

## Decoding Identity - I Do It For My People

Artists: Lorraine Bonner, Ed and Linda Calhoun, Christopher Carter, Lalla Essaydi, John Yoyogi Fortes, Chaz Guest, David Huffman, Clint Imboden, Stephanie Anne Johnson, Annette Lawrence, Kelly Marshall, Wardell Milan, Ramekon O'Arwisters, Adrienne Pao, Jefferson Pinder, Dario Posada, Danny Ramirez, Manuel Rios, Blue Wade, and David Yun.

Review by DeWitt Cheng: This contemporary art invitational show about racial and cultural identity in an increasingly blended midtone world has its reception three days after the Obama Inauguration. I'm glad I'm here even if I couldn't get to Washington-- the euphoria is palpable! (Are we still trying to levitate buildings?) "Decoding Identity - I Do It For My People" features work by twenty Bay Area and national artists. (Now let's see if we can all save our skins.)

Linda and Ed Calhoun's piece is about the encoding of racial prejudice with anti-miscegenation laws, which ended only in 1967. (Reagan Babies erroneously claiming MLK was a Republican should check and see who was presidentin' at the time, a year before Nixon's Southern Strategy ushered in the supposedly permanent GOP Majority.) A color is assigned to each painted tile, but various bits of text are there in all their white-fright glory. Adrienne Pao's photos explore tourism and colonialism. Partly Hawaiian, she photographs herself posed in these conceptual tableaux. Lalla Eessaydi, a Moroccan/Saudi/Liberal/Muslim artist exhibits photographs that are subversive within the Muslim context, in which calligraphy is a traditionally male preserve-- as shooting cage-raised birds is in Texas, say. Chaz Guest, appropriately and resplendently attired, shows art made from zoris, Japanese sandals made of wood and cotton.

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