

North Shore: Projecting the Future

Connie K. Ho | November 24, 2015



Top image: Art projections onto abandoned buildings at the edge of the Salton Sea. | Photo: Chris Mendez.

Nuestro Lugar: North Shore is the first resident-designed, culture-driven, community development project in the rural, migrant community of North Shore, California. Throughout its efforts, Artbound will chronicle *Nuestro Lugar's* various physical improvements, economic activity projects, and multi-faceted arts and culture initiatives that are using North Shore's assets as catalysts for change.

From sculpture and tortas to documentaries and live drawings, North Shore artists and residents presented "Projections," a program of art, music, film and local cuisine at the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club this past weekend.

With a view of the Salton Sea, the event was a reflection of the lives of those who work and live in the rural community. In the last two years, Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) has collaborated with North Shore residents in the design of various projects, including a five-acre desert park that will be located in the community. Shannon Scrofano and Evelyn Serrano, KDI's artistic directors, developed an arts committee with North Shore residents that will use the future park as a center for many community activities.



The Salton Sea. | Photo: Connie K. Ho.



Performance by Brianna Vasquez, Pamela Garcia, Kimberly Garcia and Angelina Fuentes. | Photo: Courtesy of Evelyn Serrano.

"The residential parts of North Shore are a ways off of Grapefruit Blvd, the main road on the north side of the Salton Sea. When you drive along this road, you only see buildings that have been abandoned by previous owners, feeding a certain perception of the area. In talking with residents, they felt those buildings misrepresented North Shore," said Scrofano. "We all wanted to do an event where we could come together and make visible the vibrancy, hard work, resilience, and imagination in the community. Using a combination of overhead projectors and live video feeds, people can draw or play out alternatives using the building as the canvas."

The event was spread over a wide swath of the section of North Shore near the renovated North Shore Beach and Yacht Club. An outside courtyard, lined with rows of seats, served as a makeshift stage. Young and old participated in the performances as the sun went down and the heat subsided. A variety of acts took to the stage, including a musician strumming a guitar and student poets, who reciting pieces they crafted during a local workshop.

"I think that our students have much talent but they haven't had much encouragement. We tell them you can do it and it's a fabulous result," said

Maria Galaviz.



Detail of painting "Salton Sea Beach" by artist Miriam Cervantes. | Photo: Courtesy of Evelyn Serrano.



Painting "Self Portrait" by Miriam Cervantes. | Photo: Courtesy of Evelyn Serrano.

Those who wanted to grab a bite to eat could visit the various booths hosted by Delicias Laguna Azul, who served savory dishes such as tamales and *elote* (corn) as well as sweets including waffles. The group developed business plans for a market that will be included in the new park.

"I was invited to join Delicias de Laguna Azul by a friend who wanted me to volunteer in a program in the community. It's a very family-like environment, and we hope that the public will continue to come and support us," said Maria Gonzales, a mother of five and resident of North Shore who sold *churros locos* among other items.

Inside the community center, there were walls decorated with sketches and drawings. Tables were topped with handmade crafts and embroidered clothing. Conchita Pozar, originally from Michoacán, Mexico, displayed sculptures of colorful birds and other creatures.



Photo: Connie K. Ho.

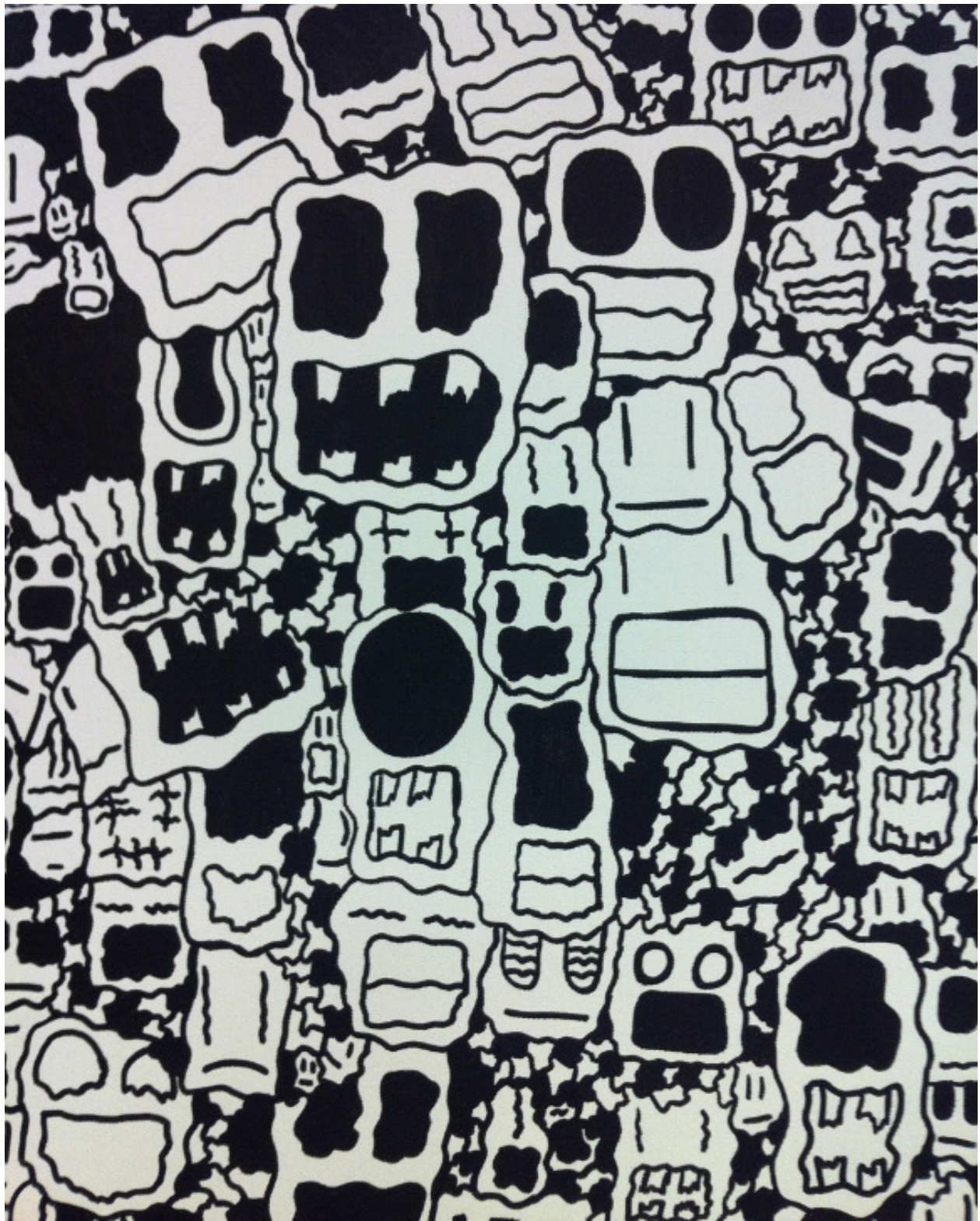


Ceramics created by Purépecha indigenous artists living in North Shore. | Photo: Courtesy of Evelyn Serrano.

"I learned how to make these from my grandmother. She would sit with me and say do this or don't do this, and the technique has been passed from generation to generation," said Pozar, who completed a five-step process to produce the pieces over a month's time for each. "For me, this event is really important because we can support what we do and there is much art here in North Shore."

Another space showcased video work from local filmmakers and previous summer art programs by KDI, one of the partners of the event. Viewers could watch a stop motion animation film called "The Forgotten Lake," created by youth artists who told the history of the Salton Sea. Another video showcased "The Salty Bottom Show," a variety show with comedy, interviews and sketches.

Lucio Vasquez, a minister involved with the North Shore community council who attended the event with his wife and children, summed up the upstart ethos of the event. "Even with a small community like North Shore, you could see that there are talented people who can sing, there are business owners, there are artists -- it's not just in the big cities."



Drawing by Ian Morando. | Photo: Courtesy of Evelyn Serrano.



A collage by Miriam Cervantes from her "Salton Sea" series. | Photo: Courtesy of Evelyn Serrano.

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