

S.A. artist Acidwinzip tackles Catholicism, video games in exhibit

By Elda Silva, San Antonio Express-News | January 17, 2017

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Photo: Courtesy Acidwinzip

IMAGE 1 OF 12

"Forest Finds" is a digital collage by Ursula Zavala AKA Acidwinzip. It is one of the works in "File>Save For Web," an exhibit at Provenance Gallery.

Ursula Zavala studied art in school. She tried to, anyway.

“Honestly, when I started out, I didn’t know what I wanted to do,” Zavala said. “It was just kind of, ‘Do I want to draw?’ I wasn’t a really good painter. And I was like, ‘Maybe, I’m just a bad artist.’”

As it turns out, she just hadn’t found her medium yet.



A little more than a year ago, the freelance graphic designer started creating digital collages and posting them on Instagram under the nom de social media Acidwinzip. The works caught the eye of Stephanie Torres of **Provenance Gallery**. Fast-forward to this month: “File>Save for Web,” an exhibit of 13 pieces by Zavala that combine images plucked from art history, religious iconography, digital icons, ’80s-style graphic elements and “lots of neon,” is on display in the intimate Southtown space.

“I was just drawn to the way she put together these collages,” Torres said. “Some of them were pretty whimsical and had these fun little references that reminded me of Lisa Frank collages and colors.”

“File>Save for Web” is Zavala’s first exhibit. It also represents the unmasking of Acidwinzip.

“When I first started out, I wanted to remain anonymous for the most part,” said Zavala, a petite, bubbly 29-year-old with reddish-brown hair and owlsh glasses. “I wanted the work to have its own persona and its own mystery creator. I didn’t want my personality and all of this to be associated with it. If I keep it separate, I don’t feel so, ‘What are people going to think of me?’”

And, indeed, there is some provocative imagery in the show. The works on display

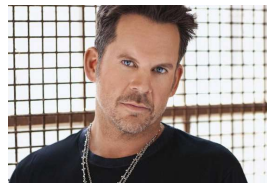
include Zavala's first digital collage, the image of a Renaissance-style Madonna holding the baby Jesus in one arm and an assault rifle from the video game Halo in the other.

"It's just two parts of my childhood connected — my religious upbringing plus my brother playing video games in the house," said Zavala, a San Antonio native who grew up in a devoutly Catholic household. "I feel like everybody interprets it in their own way, because every time somebody sees that one specifically, they're like 'Oh, my god!'"

Using mostly stock photos and "random stuff" she finds online, Zavala creates the collages using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. The exhibit shows the evolution of her style, from the more-is-more aesthetic of "Mother and Son" — a Pietá surrounded by a kaleidoscopic mashup of vintage wallpaper and vintage flowers — to her more recent pared-down works featuring neon-lit Greek and Roman statues against grids.

The grids "remind me of '90s math books," she said. "(And) like Trapper Keepers."

In one witty piece, a Greek statue of a woman leans out of a Windows interface. It is a comment on "going from actual paintings to Windows paint," Zavala said.



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While Zavala was initially wary of going public with her artwork, she has made her peace with her new lack of anonymity. One of the pieces in the show features Japanese script that reads “Pleased to meet you,” she said.

“It’s kind of like, ‘Hello, I’m Acidwinzip, and I’m pleased to meet you, because I’ve been hiding for a year,’” Zavala said. “It’s like, ‘Hey, guys. It’s me, your bro.’”

“File>Save for Web” runs through Jan. 30 by appointment. Provenance Gallery, 1906 S. Flores St., artandprovenance.blogspot.com

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Antonio Express-News