

Erin Carle

Israel Medina

### Artist interview: Israel Medina

**Erin:** First off I would like to start by you telling me a bit about yourself, where are you originally from?

**Israel:** Well I am originally from McAllen in the Rio Grande Valley, right near the border, but my parents are both from Mexico.

**Erin:** What is the primary medium in your practice?

**Israel:** I work in sculpture focusing on objects in space.

**Erin:** So what made you decide to become an artist?

**Israel:** I started as a business major for a year and a half and had no passion. My girlfriend at the time was an art major and her experiences in the field pushed me to try it out myself.

**Erin:** That's interesting. Did you do much art growing up?

**Israel:** No I actually didn't, I was fortunate to appreciate art as an outsider. Now that I am an artist I can see the crumbs that led me here. I used to enjoy taking things apart and putting them back together.

**Erin:** So why did you choose sculpture?

**Israel:** I knew I wanted to work in a 3-D space. The possibility of large scale work was definitely more for me, more nonsense to explore.

**Erin:** So tell me more about your practice conceptually, and how that relates to you personally.

**Israel:** All my work starts with a thought that is normally on the topic of day to day activities. I'm always thinking about things potential. I focus mostly on challenging sociological routines and traditions, as well as mental illness, maturity, dysfunctions and expectations. One of my pieces focuses on the idea of chores, something I'm pretty bad at doing, but I do enjoy the satisfaction of finishing a chore, so when you stop doing chores all together there is no sense of ending satisfaction. As for my personal connection to my practice growing up I was always taught the conservative values of Mexican culture. It's looked down upon to be an artist in my culture. I want other people to realize my concepts. I want to spread my perspective. I always want people to be inclined to instigate change in ideas.

**Erin:** Let's dive into this a bit more, what is the intended reaction to your work?

**Israel:** I want viewers to have a stream of thought while looking at my work. I want to provoke them, whether it be visually or emotionally.

**Erin:** Everyone's art is lightly or heavily based on other artistic practices. Who or what movement inspires your work the most?

**Israel:** I am a visual person so pop art and conceptual art really influence my practice. I'm also big on found object and surrealism, I love that it includes investigation, something that I try to replicate in my own work. I love exploring materials and being nonsensical, the techniques I use were not taught but found by self-exploration.

**Erin:** Where do you see your practice going in the future? Do you plan on more schooling or perusing galleries, teaching or business?

**Israel:** I just want to be an artist. I have backup plans but I want to be in galleries and maybe include more performance in my practice. I do plan on applying to a residency in Japan. Travel is important to me, I want to find myself and see what is important to me, and I think broadening my outlook on the world and its cultures will help with that. I eventually want to get my MFA and a welding certificate for my artist's tool belt.

**Erin:** What is the best advice you have been given pertaining to your artistic practice?

**Israel:** to trust yourself. I'm big on skepticism but there's a healthy medium. You should trust the vision in your head and trust the process. You have to flush it out and just do it, see it in the space, that's the only way to see what you are doing is valid.

**Erin:** What interests you about the world from a creative standpoint and is that reflected in your work?

**Israel:** I'm in love with absurdity, comedy and tragedy in art. I'm very playful. The piece I'm working on now is about childhood. I'm expected to mature as a man from societal pressure but I still have a desire to be silly.

**Erin:** Lastly, how has the pandemic affected your practice if at all?

**Israel:** It really didn't affect me in a negative way at all. I've found that I grow the most in uncomfortable situations, they can bring the best realizations. A year ago while I was in sculpture three my professor really broke me out of my shell. It was the first time I ever felt validated in my work.