

# Tommy J. Reyes

## *Los Picapedreros*



*Los Picapedreros*, an exhibition of large format color photography by Tommy J. Reyes opens at the McLean County Arts Center on Friday, April 26. An Artist Reception will be held on Friday, May 3 from 5pm to 7pm in conjunction with Downtown Bloomington's First Fridays. The exhibition will remain in the Armstrong Gallery through June 15, 2013.

In the series of photographs titled *Los Picapedreros*, artist Tommy J. Reyes examines the collision of traditional Mexican culture with urban America through the gentrification of his Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago. Using actors, costumes, and props to create narratives in urban interiors and on city streets, Reyes reflects on the push and pull of traditional and contemporary life, gender expectations and aspirations, visibility and invisibility from varying personal perspectives. Reyes draws from his mother's experiences and his memory of her to explore the the identity, role, and perception of Mexican American women in urban America. Each photograph includes two magical, and yet real, female characters who bear witness to each narrative and who Reyes explains "represent my mother but also represent the ideals of history and cultures that all Mexican children understand when they grow up in a traditional Mexican household." *Los Picapedreros* (English translation: The Stone Breakers) curiously melds memory, fantasy, history, and reality into a new world all its own.

Tommy J. Reyes was the Juror's Choice of the 2010 Emerging Illinois Artists exhibition at the McLean County Arts Center. He received his MFA from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He is an educator and gallery owner of Gallery 19 in Chicago.

***Los Picapedreros* is generously sponsored Barbara & Bill Taft, and John Groves.**

[Click here to view the exhibition video](#)