

Miguel Nelson

Born 1967 in Tucson, Arizona. Lives and works in Los Angeles.

EDUCATION

- 2002 M.F.A., California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts), San Francisco, California
1990 M.B.A., Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley

SELECTED PAINTING PROJECTS & COMMISSIONS

- 2026-present *Current Cinematic Painting Series*, Los Angeles
Acrylic on heavy linen
Figurative paintings developed from fleeting film frames selected for their atmosphere, spatial relationships and emotional charge rather than their narrative significance. Projected images provide loose compositional maps, while palette, detail and information shift through the physical movement of paint across the linen.
- 2016-present *Rock Paintings*
Acrylic on heavy linen
Ongoing series developed from photographs of geological formations in Monument Valley, Picacho Peak, the Aeolian Islands, Careyes and other locations. The paintings treat these formations less as conventional landscapes than as isolated presences shaped by scale, surface and the behavior of paint.
- May 2020 *Day / Night*, DMK Railway Exchange Building, Chicago, Illinois; commissioned by David Morton of the Morton family
Acrylic on linen; two paintings, each approximately 5 ft tall by 18 ft wide
Paired paintings based on sea-worn rock formations photographed in Careyes, Mexico. Installed on opposing sides of the historic Railway Exchange Building, the two works were conceived in relation to one another and to the architecture of the room.
- 2016 *Monument Valley*, Flora Chang, Los Angeles
Oil & Acrylic on hemp; approximately 8 x 18 ft
Monumental painting developed from photographic studies made during a 2015 research trip to Monument Valley with Zach Cowie. The work was painted in situ at Flora Chang.
- 2016 *Picacho Peak*
Oil & Acrylic on hemp; approximately 8 x 6 ft, with a smaller related painting
Paintings developed from dedicated photographic studies of Picacho Peak, the volcanic formation in the Sonoran Desert between Tucson and Phoenix.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS, PERFORMANCES & PROJECTS

- 2025 *Conversations Regarding the Spirit of Rudy Caballero | Volume One*, Mexico City
Preamble Exhibition, LOOT Gallery, Roma Norte, Mexico City [presented during Zona Maco 2025]
Installation, sculpted sectional sofa pit, conversation, transcripts, prototype objects and speculative propositions; dimensions variable
First public exhibition of Rudy Caballero, an ongoing collective fiction and shared-authorship platform initiated by Nelson.
With: Orly Anan, Josh Beckman, Tony Brown, Brian Butler, Chris Cichocki, Cameron Gainer, Francois Ghebaly, Chuck Moffitt, Umar Rashid / Frohawk Two Feathers, Magnus Resch, Helena von Hardenberg, Josh White and others.

- 2025-present *Rudy Caballero*
Objects, installations, conversations, books, fragrances, tools, speculative products and social situations; dimensions variable
 Ongoing collective fiction in which participants develop work collaboratively and attribute it to the imaginary artist Rudy Caballero. Conversation functions as both generative medium and archive.
- 2016 *Jolly Night at the Races*, Downtown Los Angeles
Participatory performance, sculpture, painting, live music, video, found racing ephemera, food, drink and floral ceremony; 16,000-square-foot former marijuana production facility
With: Tony Brown, Joshua Beckman, Gioj De Marco, Chuck Moffitt, Chris Natrop, Edwina Nelson, Umar Rashid / Frohawk Two Feathers, Holly Vesecky, Chad Brown, Jose Alvarado, Jed Mayhew, Danielle Motor and others.
- 2015 *Monument Valley*, Navajo Nation, Arizona / Utah; later projected in an empty Downtown Los Angeles warehouse
Photography and projection; dimensions variable
With: Zach Cowie, travel and research; Tony Brown, group exhibition collaborator.
- 2009 *Shiner*, SmogShoppe, Los Angeles
Performance, automobile, choreography, LED runway, film, music, sculptural installation, food and drink; dimensions variable
With: Ryan Heffington, choreography; Jonathan Krisel, film and editing; Zach Cowie and Petey Kleinman, music; Rya Kleinpeter; Danielle Motor; Chad Brown; additional dancers and contributors.
- 2008 *Banana Daiquiri Seance*, Bonelli Contemporary, Chinatown, Los Angeles; presented as part of Party Favors, curated by Holly Myers
Performance, live music, HD video, wearable floral interventions, candlelight and banana daiquiris; dimensions variable
With: Umar Rashid / Frohawk Two Feathers; Chad Brown; Jed Meldhow; Holly Vesecky; Jonathan Krisel, film; Holly Myers, curator.
- 2007 *USC vs. UCLA*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Installation, correspondence, bronze plaque and floral sculpture; dimensions variable
With: Holly Vesecky, floral base for the Castelli; Eben Goff; correspondence with USC and UCLA participants; bronze award delivered to Russell Ferguson at UCLA.
- 2007 *Suspended Animation*, Marvimon, Los Angeles; commissioned by Fellows of Contemporary Art
HD film, sculpture, cafeteria trays, food, floral installation and performance; dimensions variable
With: Tony Brown; Carolyn Mason; Eben Goff; Holly Vesecky; participating Fellows of Contemporary Art collectors.
- 2007 *Foodyteria*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), Los Angeles
Installation, floor tape, cafeteria trays, food and beverage, video, photography, automobiles and cardboard; gallery and parking-lot scale
With: Jonathan Krisel, video collaboration; Cameron Gainer, participant portraits; rotating chefs and contributors.
- 2006 *Babies All Grown Up*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Sculpture, food, floral installation, music, performance, surveillance and HD video; architectural / event scale
With: Veronica Fernandez, curator; Carolyn Mason; Chuck Moffitt; Holly Vesecky; Jon & Vinny; the Hillbilly Knights; additional artists and performers.
- 2006 *ZaratExperience*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Performance, installation, live music, film, costume, choreography, custom graphics and video feedback; architectural / event scale
With: Eddie; Bobby; a large volunteer cast of dancers, stylists, performers and film crew.

- 2006 *Hot Lady Heaven*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Performance, Wonder Valley salt, meteorite, recycled-plastic sculpture and garments, film, food, music and projected Hollywood fragments; architectural / event scale
With: Georges-Pascal Riccordeau, sculptural and fashion interventions; John Lieske, music; Jon & Vinny, food; Josh White, meteorite and photography; additional performers and film crew.
- 2006 *Margarita Oasis, Desert Mirage*, High Desert Test Sites, Wonder Valley / Joshua Tree, California; invited by Andrea Zittel
1984 Mercedes coupe, salt, tequila, citrus, orange liqueur and participatory hospitality; desert-site installation; approximately 300 margaritas served
With: Andrea Zittel, invitation; Sherry Walsh, assistance; salt connection through Jason Rhoades.
- 2006 *The Rapture of Yukio Murasaki*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Performance, costume, mural painting, tequila ritual, music, edible sculpture and HD video; forty-foot Secret Restaurant table and surrounding environment
With: Wanda Chan; Carolyn Mason; Billy Mallery; Josh White; additional musicians and performers.
- 2006 *Margaritaville*, MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House, Los Angeles; group exhibition curated by Allison Spellacy
HD video, performance, 1984 Mercedes convertible and mobile margarita bar; citywide / mobile work
With: Jonathan Krisel, film and editing; Allison Spellacy, curator.
- 2005-2006 *Secret Restaurant*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Food, wine, music, projection, performance and social choreography; five invitation-only editions; approximately 40-100+ guests per edition
With: Randy Clement of Silver Lake Wine; participating chefs including Nancy Silverton and Suzanne Tracht; rotating musicians, artists and performers.
- 2005 *Arctic Landscape*, Marvimon, Los Angeles
Monumental mural painting, artificial snow, blocks of ice, blue-gelled theatrical light, projection, sculpture, performance and sound; two 8 x 16 ft window murals plus architectural installation
With: Umar Rashid / Frohawk Two Feathers; Chris Natrop; Dancer X; additional performers and musicians.
- 2003 *Unofficial Getty Monthly Planner*
Limited-edition printed calendar incorporating paintings and functional planning material; approximately 200 copies distributed at Art Basel Miami
- 2002-2003 *New York / London Artist Books*
Photography, drawing, watercolor and custom archival albums; two unique sculptural books
With: Friends and family contributed drawings and watercolors; project discussed with Blum & Poe.

SELECTED SITE-SPECIFIC, ARCHITECTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

- 2021-present *Desert Island*, Rancho Mirage, California
Landscape, architecture, hospitality, cultural programming and long-duration site planning; approximately one-half mile x one-half mile; 18-hole golf course; 28-acre lake
- 2019-present *Aster Studios*, Downtown Los Angeles
Adaptive reuse, studio architecture, showrooms and fabrication infrastructure; approximately 14 x 50 x 100 ft
With: Jose Alvarado; Tony Brown; additional builders and studio occupants.

- 2017-present *The North Sea*, Downtown Los Angeles
Public-realm landscape, mural painting, neighborhood identity and commercial-facade interventions; approximately six city blocks; roughly a dozen facades; thousands of linear feet of sidewalk
With: Stacey Lynn Smith and company, mural painting; neighborhood businesses, fabricators and landscape collaborators.
- 2017-present *Valentine / Grass Room*, Downtown Los Angeles
Adaptive reuse, greenhouse structures, custom clay surfaces, carved timber, ceramic relief, murals, metal cladding, salvaged architecture and plantings; three-building complex; original structures include a 50 x 100 ft two-story building and a 100 x 100 ft bow-truss hall
With: Tony Brown; Sherry Walsh; Josh Beckman; Ivan Lee Mora; Umar Rashid / Frohawk Two Feathers; Stacey Lynn Smith; Jose Alvarado; Holly Vesecky; Design, Bitches; Parker Resnick Structural Engineering; additional builders and fabricators.
- 2016-present *Flora Chang*, Downtown Los Angeles
Salvaged wood, doors, carpet, books and architectural fragments; ceramics, neon, furniture, art objects and high-fidelity audio system; approximately 27 x 100 ft
With: Tony Brown; Jose Alvarado; Raul Romero; Zach Cowie; Amal Flores; additional contributors and donors.
- 2014-present *Millwick*, Downtown Los Angeles Arts District
Adaptive reuse, skylights, cut concrete, reclaimed brick, mature plantings, unfired ceramic, hand-cut collage and carved eucalyptus; building-scale environment
With: Tony Brown; Chuck Moffitt; Sherry Walsh; additional builders and fabricators.
- 2008-present *SmogShoppe*, Los Angeles
Concrete courtyard walls, living plant systems, solar power, salvaged architecture, neon, landscape and theatrical signage; building and courtyard scale
With: Sherry Walsh; Raul Romero; Tony Brown; additional makers and fabricators.
- 2004-2014 *Marvimon*, Los Angeles
Existing industrial shell, glass, salvaged materials, furniture, landscape and custom architectural interventions; approximately 4,000 sq ft interior plus large internal courtyard created by removing roughly one-third of the roof
- 2003 *Hollywood / Chateau Alto Nido*, Hollywood, Los Angeles
Painting, sculpture, found furnishings, mirrors, custom aquamarine wool shag form and ambient city light; apartment-scale evolving environment

SELECTED DESIGN & CULTURAL PROJECTS

- 2009-2015 *Woolly Pocket*
Recycled felt planting systems, living plants, product design, branding, photography and retail display; from wall-mounted pockets to freestanding Meadows and large architectural installations
 Vertical-garden system developed first for Marvimon and SmogShoppe, later distributed nationally through Design Within Reach, CB2, Home Depot, Walmart, Target and garden retailers; Woolly School Gardens reached more than 300 schools.
With: Sherry Walsh, early development; Rodney Nelson, manufacturing and shipping; Josh White, photography; Doug Hammer, tagline and copy; additional designers and fabricators.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2011 Martha Stewart, television feature on Woolly Pocket.
- 2010 Dwell, feature on Woolly Pocket and its vertical gardening system.
- 2009 Immediato, Linda. "L.A. People 2009: Social Chemists - Miguel Nelson and Sherry Walsh." *LA Weekly* (April 22, 2009).
- 2006 The New York Times, coverage of Secret Restaurant, Los Angeles.