



***Young Latino Artists 22 : ¡ Ahora !***

Guest Curated by Alana J. Coates

**Mexic-Arte Museum**

Catalogue published to accompany the exhibition **YLA 22: ¡ Ahora !**  
at Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin Texas, July 14 – August 27, 2017.

**Guest Curated by Alana J. Coates**

**Contributing Authors:** Alana Coates, Nansi Guevara, Daniela Cavazos  
Madrigal, Mark Anthony Martinez, Michael Martinez, Paloma Mayorga,  
Ashley Mireles, Andrei Rentería, and José Villalobos.

**Photographer:** Andrea Rampone

**Designer:** Sara Palma

**Cover artwork by Daniela Cavazos Madrigal**



Mexic-Arte Museum

419 Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701

@ 2018 Copyright



**Sylvia Orozco**

Executive Director

**Rebecca E. C. Gomez**

Curator of Exhibitions and Programs

**Olivia Tamzarian**

Education Coordinator

**Stephanie Sandoval**

Education and Development Associate

**Paloma Mayorga**

Development Associate

**Sara Palma**

Graphic Designer

**Adrian Orozco**

Membership and Marketing Associate

**Oscar Guerra**

Collections Registrar

**Miranda Cohen**

Visitor Services and Store Associate

**Denise Pollentier**

Visitor Services and Store Associate

**Andrew Anderson**

Preparator

**Michael Krauss**

Preparator

**James Borcharding**

Preparator

***Young Latino Artists 22 :***



Guest Curated by Alana J. Coates

## **YLA 22: ¡ Ahora ! (Now!)**

In its twenty-second installment of the emerging Latinx artist exhibition at Mexic-Arte Museum, YLA 22 arrives at a time of complex social-political milieu. In the U.S., this includes an administration with a vehement focus on the Mexican border, widespread economic inequalities, increased racial tensions, and subsequent hate crimes on the rise.

Within this context, the eight featured artists delve into idiosyncratic negotiations with self, family, and society. Nansi Guevara, Daniela Cavazos Madrigal, Mark Anthony Martinez, Michael Martinez, Paloma Mayorga, Ashley Mireles, Andrei Rentería, and José Villalobos navigate matters of gender restrictions, immigration politics, cultural heritage, and privilege; confronting viewers with prominent issues of the contemporary zeitgeist.

— **Alana Coates**

## **YLA 22: ¡ Ahora !**

En su vigesimosegunda instalación de los artistas emergentes Latinx en el Museo Mexic Arte, YLA 22 llega durante una época de complejos entornos socio-políticos. En los Estados Unidos, esto incluye una administración con un enfoque vehemente hacia a frontera Mexicana, las desigualdades económicas generalizadas, el aumento de las tensiones raciales, y el incremento su siguiente de los crímenes de odio.

En este context, los ocho artistas destacados profundizan en negociaciones idiosincráticas con el yo, la familia y la sociedad. Nansi Guevara, Daniela Cavazos Madrigal, Mark Anthony Martinez, Michael Martinez, Paloma Mayorga, Ashley Mireles, Andrei Rentería, y José Villalobos abordan cuestiones de la restricción de género, la política de inmigración, el patrimonio cultural y el privilegio, confrontando a los espectadores con temas prominentes del espíritu de la época (zeitgeist) contemporáneo.

— **Alana Coates**



"Racist narratives and racial scripts have criminalized and justified the detention, imprisonment, surveillance, and death of black and brown bodies. Narratives materialize into violence, hate, policy, and government agencies. On the border, we are inherently taught that we are criminal. This false narrative is perpetuated by our environment of militarization; border patrol and police in our neighborhoods, the border wall in our backyards, and cameras surveilling brown skinned people and families of mixed immigration statuses. We are not criminal, we are magic, we are a legacy of excellence, and we are powerful. Excellence, beauty, and power that is violently encased in barbed wire and deterred by walls.

This series is inspired by the vibrant costurera talent and culture on the South Texas border, and from the women who fight from their homes and with their sewing machines."

— Nansi Guevara



Nansi Guevara has lived and worked in Italy, Costa Rica, as well as various parts of Mexico, and the U.S. including Massachusetts, and Texas. Growing up on the Mexican border in Laredo, Texas, then moving to Brownsville, another border town, has formulated the core of her visual practice. She is a Xicana artist and activist that embraces a **rasquache** sensibility and **decolonial** critical theory to create works focused on community. She has devoted her career to creating and organizing through art with the community and grassroots movements.

Guevara earned a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Design from The University of Texas at Austin and a Masters in Arts Education from Harvard University. She was also awarded as a Fullbright Garcia-Robles Scholar in 2011 for social design studies in Mexico City. In 2016, she was selected for a six-month residency with Activating Vacancy Arts Incubator in Brownsville, Texas where she built and engaged community workshops centered on social justice through art. Most recently she completed the Rasquache Residency in San Francisco Cuapa, Puebla, Mexico.

Working with textiles in this body of work, Guevara takes inspiration from the vibrant costurera talent and culture on the South Texas border. **Siente Nuestrx Poder**, Guevara's grand fabric triptych, anchors the exhibition amidst a hot pink backdrop. The title is taken from the text incorporated on the center panel, which uses the contemporary conjugation of **nuestro**, a designated plural form of a pronoun that is typically gendered specific in Old Spanish. Like the use of the term **latinx**, the x signifies a gender fluidity for a neutral use of the language, creating an all-inclusive form of communication. The translation reads, **Feel Our Power**—a clear message of strength in unity.

Guevara is honoring the women organizers and the intergenerational activists in the valley, who are activists in many forms of the word. In the center panel, four women create a circle with their clasped arms. There is a sense of peaceful harmony within their circle and a great sense of strength in their togetherness. Although the work

is grounded in a great mood of positivity, Guevara does not shy away from depicting the struggles as well.

Flanked on either side of the center panel are more figurative works. On the right side, **Tenemos una visión diferente / We have a different vision**, a strong female is shown with clenched fists, her restrictive garment displays scenes of barbed wire fences and border patrol vehicles, among cactuses and graves. The figure's back is facing the border wall and every perched surveillance camera is pointed directly at her. The work is adorned in pink with flowers, lace, and sparkles, indicative of the woman's persistence, strength, and beauty, despite being within a society that criminalizes black and brown bodies just for being. On the panel to the left, **Juntxs siempre / Together always** is a painful depiction of mother and child with outstretched arms intertwined with a barbed wire fence. Their long braids hint to an indigenous past, and their current arrangement alludes to social discrimination due to cultural attributes.

Donald Trump fueled his political campaign with a vehement focus on the Mexican border. At political rallies, crowds would cheer with his theatrical statements of building a wall across the entire Mexican perimeter and Trump boasted that he would make the Mexican government pay for its construction. With Trump's election, America is seemingly at all-time heights for anti-immigrant sentiments. The country also has the highest incarceration rate in the world and the prisons are filled with a grossly disproportionate number of people of color. With visual expressions by an artist who grew up and continues to live in a border community, Guevara's work is timely and resonates with the truth, not with the hateful ideologies spewed by the President. Guevara's powerful work draws attention to the fact that a border wall already exists in large parts of the country's boundary, reminding us of the negative psychological effects such an obstruction concurs and the physical realities these irrational messages pervade.







### NANSI GUEVARA

***Feel Our Power*** | *Siente nuestrx poder*, 2017 (middle panel)

Fabric Mural | mural de tela | 12' x 8'

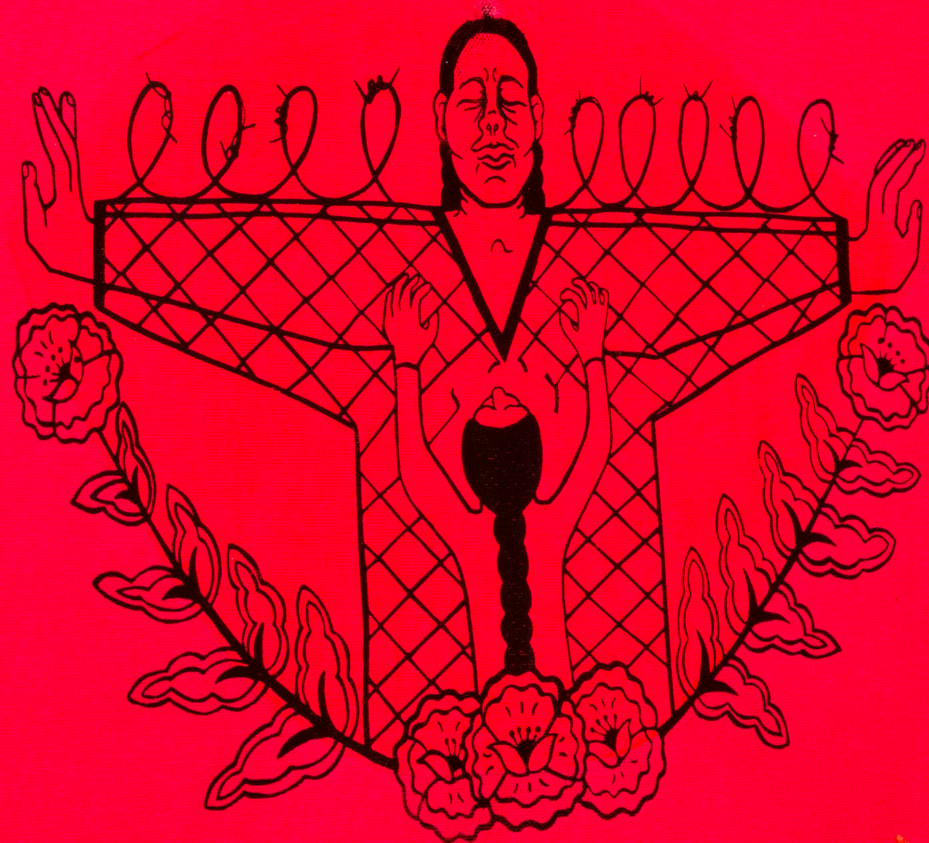
***We have a different vision*** | *Tenemos una visión diferente*, 2017 (right side)

Fabric Mural | mural de tela | 12' x 4'

***Together Always*** | *Juntxs siempre*, 2017 (left side)

Screenprinted Fabric Mural | Mural de tela estampada | 12' x 4'









Detail images: **We have a different vision** | *Tenemos una visión diferente* | Fabric Mural | mural de tela | 12' x 4'



**Together Always** | *Juntos siempre*, 2017 (left side) Screenprinted Fabric Mural | Mural de tela estampada 12' x 4'





"This body of work explores the ideas of cultural identity and loss. Growing up in a family of immigrants living in a border town, I was always hyper aware of the political tensions that have been accumulating along the US-Mexico border. This work pays tribute to my late grandmother, who despite a battle of extensive legal efforts, never reached the American Dream. She however, still lived her dream; a life of contentment against all odds. Filtered through the domestic lens, this work honors the trajectory of her life as a homemaker. As I started collecting memento and pieces of her life, there was no greater treasure than the legacy of her words. My "Guela Olí", a person who worked her entire life, was a strong and wise woman who had many "dichos", many of which spoke of a simpler time, when political and social barriers were nonexistent. The language used in my work directly quotes the witty and eloquent diction my abuela used, challenging the viewer with issues of meaning, translation and its distortion. My work incorporates processes such as embroidery and delicate textile manipulations with the use of found materials and family heirlooms. My intent for this body of work is for it to emulate a sense of hope, and that against all odds, persistence prevails."

— Daniela Cavazos Madrigal



Daniela Cavazos Madrigal was born in Laredo, Texas, where her text-based practice focusing on bilingual culture was formed. A recent graduate of the University of Texas at San Antonio, Madrigal received much positive attention for her master's thesis exhibition *I came from Wet*. Using discarded clothing from the *pacas*, stores where one can purchase clothing by the pound, Madrigal sculpts fabrics in a response to anti-immigrant rhetoric and explores the obstacles people coming to this country face.

In this body of work, Madrigal employs the clothing from secondhand shops along with family heirlooms to further explore the struggles of achieving the American Dream through a personal lens. With expressions of loss and grief, Madrigal honors her late grandmother who passed during the making of this series, by incorporating her grandmother's sayings.

Using a perspective filtered through the domestic, Madrigal explores identity largely formed by growing up in a border town and her understandings of her grandmother's struggles, who was never able to achieve citizenship. Honoring the trajectory of a homemaker, she uses objects such as the ironing board and clothing line to tell the everyday stories of someone in these shoes, such as her grandmother.

Hanging on a clothesline installation, a white lace blouse is embroidered with the words,

"Si me abrazas, apriétame de una vez" loosely translated to "If you are going to hug me, squeeze me while you are at it." The onlooker may interpret this text as: love me passionately or why bother. However, much of Madrigal's work explores the miss-translations of Google Translate. Looking up the text with the internet translation tool, as many of the viewers might, it transforms the reading to: "If you hug me, squeeze me in one go." Challenging the viewer with issues of meaning, the translations are deliberately distorted.

Looking at immigration stories, one at a time, helps for a greater understanding and empathy for the individual trials and tribulations endured. At the same time, Madrigal expresses her grandmother's legacy with bright-beautiful colors, confetti and the loving elements of the hand-sewn. The artist intended to emulate a sense of hope and optimism—echoing her late grandmother's sense of spirit.







**DANIELA CAVAZOS MADRIGAL**

*Now* | *Ahora*, 2017 (left)

Discarded clothing on wire | alambre, ropa usada | 14' x 3'

*Alphabet Soup* | *Sopita de Letras*, 2017 (right)

Wire, clothespins, collected clothing, thread | Alambre, orquillas, ropa colectada, hilo | 8' x 6'



*She Loves Me, She Loves Me N..ow* | *Ella Me Ama, Me Ama A...hora*, 2017

Iron board, discarded clothing, wire | Burro de plancha, ropa usada, alambre | 8' x 3'





**Sopita de Letras** | *Alphabet Soup*, 2017 | Wire, clothespins, collected clothing, thread | Alambre, orquillas, ropa colectada, hilo | 8' x 6'

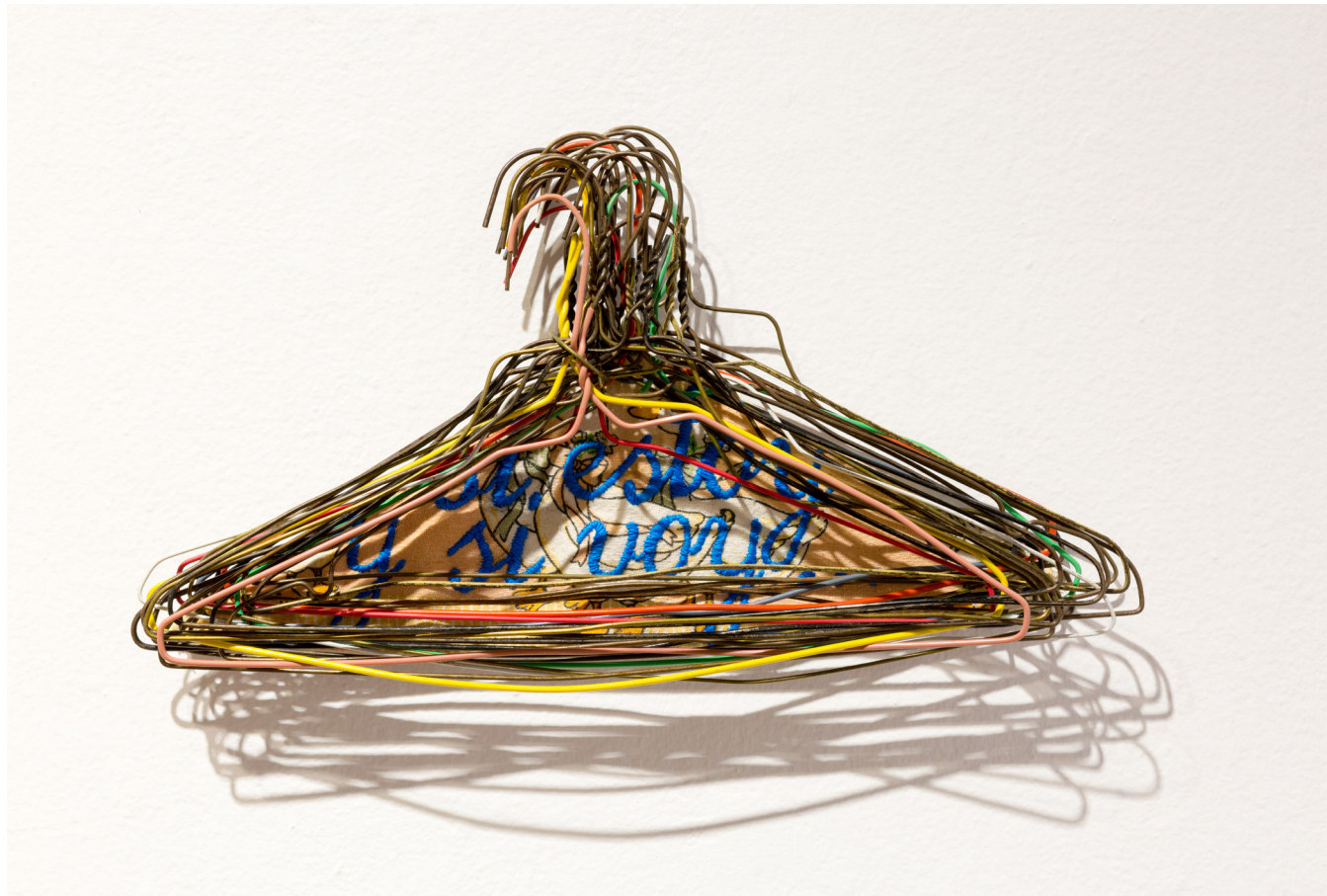


Details of **Sopita de Letras** | *Alphabet Soup*









***Yes I Am And If I Go* | *Si Estoy Y Si Voy*, 2017**

Wire hangers, apron, thread | ganchos de alambre, delantal, hilo | 14" x 16"



***Because I Love Me So Much* | *Porque Yo Me Quiero Mucho*, 2017**

Wire hangers, shawl, thread, clothespins | Ganchos de alambre, reboso, hilo, orquillas | 30" x 40"





*I Want You A Joke | Te Quiero Un Chingo, 2017 (right)*

Wire hangers, discarded clothing | ganchos de alambre, ropa usada | 14" x 12"









First and foremost, I am an Offwhite [tenuously latino, non-white, non-Black and non-affiliated indigenous], cisgender, hetero-performing, male.

Through a conceptual interdisciplinary practice, I make work that investigates how whiteness and light-skin are often removed from “polite” conversations of racial identity and racism. As a visibly brown (but “not dark”) person, I often contemplate the status or position of my own identity within society’s matrix of power and privilege. As such, many of my observations exist through an “offwhite” lens — a lens that exposes the color-based hierarchy pervasive in North America.

The questions I explore revolve around my own relation to oppressive systems. I’m taking a hard look at my upbringing and the many ways I was taught to associate whiteness with goodness, heroism, innocence and purity. Associations that are fundamentally and ideologically white supremacist — yet, continue to inform everything from casual assumptions to the U.S. criminal justice system.

I believe contemporary art provides the ideal forum for an audience to engage with abstract and difficult concepts, not typically discussed at the dinner table or water cooler. As such, my work often omits ostensibly “white” bodies and instead lives as installation, text art and custom beige tinted interior latex paint — challenging the notion of whiteness as neutral within the gallery. I believe that in order to illustrate an anti-racist

aesthetic, within the confines of the whitewall gallery, one must attempt to grapple with their own collusions to an inherited oppressive system and take a harder look at one’s inherited privileged statuses in addition to their more disadvantaged social positioning.

For YLA 22, I present neon text pieces. Not to be construed as celebratory, the neon pieces are an entry point into combining conversations of race and class. I draw on pop culture, riff off of other contemporary artists and aim to turn a couple phrases on their heads to point at whiteness as a structure. At the end of the day the work is not about white people at all but rather act as phrases to highlight the absurdity of oppression and color hierarchy altogether. The phrase “some of my best friends are white” is a flip of the common dodge of being accused of racism; the familiar “I can’t be racist some of my best friends are Mexican (Black, Brown, Asian — ‘insert racialized identity here’).”

As for the riff off of Drake’s “No new friends” — I’m using it precisely as a POC who’s had “those” long debates (more often online & on social media) with clueless white (and sometimes brown) folks who claim to “get it” yet, make apologies for oppressive structures. In this context, the work “No New White Friends” is a motto of self-preservation against the malaise of toxic comment threads that inevitably crop up whenever racial inequities are brought up or shared online.

— Mark Anthony Martinez



Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, Mark Anthony Martinez obtained both undergraduate and graduate degrees in fine art in Portland, Oregon at the Pacific Northwest College of Art and Portland State University. Through an interdisciplinary practice his work investigates how whiteness and light-skin are often removed from “polite” social conversations of racial identity and racism. His work explores the representation of power through images and symbols and exposes whiteness as interconnected within systems of domination and privilege.

In this series, Martinez utilizes neon installations as an entry point into conversations of race and class. Just like a neon sign on a store front is meant to grab the attention of the passersby, the work of Martinez may also stop the viewer in his or her tracks, but unlike the very straight forward messages found in commercial signs that request attention to purchase product, Martinez is asking the viewer to think about whiteness. And in this context, he asks the viewer to contemplate white supremacy in the United States.

His entire oeuvre to date has addressed the absurdity of racialized identities with a sense of dark humor and satire. Steeped in both the local and national art affairs, he cites three artist inspirations specific to this body of work. The first, Vincent Valdez, who has a long history of exploring America’s complex racial histories, and specifically his portraits of the Ku Klux Klan— family portraits in robes representing our supposedly post-racial era. Second, another Texas-born artist, Alejandro Diaz, and his ironic text-based works, including a neon piece which reads: “Wetback by Popular Demand.” And third, William Pope.L, an artist Martinez worked

with first hand as an assistant within a collective project as a graduate student. William Pope.L works with topics of both class and color also, as well as, objects of power—such as the American flag.

Around the globe, the social-political and economic systems were built on skin-based hierarchies and ideals of whiteness in our societies still linger. Whiteness is the standard from which the norm is built and America is immersed in notions of white supremacy. The current president of the United States was endorsed by the KKK during the elections and the organization held a victory march when he won office. Powerful think-pieces by artists such as this, hopefully spark the difficult discussions we must undertake as a society so that we may learn from the past and construct a much better future.





**MARK ANTHONY MARTINEZ**

*Some of My Best Friends, 2017*

Neon Signage, Fabricated by the King of Neon | 38" x 20" x 8"



*No New White Friends, 2017*

Neon Signage, Fabricated by the King of Neon | 28" x 22" x 8"





*“Yo soy todo lo que soy, I am all that I am.  
My heart, a force of nature, y lo llevo en mi pecho.  
Mi alma es inquebrantable, the greatest truth on Earth.*

I am all that I am, I am all that I am.  
My heart, a force of nature, and I carry it in my chest.  
My soul is unshakeable, the greatest truth on Earth.”

**—Michael Martinez**



Michael Martinez was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. They\* were academically trained in new media arts and interdisciplinary practices from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon where they earned their Bachelors of Fine Arts degree. As a multidisciplinary conceptual artist, their work confronts identity from the vantage of a gay person of color. Working primarily within performance, installation, and new media, Martinez's art practice centers on articulating the pressures endured by LGBTQ members of the Latin American diaspora. Challenging convention, Martinez illustrates a need to expand the narrative of the Latino experience within the US and beyond.

Through the use of installation, Martinez' work makes space for a Queer presence within the narrative of Chicanismo. In their installation piece titled **Courageous**, Martinez has constructed an enormous thirty-foot long pride flag, which drapes from the ceiling of the Mexic-Arte, and dramatically bursts through a wooden closet door. Deconstructing the spectral presence of the metaphorical "closet," **Courageous** is an installation that expresses the physical and emotional strain which manifests under the duress of concealing one's LGBT identity. Referencing the recently unveiled Philadelphia Pride Flag of 2017, **Courageous** features a flag which includes black and brown fabric panels, in honor of the legacy and endurance of people of color within the LGBTQ community.

Courage is a theme throughout Martinez' work featured in this year's YLA exhibition. **ALL MY LOVE (TO THE MOTHERS OF GAY LIBERATION)**, is a sculptural vignette that celebrates the efforts of the trans women of color who created the Pride Movement. In this artwork, a tattered pride flag, recovered from an abandoned gay bar in San Antonio's southeast side, is suspended from the ceiling with golden thread. Beneath the flag, an architectural brick, nestled within a blue, pink, and white floral arrangement, references Marsha P. Johnson. A black trans woman at the forefront of the 1969 Stonewall demonstrations, against the persecution of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

Existing as a framed triptych, **Muy Valiente** features gold embroidered poetry, emblazoned across a gradient of three nude chest binders, provided by the gc2b Transitional Apparel company. Binders are undergarments frequently used by transgender men, and gender nonconforming individuals, to obstruct the appearance of breasts. The poetry itself weaves a bilingual narrative, celebrating the endurance of black and brown, trans and gender nonconforming identities. Care is taken to not fully engender the text, in the hopes of making the piece accessible to both gender nonconformists and transgender men.

The poetry begins:

*"Yo soy todo lo que soy, I am all that I am. / My heart, a force of nature, y lo llevo en mi pecho. / Mi alma es inquebrantable, the greatest truth on Earth."*

Translated, the work reads:

*"I am all that I am, I am all that I am. / My heart, a force of nature, and I carry it in my chest. / My soul is unshakeable, the greatest truth on Earth."*

**Time Immemorial**, Martinez' fourth piece on exhibit for YLA 22, employs vintage television sets with video composites made from data bending techniques to enhance his narratives with controlled distortions that mimic the chaotic navigations of today's world. Martinez' videos incorporate a mix of symbolism which include 1970s films about ancient aliens, Mesoamerican iconography, and icons for non-binary gender roles. Martinez expresses resistance to cultural assimilation in his productions with opposition to conforming not only to the American way of life based off of ideals built by Caucasians with European heritage, but also the forced dominance by the cisgender community as a whole.

**\*they/their** are used here as a gender neutral pronoun preferences.







**MICHAEL MARTINEZ**

*Courageous*, 2017

Installation: broadcloth, gold thread, closet door | 14.6' x 30'



Detail of *Courageous*





**Muy Valiente | Very Brave, 2017**  
Nude binders by gc2b Transitional Apparel, embroidery | 17"x 21.5"







***Time Immemorial*, 2017**  
Digital video, animation, CRT television sets, electric guitar chords by Paul Lapsley | Dimensions variable



***ALL MY LOVE (TO THE MOTHERS OF GAY LIBERATION)*, 2017**  
Architectural brick, artificial flowers, memorial flower pot, gold thread, and tattered pride flag salvaged from defunct gay bar in San Antonio, Tequila Island | Dimensions variable









"Growing up in the U.S. the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, issues and questions of identity have always intrigued me and are now at the forefront of my work. I'm particularly interested in dismantling gender-specific roles imposed on us by others, as well as dissecting the rhetoric used to talk about women and our bodies.

Over the years, I've experimented across disciplines, working with traditional mediums such as oil and graphite, as well as organic materials such as hair, animal bones, plants, seeds, soil and even corn masa - all to explore the ways the human body relates to its natural and constructed environments. In my process, I've discovered an interconnected relationship between how human beings treat the bodies of women and our planet, whose pronouns and personifications in various languages tend to be feminine (i.e. she/ella, Mother Earth/Madre Tierra).

Inspired by works of Ana Mendieta, Beili Liu and Delilah Montoya, my own work and process have become a sort of performance that involves my entire body. When creating the photographs featured in this exhibit, I carefully arranged plants, salt, hair, and other discarded or natural objects on the bed of a scanner, and interacted with them using fragments of my own body. The end result is a documentation of that interaction.

The ways in which I hold my body, or other objects meant to symbolize my body, against the glass of the scanner are informed by my emotions and desire for healing. The body parts I choose to document make reference to acts of consuming and nurturing, and speak to the passive and active roles the bodies of women play in these acts. I'm interested in exploring the relationship between my body and the earth, with the intention of reconnecting to my roots - culturally, spiritually, and physically."

— Paloma Mayorga



Paloma Mayorga was born in Austin, Texas and graduated with a bachelor's degree in studio art from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. She has had a number of notable projects and exhibitions including, Mexic-Arte Museum's Changarrito Project, Serie Project's Artist-In-Residence program, and two solo-exhibitions of her work at The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center in Austin, Texas, where she was awarded the Emerging Artist Award of Excellence.

Mayorga utilizes a unique photographic process referred to as scanography. A process that has been around almost since the invention of the copy-scanner. With one of the most recognized pioneers of the technique, an American artist Sonia Landy Sheridan, who used the first color copier. This image capturing process utilizes a flatbed scanner instead of a traditional camera. To create the photo, the artist arranges objects, often three-dimensional, onto the scanner's glass surface.

The concept of laying atypical objects into an interesting composition for a still-image capture harks back even further than the technology used in scanography. The photogram is a technique that is as old as photography itself. The artist arranges the objects on top of a photographic, light-sensitive, paper then exposes it to light. Significant avant-garde artists, such as Man Ray, utilized the process and made it better known.

Both traditional photograms and its evolution found in scanography create wonderful images that hover between the worlds of representation and abstraction. With the limited range of depth-of-field and movements captured in the process, there is a contrasting sense of surreal buoyancy and weight. Mayorga harnesses these attributes to capture her body in performance. She cites Ana Mendieta, Beili Liu and Delilah Montoya as her artistic inspirations.

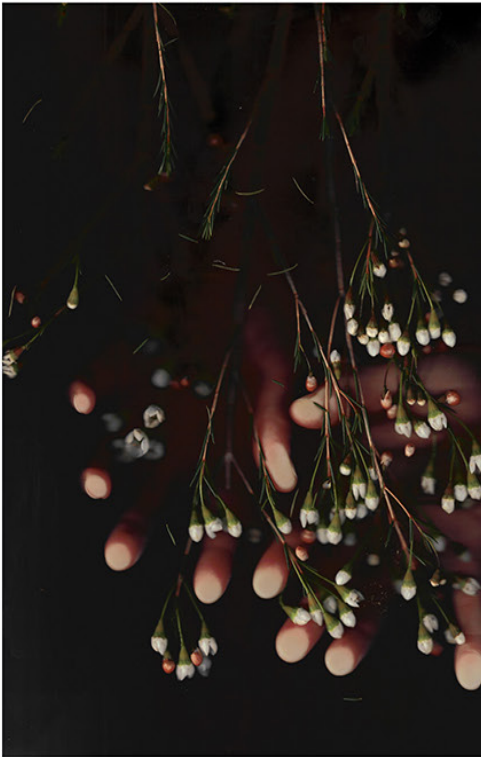
In this series, Mayorga incorporates her own body parts creating in part self-portraits along with a variety of symbolism for the earth and her Mexican American heritage. She utilizes marigolds, salt, a cut aloe vera plant, a monstera deliciosa leaf, and combines them with her breast, finger tips, palm, lips, and saliva. The flora in these works have medicinal qualities. Not only are these objects aesthetically stunning in their configurations, but they tie into ideas of healing.

Using a lens of ecofeminism, Mayorga explores gender-specific identity and the ways in which the human body relates to its natural and constructed environments. Furthermore, she dissects the relationship between the female body and the earth—a planet so often referred to in a female context, such as Mother Earth or Madre Tierra. Feminine parallels are found within ideas of cycles and generative abilities, but connections can also be found within frameworks of abuse and domination—side effects of a patriarchal society.

The message couldn't be timelier as the 45th president of the United States has recently taken a number of actions to promise a rapid road to a dismal environmental future with evermore natural catastrophes. However, Mayorga offers the viewer hope in the time of great uncertainty. Text carved into the shaft of the aloe vera plant reads, "La cortas y ella se sana con su dulce miel", (you cut her and she heals herself with her sweet honey/sap). Within this we find Mayorga's spiritual aspirations, as the artist assures us, given the opportunity to, in time all can heal.

1.









**PALOMA MAYORGA** | *Poderosa*, 2016 | Digital C-type print | 45" x 30"

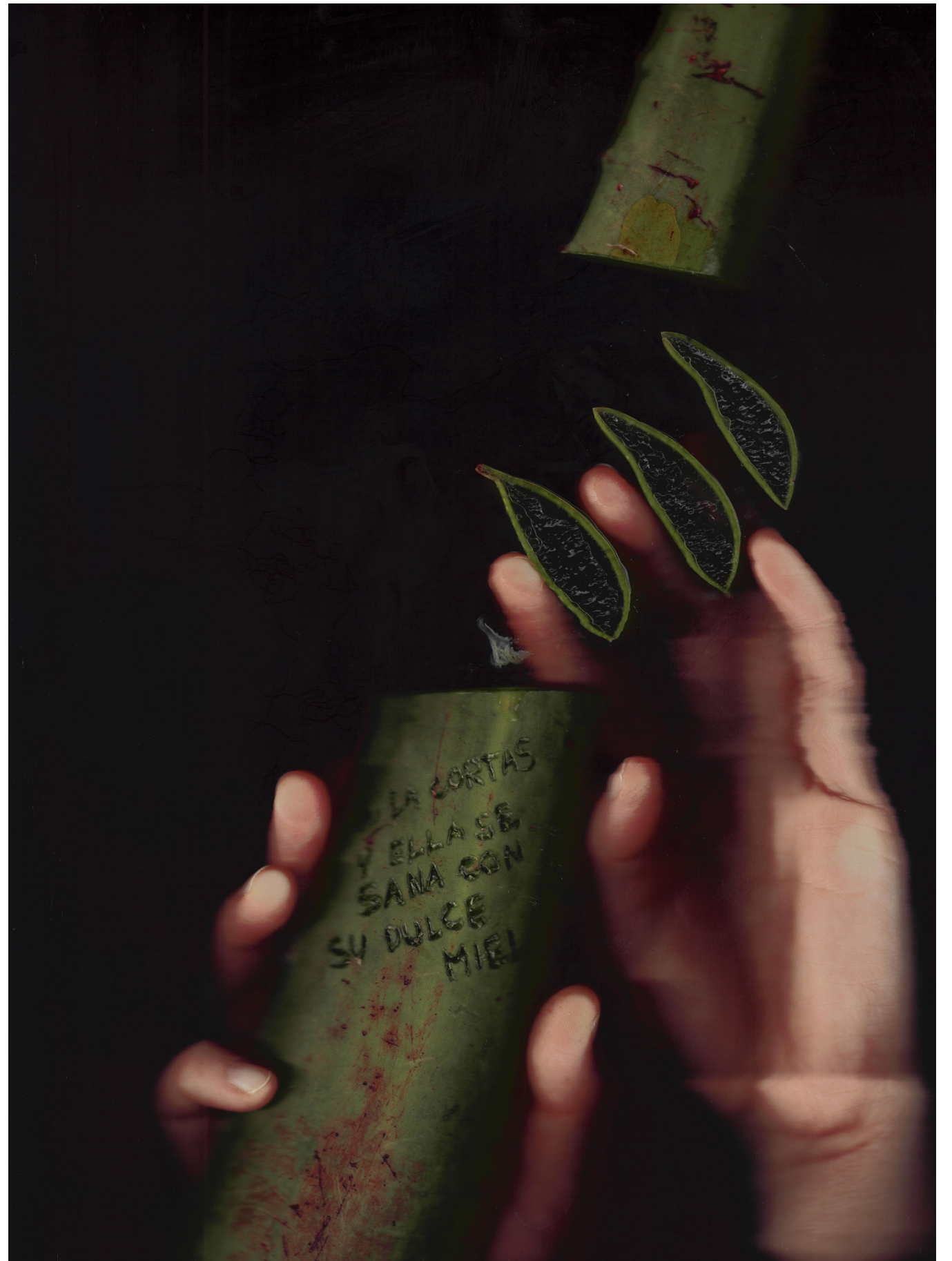


**Mia**, 2015  
Digital C-type print | 45" x 30"





***Mano Ilena***, 2014  
Digital C-type print | 45" x 30"



***Con su dulce miel***, 2017  
Digital C-type print | 45" x 30"





***Ansiedad***, 2017  
Digital C-type print | 45" x 30"



***Labios salados***, 2014  
Digital C-type print | 45" x 30"





Small white label on the wall.



Polina Bezorga



Small white label on the pedestal.



Ashley Mireles



Small white label on the wall.







"This series of serigraphs contains culturally familiar attributes chosen to create a lighthearted representation of women as saints. As a person that regards humans, especially women, to be the most impactful architects of our physical worlds, I have always been intrigued by religious stories and the people they include. Classic Hollywood actresses are just as familiar to some as the 800+ list of canonized Catholic saints.

Having a strong appreciation for the history and results of the Cuzco School, I decided to produce a series with these ideas in mind. Just as the Spanish merged elements found in European art at the time of their colonization of what was once Inca with the existing Peruvian style, I've combined the religious and pop components with added embellishment and a twist of drama.

The decision to produce these images as a series of serigraphs was made to reiterate the ephemeral quality, tactility, and reproduction of cinema advertisements."

— Ashley Mireles



Born in San Antonio, Mireles was raised in a small West Texas town but her aesthetic was largely influenced by the Chicano roots of San Antonio and her activist father. She moved back to her birth town the day after her high school graduation and still lives and works there today. Her practice has a strong community focus and she has exhibited at the Plaza de Armas, Centro de Artes, The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, and Cinnabar Gallery in San Antonio, Texas.

Mireles encompasses a figurative practice that embodies narratives of past, present, and future. Employing both homage and social critique, along with humor, she uses an illustrative style to explore cultural issues, gender roles, and the human condition. In this series, Classic Hollywood actresses are presented as revered canonized Catholic saints in a unique presentation inspired by the artist's interest in cultural syncretism found in Spanish Colonial art.

Mireles states that daydreaming in Church was an inspiration for this body of work. She recalls merging all the icons of the saints with famous old Hollywood actresses in her imagination. And for the YLA 22 exhibition, she materialized just that: Joan Crawford is rendered as Saint Luke the Evangelist (patron saint of artists), Bette Davis is Thomas Aquinas (patron saint of academics), Judy Garland is Saint Vitus (patron saint of entertainers), Kim Novak as Saint Dorothea of Caesarea (patron saint of gardeners), Rita Moreno as Saint Valentina (patron of love and engagement), and Natalie Wood as Saint Frances of Assisi (patron of animals). The women are represented with symbols attributed to their specific saint: fruit, roses, flying oxen, and so on.

Joan Crawford, the Hollywood actress with San Antonio ties and a darker-side exploited in the famous film-memoir of her estranged daughter, *Mommie Dearest* is synthesized with the biblical Luke the Evangelist, the patron saint of artists. Luke was said to

have been an artist himself, who made icons and illustrated gospels, among many other talents. In *Joan the Evangelist*, Crawford is flanked by the winged bull, the Christian symbol for Luke, in addition to radiating with a divine aura. Typically, St. Luke is represented holding a bible, but Joan the Evangelist is holding the books of guiding practice for Mireles, Rudolf Arnheim's *Visual Thinking and Art and Visual Perception*.

Bette Davis is another famous American actress referenced in this series. Davis was known for her willingness to play unlikable characters and a versatility that won her much acclaim. In *Bette Aquinas*, she is rendered with a brazen gaze and the heavenly clouds drawn on her blouse. Leaning into a book, she references the patron saint of *Thomas Aquinas*, known for his theologian teachings and philosophies. Aquinas is also often depicted with an icon of sacred studies shown as a sun on his chest, as well as, holding a small church as seen in the artist's reference image of *Saint Thomas Aquinas* painted by Carlo Crivelli in 1476<sup>1</sup>. Mireles modifies these symbols in this work, with a Hollywood-glam jeweled pendant and the church building as a stage backdrop. Bette's church is the church of feminist pride and solidarity represented by the triangle on the steeple.

Americans love celebrities and show a reverence and devotion to them as they once would have to the icons in the church narratives that were made to promote biblical stories to a largely illiterate public. Mireles' prints recall Andy Warhol's colorful screen prints of Marilyn Monroe from the 1960s that used Monroe's signature platinum blonde hair to suggest the golden halos of the Byzantine icons from his devout youth. Americans still love popular culture and the images we are bombarded with continue to instruct and persuade today, just as they did when the church was the largest patron of the visual arts. We can assume this is, after all, how America came to elect a trash television star to the highest-ranking office in the country. Mireles' images are an escape from the negative effects of a celebrity-obsessed culture—an upbeat delight in a mist of troubled times.

<sup>1</sup>Carlo Crivelli | Saint Thomas Aquinas | NG788.9 | National Gallery, London  
<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/carlo-crivelli-saint-thomas-aquinas>







**ASHLEY MIRELES**

*Joan the Evangelist, 2017*

Serigraph on Panel | 48" x 38"



**Bette Aquinas, 2017**

Serigraph on Panel | 48" x 38"





**Dorothea Novak**, 2017  
Serigraph on Panel | 48" x 38"



**Rita Valentia**, 2017  
Serigraph on Panel | 48" x 38"





**Judy Vitus, 2017**  
Serigraph on Panel | 48" x 38"



**Natalie of Assisi, 2017**  
Serigraph on Panel | 48" x 38"









**"Fringes"** is a series of large scale, gestural, figurative drawings of individuals being held captive or under vulnerable positions. Each drawing has different areas of focus and levels of development. The fringes, torn edges, and folds of each drawing transform them into individual large-scale notebook pages that become the misconceptions of the enigmatic author.

Drawn using litho crayons on vellum, a plastic-coated paper, allows for the suspension and slight absorption of the crayon, permitting the manipulation of it without damaging the paper—much like the manipulation of physical evidence in most of these unresolved cases. Scribbled notes in Spanish, of a forensic or investigative manner, accompany each figure, giving the viewer an insight into the precedent of the subject and the reality of the findings.

By reducing them to notebook pages, I wanted to create a physical engagement with the viewer that underscores the human rights issue of forced disappearances but also reduces the viewer to a potential victim, spectator, or the perpetrator.

What individual responsibility do we hold, when such strategies are used to plant terror within families, communities, and society as a whole?"

— Andrei Rentería



Andrei Rentería earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in painting from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas and a Master's in Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio. In 2016, he was awarded the Artist Lab Fellowship Grant from the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and the Friends of Chuck Ramirez Award for Visual Arts from the Artist Foundation of San Antonio.

Rentería has exhibited in some notable exhibitions to date including, *Heterotopia* a group exhibition in Marfa, Texas curated by Crystal Am Nelson, awarded by Apexart in New York; the 23rd Texas National exhibition hosted by the Austin Art Gallery at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, juried by Benito Huerta; and *Genocide: Man's Inhumanity to Humankind* at the Holocaust Museum in Houston Texas, curated by Gus Kopriva and Clint Willour. Renteria is also the forthcoming artist in residence in the Berlin Residency Program put forth by Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum in partnership with Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Germany.

Having grown up in Presidio, Texas, Rentería's work reflects his strong and longstanding interest in socio-political issues along the U.S./ Mexico border. His experimental approach to material provides a powerful forum to which explore crimes against humanity. He investigates how art can address and embody broader political issues, including torture and violence beyond international borders.

In this body of work, Rentería meticulously renders the human form in life-size drawings displayed in a processional arrangement mimicking a mass exodus. Various signs of struggles beg the viewer to question if this is documentation of genocide in the past, current, or foretelling of a dark future under a new tyrant's reign.

The presentation and format of the vellum paper is meant to recall pages of a notepad that a detective or reporter might carry to a crime scene. However, a correlation can also be made between the word fringes with the fact that the subjects are marginalized people; they lived on the fringes, the border of two very contrasting societies, largely ignored and their death treated as essentially insignificant in both societies.

In *Fringes*, Rentería focuses thematically on the issue of femicides, the killing of women, often in a violent and sexual manner, because of their gender. He also focuses on forced disappearances, situations where a person or persons go missing by actions of the government or other influential party in which the victims or their bodies are never found.

The figures are drawn using lithography-crayons on vellum and are surrounded by Spanish text describing the crime and documenting the condition of the cadaver. Although these particular stories are fictitious, Renteria blends real cases, historically from Chile and current accounts from Mexico, along with pieces of narrative from Roberto Bolaño's novel *2666*, based loosely on the femicide epidemic of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

Rentería's text describes brutal sexual assaults, murders, and kidnappings that illustrate an unfortunate reality still ongoing today. Rentería attempts to give voice to the voiceless as many of these cases go unsolved and uninvestigated. By enlarging the scale of the "notepad paper" to the life-size of the figures, he honors the victims and makes it impossible for the viewer to ignore a topic so often unacknowledged.



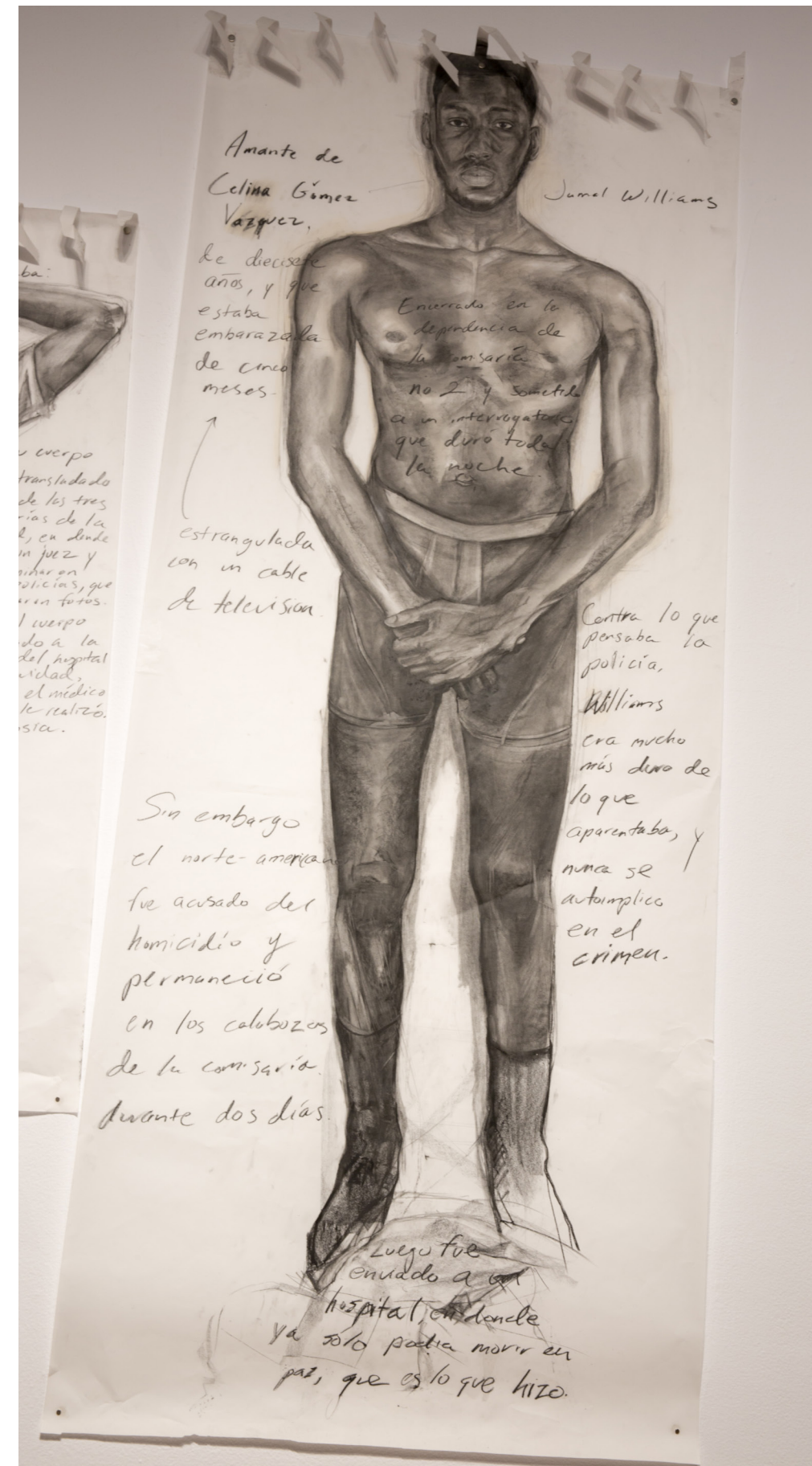




**ANDREI RENTERÍA**

Fringes: Flor Rivera Morale, 2017

Lithograph crayon on vellum | 75" x 36"



Fringes: Jamal Williams, 2017

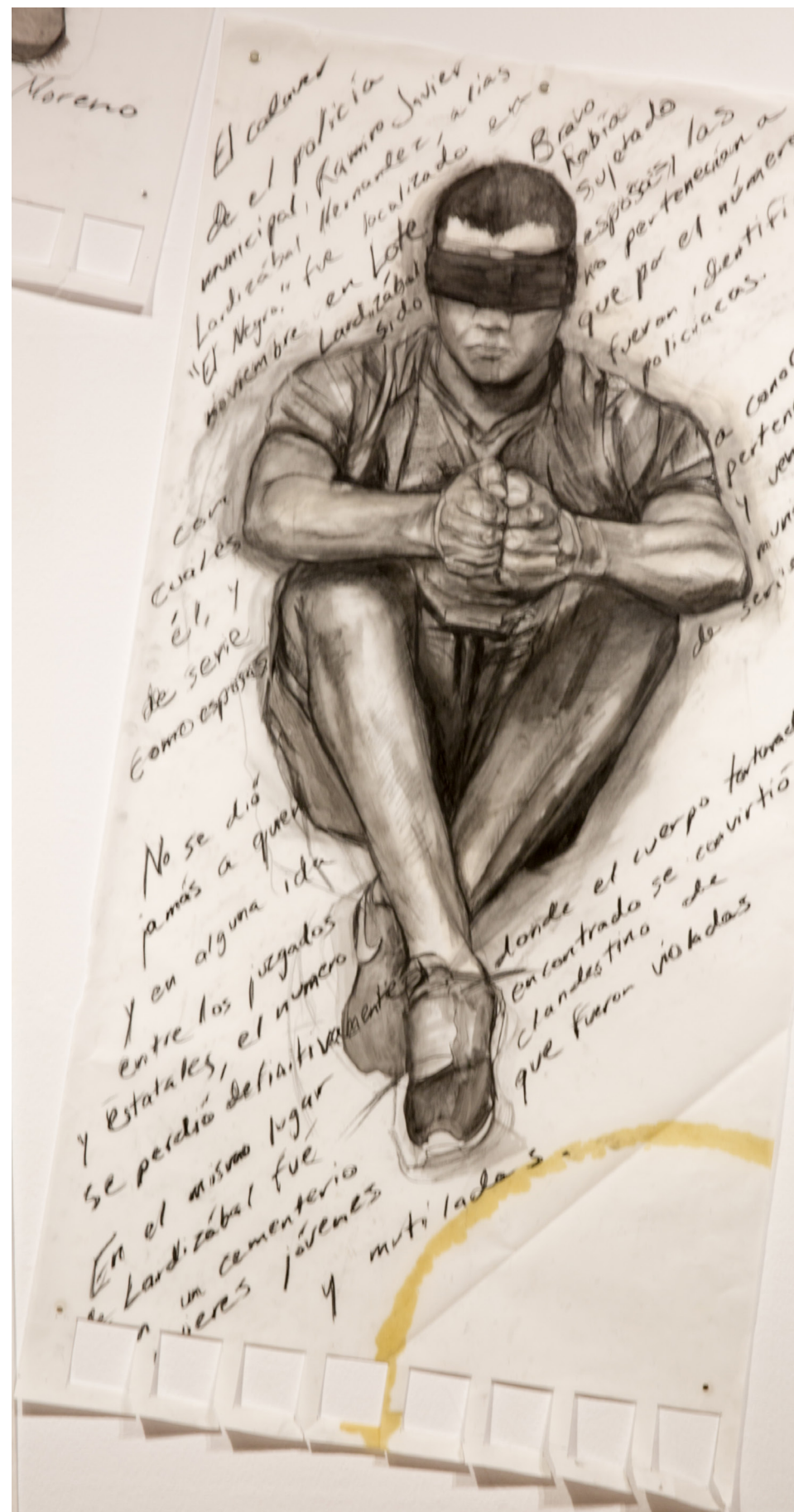
Lithograph crayon on vellum | 91" x 36"



85

Fringes: **Daniela Pacheco Martinez**, 2017  
lithograph crayon on vellum | 58" x 30"





Fringes: **Ramiro Javier Lardizabal**  
**"El Negro", 2017**  
 Lithograph crayon on vellum | 60" x 30"

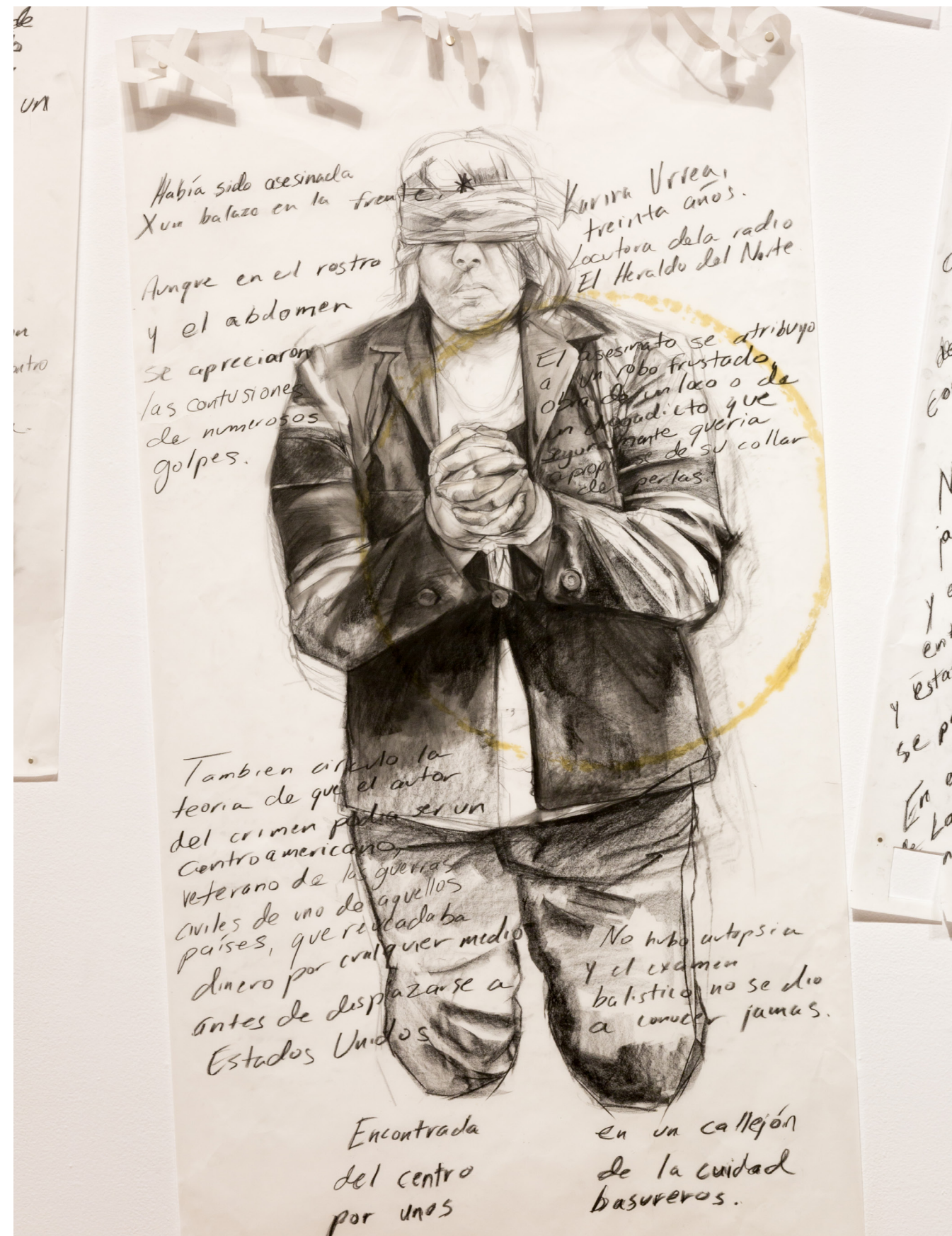


Fringes: **Joshua Pacheco Martinez**, 2017  
 Lithograph crayon on vellum | 41" x 36"





Fringes: **Carmen Elena Gonzalez**, 2017  
Lithograph crayon on vellum | 75" x 36"



Fringes: **Karina Urrea**, 2017  
Lithograph crayon on vellum | 72" x 36"





Fringes: **Nicolasa Villalvazo**, 2017  
Lithograph crayon on vellum | 83" x 36"



Fringes: **Allison Parker**, 2017  
lithograph crayon on vellum | 60" x 30"













I was born and raised in the border town of El Paso, Texas. Growing up there was a constant challenge for me due to Mexican customs and of the expectations set by my family's traditional values. I realized I was gay and this was also in direct contrast with my religious upbringing. From the machismo remarks I would hear, I felt unwanted and my true-self dwindle.

This body of work largely centers on body image, self-identity as a gay man, and my family's disappointment in my inability to carry on the family's name. I incorporate found objects to craft a feminine and masculine dichotomy using symbols from my culture. This body of work protests these traditional views and celebrates homosexuality."

—José Villalobos



José Villalobos received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in ceramics from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2016. Villalobos was also awarded the Artist Lab Fellowship Grant that same year and gained much positive recognition for his solo-exhibition, *De La Misma Piel* at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. Since 2015, he has been co-director and resident artist at Clamp Light Artist Studios and Gallery.

Villalobos grew up on the U.S./Mexico border in El Paso, Texas and was raised in a traditional conservative family. His oeuvre reconciles the identity challenges in his life, caught in between traditional Mexican customs and American mores, as well as, growing up with religious ideals that contrast with being gay. Villalobos' work largely centers on his self-identity and it is inspired by these dichotomies. In his artistic practice, Villalobos explores traditional "masculine" objects and softens the virility of these objects. By making subtle ambiguities, the macho-ness of these items become delicate. Glitter, satin fabrics, pink hues, and the infamous panache of Juan Gabriel are juxtaposed with belts, buckles, cowboy hats and boots.

For *¡ Ahora !* Villalobos focuses on his family's supposition regarding his sexuality and impotence of being the bearer of their last name. Within a rectangular installation space, *sombreros*, adorned with multilayered-fringe, dangle from invisible suspensions at varied heights above piles of dirt. The hats hold an eerie ghostliness and from each falls a pendent incased with prickly pear seeds and one letter from the artist's last name. All but the last letter are included: collectively reading **VILLALOBO**. The sole hat without a letter is made from pink fringe instead of gold and is also the only one with sparkles in the dirt pile beneath. The title of this work, *Sin la S*, translates to *Without the S*.

Villalobos specifically chose the sombrero to represent his male ancestors. It is symbolically a masculine object and at times connected to machismo. The hats stand for the Villalobos' of the past, who proudly passed on the family's last name, this golden generation that carried the seeds. The pink hat, representing the artist, is without the seed-filled pendent because he will not be having children of his own. Although the unique pink hat holds the most pizzazz, they all hold the ironic flamboyance and nostalgia reminiscent of the style of dress used by ranchero music stars.

The installation is flanked by two series that also nod to tradition and heritage. On one wall, a display of pink oval canvases with decorative gold trim exhibit anthropomorphized cactus leaves, evoking antique Victorian portraits. Mimicking the sombrero without the S, one cactus is heavily coated with sparkles—while the others only have sparkles on their prickly spines. On the lateral wall, is a series of photographic transfers adhered to hand-made paper created by the artist using the nopal plant, echoing the ideas of tradition. Each framed photograph contains a man from the artist's family tree. While the photograph's smaller scale recall a Polaroid-style found in old family albums, the paper's larger margins reaffirm that the artist's future is determined by his own making.

Villalobos' work reminds us that the heterosexual patriarchal framework has a strong hold on society. Even though historic strides have been made in this country; for example, same-sex couples can marry in all 50 states legally. Events such as the June 2016 mass shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando or the election and normalization of Vice President Pence, a zealot of anti-gay ideologies, remind us that there is still a lot more work to do as a nation.







**JOSÉ VILLALOBOS**

*Sin La "S", 2017*

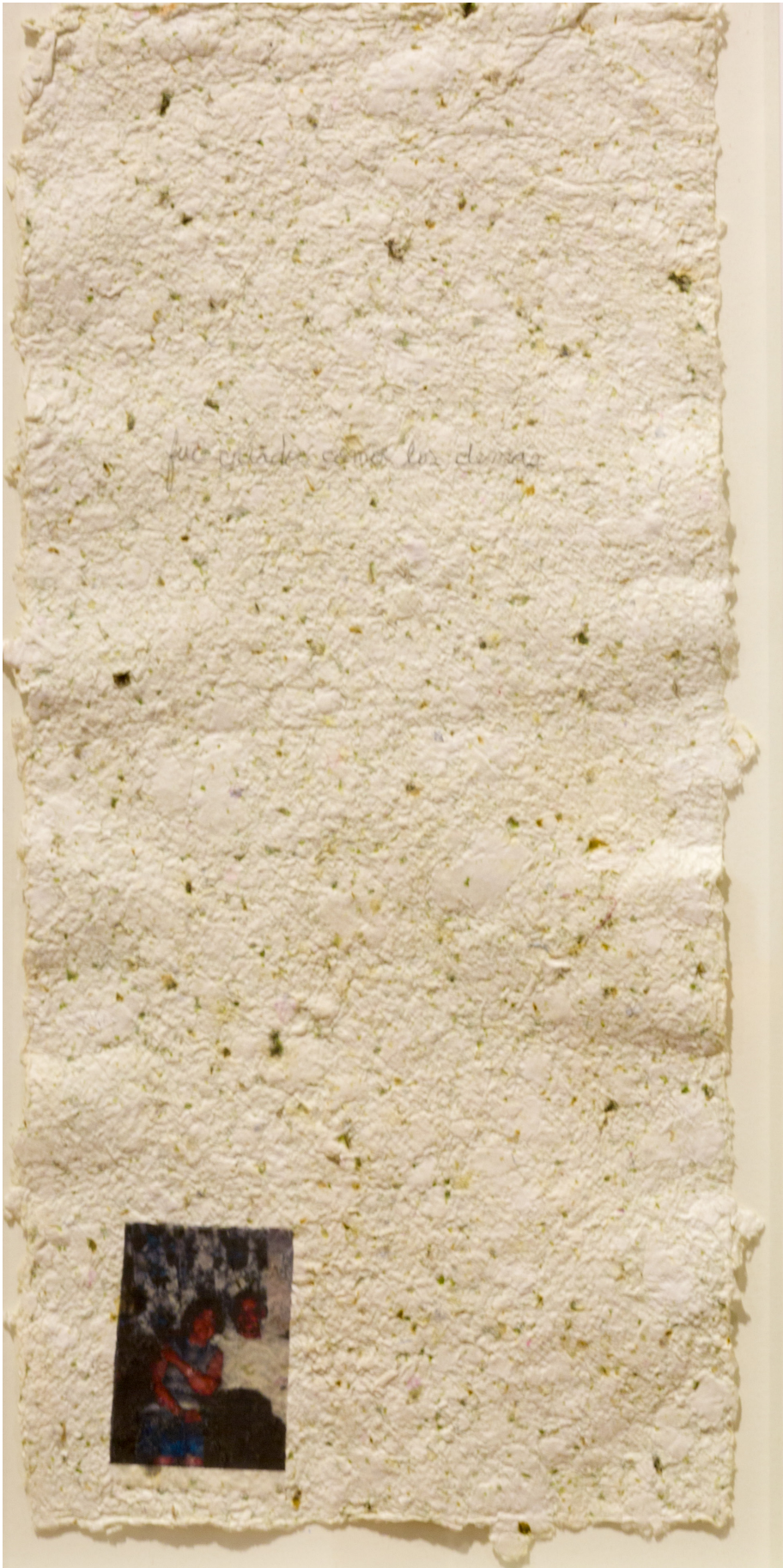
Mixed-media installation | Dimensions variable







**La Misma Vaina Que tu Papa, 2017**  
Handmade paper, nopales, image transfer | 22" x 12"



**Fue Criado Como los Demas, 2012**  
Handmade paper, nopales, image transfer | 22" x 12"





***Palo Que Nace Doblado,***

***Jamas Su Tronco Endereza,*** 2017

Handmade paper, nopales, image transfer | 22" x 12"



***No Se Puede Corregir,*** 2017

Handmade paper, nopales, image transfer | 22" x 12"





**Cambio La Forma De Caminar, 2017**  
 Handmade paper, nopales, image transfer | 22" x 12"



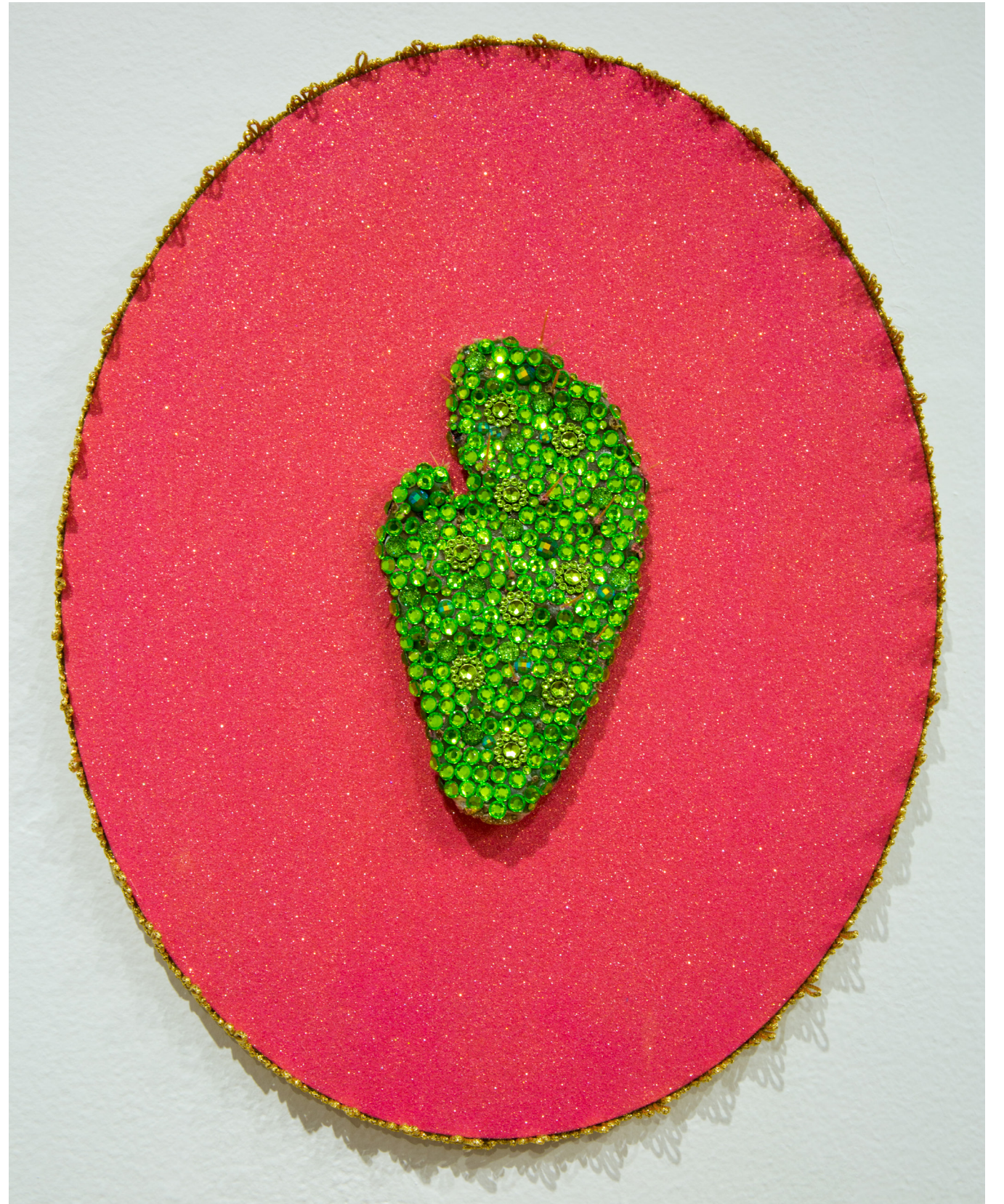
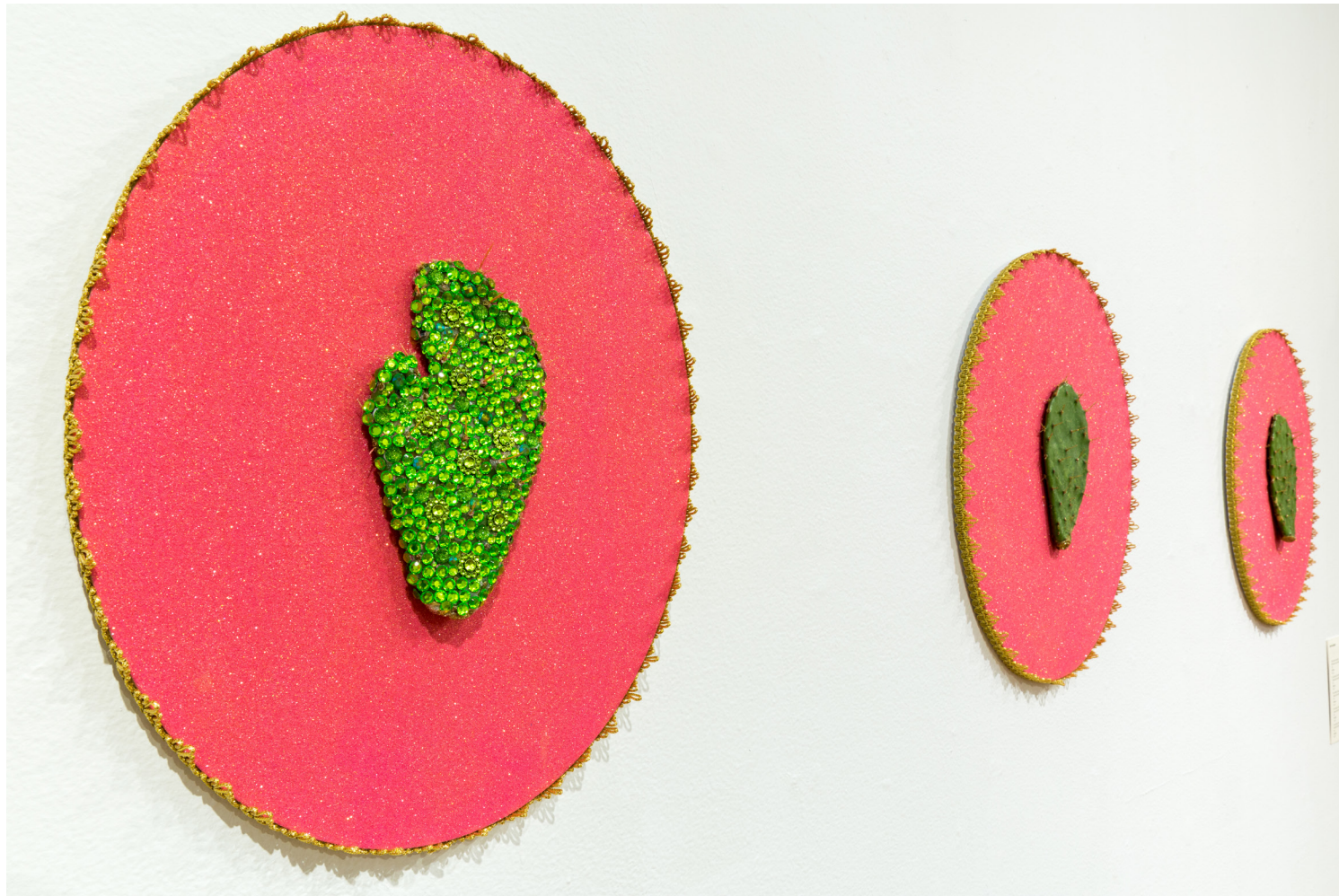
**Tendras Que Ser Un Buen Varon, 2017**  
 Handmade paper, nopales, image transfer | 22" x 12"





***Entre el Nopal y las Espinas***, 2017  
Mixed media | 20" x 16"





*Entre el Nopal y las Espinas, Uno se Asimila, 2017*  
Mixed media | 20" x 16"





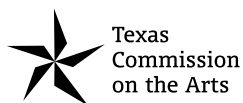


This exhibition was made possible by





This exhibition was made possible by



This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department.



The Official Mexican  
& Mexican American  
Fine Arts Museum of Texas

419 Congress Ave.  
Austin, Texas 78701  
(512) 480-9373  
[info@mexic-artemuseum.org](mailto:info@mexic-artemuseum.org)  
[www.mexic-artemuseum.org](http://www.mexic-artemuseum.org)



/mexicarte



@mexic\_arte



@mexic\_arte #YLA22