

LINDA VALLEJO
ARTIST STATEMENT
THUGS AND HOES

*“No one will ever win the battle of the sexes;
there's too much fraternizing with the enemy.” Henry Kissinger*

Vallejo's *Thugs and Hoes Series* offer sassy satire of sexual politics that is on the pulse of America's social climate. In *Thugs and Hoes* Vallejo represents a cast including “The Caped Crusader” and the “Vato Loco” and vamped out versions of beauty icons on repurposed Greek-style vases, reconstructing cleverly kitschy pantheons to tease postmodern worshippers of celebrity.

Vallejo toys with the viewer's perception and attention by using the same color palette as those found in classical pottery. These vases sit on pedestals adorned in pigment prints of her original paintings, playfully defying constructions of the original, irreproducible fine art object, interrogating the status of authenticity and originality.

These works play out their dramas on replicas of ancient Classical Greek vases, affirming that these roles go back to the conception of the Western ideal, which celebrates the strong, youthful male athlete or warrior and the beautiful, passive subservient female. The vases rest atop beautiful bases that are covered with recycled images of Vallejo's work: vibrant magnificent trees, portraits of couples that have been reconfigured with the upper half of the body on the bottom of the base and the lower half at the top. The images are reconstructed, conveying organic fluid forms that allude to female genitalia.

Inspired by a *Sports Illustrated Magazine* article, where she saw an entire basketball team dressed up as superheroes, Vallejo decided to depict the ultimate man in our current postmodern world as a superhero. In Vallejo's work, the female counterpart of the superhero – the ideal females – are represented by the tropes of the cheerleader, the vamp, the dominatrix, and the baby doll. Men exude superhuman power and strength, women satisfy their desires. They serve as sexual objects that exist to seduce, please, and service the superhero.

Thugs and Hoes asks essential contemporary questions:

What do men have on their minds these days? Being the king or super hero? Gaining power, money, or sexual satisfaction? Do these sexual fantasies cross cultural lines?

Are women oppressed by the emperor's of culture? Is the female relegated to the sex kitten or vamp? Do you need one to “get” the other? Is media responsible for stamping these perceptions into modern sensibilities?