I met Josué when he was going through his master’s degree a few years back. I was a recent graduate myself, and I had just moved back to Michigan from Canada. I was working on an issue for the magazine I run, Barbed. Josué’s work has always caught my eye for being ‘in-between,’ and while I can’t recall if he actually said that, it’s how I see it and feel his work.

Later that same year, we met again; Josué participated in a small performance art workshop session I organized in a studio space in Detroit. I became intrigued by his approach on aspects of Mexican culture, combined with an Americanized system of those born in Mexican Border cities like, El Paso, in Texas.
Personally, I have always like work that is right in the border, no to double-word-dip, but I mean the border in which we ask ourselves, and sometimes makes us think about a different approach to things. In other words, being playful. At the end of the workshop that week, we organized an open party event where we presented the audience our work created. Here is Josué performing some futuristic mariachi wedding performance:
Josué performed sounds, movements, and rhythms accented by his Batman look as he sat on his chair. Behind him, his other classmates from the Print Media Depto.
I often wonder, if ever. EVER, one, can produce a moment. Still, movie, clip. — That one can be.
A year or so went by, and I lost contact with Josué; I often wondered if he had gone back to El Paso or move to New York. I didn't hear about or saw him on Instagram. Then one day, he followed me, or I follow him again; apparently, he had deleted his account, but I can't clearly remember.

I began to watch his stories on Instagram, which by the way, I've been fascinated making and watching stories myself for a while now. (pre/post pandemia). And, I soon realized that he had been working in the restaurant industry. He began to post some of the platos he learned to make in the kitchen and work-related things. I thought, hmm, maybe Josué decided to get a job in the industry to gain access to restaurant acculturation and use it on his own work. (assuming).

When I finally saw him two weeks ago, when he and his partner invited me to their home, he had long hair, and they both lived in a beautiful townhouse in Detroit with their dog. I thought, “it has been this long since I saw you.” I noticed that Josué had little altars of works throughout his home, and one, in particular, that was in the living room was this type of totem piece that at the same time was performative:
Josué melting copal on a silver spoon on his gas stove that he later poured over another spoon on his sculpture.
I said to him next:
“Josué, look at yourself in the mirrors.”
Then, he took me around his place and showed some of those altars hanging on different walls, the drawings, and collages that he was working on too. I think Josué sees absence and void. I think Josué reads into it and displays it as it is, and like he said: “it doesn’t affect me,” and I asked, Josué, but your art has to be political or something, or have you tried to make your art about the void in your personal life, work, etc.?— and said: “no.”
I admit, I wrongly assumed that his work was about a void between his identity and his heritage, which opened a dimension where I wondered, are we all cut from the same cloth? Why do we assumed so much based on our names, mustaches, sombreros, tacos y tacones, faldas, y demás? We even talked about Texmex and Chicano terms which I won't get into it right now.
Josué and I performed a piece later that month called “The Cherry Pie Contest” that speaks about grieving, sexual innuendos, and the job marketplace for minority groups in the United States and Canada, and how people from communities of color, foreigners, have to learn how to whiten their resumes to appear more appealing to Corporate America. Despite the mosquitos attacking us, (mostly Josué) I felt a connection.

Josué Emmanuel Fierro was born in El Paso Texas, in 1989. Fierro is a mixed media multidisciplinary artist and musician working primarily in sculpture, installation, printmaking, and performance. Fierro earned his BFA in Sculpture/Printmaking from the University of Texas in El Paso and his Masters of Fine Arts from Cranbrook Academy of Arts in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Josué currently lives in Detroit, Michigan, and works in the service industry.