

In the summer of 2012 I studied abroad in Costa Rica for 6 weeks followed by a 4 week bicycle tour of Cuba. Prior to this I had sought to engage with political themes through my painting, however these experiences deepened and personalized my commitment to the themes I had been working with. In Costa Rica I stayed with a middle class family and was struck by their political views. I remember my host father saying that he was proud to pay taxes: to give back to the society that had given him so much. He also described, how he thought Cuba was in many ways more free than the US, because here freedom is largely defined by the size of one's bank account. These views resonated with me, characterizing a dramatically different perception of social responsibility than is espoused within the US. In Cuba, biking allowed me to get away from tourist areas and into the interior of the island, meeting farmers, students, and families. It has taken me some time to process my thoughts from Cuba, and they are still complex. However, returning to the United States, I was most struck by the hollowness of the refrain that the government cannot afford to provide healthcare, education, food, and housing for its people. It is a question of priorities not resources: we have the money, what we currently lack is empathy. Directly experiencing the divide between Latin America and the US planted this idea deeper than any textbook ever could. My art has evolved along with these experiences, as I've tried to deal with some of the complexities surrounding radical social change. In particular my piece *Vencedores* responded to my experiences in Cuba, and *Shoulder to Shoulder* addressed my feelings toward individuals within the history of radical change.



*Compañera* Oil on Canvas 36"x 54' (painted in 2011)

Drawn from an image of a Socialist combatant in the Spanish civil war, and a modern image of New York, this piece tried to capture some of the victorious confidence of revolutionary youth.



*Bench Sitters* Oil On canvas 44" x 60" (2012)

Drawn from an image of Chinese migrant laborers smoking on a bench, I wanted to emphasize the replacability of the worker within capitalism. They are valued only for the time that they work, and the amount that they consume.



*Venedores*

Oil on Canvas 72" x 48" (2013)

This piece was drawn from my experiences in Latin America a few summers ago. Referencing an image of Cuban revolutionaries entering Havana in 1959 I reinserted them into the present day city. My intent is to question if the present is worthy of the sacrifices of the past, what would the revolutionaries think of their revolution?



*Shoulder to Shoulder* Oil on Canvas 84"x60" (2014)

At the far left is Miguel Enríquez, leader of the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria) that took up arms against the US backed coup, and who was killed by Chilean police in 1974. Next a space is left for the thousands of people known and unknown that were disappeared by the Pinochet regime. The two figures on the right are present day organizers and student leaders, involved in the previous 5 years of student strikes and protests against the privatization of higher education. I do not intend for these individuals to be the sole representatives of what is a mass struggle, but rather hope that through these portraits I can help the viewer establish a more personal connection with the movement.