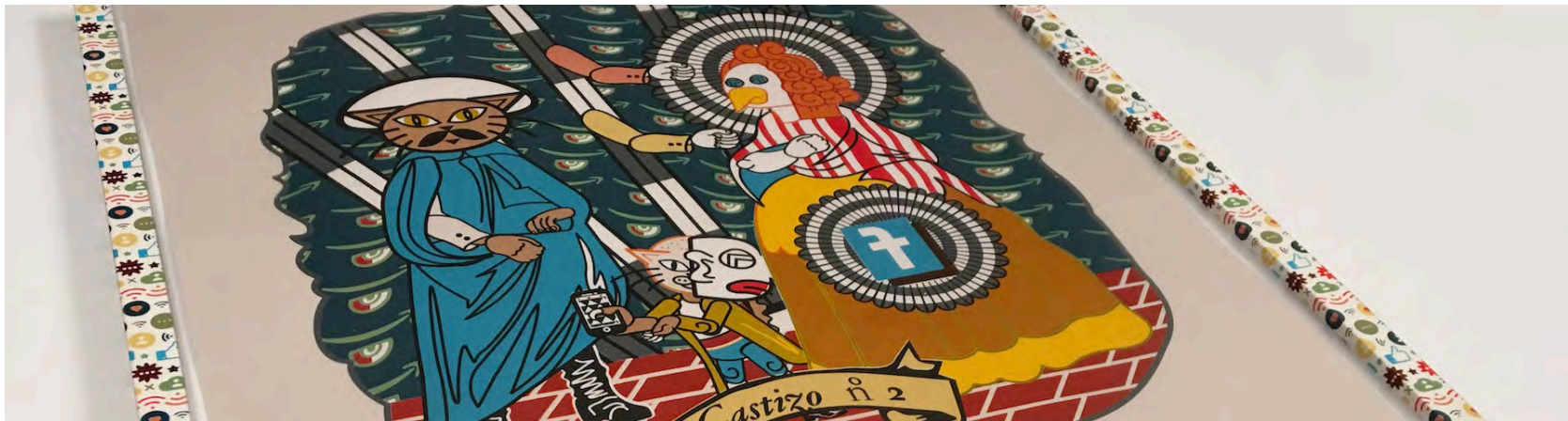


A Guide to La Raza Cósmica 20XX

A suite of 16 screenprints by Michael Menchaca



La Raza Cosmica 20XX is a suite of 16 screen-prints by **Michael Menchaca** (b. 1985, San Antonio, TX) printed in collaboration with Master Printer **Julia Samuels** at **Overpass Projects** (Providence, RI). This series of screenprints invokes the Spanish *Casta* (or caste) painting tradition of colonial Mexico, circa 17th — 18th century. Each *Casta* consisted of a domestic family portrait posing a father, mother, and their (hybrid) offspring in traditional colonial dress. *Castas* were labeled in Spanish script at the bottom of each portrait according to the racial mixture of their child.

New World racial mixtures were identified by the Spanish Crown in the following combinations:

- Espanol + Amerindian = **Mestizo No.1**
- Mestizo + Espanol = **Castizo No.2**
- Espanol + Espanol = **Español No.3**
- Espanol + Espanol = **Español No.4**
- Espanol + African = **Mulato No.5**
- Mulato + Espanol = **Quarteron No.6**
- Quarteron + Espanol = **Torna Atras No.7**
- Torna Atras + Amerindian = **Chino No.8**
- Chino + Mulata = **Lobo No.9**
- Lobo + Mulata = **Sambayoo No.10**
- Sambayoo + Amerindian = **Cambujan No.11**
- Cambujan + Mulata = **Notientiendo No.12**
- Amerindian + Mulata = **Calpamulato No.13**
- Calpamulato + Mulato = **Albarazado No.14**
- Albarazado + Mulata = **Tente en el Aire No.15**
- Tente en el Aire + Amerindian = **Ahi Te Estas No.16**



Figure 1. *Las Castas Mexicanas* by Ignacio Maria Barreda, oil painting, dated 1777.



Figure 2. Albarazado con Negra, Cambujo, detail from *Casta* painting containing complete set of 16 casta combinations (racial classifications in Spanish colonies in the Americas). Oil on canvas, 148 cm x 104 cm (58 1/4 inches x 40 15/16 inches). 18th Century, Painter Unknown



Figure 3. *Casta* painting containing complete set of 16 casta combinations (racial classifications in Spanish colonies in the Americas). Oil on canvas, 148 cm x 104 cm (58 1/4 inches x 40 15/16 inches). 18th Century, Painter Unknown

Menchaca's *La Raza Cósmica 20XX* contemporize the portraits from a 1777 *Casta* painting entitled *Las Castas Mexicanas* by **Ignacio Maria Barreda** (Figure 1. *opposite*). The 16 individual prints in the series feature New World racial combinations as a variety of animal archetypes posing with their Big Tech “smart” devices in the traditional *Casta* painting form. In this way, Menchaca turns to world mythology to depict a variety of Latinx families as hybrid instruments of digital technology; while correlating Silicon Valley’s domineering societal influence in the 21st century with antiquated forms of systemic oppression.

The *Castas* in Menchaca’s *La Raza Cósmica 20XX* are placed into 3 class categories.



Figure 4. *Las Raza Cósmica* by Michael Menchaca, 16 screenprints on Stonehenge Pearl Grey, Edition of 10; 2019. Printed and Published by Overpass Projects.



THE UPPER CLASS CASTAS:



Castizo No.2



Español No.3



Español No.4

THE MIDDLE CLASS CASTAS:



Mestizo No. 2



Mulato No. 5



Quarteron No. 6



Torna Atras No. 7



Chino No. 8

THE LOWER CLASS CASTAS:



Lobo No. 9



Sambayoo No. 10



Cambujan No. 11



Notientiempo No. 12



Calpamulato No. 13



Albarazado No. 14

LOWER CLASS CASTAS (CONTINUED):



Tente En El Aire No. 15



Ahi Te Estas No. 16

Artist designed frames are wrapped with screen prints depicting various iterations of social media and Big Tech icons. This patterning highlights the artist's concerns with the human connection to technology in the 21st century and the imposition and obstruction by the logic of surveillance capitalism as the prevalent form of instrumentarian power.



