A&E VISUALART

VISUALART | REVIEW

The Dramatic Tension of ‘Broken Dreams/Sueños Rotos’

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST XIMENA SOZA AT LATINO ARTS GALLERY

BY KAT MINERATH

“Broken Dreams/Sueños Rotos” is an immediately compelling exhibition. Maybe it’s the sound echoing throughout the gallery, like detuned wind chimes, or the deep crimson color that unifies the sculptural installations that line the walls. Multidisciplinary artist Ximena Soza uses glass, thread and branches to create works that, even in their abstract nature, speak to a feeling of breaking apart while also achieving visual catharsis.

Soza is a Chilean-born artist whose work often focuses on issues of social justice. In this exhibition, currently on view at Latino Arts, there is less said about specific themes, but the sense of unity as the body of work is strong, and the effect dramatic. Larger installations incorporate thin, spindly tree branches, often bound together with long red strands that create webs that drape and pool, at times stretching from floor to ceiling. Other motifs such as small birds with spread wings appear, at times suspended in air and elsewhere upon the floor as though flight has failed.

El Rincon de Los Sueños functions as something of a centerpiece. A mattress and pillow covered in white sheets are propped up vertically against the gallery wall, framed by the fanned out branches of a young sapling. Deep red threads, a color reminiscent of blood, wind their way in between. Larger woven cords seem to trickle and trail down the pristine but wrinkled sheets, and small red birds are almost hidden details. The soundscape in the gallery comes from here, as sculptural glass in circle-like shapes hangs from an air vent, constantly moving and sounding its strange ring.

This piece calls to mind other famous beds in art history. Robert Rauschenberg’s Bed, which was similarly mounted vertically and splashed with paint in a way that made the abstract expressionist gesture even more tactile, or Tracy Emin’s My Bed that functions like pages from a personal diary. But the whole notion of sleep, and the anteriority of psychological space especially, brings up shades of Francisco de Goya. Soza delves into the passages of private tension with her contemporary art that addresses age-old feelings.

Through Oct. 14 at Latino Arts Gallery, 7028 S. Ninth St.