

Blaffer Art Museum
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John Guzman: Flesh and Bone
June 23–September 24, 2023

Public opening reception | June 23, 6-9pm

HOUSTON, TX | May 25, 2023-

The Blaffer Art Museum is honored to present the first solo museum exhibition of work by artist John Guzman (b. 1984). *Flesh and Bone* focuses on works produced in the artist's hometown of San Antonio and the Texas debut of paintings completed during, and immediately following, time at the [NXTHVN Studio Fellowship Program](#) in New Haven, Connecticut.

As a spectator to claustrophobic psychological and physical states growing up in San Antonio's Southside, Guzman's monumental paintings are a byproduct of experiences, recordings, and environmental reflections. The artist abstracts the human figure to reflect the harm endured by the body of those around him, and the unrecognizable transformation brought on by years of punishment, relapse, and self-destruction.

Through large-scale paintings, Guzman assembles distorted, tangled, and deteriorated figures confined in cramped domestic spaces, concealing their behaviors from others and themselves. He layers heavily textured brush strokes to cut and gouge out a dizzying carnage of disfigured hands, feet, knees, and teeth enmeshed and mangled into new beings. Using a palette of muted colors and dark lines, the pummeling mutilation of the human body creates a visual language for the condition of existence continuing to prevail at the edge of barely living.

A markedly distinct spatial shift emerges in more recent works, pointing to its link between the environment and its inhabitants in the artist's exploration of new space, styles, subject matter, and attention to simple lines. Working in Connecticut, the artist continues to explore biomorphic forms, yet addresses the fragility and interiority of the psyche and altered landscapes. Throughout the work, Guzman visualizes inexpressible yet consequential conditions of suffering and, in so doing, articulates a departure from cyclical patterns of self-destruction becoming his own reality.

John Guzman: Flesh and Bone is co-organized by Rigoberto Luna, independent curator, and Erika Mei Chua Holum, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Assistant Curator at the Blaffer Art Museum.

About the artist:

John Guzman is a painter from San Antonio, Texas. Guzman has exhibited nationally and completed formal training at the Southwest School of Art in 2019. In 2020, Guzman's solo exhibition, *If It Doesn't Pick Up, Let's Split*, presented by Blue Star Contemporary in San Antonio received a Contemporary Art Month Award. In 2021, the artist presented the solo exhibition *I Would Have Killed To See It* at Presa House Gallery curated by Rigoberto Luna.

About the curators:

Rigoberto Luna is a San Antonio-born independent curator and the co-founder and director of Presa House Gallery in San Antonio, TX. Luna has curated numerous exhibitions focused on Latinx artists living and working in Central and South Texas.

Erika Mei Chua Holum is the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Assistant Curator at the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston. Forthcoming projects include a collaborative group exhibition with KADIST and solo exhibitions with Reynier Leyva Novo and Cian Dayrit.

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