

MEDIA RELEASE

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Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present the exhibition:

NERY GABRIEL LEMUS - *JUST SO STORIES*

APRIL 18 – MAY 30, 2015

ARTISTS' RECEPTION APRIL 18th 2015 FROM 6-9PM

Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present our third solo exhibition of LA-based artist Nery Gabriel Lemus titled *Just So Stories*.

For the last eight years, Lemus's practice has explored divisions between African-American and Latino cultures, and the means by which identity is assigned in contemporary culture. Lemus contends that identity is formed by the continuous interaction of people; hence identity is malleable and not fixed. An activist artist, Lemus's work creates metaphorical and allegorical structures that highlight societal issues and their possible remedies. The title of this exhibition is taken from the great Colonialist storyteller Rudyard Kipling's 1902 book of short stories for children titled "Just So Stories." Kipling's book presents various origin stories of how certain animals came to be – "How the Leopard Got His Spots," etc. Lemus wryly appropriates the title, voice, and structure of Kipling – arguably the writer most associated with Euro-centric racism - to tell an allegorical story of how trust and friendship evolve for a young black panther named Bunchy, and a young brown bear named Corky. In a series of six large-scale acrylic ink and charcoal on paper drawings, Lemus adds his own origin story to the Canon, that of how solidarity developed between black and brown.

In the rear gallery, Lemus presents an alfombra (rug), *Yo Soy Nosotros (I Am We)* that again points to solidarity between the Black Panthers and the Brown Berets. In Guatemalan tradition, the alfombra is made to pay homage to religious, historical and political events and people.

Nery Gabriel Lemus was born in Los Angeles, in 1977. The subjects in his work range from issues of stereotype and immigration to problems in society that can lead to the failure of families, such as poverty, abuse and neglect. Lemus received his BFA at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California (2007) and his MFA at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California (2009). Lemus attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine (2008).

His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA; The Bindery Projects, Minneapolis, MN; Project Row Houses, Houston, TX. Group exhibitions include, Fútbol: The Beautiful Game, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Made in L.A. 2012, organized by the Hammer Museum in collaboration with LA><ART, Los Angeles, CA; dia a dia/ day by day, The 9.99 Gallery, Guatemala City, Guatemala; OZ: New Offerings From Angel City, Museo Regional Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; 2010 Border Art Biennial, El Paso Museum, El Paso, Texas; Common Ground, California African-American Museum, Los Angeles, CA and exhibitions at the Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA; Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, Santa Ana, CA; Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis, IN; Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA; Centro Cultural Paseo del Norte, Chihuahua, Mexico and the Centro Cultural Tijuana, Tijuana, Mexico, among others.

Lemus is a recipient of a California Community Foundation Fellowship, a COLA Fellowship Grant from the Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles, and the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Fellowship Award. He is represented by Charlie James Gallery in Los Angeles.