

LA Art Diary

A round up of the best shows in LA

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2012

Hugo Crosthwaite



Hugo Crosthwaite's small drawings line the front gallery's walls at Luis De Jesus Los Angeles. A jig saw puzzle of catholic school girls, nudies, saints, tattoos, and ghosts fill the pieces that are excerpts of life in Tijuana. Many of the scenes are positioned like movie stills, a young girl could be walking off of a surreal set, or she's unwittingly walked into another dimension. It's cartoonish and seedy, and the spaces where people linger could be the backside of a carnival.

When I was young and growing up in LA, Tijuana was a mysterious place.

Friends came back with embroidered dresses, Mexican blankets and

ponchos. It was a tourist place. But it also had a dark side that we whispered about with our friends. You could go there and drink in bars if you were under age and drugs were easy to get. We heard crazy stories about drunkenness, getting stopped with pot in your VW and acid on your tongue. By the time I actually went there in college, I was a little bit more than nervous. The darkness was hidden from me though, like all tourists. I was aware of the fakery on display, like a tourist who goes to Hollywood Blvd. and believes they are in Hollywood when they walk by the Chinese Theater.

In the back gallery, Crosthwaite has charged the room with holding the mayhem of his characters. The once clean walls are gray and black, filled with violence from a culture that is so close, yet does not live in the open.

More than anything else, I feel the presence of ghosts in Crosthwaite's world. It's hard to tell if they are demons or protecting saints, but always there is an sense of loss and struggle. Evil things lurk as innocents walk by. Menacing spirits hang around men that could be murderers or are harmless and homeless. I like to believe that these deadly ghosts are spirits protecting the young and exacting revenge on the unforsaken.

The show runs through May 26 at [Luis De Jesus Los Angeles](#).