

## Artist Statement

Marco Hernandez

My current body of work explores issues associated with the societies and politics of contemporary Mexican and Mexican American Cultures. I am inspired by my personal experiences growing up as a Mexican immigrant in California and the Midwest. Mexican and Mexican American symbols play a large role in my prints. The symbols span from ancient Mesoamerican imagery to contemporary popular culture items, such as the *Valentina* hot sauce. Life experiences and a traditional Mexican upbringing have influenced my thoughts and beliefs; and ultimately have been inspirational to the imagery and meaning in my current work.

I immigrated with my family to the United States when I was very young. I was introduced to a new culture, language, and other struggles that would have to be overcome. I felt a loss of my cultural roots during these early years. While living with family in the United States I watched Spanish news programs that would report about Mexico's social problems, generally caused by corruption and drugs. These experiences influenced my thoughts and beliefs about my unique personal identity. Being born in Mexico and raised in a traditional Mexican family has taught me to be proud and embrace my roots.

The art of printmaking provides me with a flexibility of technique and process necessary for my content development. Experimenting in the studio is as important as historical research in my search for content and ideas. The initial inspiration for my current work comes from several sources, including black and white photographs of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), Francisco Goya's *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (Disasters of War) etchings (1810-1820), and contemporary interpretations of Mexican folk legends. With these images in mind, I use printmaking to visually create powerful and interesting compositions with an emphasis on highly delicate printmaking techniques. Inspiration, technique, and print medium may vary between prints but my curiosity, hard work ethic, and patience always remain constant.