues suggestive of Alba’s shift toward magical realism first appeared in *Weighted Home*, an exhibition at Froelick Gallery that featured Alba’s signature figures grounded and integrated into a dreamlike, earthly environment. Drawing from Alba’s reflections on his body as a vessel for history, ancestry and emotion, the artist’s expressive brushwork and intense color palette render a new kind of figure in *Lifted Labor*. Alba reflects on humanity through a spiritual lens, surfacing and visualizing the human soul.

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at [spencer@formandconcept.center](mailto:spencer@formandconcept.center).

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## BIOGRAPHY

**Andrew Alba** is a prolific, self-taught artist from a non-traditional art background; He creates work without the theoretical constraints and critical expectations of the academy.

Inspired by the neo-expressionists, he loves using thick, gestural applications of oil paint and repurposed construction materials to provoke emotional responses in his audience and critique our wildly complex sociopolitical present. He achieves this by juxtaposing the clean white walls of art institutions with the rough-hewn, everyday materials of workers. His use of non-traditional materials such as drywall mud, concrete, lumber, and drop cloths creates an aesthetic entryway through which the working class can enter esoteric fine art spaces.

Ultimately, Alba is interested in how his use of materials resonates with the working class. His to-date career highlights include his exhibition and residency with the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art and receiving the Utah Division of Arts and Museums Visual Arts Fellowship.

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