

FRESNO ARTS & CULTURE

Arts & Culture Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2024

01

Evil Dead: The Musical

Selma Arts Center. 2 p.m. 1935 High St., Selma. This campy musical makes for a comedic, not to mention gratuitously violent and over-the-top, fun, bloody experience. 559-891-2238.

05

ArtHop Fresno Arts Council

5 p.m.–8 p.m. Greater Fresno Metro Area Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. FACarthop on Facebook.

Celebrating 50 Years: Gallery 25

Gallery 25. 5 p.m.–8 p.m. 729 E. Divisadero St. 50th anniversary exhibition. 559-264-4092.

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07

Let's Make an Art!

Root Access Hackerspace. 6 p.m.–9 p.m. 1476 N. Van Ness Ave. Community art meet-up. Bring your favorite materials or use ours. rootaccess.org.

Free Art Demo Day

Allard's Art. 12:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 5350 N. Blackstone Ave. Immerse yourself for an afternoon of artistic adventure. 559-225-1500.

CMAC Youth Voices Film Screening

Maya Cinemas. 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. 3090 E. Campus Pointe Dr. Films by local students focusing on community issues. 559-266-2622.

Twist on Taylor Tower Theatre

8 p.m. 815 E. Olive Ave. Live Taylor Swift tribute show. 559-485-9050.

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13

Ashley M. Jones: An Evening of Poetry

Downtown Artist Gallery. 5 p.m.–9 p.m. 701 L St. An inspiring evening with Alabama's poet laureate. 559-304-3424.

19

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ArtHop: Senior Painting Party

River Park's Art Groove Gallery. 4 p.m.–6 p.m. 7786 N. Blackstone Ave. 559-840-8886.

River Park Art Groove Open Invitation

River Park's Art Groove Gallery
5 p.m.–8 p.m. 7786 N. Blackstone Ave. Participate in one of our Art Groove/ArtHop programs: "Get Your Art Groove On!" 559-840-8886.

21

Mixed Media Play Day

Scarab Creative Arts. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. 729 E. Divisadero St. Join us for a fun-filled day of creativity and exploration. 559-285-2878.

28

Celebrating 50 Years: Gallery 25

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The Captivating and Brimming Art of Chris Solis

BY NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

Christopher Solis is a Fresno-based artist. Solis does not strike one as the type of artist trying to sell you something, least of all himself. Indeed, instead of a written bio, Solis sent a self-portrait.

Solis appears to see bios like product thumbnails—ersatz snapshots purposefully pruned of "fat," excess, the surrounding world and, crucially, the perspective of the subject standing in front of the camera's (or publisher's) lens.

Many of Solis's pieces feel almost voyeuristic but not because his pieces depict figures seemingly entranced in intimate moments while we watch. Instead, the feeling of voyeurism comes from the sense that the viewer is inside the world of the person experiencing these moments. It is as though the viewer exists in the dream of another individual, captivated by a world that cannot be fully comprehended.

The images are blurry, flickering, always on the verge of dripping out of existence. Solis's loose expressive sketch pieces depict scenes filled with figures radiating a warm, sensual intensity at one moment and cold, distant distrust the next as if they know the viewer is an interloper.

The dynamism that pulses on the page suddenly pauses; figures turn their gaze toward you—or perhaps they were always looking at you—with dark, discerning eyes as if to say "Yes, I see you, wandering phantasm. How did you find your way here? How will you find your way back?"

Solis's non-sketch pieces are just as captivating and brimming with vitality. Solis expertly utilizes absence in many of his pieces to strengthen the illusion of movement and intersubjectivity.

Subjects appear to be phasing into corporeal form, emerging out of a void by sheer willpower alone. In the void sometimes appears inane, white-chalked scribbling, which impresses the idea that these figures originate from untamed

chaos, incomplete thoughts that compose the unconscious mind. Within the horse and shirtless figure pieces, the writing seems to depict an exercise journal, tracking physical progress over time.

This, combined with the muscularity and vigor of the figures, the careful use of negative space and the "messiness" of the strokes, instills a feeling of immediacy and becomingness. There's a deeply libidinal presence in these pieces that insists upon itself—it makes us confront the power of our unconscious and its role in the perpetual creation of "self."

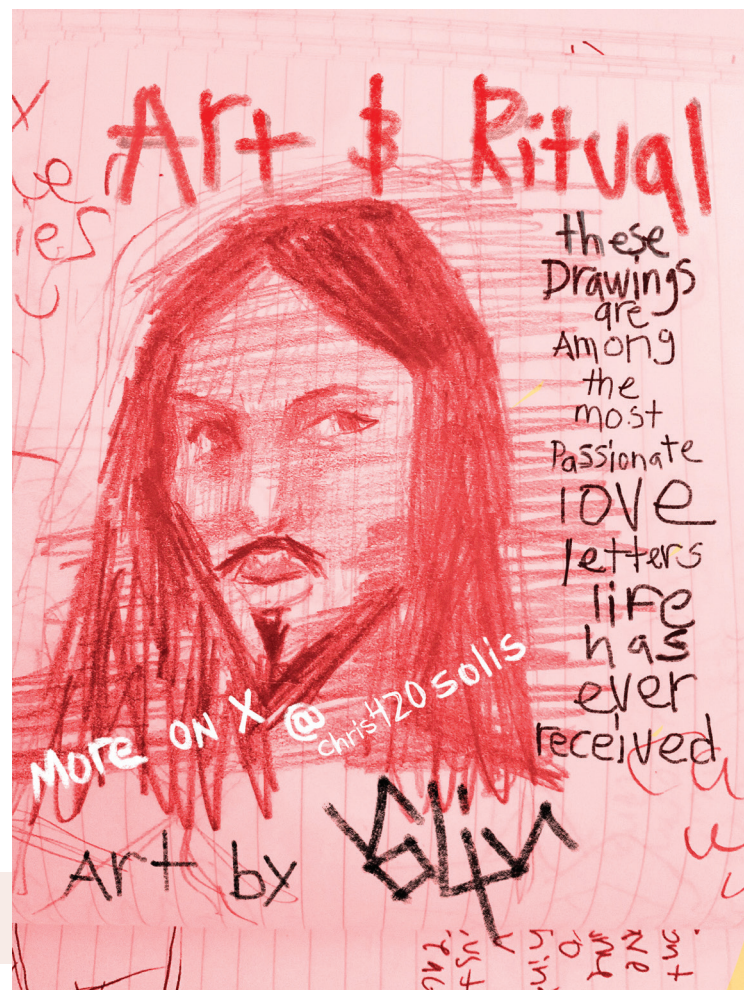
The pink piece is the "bio" that Solis sent instead of anything that could be perceived as self-promotion. On it, he scribbled "These drawings are among the most passionate love letters life has ever received" next to a loosely sketched self-portrait.

Although Solis's art can feel disorienting and unsettling at times, it is undeniably brimming with life and authenticity. It is intimate, self-explanatory and visceral almost like a diary that is being written in real time.

Solis was a resident at the now-defunct Sorensen's Studio, which represented a similar vitality and devotion to art for art's sake. Many of the studio's artists, including Solis, are continuing to create phenomenal art but no longer have a reliable place to showcase it.

If "outsider" art is important to you, follow those artists because they are continuing to work and self-organize. Follow Solis's work on X at @chris420solis, where he consistently posts his current art.

Noah Deeds Ortiz is a student at Fresno State majoring in psychology. He coordinates the Community Alliance newspaper's Arts & Culture section along with his wife, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. He hosted the "Queer Goggles" podcast.



The art of Chris Solis