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### Minority Report

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I make large, colorful, messy figurative paintings that tell stories and celebrate the underdog. I use found objects, as well as wood panels and canvases. The poetry of the street plays an important role in my art; from what I paint on, to what I paint with, to my subject matter, my art conveys both liberation and pride toward my Hispanic culture. When I create, I allow the paint to be true to its physical properties. I am aggressive and free in my painting and mark-making. If my paintings begin to appear “sophisticated,” I find ways to manipulate them. I set up expectations then defy them.

My art is done with a purposeful anti-design. Natural laws are removed; I prefer cultural mindscapes and allegorical spaces over the traditional figure/ground relationship. I place the viewer in a confrontational stance so as to feel directly engaged with each of my paintings. I also rely on absurdity to confront the viewer. I take her on a journey where style begins to blur with content. Boundaries are vital. I am constantly pushing just how far I can go in terms of content and the artistic practice in order to see if what I am doing holds up as both poignant and funny.

I don't portray heaven, hell, or even reality. I create gritty, non-escapist fanciful worlds, something like utopian communities gone wrong. My characters often provide a dose of judicious realism in my narratives, but they have to deal with the chaos around them in a world where everything goes awry. The stylized imagery of my figures and settings is other-worldly but never completely abstracted because it stems from real experiences. My characters are unique, but they also symbolize a variety of human conditions. Like the absurd way I paint, they smile with both a jaded weariness and appreciation for life's contradictions.

I represent the lower-middle working class people that keep our society afloat. I portray my characters in a positive light, almost reverentially, but there's always a *wink wink* celebratory tone to my work, humor without mockery. My paintings are celebrations that have gone insane. Sometimes my characters are *characters*, comedic stand-ins for someone very real, and other times they become *caricatures*. I am interested in what happens when my characters are placed in situations alongside my caricatures. What kind of bizarre dialogues will ensue? I revel in such absurdities. I am not interested in irony or satire, but rather an absurd take on everything from social commentaries to color choices and mark-making. My paintings, like awesomely bad proclamations of confidence, become very bodily and decadent. They're like an obese woman strutting around in a way too small red tube dress. I would not love the obese woman as much if she wore figure flattering clothes, just as I wouldn't love my art as much if I followed rules of conduct.

I act as a storyteller from a complex perspective of hybridization. I'm both utopian and pissed. I want people to let their guard down, because then they listen more. Dialogues begin to appear in my paintings: pop culture merges with traditional culture, visions and anecdotes tap into the viewer's unconscious. I want viewers to enjoy my anecdotes and bizarre compositions and ask questions, about perceptions of both the Hispanic community, as well as mainstream culture. My humorous environments allow me to play with stereotypes and create both counter-histories and my own futures.

Tania Jazz Alvarez