

ART MEETS HISTORY NEW MEXICO

**Many Worlds Are Born
& Technologies of the Spirit**

at 516 ARTS



ART MEETS HISTORY NEW MEXICO

Many Worlds Are Born & Technologies of the Spirit

Curated by

Ric Kasini Kadour & Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD

at 516 ARTS
516 Central Avenue SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico
516arts.org

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Art Meets History: New Mexico

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Texts by Ric Kasini Kadour with contributions from Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD

At the Intersection of Art and History

by Ric Kasini Kadour, Co-curator

Art Meets History: New Mexico is a document of two exhibitions that took place at 516 ARTS in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2022. The exhibitions were the results of two 2021 Artist Labs during which artists explored the Photography Archives of the Albuquerque Museum and how to integrate history into contemporary art practice. The exhibitions were informed by a Fellowship from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts where I researched how artists can use historic sites, collections, and archives to make work that contributes to civic discourse.

During the fellowship, I visited over a hundred historic sites and museums with an eye towards how history organizations share knowledge with the public, what art organizations can learn from them, and their potential as sites for contemporary art. A working theory of culture emerged from that research which attempts to create a framework for understanding how art and history is experienced in society and what culture workers can do to create experiences. Art and history, I have come to understand, are performative acts, exchanges between people that allow people to do culture. Presenting history and exhibiting artwork becomes a topical site of experience.

This idea competes with an understanding of history as a collection of stories to be passed from one generation to another. It positions history as the act of gathering and internalizing knowledge of the past. History is not made by the historian and injected into society; rather, it is a technology one uses to make sense of the world in which one lives. It is akin to art that way, but here again the idea competes with an understanding of art as pictures and objects as opposed to experiences of viewers. Writing in 1924, Leon Trotsky summarized the change in technology and society's response to it. "To reject art as a means of picturing and imaging knowledge because of one's opposition to the contemplative and impressionistic bourgeois art of the last few decades, is to strike from the hands of the class which is building a new society its most important weapon. Art, it is said, is not a mirror, but a hammer: it does not reflect, it shapes. But at present even the handling of a hammer is taught with the help of a mirror, a sensitive film which records all the movements."

The problem is that artists did not do a very good job of explaining the change in technology. In 2003, researchers at the Urban Institute documented how "artists are often separated from the perceived value of what they do or make." Their study found that while 96 percent of respondents "said they were greatly inspired and moved

by various kinds of art. However, the artist as creator of goods (works of music, film, literature, and so on) often appears to be divorced in the public mind from the good itself. Only 27 percent of respondents said that artists contribute 'a lot' to the good of society." Ultimately the project of Art Meets History is one that attempts to bridge this gap by putting artists in civic discourse and in conversation with other members of society.

To that end, I organized a series of Artist Labs that looked at how our divergent histories of race, conflict, and colonialism inform how artists imagine our futures. Artists were asked to work from their own people's history, to confront that history, and to imagine a future that offers justice, fairness, and support for all people. Race, conflict, and colonialism are themes that run through the history of America and while these topics inform national mythologies, they often go unexplored and unimagined in our civic discourse. People often operate with a different history than that of their neighbors. How we understand our divergent histories of race, conflict, and colonialism inform how we imagine our futures. In the call to artists, we declared, "For artists to speak to society, we must raise up all the histories of our community." The result of the lab were a collection of proposals for artwork, some of which were selected by the curators of these exhibitions for a commission.

The exhibition, "Many Worlds are Born," opened in February 2022. Co-curator Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD chose the title from a novel by late Chicano writer Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless Me, Última*. In his fictionalized, portrait of New Mexico, Anaya wrote, "Millions of worlds are born, evolve, and pass away into nebulous, unmeasured skies; and there is still eternity. Time always." Guzmán expanded on this idea. "The light, the land, the mysticism, and the people were all his subjects--kinfolk in a constellation that spanned generations. Along the same lines, the sprawling content of this group exhibition also spans multiple generations and understandings of New Mexico's many histories, worlds born from beauty, violence, and a deep sense of place."

The second exhibition, "Technologies of the Spirit," opened in June 2022. We asked viewers to think of technology not as machines, software, and algorithms but as the application of human knowledge. Technology is how we use our knowledge of the world around us—people, places, and things—to make sense of our place in that world. The promise of technology is that machines and algorithms will make our lives better. The reality of



unidentified photographer, *A photographer on the Navajo Nation takes a photograph of a woman*
c. 1945, gelatin silver print; Albuquerque Museum, gift of John Airy; PA1982.181.1549



Ric Kasini Kadour, *New Mexico*
2020, collage of photographs from the Albuquerque Museum Photography Archives

this sort of technology is that we adapt to it more than it adapts to us. With each new upgrade, we must learn how to use it. The advancement of humanity is not reliant on machines alone. There are no apps for truth, reconciliation, justice, empathy, or understanding. There is no app that can help us get along with one another. That requires a different sort of technology: a technology of the spirit.

A premise of these exhibitions was that history is not a single, linear narrative, but many threads woven together. Ruptures in the fabric of society can be traced to broken historical threads. While we may know our own history, we may not know the history of others. Erasure, denial, forced amnesia and an unwillingness to confront inconvenient and uncomfortable histories allow systems of oppression to persist. The antidote, I believe, is to learn as much as we can about the histories of others. Through this, we can repair the social fabric and build a society that is just and fair for all people.

Artists worked from multiple histories, often personal ones. Joanna Keane Lopez's installation chronicled the artist's family land grant located in Socorro, New Mexico. Juanita J. Lavadie reimagined her people's 18th century commercial life as four hand-stitched traditional patterned wool shirts, each belonging to a fictional Cibolero hunter or Comanchero merchant from Taos. Jeanna Penn's four large-scale collages made with archival photographs spoke of Albuquerque's oft-neglected history of Black presence and the will to create community, despite the constraints of gentrification, urban planning, and zoning. Karsten Creightney's large collage paintings offer us two

views of New Mexico. The pastoral landscape of a well-groomed golf course contrasts with a barrage of "No Loitering" signs.

Place, belonging, and self-location reoccured as a theme in the artworks. A mural by Diego Medina (Piro-Manso-Tiwa) evoked histories as they unfold along El Camino Real, the Spanish Royal Road, the Rabbit Run Trail, that interlinked Mexico City and Santa Fe: "all travelers of a sort, some forcibly removed from ancestral lands and others following well-used trade routes." Invoking Mesoamerican cosmology, Marcus Zúñiga video installation documented a pilgrimage to his familial village of Mimbres. His installation used video projection and light to analyze the intersection of place, time, and history. Paola de la Calle examined home, borders, identity, and nostalgia in three collages that reflected on immigration to New Mexico from Mexico and South America. Through the use of Mesoamerican visual language and materials, Moira Garcia paid homage to Indigenous painted histories and cartographies, and re-imagine the depictions and narratives of the first generations of Nahua settlers of Yancuic Mexico (New Mexico) in the early seventeenth century.

Artists confronted legacies. In a monumental black-and-white photographic artwork of *The Blue Swallow*, a historic hotel on old Route 66 in Tucumcari, EveNSteve set the stage for a small drama about tourism and changing notions of whiteness in the Southwest; a reflection on the role tourism plays in the lasting effects of colonization, racism, and Manifest Destiny on New Mexico. In *Stone Resting on Georgia O'Keeffe* (*Their sky fell to the sound of*

laughter) Josh T. Franco reflected upon the famous artist's legacy and her place in the New Mexican psyche and cultural landscape. In *Welcome to Aztlan: A Convergence of Protest Culture* by Marlena Robbins (Diné) interpreted, in large-scale beaded canvases, two of Bob Fitch's 1974 photographs depicting the Navajo Protests in Farmington. Robbins invited members of the community to bead these canvases as an act of remembering. In so doing, she invited viewers to think of history as a type of labor, a craft needing to be worked.

One key theme that rose was the role photography played in shaping our understanding of the world and how Indigenous artists repurposed a problematic medium. In his photographs of culturally modified trees, Leo Vicenti (Jicarilla Apache) put the technology of photography in the service of a more complete history of the Jicarilla Apache. Margarita Paz-Pedro (Laguna/Santa Clara Pueblos) photo transferred images of Indigenous peoples' hands onto ceramics as a way of inviting the viewer to consider the Indigenous presence—and labor—that has shaped the region.

Resilience, prayer, ritual, coping, and self-care can be considered technologies of the spirit. An effigy and performance by Nikesha Breeze with Miles Tokunow, Lazarus Nance Letcher, and cinematographer MK called forth a history of Blackness in New Mexico. Jackie Mitchell Edwards' installation created a contemplative space in which the viewer is invited to consider the dispossession and displacement of the African Diaspora. An installation of soft, woven sculptures by Eric-Paul Riege (Diné/Navajo) expressed his philosophies and cosmologies of sanctuary, harmony, and interconnection with all elements of the world around him. In Laurie O'Brien's collage animation, Adam Smith's concept of the invisible hand guiding the free market economy invited viewers to consider how unseen forces of contemporary technology impact our experience of the world.

Taking a note from lessons learned visiting historic sites, I wrote in my reflection of the first exhibition, "They are boxes to unpack, onions to peel. We invite you to enjoy these artworks and to dig into the histories behind them. This is not an exhibition you visit once. If so inspired, jump into these histories. Revisit the artwork. This is one way to

do history, to do culture, to engage in a process of truth and reconciliation." It wasn't until we were completing the work for the second exhibition that I realized how challenging this type of culture work is to existing art world conventions. To fully unpack these artworks and to release what they have to offer us demands going beyond short gallery texts, beyond the fear of sharing unpopular thinking, beyond a preoccupation with the going beyond short gallery texts, beyond the fear of sharing unpopular thinking, beyond a preoccupation with the marketability of artwork, and beyond the limited



unidentified photographer, *Harvest in Chamita*, c. 1950,
gelatin silver print; Albuquerque Museum, gift of John Airy; PA1982.181.814

attention spans we often bring into the gallery. I'm reminded of a lyric from a Macklemore song, "No law's gonna change us, we have to change us." I believe the artwork in these exhibitions is powerful magic. To access that magic, viewers must take the time to gather the histories they hold and to learn about the people who are making them. As a curator and a culture worker, I continually look for ways to make available artwork that so richly informs my own life. This catalog is but one attempt to share these remarkable artworks with others.

Ric Kasini Kadour, a recent recipient of a Curatorial Fellowship from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, is a writer, artist, publisher, and cultural worker. He has curated numerous exhibitions across the country, is a widely published arts writer, and a practicing artist.

Our Beloved Fractured Home

by Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD, Co-curator

Years ago, when I was still a graduate student and living on the East Coast, I would visit New Mexico as many times a year as I could. Whenever I stopped in—whether for a holiday or to spend a summer—my mom would never fail to tell me I was back on “tierra firme,” steady ground. The plane simply needed to land and I knew like clockwork to expect those words, as if our longstanding inside joke was waiting for just for that moment. It was her way of pointing out the fact of being ungrounded, in flight. But there was an added meaning to her words, for to be anywhere else but New Mexico was to be ungrounded whether that was the sky or another city altogether. My arrival, it seemed, only emphasized that one often signified the other.

This place, to her point, was my *umbilicus mundi*, my center.

It would take leaving and then returning to understand that. Yet, as I write these words about what it means to feel grounded in this place, hundreds of thousands of acres of New Mexico are engulfed in flames. The largest fire in the state’s history has ripped through rural communities, destroying multi-generational homes, hundred-year-old riparian forests dense with wildlife, and entire watersheds. The landscape may never be the same in my lifetime.

As a writer, I feel the weight of bearing witness and of chronicling what many here feel is a profound cultural loss. But I take heart from the artists of “Many Worlds are Born” and “Technologies of the Spirit,” those

who’ve become visual storytellers for a New Mexico that endlessly defies expectations and that endlessly defies a single narrative. They are those who remind me again and again where I am when I stand on this land.

These works aren’t direct representations of history, or even of landscapes and places, but they instead revel in the imaginative process of conjuring the footsteps that have come before our own. In many cases, the artists in each exhibition have drawn from archives to piece together these narratives, fluid as they are and fluid in their ability to jump across time. The works that they’ve produced are also historical documents in their own right.

Indeed, *chuparosa*, by Marcus Zúñiga, is, at its core, about the act of remembrance. To honor his ancestor—Canuta Gutierrez Torrez—the artist took a pilgrimage to Mimbres, a village in southeastern New Mexico where she died, and set up a sculpture made of mirrors that reflected the image of the sky into the image of the land. The subsequent installation at 516 ARTS is a “remnant,” in his words of this “remembrance ceremony.” Mirrors within the gallery thus recreate the path of the sun at the moment of her death.

Much of the artwork included in “Many Worlds are Born” and “Technologies of the Spirit” similarly evokes remembrance, both as personal and collective acts of recalling the past and as a salve against erasure. In Juanita Lavadie’s *Ciboleros & Comancheros: Four Personas of Spanish Colonial Shirts*, four hand-stitched shirts (one completely spun and sewn from wool) represent a persona that is inspired by a historical period ranging between 1740 and 1840. Each is also accompanied by a journal that serves to record dreams about the future. For instance, the cibolero, or buffalo hunter, dreams of the heaving locomotive that will eventually push buffalo to the brink of extinction. The dreams can be dirges to futures filled with loss, as in this case, but also, in others, to futures where cultural identities remain resilient.



Diego Medina (Piro-Manso-Tiwa)
long has the light wandered to lay itself upon you
2022, site-specific mural, mixed media
commissioned by 516 ARTS



unidentified photographer, *Farm Workers in a Field*, July 1946; Albuquerque Museum, gift of Albuquerque National Bank; PA1980.184.070

For Diego Medina (Piro-Manso-Tiwa), the past is both the sediment and the footprint, evidence in either of multiple migrations that have taken place along the Rabbit Run trail, or, as it is commonly known today, the Camino Real. Those migrations, in long has the light wandered to lay itself upon you, could have been for trade or, later, during the colonial period, have resulted from a forced diaspora that followed the Pueblo Revolt. Each movement, nonetheless, yielding new kin. There is love, here, of all these relatives, born of pain and light.

I then think of these works as effigies, poems, or perhaps as Zúñiga describes of his own *chuparosa*, descansos, shrines made to honor loved ones. In Lópezville, they are those who once occupied a family land grant and, who would later witness the repeated violence of environmental racism, as Joanna Keane Lopez shows. Her assemblage brings together the material culture of these disparate worlds—from a pile of earth, and bits of metal, barbed wire, and glass, to swaths of cloth that once caught the debris from the ceilings of adobe buildings that had long punctuated

the land grant. Then there are the documents showing evidence of countless nuclear tests that took place in the mountains nearby. It is home, she tells viewers, and something uncanny too.

If there are many worlds in these visions, not all can be reconciled even if they reside side by side. I think of the tiny hunk of calcimine paint that Keane Lopez rescued from the ailing and abandoned landscape of Lópezville. It is itself a fragmented landscape, pale pinks, yellows and chalky whites that at one point in the past, had been painted, layer after layer, onto the interior of an adobe.

New Mexico, I see in this scrape of wall, is our beloved, fractured home. It is also tierra firme.

Alicia Inez Guzmán holds a BAFA in Art History from UNM and an MA and PhD in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester. A writer, editor, educator, and curator, she has published widely, taught undergraduate lectures and seminars, and has curated shows featuring queer artists and artists of color.



Superpredator and Meditation on American Hypocrisy

Karsten Creightney
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Two large collage paintings by Karsten Creightney invite us to consider inequality in New Mexico. Made as stand alone artworks, *Superpredator* and *Meditation on American Hypocrisy* present two experiences of America. In *Superpredator*, a relatively tiny man swings a golf club in Creightney's magnificently imagined course. Two trees bloom pink while a field of daisies covers the foreground. The wide open space of the golf course symbolizes the hoarding of resources by the affluent class. In *Meditation on American Hypocrisy*, by contrast, a barrage of "No Loitering/Se Prohibe Vagar" signs stand between the viewer and a small collection of flowers in the background. The hypocrisy referenced in the title speaks to Creightney's observation that authority can make itself understood, in any language, when it wants to control behavior and tell people what to do. Would the subject of the signs be welcome on the golf course? Would the man golfing be subject to the signs? These are the

questions we invite you to consider by placing these two artworks in conversation with one another.

Collage is a particular technology that often uses the juxtaposition of familiar things to create a space that allows viewers to make sense of disparate things. Income inequality is a frequent topic in our civic discourse in large part due to the fact that the top 1 percent of Americans have more than twice the amount of wealth of the bottom 50 percent. On any given night, over half a million people have no place to sleep. Statistics are only one way to understand the problem. What does it feel like to have an entire golf course to one's self versus not being able to stop moving because civil codes don't allow you to be in a place without some purpose. Collage allows us to consider these disparate realities as part of a single whole: a complex world where two competing pictures are rarely brought together.



(left) Karsten Creightney, *Meditation on American Hypocrisy* (diptych), 2022, collage, silkscreen, acrylic, oil, and wax on canvas, 48 x 80 inches

(right) Karsten Creightney, *Superpredator*, 2022, collage, silkscreen, watercolor, acrylic, oil, and wax on canvas, 65.5 x 75.9 inches



Jeanna Penn, *Bailey House* from the series "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West"
2022, watercolor, acrylic, marker, oil paint marker, inkjet prints on mounted watercolor paper, 24 x 48 inches, commissioned by 516 ARTS

Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West

Jeanna Penn
Oakland, California

What happens when a people's history becomes invisible? This is how some people describe Black history in New Mexico. Bruce A. Glasrud wrote in 2013, "It should be mentioned that so little can be found about African Americans in New Mexico that it almost seems as a conspiracy." Glasrud goes on to quote Barbara J. Richardson who wrote, "One of the injustices shown towards the black man in New Mexico was to ignore his presence in the state and his many contributions." The first Black person arrived in New Mexico in 1539 traveling with Fray Marcos de Niza's early expeditions in search of the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola. But it wasn't until the 1860s that communities of Black people began to take shape in Las Cruces, Albuquerque, and for a time, Blackdom. In the face of legal and social segregation, people bought houses, created businesses, and formed community organizations like Albuquerque's Home Circle Club whose motto was "Intellectual, Social, and Moral Uplift." And yet, the myth of New Mexico as a "tricultural" state perpetuated the erasure of Black New Mexicans from the cultural landscape.

The four large-scale collages that make up Jeanna Penn's series, "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West", intercede on this history. Using photographs from the Albuquerque Museum and painstakingly searching phone books, Penn identified four sites that represented Black presence in early 20th century Albuquerque. She explained, "Black people in New Mexico had to create spaces because they were not allowed to live and work and socialize in predominantly white spaces." Because of gentrification and eminent domain, these spaces no longer exist. Her artworks offer us an opportunity to develop a sense of Black geography and learn these neglected histories.



Jeanna Penn, *Ideal Hotel* from the series "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West"
2022, watercolor, acrylic, marker, oil paint marker, inkjet prints on mounted watercolor paper, 24 x 48 inches, commissioned by 516 ARTS

Bailey House

Mrs. W. Bailey, Tourist Home
1127 North 2nd Street 1947–1963 (Madora Bailey)

Bailey House was the home of Madora Bailey and her husband, who, with money made from working on the railroads, purchased a kit house from Sears, Roebuck and Company. Onlookers believed it was "the most lavish home owned by a black family in Albuquerque at the time." The Baileys opened their home to others too, renting rooms and hosting Black musicians who could not stay in area hotels when they were on tour. "Madora Bailey was very involved in helping young black Albuquerqueans get into college." Bailey House, said Penn, speaks to "this idea of creating a place for other people coming into Albuquerque, whether they're starting their life and just need a place until they get settled or they're traveling through...They're not only making a home for themselves. They're making more space for the entire community." Bailey House was demolished sometime after 1963 to make room for a parking lot.

Ideal Hotel

Ideal Hotel (E. Rusk and W. J. Rusk)
310 East Marquette 1948–1950

"There was no hotel available for Black people to stay in Albuquerque," says Penn, that is until S.T. Richards came along. A school teacher from Arkansas, Richards arrived in Albuquerque in 1912 and founded the Ideal Hotel, the first place of public accommodation for Black people in the city. He also published the city's first Black newspaper, *The Southwest Plaindealer*. "It wasn't just that it was a hotel. It was a social space," says Penn. Ideal Hotel had a bar and a funeral home and functioned as a community center. Penn recalls the history, "The bar was called Chet & Pert's Flamingo Room and it was owned by Chester and Corinne Smauldine. The Smauldines were a prominent Albuquerque family including Chester's brother, Owen, a champion athlete. Chester had applied for a liquor license so many times. Because at this point in the 40s—I think he even started in the 30s—Black people could not drink in public spaces with white people. He was trying to create a space where people could drink and was just getting constantly thwarted by the county or whomever. Then this situation came up and they opened. [Ideal Hotel was a] space for the community to be with the community. As trite as it might sound at this point as an overused term, it was a 'safe space.' They could play their music. They could drink, they could laugh, and cry, if they needed to. It was theirs; it was their own." Ideal Hotel was torn down in the 1970s to make room for a social service building.



Jeanna Penn, *Ted Davis Texaco* from the series "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West"
2022, watercolor, acrylic, marker, oil paint marker, inkjet prints on mounted watercolor paper, 24 x 48 inches, commissioned by 516 ARTS

Ted Davis Texaco

1124 South Broadway from around 1949

How did Black people in New Mexico make a living and build wealth? "Black workers could only rise so far. African American men were generally relegated to jobs as porters, janitors and cooks; women were limited to jobs as maids, caretakers, domestic cooks and caterers." To get ahead under these circumstances, Black people needed to strike out on their own. In this collage, Penn reflects on two such instances.

Around 1949, Ted Davis opened a gas station. Penn considered what it meant for a Black man in the 1950s to open such a business. "You're dealing with this product that isn't so easily available to just sell—if you're going to sell oranges, you're going to sell oranges—but this is gasoline. I could see it being very controlled and just the fact that he was able to create it was really intriguing to me...Black folks had the wherewithal to hold together funds and pull together resources, but there's always a gatekeeper and your success depended on how that gatekeeper was going to respond to you. I thought that was really interesting. I don't know the history of gas stations across America. I don't know how many were Black-owned, but this was the first time I had ever seen a Black-owned gas station." Davis' son grew up working at the gas station. He attended the University of New Mexico, served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves,

and eventually retired from his position as Chief of the Property Appraisal Bureau at the New Mexico State Taxation and Revenue Department. He passed away in 2003. Ted's Texaco Station is now Ray's Auto Repair on the corner of Broadway and Lewis Avenue.

One of the first Black owned businesses in Albuquerque was Bryant's Delivery Service located on the 200 block of Gold Avenue. Opened in 1911 on the 200 block of Gold Avenue, "The Bryant Company was primarily dealing with downtown Albuquerque. So it wasn't a Black business for Black people, but I think it's also about finding where the gatekeepers are going to let you thrive. It's always been that way. We'll let you work on the railroad and you can become middle class. We'll let you work here and you can become middle class. I think this is another example: We're not going to let you in the office building, but you could transport for us or whatever it is."



Jeanna Penn, *Winona Day Nursery* from the series "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West"
2022, watercolor, acrylic, marker, oil paint marker, inkjet prints on mounted watercolor paper, 24 x 48 inches, commissioned by 516 ARTS

Winona Day Nursery

1119 South Arno

How did Black people in New Mexico take care of one another? In the early 20th century, Black people formed fraternal associations and mutual aid societies. The Winona Art Club was part of the Women's Club movement during the Progressive Era that saw the creation of hundreds of African American women's organizations. These groups were dedicated to helping their communities through social activism around topics as diverse as juvenile justice and library creation. They also performed charitable works that improved the general economic wellbeing of the community. One such project of the Winona Art Club was the creation of a day care center in Albuquerque. Penn recalled the history:

"These small clubs were community-based. Albuquerque had three or four of them. They would come together on causes and they made shit happen. What do we need? We need a nursery school. Let's make this happen. The image in the bottom corner, that's from my collection, but that is a Women's Club. I wanted to illustrate that idea in the other corner. The Winona Women's Club got together, got the house and provided child care service for people who were working largely, again on the railroads, to take care of their kids...Every couple of months they would hold a chicken dinner or

fish fry to raise money to support the nursery. It was very much about our community coming together to keep this space open to support our community."

"I wanted to talk about the next generations that were being [brought up]. Their parents moved here and they're coming with whatever they're coming with from wherever they came from, but now these are the first generations of black Albuquerqueans, New Mexicans. Now they're part of the conversation and what are they going to bring to the culture and into the community? The picture of the four girls, that's from the [Albuquerque Museum] collection and the boy sleeping: he's sleeping at this nursery. The woman on the side, I attributed her to the Women's Clubs and the women's movement. The house still exists. It's obviously been modified. It's a private home. I like that it is shrouded in trees. I thought that was really interesting. It's not demolished, but it's kind of hidden. So the history is kind of hidden behind these trees of what the space once was."



Lópezville, Socorro, New Mexico

Joanna Keane Lopez

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Among the assemblage in Joanna Keane Lopez's installation is a *manta de techo*, the dried stems of a chaparral or creosote bush, and at least four generations of remnants—glass bits, barbed wire, and old cans—evidence of past generations of Lopez family members who made their lives on the same sprawling plot of land. The artist's father gifted her one adobe house from Lópezville, part of a Spanish land grant awarded to 27 Socorro families in 1805, and now largely abandoned by most of the Lopez family. Much of what she brings into the gallery emblemizes that which has been left behind.

The *manta de techo* comes from the home of Lopez's great grandfather Abelino López, who built the adobe around the turn of the century. The sheet hung beneath the ceiling, catching dirt that fell from the earthen roof. Lately, however, it's dangled from the rafters, forgotten.

The chaparral comes from the wider landscape where it grows abundantly. It has been said by traditional healers to clean out the system from environmental toxins, a reality for those who've lived downwind from nuclear testing, as has been the case in Socorro. The artist brings both the remnants from the land, homes, and of lives lived into the gallery, along with adobe bricks crafted by hand from earth derived from Lópezville. *Lópezville, Socorro* asks viewers to contemplate the site as an axis of family memory and other histories of place, including the original presence of the Piro Pueblo of Teypana.

(above) Joanna Keane Lopez, *Lópezville, Socorro, New Mexico*, 2022, site-specific installation detail, adobe bricks

(right, top left) Photo of Historic family adobe home

(right, bottom) Manta de techo, liquor bottle shards, creosote branches commissioned by 516 ARTS
above & right process & installation view photos by Daniel Ulibarri



chuparosa

Marcus Zúñiga

Los Angeles, California & New Mexico

“Most often place applies to our own “local”—entwined with personal memory, known or unknown histories, marks made in the land that provoke and evoke. Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person’s life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there.”

—Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local*

chuparosa, by Marcus Zúñiga, began with a pilgrimage. Alongside his grandmother, Ernestina, and cousin, Olivia, the artist visited the village of Mimbres, located in southwestern New Mexico and the place where his grandmother Canuta Gutierrez Torrez died. The recorded time of her death was at solar noon, a temporal point that functioned as the fulcrum of a ceremony Zúñiga performed with his family members and a series of mirrors, a practice he invokes in much of his work.

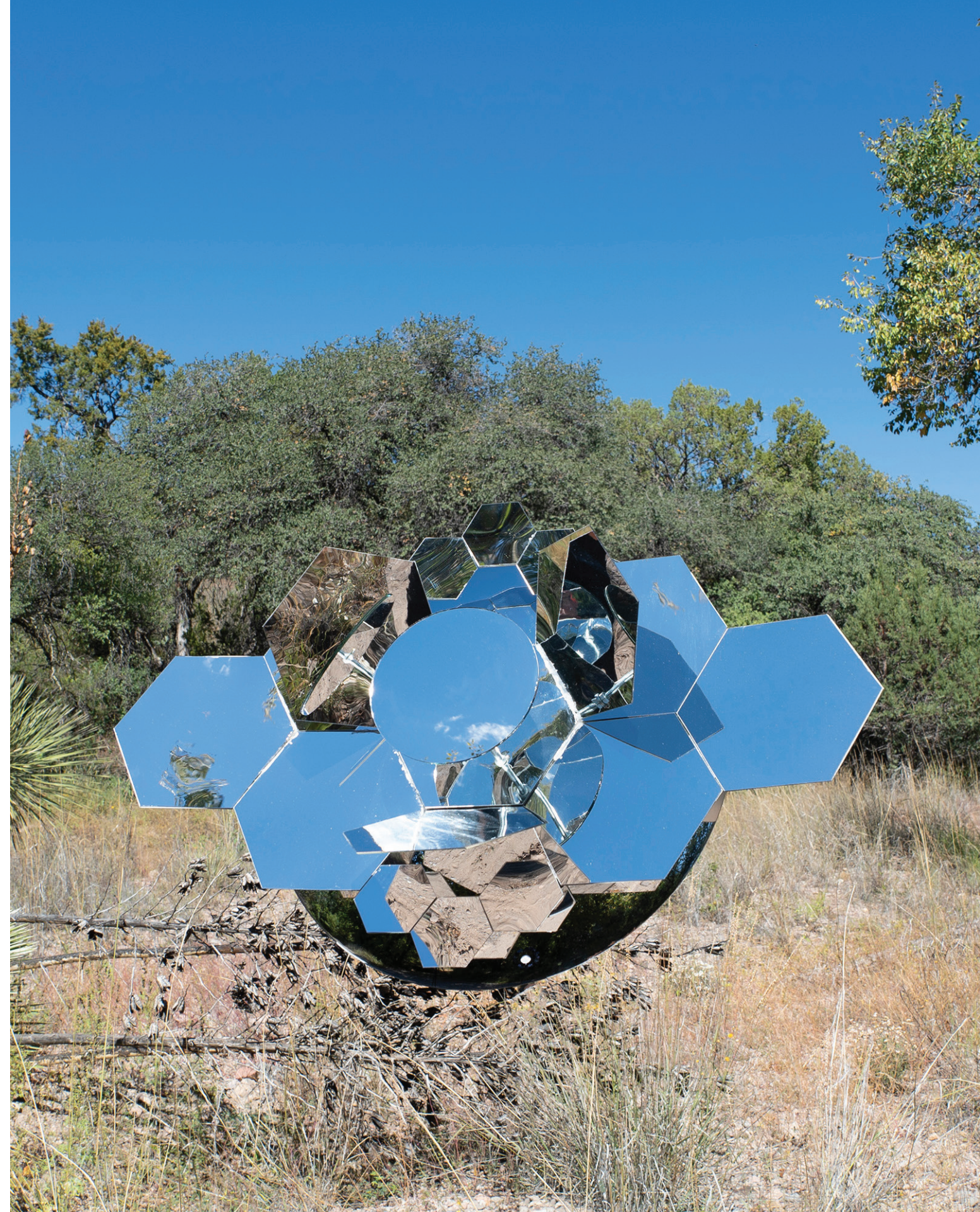
Set into the landscape to reflect, in his words “the image of the sky into the image of the land,” the mirrors materialized a certain relationality between the heavens and the earth, an inquiry that is inspired, in part, by Aztec cosmologies. Drawing from those cosmologies, is but one vehicle, he writes, of “relearning the cosmos through a multicultural consciousness,” — a consciousness that to him necessarily invokes both science and mythology.

Zúñiga took remnants of the ceremony as points of departure for his installation at 516 ARTS, which includes a video projection and a grouping of mirrors that recreate the path of the sun at the time of his great-grandmother’s death. It is a provisional observatory of sorts that materializes a sense of connectedness between the sun and other bodies, including viewers.

Taken as a whole, *chuparosa* is a tribute to the Mimbres Valley, and to Canuta, but also to the feeling of being in relation to him and the ancestors that forged their place in the land and the cosmos at distinct, but connected moments in time. This is made apparent in how the installation creates its own kind of feedback loop, where the mirrors at once reflect the projection as well as viewers who move through it. All these forms of movement are inspired by the chuparosa, or hummingbird, which the Aztecs saw as pure spirits.

Invoked in both the ceremony and the installation, the chuparosa is envisioned as “the messenger of the memories between land and sky.” The hummingbird, to that end, emblemizes the connective tissue that resides between the cosmic bodies and the land, between himself and relations past, and between viewers and the installation.

Marcus Zúñiga, *chuparosa*, 2022, sunlight and mirrors
commissioned by 516 ARTS



Yancuic Mexico: Analco & Atlixco

Moira Garcia
Santa Fe, New Mexico

The book, the scroll, the lienzo, and the tira are all forms of technology used to hold and pass knowledge. Just as the physical object of a book shapes the reader’s experience, the structure of a language, its strengths and constraints, informs the cosmology and experience of its user. Written language allows people to communicate without being present, a fact that has deep implications for identity and history, particularly those attempting to survive a colonial assault.

Tlaxcalans migrated north with Spanish settlers and built communities in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, but this was unlikely their first venture into New Mexico. Archeologists found chocolate resin in ancestral Pueblo jars and Amazonian feathers at Chaco Canyon, an indicator that the Indigenous people of New Mexico traded with people from the South. The history of Nahua and Tlaxcalan settlers is recorded by the Spanish in their history of settling New Mexico; however, the voices of Nahua and Tlaxcallan are largely absent from the archive.

Before the arrival of the Spanish, Nahua and Tlaxcalan people recorded their own history. They used painted books and a rich pictorial tradition to record knowledge



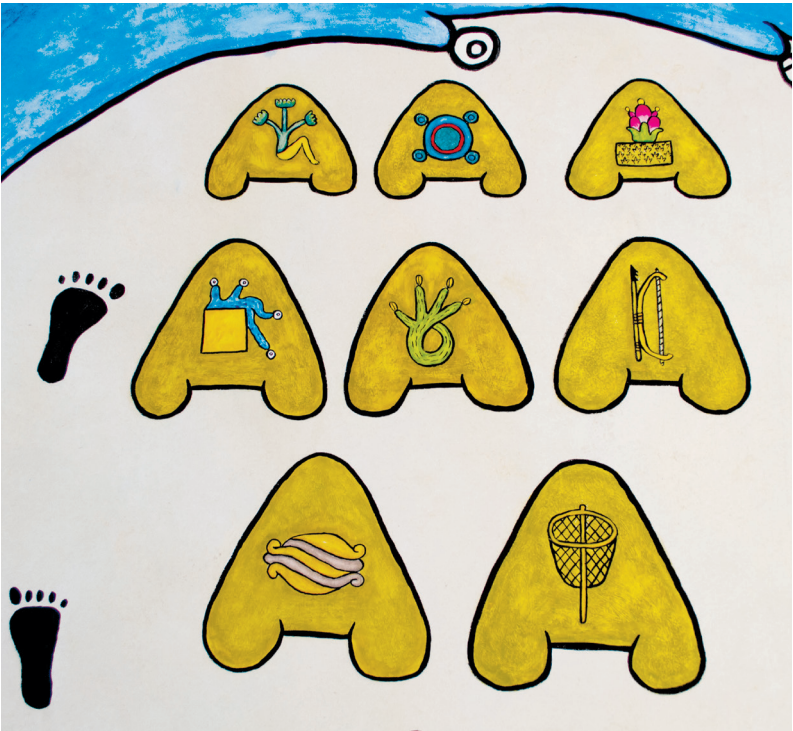
of the past, as well as current land use, science, and religion. Many of these documents were destroyed by the Spanish as part of their conquest. *Yancuic Mexico* reimagines the depictions and narratives of the first generations of Nahua and Tlaxcalan settlers of New Mexico using their own pictorial tradition.

Moira Garcia’s large-scale painted works and installation illustrate the continued presence, relationship, and contribution of Indigenous Mexican culture and identity to New Mexico. Through the use of Mesoamerican visual language, Nahuatl text, and traditional methods, these works pay homage to Indigenous painted histories and re-imagine the depictions and narratives of the first generations of Nahua and Tlaxcalan settlers of Yancuic Mexico (New Mexico) in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The artist explains the visual code used to make the piece: “The literal translation for Atlixco is ‘on/at the face/eye of the water’. I have illustrated the toponym as an ‘eye inside the water’. In Nahuatl language and art, body parts are used to describe and depict spatial orientation, and the ‘eye or face’ of something corresponds to its surface, whereas the ‘ear’ corresponds to its side, and the ‘lip’ to its edge, etc. In this way, Atlixco [Albuquerque] is understood as ‘on/at the surface of the water’. In addition, Atlixco could be understood as ‘ojo de agua’ or a natural spring. The translation for Analco [Santa Fe] is ‘on/at the other side of the water’ and ‘on/at the arroyo’. I’ve depicted this toponym with an ear to represent ‘side’ with feet crossing the water.”

The artwork “imagines these histories as if they were depicted by seventeenth-century Nahua artists and scribes who were learned practitioners of the painted historiographic and cartographic traditions of Mexico/ Mesoamerica.” In doing this, Garcia asks us to remember the long history of Nahua and Tlaxcalan people in New Mexico.

(left) George Ben Wittick, *Two men picking fruit from the Cane Cholla cactus*, 1882, albumen silver stereograph, 3.875 x 6.9375 inches; Albuquerque Museum, gift of Nancy Tucker; PA2019.021.003
(right) Moira Garcia, details from from *Yancuic, Mexico* series 2022, acrylic on amata paper, 8 x 4 feet commissioned by 516 ARTS



Untitled Map (Triptych)

Paola de la Calle

San Francisco, California

Modern cartography is more science than aesthetics, complex codexes of symbols and meaning. Map making is an ancient technology. An Aboriginal Australian cylcon, a type of tapered stone cylinder, showing the Darling River is thought to be 20,000 years old. A wall painting of the city Çatalhöyük dates back to the late 7th millennium BCE, four thousand years before the earliest examples of writing. The desire to depict visually our place in the world is profoundly human. Because they define the limits of a place, maps inform our sense of identity and teaches us who is part of our community and who is other, who belongs and who does not, and most importantly, who controls a place. Maps are fundamental to the construction of state power. To name a place is to define a place is to exert ownership of a place.

All maps are psychic. For a map to be useful, its visual elements must resonate with its audience. Often those embellishments say more of the mind of the maker than it does about the places being depicted. A map of the ocean by 16th century Swedish cartographer Olaus Magnus is littered with sea monsters and mythical beasts. Diego Gutiérrez's 1562 Map of America includes images that refer to observable phenomena such as parrots and monkeys, alongside representations of cannibals and Patagonian giants. Maps such as these are meant to provoke curiosity in the minds of Europeans.

This combination of state power and metaphysical play results in the mythology of the border, an arbitrary line demarcating one place from another, one people from another. If one moves 350 miles from Las Cruces to Taos, one hasn't migrated and yet, if one moves 50 miles from Ciudad Juárez to Las Cruces, an entire state bureaucracy needs to be navigated. From language to currency, culture to law, to the availability of certain material goods, a profound shift in place occurs. Depending on who you are, the move changes one's social, economic, and political status.

Migration is the subject of Colombian-American artist Paola de la Calle, whose work examines home, borders, identity, and nostalgia. *Untitled Map (Triptych)* is inspired by Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, who titled one of the chapters of his book, *Las Venas Abiertas de America Latina* (Open Veins of Latin America), "La pobreza del hombre como resultado de la riqueza de la tierra" (Mankind's Poverty As a Consequence of the Wealth of the Land). He writes of Latin America's struggle, "Our defeat was always implicit in the victory of others; our wealth has always generated our poverty by nourishing the prosperity of others—the empires and their native overseers. In the colonial and neocolonial alchemy, gold changes into scrap metal and food into poison." A collage in de la Calle's print sits on top of a map of South America and "urges us to look at capitalism, colonization, and the exploitation of America Latina as the root cause of poverty and migration." The collage makes the map unusable for navigation of physical place and invites us to explore a psychic and spiritual world of memory, nostalgia, and meaning.



Paola de la Calle, *Untitled Map (Triptych)*
2019, mixed media collage on paper
sizes variable

long has the light wandered to lay itself upon you

Diego Medina (Piro-Manso-Tiwa)
Las Cruces, New Mexico

There is the strata of the earth and the strata of time. And across these dimensions, countless feet pass—all travelers of a sort, some forcibly removed from ancestral lands and others following well-used trade routes. In long has the light wandered to lay itself upon you, Diego Medina—poet, artist and tribal historic preservation officer for the Piro-Manso-Tiwa tribe—evokes all of these histories as they unfold along El Camino Real, the Spanish Royal Road, the Rabbit Run Trail, that interlinked Mexico City and Santa Fe. Before that, it was one of the most significant ancestral routes of exchange and migration.

The mural contracts and expands time, paying homage to all relatives who have sojourned this and other routes, including those who once exchanged salt, shells, and chocolate across vast distances before European contact. It also conjures another, even deeper, past—the earliest recorded presence of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. Fossilized footprints from over 23,000 years ago were found in the Tularosa Basin at White Sands National Park, along with ancient grass seeds, marking yet another history of travel. The artist, who has collaborated with the National Park Service on the site, believes the profound layers of ancestral presence and connection to the current moment have gone untold in writings about the discovery.

Finally, *long has the light wandered to lay itself upon you* thrusts viewers into yet another timescape, the exodus of the Tiwa and Piro peoples southward after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. These routes, the artist calls, the “trails beneath the trail, the roads beneath the road.” The overlapping timelines, he says, “are part of an interbeing of spiritual identity and mystical relationship to place.”



Diego Medina (Piro-Manso-Tiwa)
long has the light wandered to lay itself upon you
2022, site-specific mural, mixed media, photo by Claude Smith
commissioned by 516 ARTS

Stone Resting on Georgia O’Keeffe

(Their Sky Fell to the Sound of Laughter)

Josh T. Franco

Fame (celebrity, notoriety, etc.) is a technology used to reinforce identity and to consolidate cultural power. An individual acquires fame by cultivating the attention of others or by having the attention of others put upon them. This can be for good reasons such as notable works or accomplishments and it can be for bad reasons such as a horrible act or an atrocity. While the cultivation of fame can be an individual act, fame itself is always collective, always the process of a group of people who collectively decide to whom they will give their attention.

Fame is at the heart of the art world which is notoriously hierarchical with a select few artists on the top and an unknowable number of artists on the bottom. Such a hierarchy is reinforced in capitalism, where each artist is ranked according to the value of their work as determined by the secondary market, and mostly at elite auctions held throughout the year. This system has implications for the culture of a community because it determines who is exhibited, who is published and whose artwork is given attention. Those who understand how this system works are able to manipulate it. The placement of artwork in institutional collections or the strategic timing of offering work for sale at an auction can impact the fame of an artist and as such, their monetary and cultural value.

The technology of fame is at the heart of Josh T. Franco’s artwork, *Stone Resting on Georgia O’Keeffe (Their sky fell to the sound of laughter)*, in which he reflects upon the legacy of Georgia O’Keeffe and her place in the New Mexican psyche and cultural landscape. The artist writes, “I take material cues from the primary source documents themselves. The primary [Ralph] Looney photograph in my thinking about this work is *Georgia O’Keeffe holding stone*.” The title of *Stone Resting* is a deliberate inversion of the photograph’s archival description. It switches the implied agencies of the artist and the stone, and it elevates the stone’s status to that of portraiture subject. Inspired by this stone and O’Keeffe’s deep admiration and collection of stones, I have chosen to include marble chips and quartz stones, mediums I worked with previously, into each part of the essential triptych. While similar in color, the physical qualities of the stone are opposite those of clouds, O’Keeffe’s chosen motif in her paintings being specifically reconsidered in



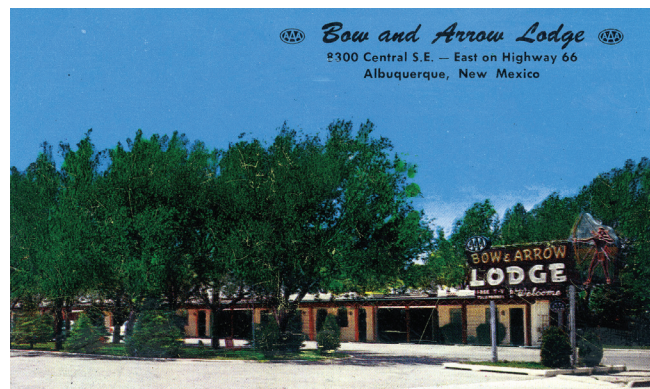
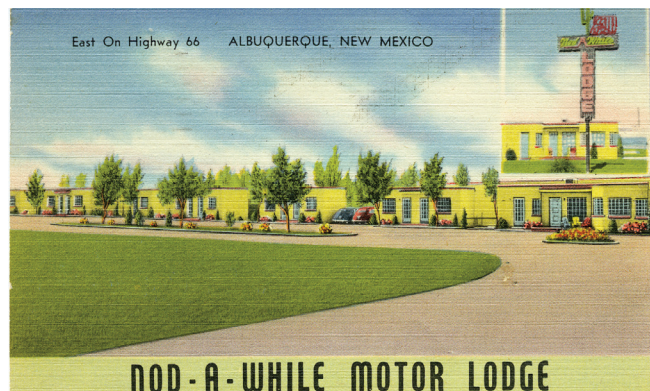
Stone Resting. I reconsider through reproduction, re-interpretation, and presentation of archival documentation (one of the optional components is a Looney photograph of O’Keeffe standing next to her largest cloud painting). The physical heaviness of the stones echoes the affective heaviness incurred by hearing the laughter in the video clip looping in the final part of the triptych. When presented with mention of the physical and conceptual displacement or full erasure of Indigenous and Hispanic New Mexicans telegraphed by the notion of ‘O’Keeffe Country’, this audience chuckles. The sky has fallen, worlds have been ended for Indigenous and Hispanic peoples, implies the speaker. The audience laughs. In the same clip, the speaker notes how horrified O’Keeffe herself would be by the notion. I want to amplify this space between the artist and contemporary audiences who view and consume her work uncritically.”

(above) Ralph Looney, *Georgia O’Keeffe holding stone*, silver negative, 3.5 x 4.5625 inches; Albuquerque Museum, gift of the Estate of Ralph and Clarabel Looney; PA2006.021.038.

(right) Josh T. Franco, *Stone Resting on Georgia O’Keeffe (Their Sky Fell to the Sound of Laughter)*, 2022, installation details commissioned by 516 ARTS

upper left photo by Daniel Ulibarri





The Blue Swallow

EveNSteve
Pawlet, Vermont

In the monumental black-and-white photographic artwork, *The Blue Swallow* by EveNSteve, a historic hotel on old Route 66 in Tucumcari serves as the stage for a small drama about tourism and changing notions of whiteness in the Southwest. Questioning the practice of attracting tourists by celebrating unsavory aspects of history or glossing over conflict altogether, the artwork also challenges transplants to New Mexico, tourists, and white-identifying viewers to truly consider the lasting effects of colonization, racism, and Manifest Destiny on New Mexico. The text gives voice to the solitary figure who is thinking about what it means to be a white tourist in New Mexico. One privilege of whiteness is the freedom to choose amnesia over memory, to deny history or accept it. The figure in *The Blue Swallow* wrestles with her options: to hold the history; to slip out of her skin; to perform guilt or shame; or to retreat into the cloak of tourism. In the end, she hands the choice to viewers like herself.

(above) EveNSteve, *The Blue Swallow*
2022, in-camera collage on film with hand-written text, pigment on
Japanese Kinwashi, commissioned by 516 ARTS

(left) Postcards from the Albuquerque Museum Photography Archives
1930-1975

Welcome to Aztlan: A Convergence of Protest Culture

Marlena Robbins (Diné)
Mesa, Arizona

How is the memory of conflict honored and the unthinkable remembered? In *Welcome to Aztlan: A Convergence of Protest Culture*, artist Marlena Robbins (Diné) references details from Bob Fitch’s photographs of the 1974 Farmington Protests to make paintings on canvas and then invites members of the community to bead these canvases as an act of remembering. In so doing, Robbins invites viewers to think of history as a type of labor, a craft needing to be worked. As community members bead the canvas, Robbins shares her knowledge of beadwork and history with them. This is how the story is passed from one person to another. Like the act of remembering history, the artwork is never complete and stands as a call for others to pick up the unfinished work of the past.

The 1974 Farmington Protests were in response to the murder of three Navajo men in Farmington, New Mexico by three teenage boys. The acts were described at the time as “Indian rolling.” When State District Judge Frank B. Zinn sentenced the killers to a state-run reform school until they turned eighteen, the Navajo people began a campaign of nonviolent protest.

The 1974 Farmington Protests were a moment of expanded consciousness for the Navajo people and marked a transition in their relationship with the white communities that surround them, one where violence, intimidation, and subjugation would no longer be passively tolerated. In a photograph by Bob Fitch, one can see protesters carrying signs expressing a range of sentiments: “We Want Justice” could refer to both to the three teenage boys and to the need to address larger, long-standing issues. “Indian & Proud” expresses community solidarity. The violent “Slaughter the White Man” expresses the anger and rage built up over the years. The expression of violence makes its way into Robbins’ artwork where she re-imagines the Hero Twins from Navajo mythology as two female figures: Naayéé’neizghání (Slayer of Monsters) reminds us “You Are On Native Land” and Tóbájjishchíní (Born for Water) states “Slaughter the White Man.” By bringing these sentiments into present-day artwork, Robbins ask us to remember, not just the 1974 events of Farmington, but the full range of human emotions that inform their memory.

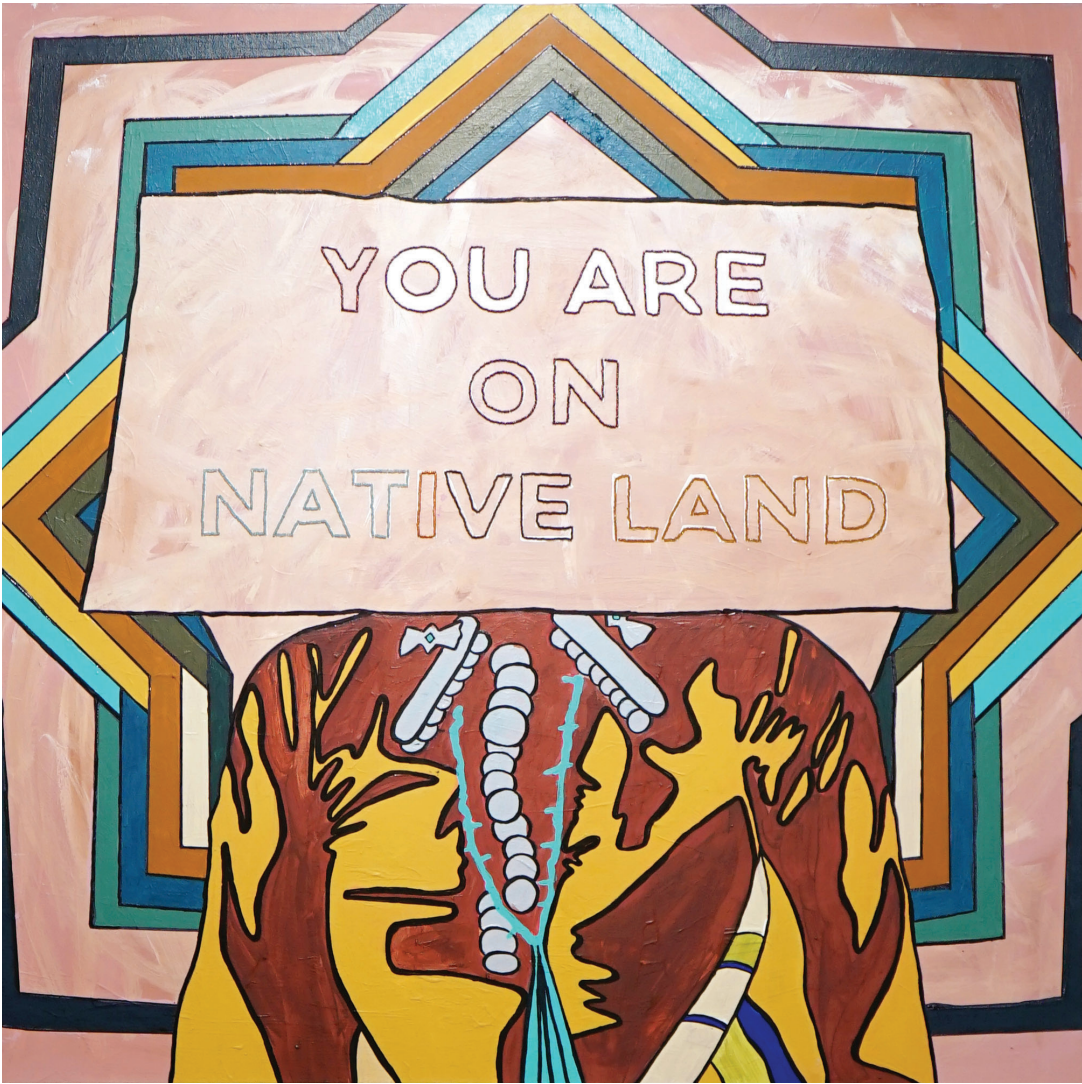
Co-curator Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD writes: “This artwork is not an invitation to violence. It is an invitation to reflect on multiple histories: the 1974 Navajo Protests, which this painting quotes, the deeper past of Manifest Destiny and Indigenous displacement, and the longstanding and still prevalent visual culture of anti-Indigeneity. All are related. In fact, much of the American imagination has been built on images that both parody and dehumanize Indigenous peoples, especially women. Those images have worked to desensitize viewers and to make violence against Indigenous peoples appear normal. As an invitation, then, the artwork welcomes all feelings that might come to the surface when engaging it: anger, discomfort, or even shame. It invites speaking about such feelings and the complexities of the past and present. Finally, viewers are enjoined to consider the white man referenced here not as a specific person per se, but as the institution of white supremacy itself. ‘Slaughter the white man,’ in this context, is another means of saying ‘Abolish white supremacy’.”



(above): Bob Fitch, *Navajo protest marchers: Slaughter The White Man*, 1974, Stanford University Libraries, Department of Special Collections and University Archives; M1994_Navajo_047

(right) Marlena Robbins (Diné), *Welcome to Aztlan: A Convergence of Protest Culture* (detail), 2022, acrylic and beads on canvas commissioned by 516 ARTS

(right) Bob Fitch, *Navajo elder at protest march: Farmington is on Indian Land*, by Bob Fitch, 1974, Stanford University Libraries, Department of Special Collections and University Archives; M1994_Navajo_053



From *las juntas de indignación* during New Mexico’s territorial period to a 1915 parade of one hundred and fifty women around the Sante Fe home of Senator Thomas Benton Catron to demand women’s suffrage to the 1971 Chicano-led rebellion against police brutality and racism in Albuquerque’s Roosevelt Park to the 2020 protests over the murder of George Floyd and Albuquerque’s statue of Juan De Oñate, New Mexico has a rich history of protest, where often long simmering tensions spill out into the streets.

“Protesting is a multi-generational expansion of collective consciousness where our youth are learning from our elders and our elders are learning from our youth and everyone in between,” says Robbins. “They’re all in support of one collective decision. It’s very communal in nature.”

“Tsi gha taa ye” (You can almost see through it)

Leo Vicenti (Jicarilla Apache)
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

“*Tsi gha taa ye*” (*You can almost see through it*) by Leo Vicenti (Jicarilla Apache) is a collection of collodion prints on glass that tell the story of culturally modified trees by the Jicarilla Apache in northern New Mexico. To help them survive forced removal from New Mexico’s northeastern plains by the US Army, the Jicarilla Apache harvested cambium, a thin and edible layer between the bark and wood of ponderosa pine trees from the mid-1800s onward. The trees still bear those marks today, reflecting long standing forms of mutualism with the land, then and now.

Photography has been a mixed technology for indigenous people. It has, to some, become an invaluable resource that shows how indigenous people dressed and lived in the 19th and 20th centuries. But these same photographs were often staged and edited to portray Native Americans as primitive and exotic, advancing a narrative that their cultures were dying. Such visual culture not only attempted to chronicle this perceived demise, but also justify the mass displacement of Native Americans for white settlement. Vicenti puts the technology of photography in the service of a more complete history of the Jicarilla Apache using an indigenous voice and performing a kind of alchemy in the process.

“Through appropriation, I use this western medium to focus on the living artifacts that hide in plain sight but tell a story which is documented outside of colonial frameworks,” says Vicenti. The photographs of trees testify to the Jicarilla Apache’s historic knowledge and relationship to the land. This history is held in the 561 culturally modified trees found around the Picuris Mountains, in northern New Mexico.

(left top) unidentified photographer, *Car on a Forest Road*, c. 1925, gelatin silver print; Albuquerque Museum, gift of John Airy; PA1982.181.042
(left bottom) unidentified photographer, *Sawmill in New Mexico*, April 1942, gelatin silver print; Albuquerque Museum, gift of Albuquerque National Bank; PA1980.061.397

(right) Leo Vicenti (Jicarilla Apache), “*Tsi gha taa ye*” (*You can almost see through it*) 2022, four collodion prints on glass, commissioned by 516 ARTS



Mano a Mano

Margarita Paz-Pedro (Laguna/Santa Clara Pueblos)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

The ancient technology of shaping and firing clay is constantly reinterpreted and reimagined. From traditional Pueblo potters to contemporary ceramic artists, New Mexican earthenware carries the stories of its makers, and personal and collective ways of knowing.

In *Mano a Mano*, Margarita Paz-Pedro (Laguna/Santa Clara Pueblos) photo transfers images of Indigenous peoples’ hands onto ceramics. The cups are inspired by designs found at Chaco Canyon, an Ancestral Puebloan site located in northwestern New Mexico. “Pueblo pottery is a deep and rich artform and that’s not what I do,” says Paz-Pedro, who distinguishes between traditional Pueblo pottery and her own practice of incorporating global materials and techniques. Paz-Pedro, who trained in Colorado and France, uses porcelain, which was invented in China during the Shang dynasty (1600–1046 B.C.E.) and refined in Europe in the 18th century.

As a comment on history, survival, labor, and connectivity, *Mano a Mano* invites the viewer to consider the Indigenous presence—and labor—that has shaped the region. To source the imagery, Paz-Pedro found historical photographs of Indigenous women grinding corn and weaving baskets, and she combined these with contemporary photographs of her daughter and husband’s grandfather.



(left top & right) Margarita Paz-Pedro (Laguna/Santa Clara Pueblos) *Mano a Mano*, 2021, (installation views), ceramic plates, cups, bowl, and shards decorated with photo transfers commissioned by 516 ARTS

(left bottom) Barnes & Caplin, *Three women grinding corn*, September 1946, gelatin silver print; Albuquerque Museum, gift of Albuquerque National Bank; PA1980.184.149



The Hand

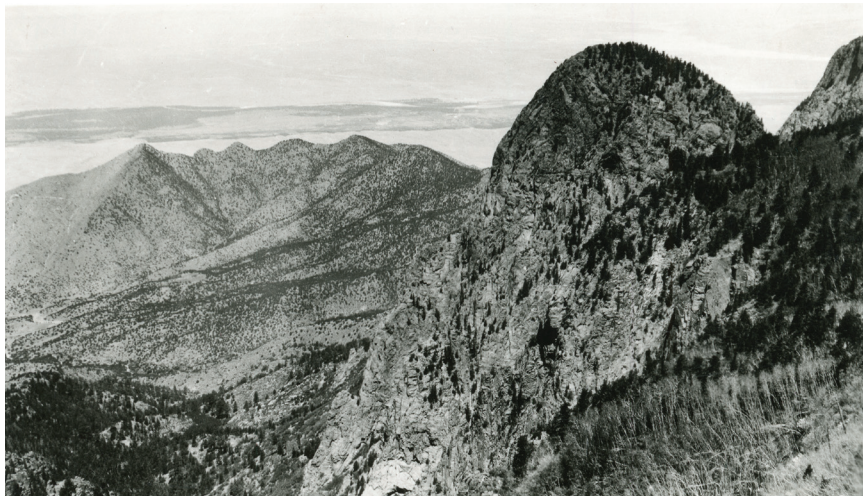
Laurie O’Brien
San Francisco, California & Brooklyn, New York

Laurie O’Brien’s collage animation uses historical images from the Albuquerque Museum Photography Archives to illustrate how humanity is impacted by accelerated technical progress. “Adam Smith, the father of economics, introduced the concept of The Invisible Hand in 1759, as a metaphor of an invisible force that moved the free market economy,” wrote O’Brien. “In his extremely influential model, accumulated self-interest is the primary mechanism that keeps our society whole, fulfilled and creates a natural equilibrium. In my film, the force of the hand has a visible, destructive and divisive relationship to the land, the earth and human beings.”

The film asks us to reconsider the notion of technology as one synonymous with progress and to reflect on the cost of turning individual decision making over to algorithms and digital processes. “We are trending toward a world that desires ‘more exits’—no obligations to the land, place, job or personal identity and in this way, we begin to enter into the spiritual realm.” 21st Century technology promises us boundless access to knowledge, freedom from the burdens of ownership, and convenience designed to give us more time to do other things, but, as O’Brien asked, “But at what cost? Are we really released and free?”



(above & top right) Laurie O’Brien, *The Hand* 2022, stills from digital animation, 3:35 min, no sound, commissioned by 516 ARTS
(right, bottom left) unknown photographer, *Sandia Mountains*, c. 1950, gelatin silver print; Albuquerque Museum, gift of John Airy; PA1982.181.044
(right, bottom right) Cobb Studio, *Portrait of a Man*, c. 1900, glass plate negative; Albuquerque Museum, gift of Tom S. Hatton and Zack Clem; PA1981.125.045.A



Remembered Landscapes: The Sacred Space of Home

Jackie Mitchell Edwards
Las Cruces, New Mexico

From an ancient Greek libation vessel at a religious school in Albuquerque to Catholic communion chalices and rosaries to a ceremonial shield that was recently returned to Acoma Pueblo, the ritual objects of New Mexico are varied and plentiful. As material culture goes, ritual objects are those that someone identifies as sacred. To some, they are artifacts of times past, laden with superstition, something to be collected as art but ultimately devoid of power. To others, these are deeply significant objects, tools to transcend the mundane, and connect with ancestors and tradition. Viewed as technology, ritual objects are used to bridge the sacred and the profane and in doing so, create a space outside of time in which magical, devotional, or spiritual events may occur. A mezuzah on a Jewish person’s home fulfills a mitzvah. A prayer rug pointed towards qibla sets the place for daily Muslim prayer. The ringing of a curved bell signals the start of a Buddhist meditation. And so on.

What does one do, then, if their connection to tradition and place is broken? How do they cultivate a spiritual sense of place and a connection to their ancestors? How does a diasporic person forge a sense of belonging? Jackie Mitchell Edwards wrestles with these questions. Her site-specific installation creates a contemplative space in which the viewer is invited to consider the dispossession and displacement of the African Diaspora, who is “told that we are from elsewhere and nowhere, even though we have deeper roots in America than most European immigrants.”

The artist continues, “My interest in ritual objects has been a life-long focus. Rituals are actions or practices often associated with spirituality or religion, beliefs and emotions. Rituals sometimes involve oral recitations or performances, but are also enacted with the help of material objects. You may say your prayers, but you might also use a rosary, a japa mala, or a subha. You might practice a ritual in front of a symbol of your belief that has been carved or made into a ritual object, like a cross. While the ritual action itself is important, the object often mediates the ritual and has a meaning and



significance in its own right. For example, most jewelry, made of gold, silver, copper, bronze and containing gems and minerals, was initially fashioned as talismans or amulets and used in rituals and ritual ceremonies. The objects and substances came from the earth and held their own meaning, essence and spirit.”

“The primary material for my sculptural pieces is wood and the roots of desert plants and trees that I have collected. These materials are critical to the work, as they carry the energy of the place and a broader memory that connects to many shared experiences. Desert roots are very resilient so they seemed the perfect material. Years before I began working on the small sculptural pieces, I was studying the history of African and African Diaspora ritual objects, masks, and carvings of several cultures (Yoruba, Baule, Bambara, Dan and others). I also studied the impact of colonization on those objects and their makers, and the treatment of those objects, in Africa and the African Diaspora. I also collected and read materials on other Indigenous artifacts and practices. My ritual objects are in the lineage of the African Diaspora, but also include other influences. I have collected African art objects and other cultural objects for decades and I honor the spirits as my ancestors and mentors. But many of my materials and my references to nature come from where I live: in the desert landscape, the mountainous terrain and the endless skies of New Mexico.”

(above) unidentified photographer, *New Mexico Flora and Fauna*, ca. 1954 Albuquerque Museum, gift of John Airy, PA1982.181.2283
(right) Jackie Mitchell Edwards, *Ancestor 2 - She Reigns*, 2022, wood, feathers, deer jaw bone, dried flowers, 38 x 41 x 16 inches



(jaatloh4Ye’iitsoh [9–10])(to/too coccoonz)

Eric-Paul Riege (Diné/Navajo)
Na’nízhoozhí (Gallup, New Mexico)

Eric-Paul Riege (Diné/Navajo) uses inexpensive and easily attainable materials to create autobiographical, soft sculptures and installations that reference Diné weaving and jewelry making practices. These works express his philosophies and cosmologies of sanctuary, peace, and interconnection with all elements of the world around him. His work is a being of Hózhó-Diné philosophy that encompasses beauty, balance, goodness, and harmony in all things physical and mental and its bearing on everyday experience. The title translates from Diné into English as “Earrings for Big God.”

“My hands knew what they were supposed to do before my body did,” he added. Weaving in this work is more than a technology of making. Riege’s maternal great grandmother was a weaver and his mother taught him how to sew. By applying this ancestral knowledge to contemporary artworks, Riege repurposes the technology from industrial to spiritual, ultimately reconnecting the act of weaving to its sacred roots. The artwork is completed with a performance that reestablishes balance and harmony.



(left) Eric-Paul Riege

(above) Eric-Paul Riege, *jaatloh4Ye’iitsoh* (1 of 2), 2017-2020, mixed media and fibers, Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ, photo by Craig Smith, photo courtesy of Heard Museum

(right) Eric-Paul Riege, regalia for *Hólo’-it xistz and ...Son, yáázh, mijo...*, 2019, regalia worn in performances at ICA Miami, Miami, FL and Sanitary Tortilla Factory, Albuquerque, NM, photo by Silvia Ros, photo courtesy of ICA Miami

New project for *Art Meets History: Technologies of the Spirit* commissioned by 516 ARTS





Stages of Tectonic Blackness: Blackdom

Stages of Tectonic Blackness

(Nikeshia Breeze, Miles Tokunow, Lazarus Nance Letcher, MK)
Taos / Albuquerque, New Mexico

Stages of Tectonic Blackness is a collaborative performance project created by Nikeshia Breeze with Miles Tokunow, Lazarus Nance Letcher, and cinematographer MK that includes land-based durational performance interventions, original music, a series of short films, and direct community engagement with Queer, Black, and Indigenous peoples. This iteration centers around Blackdom, the first and only all-Black community founded in southern New Mexico in 1902. Envisioned as a Black utopia, Blackdom thrived for over 20 years, but was deserted by the 1930s due to racial tensions, lack of access to water, and drought.

A land effigy by Nikeshia Breeze served as “a guardian of Black, Indigenous, Queer, and Earth bodies.” The artist said, “The Land Effigy becomes a grounding force for the work in the exhibit, utilizing the spirits of each plant to create both a field of protection and a conduit for the various energies that arise in the space.”

Stages of Tectonic Blackness: Blackdom, 2021
still from performance, photo credit: ©Noël Hutton
Collaborating performers: Nikeshia Breeze, Miles Tokunow, Lazarus Nance Letcher, and cinematographer, MK. This project was represented at both 516 ARTS and in a larger exhibition of Breeze’s work at NMSU Art Museum, titled *Four Sites of Return: Ritual, Remembrance, Reparation & Reclamation*. It is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by 516 ARTS, New Mexico State University/University Art Museum, and NPN. For more information, visit nnpweb.org. Special thanks to The African American Historical Research Fund, through the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico; Larry Bob Phillips, RAIr Foundation; Dr. Timothy E. Nelson, Oenita Taylor, Joanne Multree, and all of the living and past descendants of Blackdom, New Mexico.

Nikeshia Breeze, *child of wind (Blackdom Land Effigy)*, 2022, pampas grass, wild sunflower, needle and thread grass, milkweed, summer cypress and found cow bones on a steel frame. Photo by Ric Kasini Kadour.



PARTNERS



Founded in 2006, 516 ARTS is a non-collecting contemporary art museum in Downtown Albuquerque that celebrates thought-provoking art in the here and now. Our mission is to connect contemporary artists and diverse audiences. 516 ARTS presents relevant exhibitions and public programs, which feature a mix of local, national, and international artists and seeks to inspire curiosity and creative experimentation. 516arts.org



The mission of Kolaj Institute is to support artists, curators, and writers who seek to study, document, and disseminate ideas that deepen our understanding of collage as a medium, a genre, a community, and a 21st century movement. Kolaj Institute operates a number of initiatives meant to bring together community, investigate critical issues, and raise collage’s standing in the art world. kolajinstitute.org



Art Meets History, a project of Kasini House, is a national initiative that works to build connections between contemporary art and history-focused organizations. It develops exhibitions, curatorial projects, publications, and educational programs in partnership with museums and arts organizations across the country. Its vision is for artists to pick up the unfinished work of history and speak to contemporary social, economic, and environmental issues. It’s affiliated with Kolaj Institute which supports artists, curators, and writers who seek to study, document, and disseminate ideas that deepen understanding of collage as a medium, a genre, a community, and a 21st Century movement. kasinihouse.com/art-meets-history



Albuquerque Museum Photography Archives comprise approximately 150,000 images and items made by amateur, commercial, and studio photographers throughout the central Rio Grande valley and the City of Albuquerque from 1867 to the present. The collection includes photographic prints, stereoscopic views, glass plate negatives, family albums, slides, oral history recordings, ephemera, postcards, film, and digitized media. albuquerque.emuseum.com



Desierto Mountain Time, spearheaded by 516 ARTS, is a constellation of contemporary arts organizations in the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico drawn together by our shared interest in making meaningful connections between local and international communities. Together, we are offering thematic programs with artists, educators, curators, activists, and arts administrators whose dynamic practices integrate cross-border, regional, and global issues. DesiertoMountainTime.org

516 ARTS

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