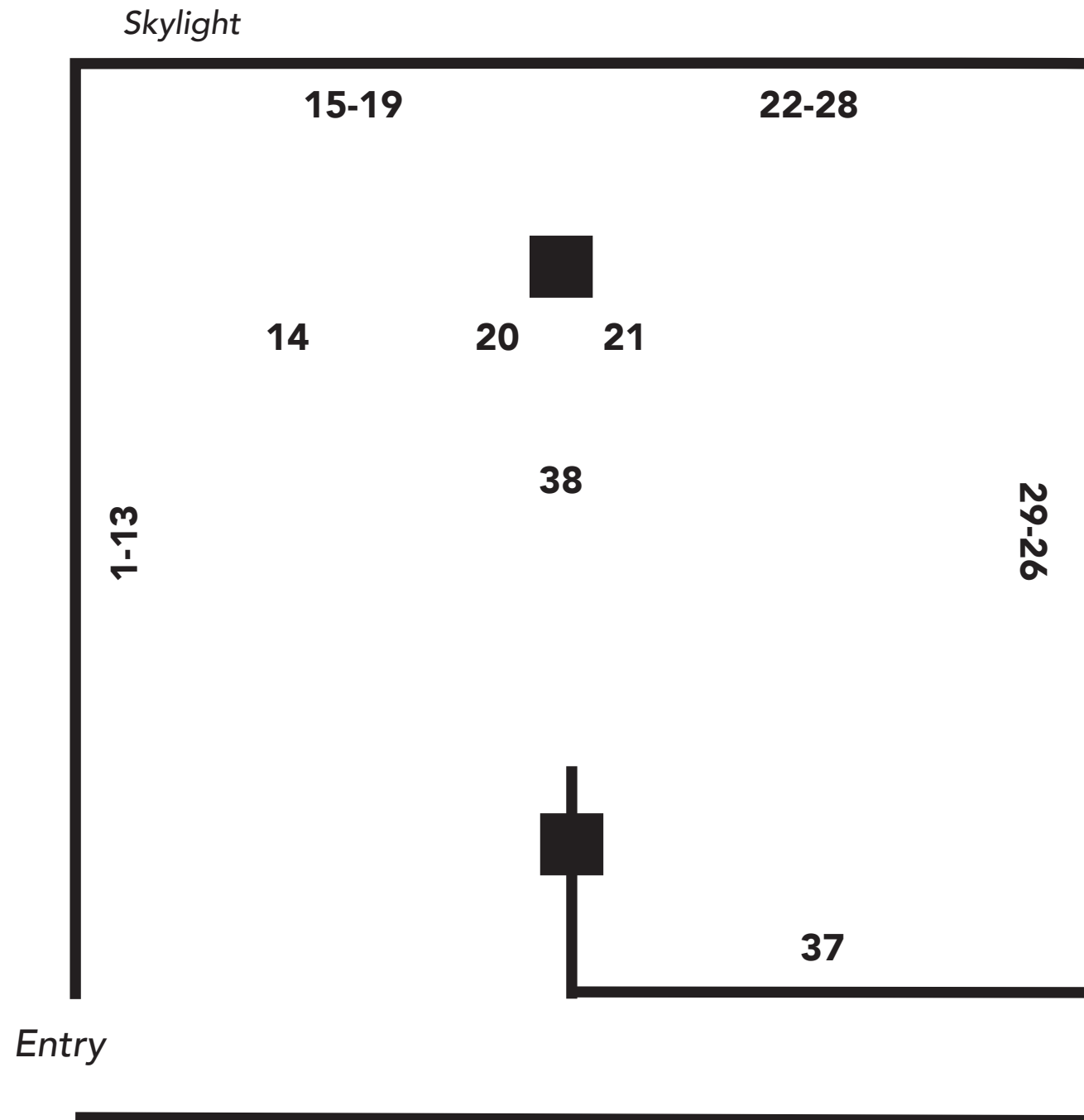


GALLERY MAP



Please refer to separate Works List for titles and materials.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The artist's father entered the United States from Mexico illegally with the help of a coyote, a human trafficker, in search of a better life. Daniel was born into a family of working-class immigrants in Pilsen, a Mexican American neighborhood on the West Side of Chicago. Every summer until he was 18, his parents sent him to Lampazos De Naranjo, a small town in Nuevo León, Mexico to stay with his grandmother, so he would not fall victim to the gang violence in his Chicago neighborhood. His grandmother would often remind him that Lampazos is known as "the land of illustrious men," and she urged that Ramos, following in the footsteps of many historical figures of the same town, would do the same.

His father was immensely proud when he began working with him as a hand polisher at Sloan Valve in 1999. During his freshman year at Columbia College, he took portraits of his coworkers at the factory for his first photo series, which resulted in a scholarship, allowing him to quit his hand-polishing job in 2001. This decision was a big disappointment to his father since he always wanted him to follow in his footsteps, but this scholarship was a tipping point for the artist. He decided to reject the presumed legacy of the blue-collar tradition in order to become a photographer.

The Land of Illustrious Men portrays the artist's, and his family's, life in roughly chronological order beginning with his origins: his grandmother and Lampazos De Naranjo. The exhibition continues with a vitrine containing photographs and objects collected by his grandmother and mother. Placed among these mementos are collages Daniel created to reveal the kind of stories about his family that are usually kept private, not necessarily happy memories but nevertheless very real. Hanging nearby is a dissected wardrobe (called a *ropero*), which was passed down from generation to generation. The gentle swaying movement of the doors and the suspended keys recall the constantly fleeting memories Daniel has of his family members, most of whom have passed on. In the center of the gallery is the van that transported Daniel and his family between Chicago and Mexico for decades. It is well-worn but carries with it many memories of more than twenty-years' worth of road trips listening to rancheras and corridos. Photographs mounted on a set of doors with awnings are meant to resemble the 18th Street block the artist lived on in Pilsen. A collage triptych made with the artist's own photographs and photographic postcards of Mexico from the Wittliff Collections is Daniel's visual interpretation of the three pivotal events of his life: his father's decision to illegally enter the US, his formative years learning to survive in the harsh inner city, and the passing of his mother from pancreatic cancer, which precipitated his move to Mexico and the subsequent birth of his son there. The final piece is an image of Daniel's father mounted on mattress springs which poignantly presents the attachment or identification one has to a certain place, and the decision one makes when choosing a final, peaceful resting place.

The exhibition offers the viewer the opportunity to witness the artist's personal journey as son, brother, husband, father, photographer, and artist. Daniel dared to step out of the confines of the working class to pursue a career in the arts, a conflict which, to him was greater than his cultural identity. Who he is will continue to be defined day by day and does not diminish his desire to belong to society and the world.

The Land of Illustrious Men is a poetic expression about immigration, assimilation, and class that is shared and felt by many.

ABOUT ^{THE} INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Since 1995, Artpace has welcomed more than 240 artists through its renowned International Artist-in-Residence program. Annually, Artpace hosts three residencies, which each feature one Texas-based artist, one national artist, and one international artist, who are selected by a notable guest curator. Each eight-week residency culminates in a two-month exhibition on site. The mission of this program is to provide artists with unparalleled resources that allow them to experiment with new ideas and take provocative risks.

ABOUT ARTPACE

Artpace San Antonio is a nonprofit residency program which supports regional, national, and international artists in the creation of new art.

As a catalyst for artistic expression, we engage local communities with global art practices and experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Support for the International Artist-in-Residence Program comes from Artpace members & donors and:

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INTERNATIONAL

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

artpace.org

The Land of Illustrious Men
Daniel Ramos

Spring 2020 International Artist-in-Residence
In residence January 27–March 23, 2020
Exhibitions on view March 19–May 10, 2020

ABOUT ^{THE} ARTIST

Daniel Ramos graduated from Columbia College Chicago in 2003 with a BA in Photography and studied for an MFA at California College of the Arts in 2007. In 2018, he was the recipient of the Dorothea Lange-Paul Taylor Prize and completed the Artist Residency Program at The Center of Photography in Woodstock, NY.

He was awarded the second-place prize in *Cuartoscuro* magazine's national competition in Mexico, and his most recent work has been featured in *AI-AP Latin American Fotografia 7* and the *Lenscratch DeveloperX For Freedoms* online gallery.

In 2019, Daniel participated in the Center Annual Exhibition at the Houston Center for Photography and had his first solo show for his series, *The Land of Illustrious Men*, at Filter Photo in Chicago, Illinois. The series was featured in *NY Times Lens* and *PDN Edu*.

ABOUT ^{THE} EXHIBITION

In 2019 Daniel Ramos produced an artist book entitled *The Land of Illustrious Men*. This exhibition at Artpace, of the same name, is his 2019 book writ large and in three-dimensions wherein the viewer can surround themselves with Ramos' own experiences, memories, and family.

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