

EXHIBITION REVIEW

UNKNOWN LEARNING
JOSE CAMPOS (STUDIO LENCA) AND OLIVER HERBERT

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Image: Jose Campos, Untitled, lesson on composition and collage. Courtesy the artist.

The online exhibition “Unknown Learning” features works that reflect on the current labor of the artist/teacher and the changed processes of learning and teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. The exhibition is a collaboration between Salvadoran British artist, Jose Campos (Studio Lenca) and artist Oliver Herbert, along with their students.

In his recent photographs Campos takes inspiration from the garments of *Los Historiantes*, folkloric Salvadoran characters influenced by Hispanic and pre-columbian traditions. Being away from El Salvador has forced him to explore alternative materials, different to the ones used by traditional *Historiante* dancers. This has become an integral part of his creative process, intensified since the beginning of the quarantine as he has been utilizing primarily the materials available in his home.



Image: Jose Campos, “School Kills Artists”, Installation. Courtesy the artist.

One piece “School Kills Artists” consists of a blanket suspended in the air, which reads “School makes artists” on one side and “School kills artists” on the other. These statements allow the spectator to circle around from one point of view to the other and back. The use of the material here is relevant as it presents the blanket as an object of shelter independent of the oppositional claims. The idea of shelter implies care in the acts of teaching, learning and creating. It establishes an affective bond between teacher and student which precedes all conflicting ideas about educational structures.



The presence of this affective bond in educational processes is highly valuable, especially considering that traditional education in arts often imposes canons, is restrictive, hierarchical, and promotes competition between students. This bond is important as it challenges this and provides a space to create beyond hierarchy and normativity.

The most important aspect that comes out of this exhibition is the act of reflecting on educational processes and adapting them if necessary. Even though the project is framed by the pandemic and quarantine, this reflection is healthy and necessary at any moment.

Image: Jose Campos, “Illegal Alien”. Garments from found materials from the artist home. Courtesy the artist.