

cande aguilár www.barrioPOP.com

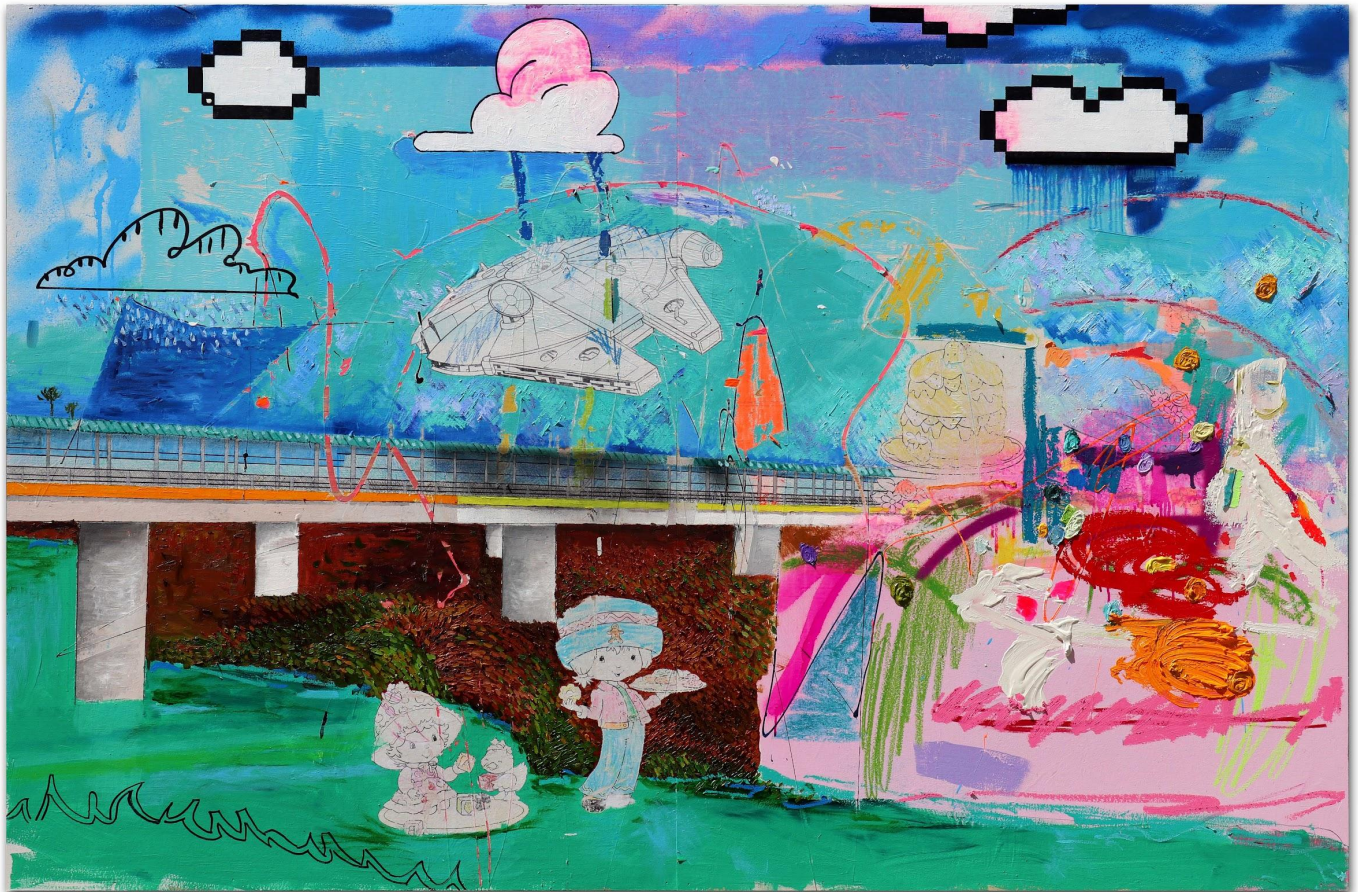
El Puente Nuevo

2019

Multimedia painting with transfers on panel

48x72 inches

\$11,000



This painting is of our international bridge here in Brownsville TX that connects the United States and Mexico. It's known as el Puente Nuevo or The New Bridge in English. I transferred an image of the Millennium Falcon from Star Wars flying over the bridge. As I do in many of my paintings, I juxtaposed mainstream pop culture icons, and/or appropriate from art history to form a sense of belonging because, in this region, we are not really considered "American" or even "Mexican"... it's kind of like living in a cultural limbo. So when locals see this particular painting they might think, "*Oh, that's our bridge from here, right? And, that's the Star Wars spaceship*", making it interesting to them. On the other hand the painting dives into the immigration issue we have. The Millennium Falcon has always been a symbol of hope in the Star Wars story and so flying over the bridge is kind bringing hope, amidst all the negative immigration stories.

~Cande Aguilar

[Cande Aguilar Creates Art at a Cultural Crossroads](#)



One striking painting at his Brownsville show, “El Puente Nuevo,” combines several figures from fantasy worlds. The Millennium Falcon—the good guys’ spaceship in the Star Wars universe—is juxtaposed just above an image of a bridge linking Brownsville to Matamoros. Meanwhile, underneath the bridge, two Strawberry Shortcake characters seem to have waded across to Mexico with an offering of pastries. At the foot of the bridge, the otherwise figurative painting gives way to a mess of color.

“Mexico has turned into this abstraction to me,” Aguilar explains. “My kids have never seen Mexico. When I was a kid, we used to go all the time....It was just like crossing the street.” Aguilar has not set foot over the border since a harrowing experience 12 years ago, when he was accosted by half a dozen men with machine guns. The men separated Aguilar from his wife and forced him to let them search his car. Though neither of them was harmed, the couple has avoided Matamoros ever since. Aguilar says he sees the Millennium Falcon as a symbol of hope, perhaps swooping in to save the day, while the Strawberry Shortcakes bring peace in the form of baked goods. ~Michael Agresta, an Austin resident, has written for *Slate*, the *Atlantic* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

[The Fantastic World of Cande Aguilar](#)



El Puente Nuevo, Brownsville Museum of Fine Art exhibition photo

[3d immersive link Brownsville Museum of Fine Art](#)



[New York – “Cande Aguilar: barrioPOP” on view at 81 Leonard Gallery](#)



[New York exhibition catalog](#)

“When you’re born here in Brownsville, Texas, or on any border, you really don’t feel like you’re considered Mexican or you really don’t feel like you’re considered American,” Aguilar explained. “You sort of are in this kind of limbo. That’s why I called the show ‘Ni de Aqui Ni de Allá.’ “I am doing this immersive experience; I am trying to put together a show that will sort of immerse the viewer in an experience.” ~cande aguilar

[Surface Treatment: Blending cultures with colors - The Monitor](#)

Cande Aguilar Biography

Born: Brownsville, TX, 1972

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

McNay Museum, San Antonio, TX
San Diego Art Institute, San Diego, CA
International Museum of Arts & Science, McAllen, TX
Brownsville Museum of Art, Brownsville, TX
San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum, San Benito, TX
Gertrude Herbert Institute for Art, Augusta, GA
The Masur Museum of Art, Monroe, LA
Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls, TX
University of Texas, Rusteberg Gallery, Brownsville, TX
The Office of Useless Art, Tamines, Belgium
Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin, TX
Studio Apothiki, Paphos, Cyprus
Progresso Art Gallery, Tamaulipas, Mexico
Funky Town, Berkeley, CA
The Painting Center, NYC
Wave Pool Gallery, Cincinnati, OH
Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, TX
Texas Biennial, Austin, TX
Young Space, Kaukauna, WI
Boecker Contemporary, Heidelberg, Germany

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Cheech Marin Center of Chicano Art, Riverside CA
International Museum of Arts & Science, McAllen TX
Brownsville Museum of Fine Art, Brownsville, TX
Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls, TX
UTSA Art Collection, San Antonio, TX
First National Bank, Edinburg, TX
Mountain View College, Dallas TX
Harper College, Palatine, IL

Texas Observer

<https://www.texasobserver.org/cande-aguilar-brownsville-barriopop/>

McNay Museum of Art, barrioPOP 2019

<https://youtu.be/hBheCXEjKjY>

3d virtual exhibition tour link barrioPOP, BMFA 2019

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=bzE9r8JGKUj>

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Text by artist/writer Noe Hinojosa

What is Cande Aguilar's barrioPOP? In the United States, when you place the word "barrio" in front of anything, it acts as a filter. It filters whatever words follow through a Mexican American context down to a common denominator: the neighborhood. If I say I can play barrio tennis, it means I may not have the fancy equipment or clothes, and my strokes may not be refined, but I do know the rules, and I can play. I might have to jump a fence to get to some tennis courts, but that just reinforces the point that "barrio" anything is being of, or pertaining to, the common folk of the barrio where people are accustomed to less access of all kinds for basic socio-economic reasons.

barrioPOP therefore can be understood as pop art through a particular south Texas, Mexican American lens that takes us on a ride that might not be posh, but it will get us there, and in this case, with its own unique style. Cande's work is rooted in a Rio Grande Valley, "pull yourself up from your bootstraps and make do with what you have", kind of feel that translates well through his use of found objects in this series of mixed media art installations. Traditional art, after all, has been done and it all looks the same no matter where in the world it originates. What people want is something new and different. What people need from art are statements that move them either emotionally, or intellectually, and preferably both within some relevant context. This is what Aguilar achieves in his art with regional flavor and genuine authenticity. After all, if there is one thing the "barrio" (and Mexican culture in general) is known for, it is: sabor (flavor).

In barrioPOP, we see Cande's abstract expressionist's painterly experience with bright color fields and forms extruded through the Play-dough press of his 1970s and 80s popular culture upbringing. barrioPOP is an interconnected series of mixed media art installations, which represent various border town settings associated with a certain era and place, and it's filled with opportunities for nostalgia. Any shared history or appreciation for the unique cultural amalgamation of post 1960s Americana will find much to enjoy in this particularly modern pop art view cast from the southern tip of Texas.

Cande Aguilar was raised American and proud of it just like all the other Valley kids in the public schools in the 70s and 80s, but he and all the other kids were also fully immersed in their Mexican heritage. Growing up in the Rio Grande Valley and being surrounded by Mexican culture colored all aspects of life including the flavor of the general cultural ideas being doled out generically across America on television and in movies. Cande's unique perspective helped form the building blocks of his barrioPOP art. His hybridization of ideas is the catalyst and the contextual components for his creations.