



Señor Selfy, 2014, 24" x 48" x 2"
mixed media on board

Russ Glaser has been an experience designer for 30+ years, designing consumer products such as Xbox 360 and the Zune Music player. Through the years he has created occasional art pieces with photography, collage, and other mixed media. Focusing more on combining all of his passions, he recently created a technique he calls "Chalktography," blending photography in a 1930's style of hand-colored black and white imagery with chalk pastels as the color medium. The pastels, when coated with a resin, take on a life and color of their own. During the final coat of resin, he adds whimsical items that are embedded, like an insect in amber, below the surface of the art piece. <http://russglaser.com/>

The experimental aspect of Russ Glaser's work is apparent from a glance: one of the works he contributed to the exhibition has two wires and clips attached to the surface as if there were an electrical component. Other pieces feature Mexican lottery cards, kids' blocks, and coins. In *Señor Selfy*, we're confronted with a *luchador*, a Mexican professional wrestler who reaches out toward us, surrounded by the glitter and

glam of luchador subculture. Inspired by the colors of Oaxaca, especially the blues and pinks, Glaser pays homage to the folk art he grew up with in southern California that was in turn heavily influenced by the Mexican style of roughness or rawness.

Glaser's interest in photography and portraiture is also evident in his work, uniquely in reference to the 1930s style of postcard imagery with hand-tinted color added to a black and white original. As a means of recreating the excitement and nostalgia of a previous era, Glaser uses chalk pastel to color his images and reinterpret them for the 21st century. By adding resin, the pastel becomes opaque while other areas become translucent. The sheets of Spanish literature collaged behind the figure serve to anchor *Señor Selfy* in language, while the sections of Mexican comics, which the artist arranges in a ray-like pattern around the wrestler, reinforce the pop-culture (and Pop Art) references evident throughout the work. Collaged around the sides of the piece are Mexican lottery cards, further celebrating this amalgamation of west-coast, hybrid culture that spans international borders. Finally, Glaser's title pokes fun at our newfound obsession with posting self-portraits on our social media sites; the wrestler is Glaser himself, a self-portrait that celebrates the past while looking ahead.