

A Day's Work



ROBERTO

GUTIERREZ

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Curated by
Rafael Barrientos Martinez

Avenue 50 Studio
Los Angeles, California

AltaMed

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Roberto Gutiérrez: A Day's Work

Rafael Barrientos Martínez

Curator, AltaMed Art Collection

Born in 1943 in East Los Angeles, Roberto Gutiérrez was born to an impoverished family within a community still reeling from the after effects of the Great Depression and World War II. His mother a laundress and caretaker, his father a dishwasher and rag collector, Roberto's upbringing left him with a unique sensitivity towards the everyday and the working man. Known for his exuberant, yet humble depictions of East Los Angeles and beyond, it is through his artistic eye that elements of our shared Chicanx landscape have gained iconic notoriety. From the Los Angeles skyline, a city bridge, to a corner tienda, Roberto's work reflects a celebration of a community from within and a call for acknowledgement of a community and people from beyond. It is important to note that Roberto's monuments are not solely made of brick, mortar, concrete and steel, but are also the incidental happenings of everyday life, from a modest bus stop, a roving garden on the back of a landscaper's truck, an elote seller, to a street altar meant to protect.

It was in 1961 that Roberto sought an escape from East Los Angeles. As with many young men at that time, he enlisted with the United States Marine Core, not because his beliefs aligned with those of our political system, but out of a craving for something more in life. Both a curse and a blessing, Roberto was sent to serve on the front lines of Vietnam in 1965. Coming back a changed man, no individual who lived to become a witness to the grim realities that he faced was left unaffected. This holds true for Roberto, who still

deals with the effects of this time overseas. But it is from this experience of warfare that Roberto gained a greater gratefulness of the importance of life and a better appreciation of the home that welcomed him back. While stateside, thanks to the G.I. Bill, Roberto was able to attend East Los Angeles Community College and found himself. A talented draftsman and voracious reader of art history books and artist biographies, Roberto finally connected to the world beyond his home through his art.

In Roberto Gutiérrez: A Day's Work, the artist presents us with a body of images where the comings and goings normally presented as details within his works are brought to center stage. In each of the eighteen sumi ink drawings, Roberto depicts members of a work crew toiling away on what was a hot summer day outside his studio in South Pasadena. Using sinuous continuous lines that demonstrates his command of the media, the artist shows his subjects in profile or with their backs facing the viewer. In addition to this implied anonymity there is an absence of recognizable indicators of place, giving the visual description of their labor a universal quality. These men are our neighbors, they are our cousins, they are our sobrinos, they are our gente. Seeing a correlation between his parents' efforts and their manual work, Roberto felt a profound sense of empathy and connection towards them, supplying them with cold water while they toiled, and cold beers once they were done. A monument to the blood, sweat and tears that have gone into shaping our community, Roberto continues to call on us to recognize our fellow man.



Untitled 1, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 2, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

Roberto Gutierrez



Untitled 3, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

Untitled 4, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Roberto Gutiérrez



Untitled 5, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 6, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 7, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 8, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

Roberto Gutierrez



Untitled 9, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

Roberto Guiting



Untitled 10, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 11, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

Roberto Gutierrez



Untitled 12, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Roberto Gutierrez

Untitled 13, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Roberto Gualón

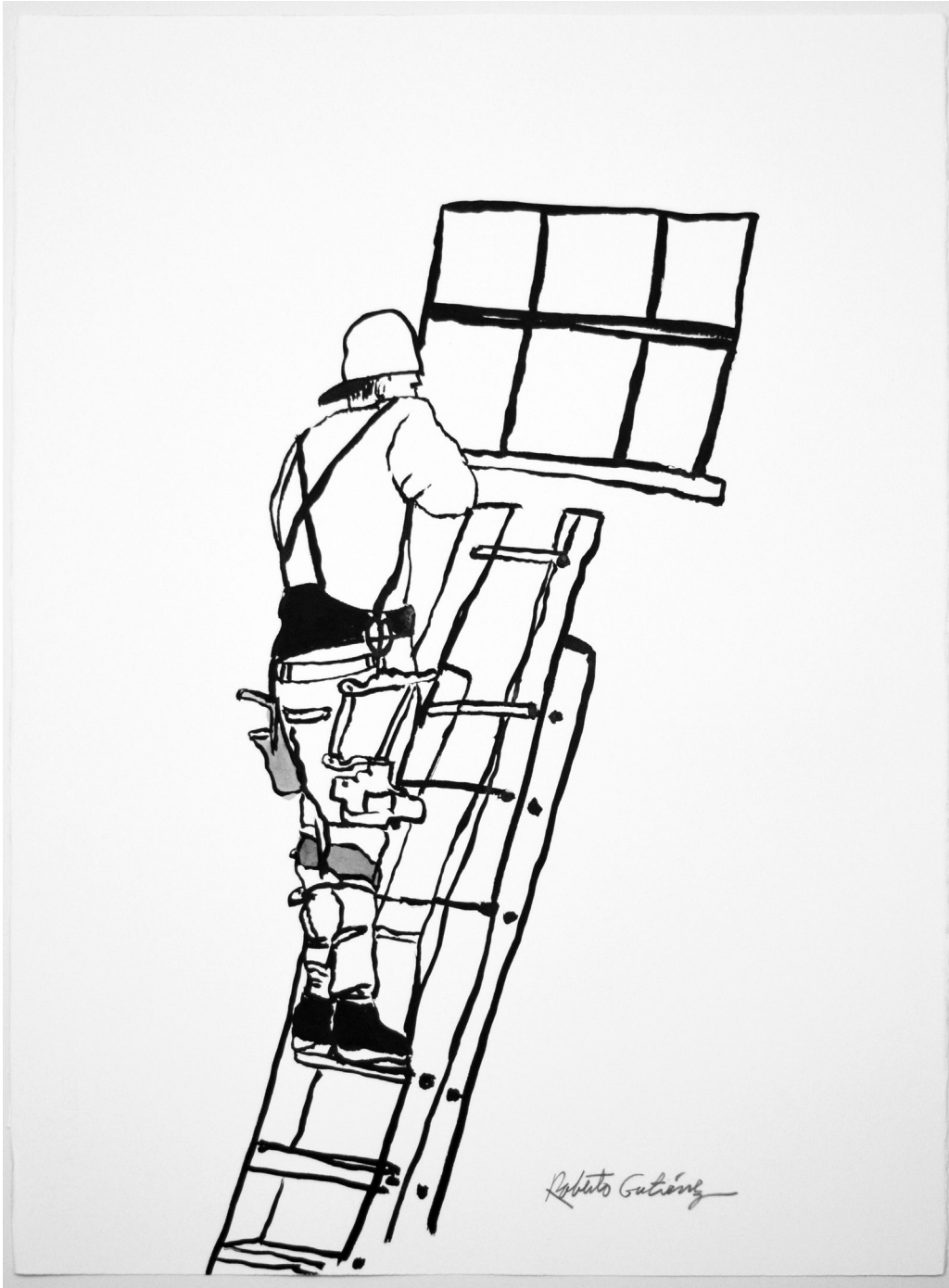
Untitled 14, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 15, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 16, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.



Untitled 17, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

Photo Cutting



Untitled 18, 2022
Sumi ink on paper
30 x 22 in.

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