



Onloaded: Alberto Aguilar/*No Showroom* December 18, 2015 – January 10, 2016

"If your art is not talking to everyday people it's an elite form whether you like it or not. If your art separates itself from everyday people it's speaking for a very small group of people." -Alberto Aguilar in a recent interview with NPR/St. Louis Public Radio

When I asked Alberto Aguilar what his ideas are for this solo exhibition with phICA, I was pleased to learn that he is responding to the space of a decommissioned shipping container turned art space which I urge each artist we show to do. He said, "Within this shipping container there is a room with hardwood floors, white walls, molding, and track lighting. Is it a Showroom? A Gallery? It resembles a living space. Whatever it is, logically it should not be either. Upon opening the container one's perception is challenged. It is a finished space within a rugged industrial container. The space is narrow defying practical function. The track lighting bisects the space creating two even narrower spaces. Instead of fixing these spatial paradoxes, I will visually confound them further. This may be through doubling the viewer's vision, creating a faux mirror image, or conjuring a mirage. To deepen the paradox, this will be done using the common material, onsite materials, or by materializing that which is unnoticed or not there." These common materials he is thinking about using in his installation (always subject to change!) include Latex paint, masking tape, push pins, yarn, pencil, brown paper, party streamers, and drywall screws.

While Aguilar says his work is about the sharing of a moment in time, it is also about giving his ideas visual speech in the public realm where social practice in art is a growing field. Ideas and inspiration gleaned from research, life experiences with his family, displacement from urban re-gentrification and travel, working as a college professor of Studio Art and Art History, as well as strong training in and understanding of materials, are demonstrated in a soaring trajectory in his professional art practice. Aguilar earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and since 2006 has been a Professor of Studio Art at Harold Washington College where he also serves as the Coordinator of the Pedestrian Project and Resident and Visiting Artist Program. He has also taught at McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL (Art History), at the University of Chicago, and at the University of Illinois at Chicago Free Art School. In 2014, he was selected to represent the State of Illinois in the nationally-acclaimed exhibition, *State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now*, Crystal Bridges Museum, Bentonville, Arkansas.

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