

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Los Angeles, CA  
February 1, 2013

**Charlie James Gallery, located at 969 Chung King Road, Los Angeles, CA 90012 Presents:**

**Nery Gabriel Lemus – *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich***

**February 16<sup>th</sup> thru March 30, 2013**

**Artist's Reception – Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup> 7-10pm**

**Charlie James Gallery** is pleased to present our second solo show by gallery artist Nery Gabriel Lemus, winner of the 2013 COLA Individual Artist Grant, and the 2013 Rema Hort Mann Foundation Award. In this current body of work, Lemus continues to explore domestic issues, issues that can often manifest in society at large. In particular, Lemus brings focus to the influence, positive and negative, adult men have over young boys, either within families or as men in society. Lemus' interest in the topic stems from his involvement in social work over the past 14 years, where he has worked with boys and young men with absent fathers and a lack of positive role models.

The work in the show examines the concept of heroism - particularly in what constitutes a hero. Society has established heroes in a multitude of different spaces, frequently cemented through entertainment culture. In our hyper-mediated age, many established heroes are found to be fraudulent, and many elevated personae exemplify behaviors of questionable merit. The title of this exhibition is taken from Alice Childress' book, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich* (1973). The book chronicles the struggles of Benjie, a young African-American kid struggling with acceptance and self-worth while flirting dangerously with heroin addiction. Benjie utters the titular phrase implying that heroes and saviors have ceased to exist in the hard times he lives in. Within this body of work, Lemus uses recognizable childhood archetypes like stuffed animals, piñatas, superheroes and childhood characters to incorporate the idea of heroic absence, and to suggest where heroes might be found.

**Nery Gabriel Lemus** was born in Los Angeles, in 1977. 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 also attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine (2008).

His work has been featured in several group exhibitions including, Made in L.A. 2012, organized by the Hammer Museum in collaboration with LA><ART, OZ: New Offerings From Angel City at Museo Regional Guadalajara in Jalisco, Mexico, The Seventh House at Project Row Houses in Houston, Texas, the 2010 Border Art Biennial at El Paso museum in El Paso, Texas, El Grito, at The University of Arkansas in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Common Ground, at the California African-American Museum. Lemus is also a recipient of the 2012- 2013 prestigious City of Los Angeles (C.O.L.A.) award and the 2013 recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Award.