

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MARCH 2009**

**FERNANDO SANCHEZ  
WITH BLOOD, GUTS, A STIFF LUST  
April 4 - May 16, 2009**

*Opening reception Saturday, April 4, 6 to 9 pm*

de Soto Gallery 2635 Fairfax Avenue, Culver City, Ca 90232  
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*Fernando Sanchez, Self-Portrait with Parents, 2009, 8 X 12 inches, C-print*

De Soto Gallery's second show in its new Culver City location will open on April 4, 2009 with works by Fernando Sanchez. Sanchez works primarily with video, audio, photography, and the internet.

Themes of vengeance, excess, success, and catharsis punctuate Fernando Sanchez' latest work. The exhibition revolves around two fictional characters, Song Kwai Li, a pervy and hostile Chinese artist hating on the LA art scene, and Nico Brown Jr., a gangsta rapper calling out all the major (and minor) art world players. Both "personas" are invented and played by Sanchez himself and their personalities manifest in whatever form seems the most fitting and accessible, be it blog, book, verse, or video. The exhibition is partly a collection of the artifacts surrounding the portrayal of these two characters but also, and more importantly, a demonstration of how the characters function in the world (virtual and otherwise).

With Song Kwai Li, Sanchez ventures into the anarchic territory of the internet and the social and behavioral dynamics of online communities. The genesis of Song Kwai Li began as a semi-autobiographical blog, "Vampire Criticism and Dick Bass Stories" ([laartsucks.com](http://laartsucks.com)). In the gallery, various objects and photographs

chronicle Li's antics, and his blog posts are on view compiled in a simple booklet. Li writes like he might speak, an intelligent pidgin with high notes peppering mostly nickel words. He beefs about the way the art world works, who gets attention and how. He keeps a running total of the number attractive girls he sees at art functions and describes in embarrassing detail his every lewd imagining and encounter. As Li gains a following, he is hailed by some as an anti-hero, an "art-world Bukowski" and disparaged by others who make known Sanchez' real-life identity. Most though, can only root him on as he calls people out and links male sexuality and territoriality to staking claim in the art world. The relationships among Li, his commentators, and Sanchez himself experiment with the construction of a public persona, the individual and collective management of a reputation, and how triumphs and missteps are arbitrated in the relative anonymity of the internet.

In Nico Brown Jr., Sanchez finds a vehicle that works partly as performance and partly as social theater. Brown emerged as a distinct identity as Li's lyrical shorthand evolved into rap style rhymes and after Sanchez was outed as Li. The character takes shape through written lyrics, music videos, and other paraphernalia around the making of an album. More so than with Li, Sanchez plays Brown like a method actor, a larger than life version of himself. He draws on the confrontational style and theatricality already inherent in the conventions of gangsta rap and shares a similar emphasis on making one's mark in the world, but he displays none of the trappings of a regular hardcore rapper. Earnest self-consciousness tempers self-indulgent bravado. A flannel shirt and bookish glasses do nothing to hinder his sexually charged delivery. He seems completely in his element laying down tracks while drinking coffee in front of the camera at the kitchen table. There is a boldness to his unpolished and often awkward delivery and he is more concerned with matching the intensity of his pent-up anger than with cadence or tempo. Through Brown, Sanchez puts his inner conflict center stage and probes the complexities of identity, marginality, and the battle for recognition.

Sanchez' practice does less to advocate extremism than it does to reflect it. His environment shapes him and he takes a critical stance but does not let himself be subsumed. The juxtapositions and cultural borrowing are how Sanchez engages with the world at large and authors a place for himself within it.

Fernando Sanchez was born in Mexico and smuggled into the US as a baby. In 2007, he received his M.F.A. in Media Arts from UCLA. He just returned to LA on the heels of his show *Straight Gangsta* at The Future Gallery in Berlin.

*With Blood, Guts, a Stiff Lust* will be on view at de Soto Gallery from April 4 thru May 26, 2009. The gallery is located at 2635 Fairfax Avenue in Culver City. Gallery hours are Wednesday thru Saturday, noon to 6pm, and by appointment. Biographical information and images are available at our website at [www.desotogallery.com](http://www.desotogallery.com) For further information and reproductions please contact Shelley de Soto at 323-253-2255 or via email at [shelley@desotogallery.com](mailto:shelley@desotogallery.com).