

BEING LATINX

Every couple of decades a new word is coined to formulate Latin American heritage in the US. "Hispanic" was brought into common parlance in the early 1970s; not long after it was upstaged by "Latino" and "Latina," its female counterpart. First used in academic circles in the early aughts, "Latinx" gained traction in 2016 on the heels of the Orlando, FL, Pulse Nightclub shooting. Popular on social media, but not so much among older users—polls indicate just 3% of Latinos over 30 prefer it—this last term was finally made official in 2018. That was the year the Merriam-Webster Dictionary pegged it as "a gender-neutral word for people of Latin American descent."

A pan-ethnic label for "Latin" identity, Latinx is best employed expansively today; that is, as an inclusive, nongendered term for millions of Americans of Latin American heritage. That group includes people of all beliefs and persuasions who identify as white, Black, Asian, or Indigenous and have roots in more than 20 countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Latinx remains underused (even unpopular) but carries expanding currency: it addresses evolving conversations about cultural consumption, representation, empowerment, queerness, genderfluidity, and cultural access. Linguistically, the word is a sapling—it has room to grow. Due to its burgeoning naming potential, it has become especially important for individuals and communities that negotiate two, three or more identities in the United States and beyond.

Rather than wander the sand traps of partisan (or curatorial) semantics, *X Factor* has selected fifteen leading American artists to fill out the envelope of Latinx's current meanings. To this end, the exhibition looks to ground a series of redefinitions of "Latinity" in the work of these creators—especially where their artworks and creative processes wrest novel meanings from hackneyed, conventional ideas of politics, class, race, history, representation, and everyday life. There's a specific (and, one hopes, democratic) curatorial logic at work our institution aims to advance. If definitions are up for debate today—and they are—there's no one better than artists (i.e., professional symbol makers) to reconquer them from elite sensibilities and outright nonsense.



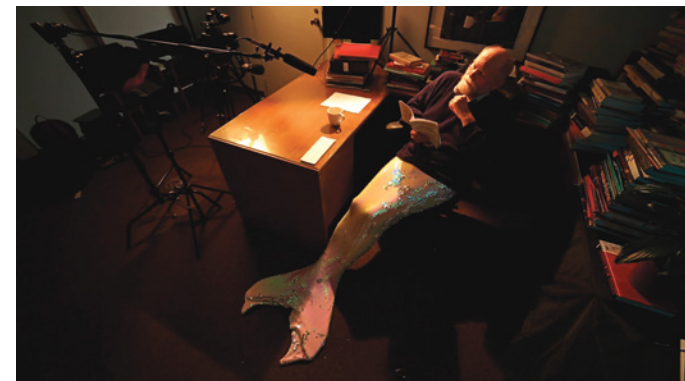
Gisela Colón, *Monolito Parabólico Basáltico (Bosque Tropical de El Yunque, Luquillo, Puerto Rico)*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist.



José Lerma, *Gobernador Ramón de Castro, 1801 (After Campeche)*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.

The USF Contemporary Art Museum is grateful to the artists who have agreed to participate in *X Factor: Latinx Artists and the Reconquest of the Everyday*. Through their historical, recent, and commissioned artworks, it's possible to arrive at an ideal working definition for things, ideas and experiences associated with being Latinx—one that includes and recognizes even more identities within this rapidly growing and varied American community. These artists are Gabino A. Castelán, Gisela Colón, Danielle De Jesus, Lucía Hierro, Karlo Andrei Ibarra, Laura Perez Insua, José Lerma, Eddy A. López, Miguel Luciano, Narsiso Martínez, Angel Otero, Edison Peñañiel, Shizu Saldamando, Yiyó Tirado-Rivera and Rodrigo Valenzuela.

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CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNÉ
CURATOR-AT-LARGE, USFCAM



Laura Perez Insua, *Hombre Nuevo*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The USF Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *X Factor: Latinx Artists and the Reconquest of the Everyday*, an exhibition of fifteen artists with Latin American heritage, curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné. Christian is a New York-based writer and curator of contemporary art with an exceptional international network including artists, curators, writers, museum professionals and other artworld figures, and we are privileged to have him as our Curator at Large.

The artists and artworks included or commissioned for this exhibition engage viewers in fresh perspectives on conventional or stereotypical representations of "Latinity". The exhibition expands definitions of identity and offers a range of creative work in a variety of mediums, demonstrating political and cultural savvy. Christian has written a description of each artist's work for this brochure.

It takes an expert team to organize an exhibition of this complexity with work on loan from artists, collectors and galleries located in New York, Los Angeles, Puerto Rico and beyond. It is with immense gratitude that I recognize the CAM team for organizing this extensive exhibition. Shannon Annis arranged the loans and shipping with the assistance of School of Art and Art History graduate student Kyna Patel; Gary Schmitt designed the exhibition; Eric Jonas along with Alejandro Gomez and Madison Andrews installed the exhibition; Don Fuller and Kenzie Ferrell worked on promotion and marketing; David Waterman assisted with the audio guides and daily security for the exhibition; Randall West provided financial oversight; Mark Fredricks assisted with organizing the panel discussions; Amy Allison arranged for travel and accommodations; and Tamara Thomas organized the opening reception.

X Factor received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support this project. In addition, funding for the exhibition came from contributions



Karlo Andrei Ibarra, *Draft for a star shaped island*, 2014-present. Courtesy of the artist.

from members of our Director's Circle, the Kathleen Binnicker Swann Endowment, the Lee and Victor Leavengood Endowment, the Dr. Allen W. and Janet G. Root CAM Endowment, the Sara Richter IRA Operations and Program Fund, and The Frank E Duckwall Foundation.

The quality of artwork selected for the exhibition is exceptional. Thank you to the artists participating in the exhibition: Gabino A. Castelán, Gisela Colón, Danielle De Jesus, Lucía Hierro, Karlo Andrei Ibarra, Laura Perez Insua, José Lerma, Eddy A. López, Miguel Luciano, Narsiso Martínez, Angel Otero, Edison Peñañiel, Shizu Saldamando, Yiyó Tirado-Rivera and Rodrigo Valenzuela.

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MARGARET A. MILLER
DIRECTOR AND PROFESSOR
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM



Lucía Hierro, *100z. Café Bustelo*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles.



Danielle De Jesus, *Moore Street Marqueta*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.

CHECKLIST

All artworks courtesy of the artist unless otherwise noted.

GABINO A. CASTELÁN

Life's Journey—Right to Exist, 2024-2025
site-specific murals with two paintings on canvas, acrylic on wall
10 x 28 ft.
Commissioned by USFCAM 2024

Draftsman

Alejandro Gomez

Assistants

Madison Andrews

Eric Jonas

Gary Schmitt

Two paintings on canvas within *Life's Journey—Right to Exist*:

Éthécatt: Intangible Like The Wind, 2024-2025

mixed-media, oil on canvas

51 x 36 inches

Att: Encircling The Earth Like A Ring, 2024-2025

mixed-media, oil on canvas

82 x 81 inches

GISELA COLÓN

Estructura Tótemica (Piedras Contra Balas, Clorofila de La Cordillera Central), 2024

monolith form composed of aurora particles, stardust, cosmic radiation, intergalactic matter, ionic waves, organic carbonate, gravity, and time, stacked upon bullet-resistant lucite base containing layered matter, from bottom to top: pulverized bullets, Puerto Rico red earth (fango Borinqueno), Western desert sands, cosmic dust

87-1/2 x 9 x 9 inches

Llevo La Tierra Por Dentro (Serie Montañas de Puerto Rico) - (Los Picachos de Jayuya, El Yunque, La Cordillera Central, Las Piedras del Collado Cayey, El Cerro Maravilla), 2024

five line drawings on archival arches 140 lb. rough paper with harvested earth, pulverized particles, and hand-processed pigmented matter

7 x 10 inches each

Monolito Parabólico Basáltico (Bosque Tropical de El Yunque, Luquillo, Puerto Rico), 2021

particles of the aurora, stardust, cosmic radiation, intergalactic material, ionic waves, organic carbonate, earth, gravity, energy and time.

98-1/2 x 24 x 12 inches

Plasmatic Rhomboid (Mercury), 2024

blow-molded acrylic

72 x 36 x 10 inches

DANIELLE DE JESUS

Moore Street Marqueta, 2024

acrylic on U.S. currency

8-1/2 x 12-1/2 inches

My Block, 2023

oil and felt moving blanket

60 x 48 inches

Courtesy of the artist

A self portrait of and artist with a self portrait of an artist with a self portrait made of books, 2024

oil on linen

57 x 78 inches

This Was My Stop, 2023

oil, fabric table cloth and string on wood panel

48 x 48 inches

A Washing Machine Away, 2024

acrylic on U.S. currency

8-1/2 x 12-1/2 inches

LUCIA HIERRO

100z. Café Bustelo, 2022

foam, digital print on cotton sateen, rubber band

53 x 43 x 25 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

Remojo, 2023

cotton, digital print, cotton sateen, foam

74-1/2 x 61 x 4 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

Uptown Fugue, 2021

audio

18:20 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

KARLO ANDREI IBARRA

Draft for a star shaped island, 2014-present

contention fences

60 x 60 inches

LAURA PEREZ INSUA

Hombre Nuevo, 2021

single channel video

7:08 minutes

JOSÉ LERMA

Gobernador José Dufresne, 1782 (After Campeche), 2024

acrylic on burlap

72 x 48 inches

Gobernador Ramón de Castro, 1801 (After Campeche), 2024

acrylic on burlap

72 x 48 inches

EDDY A. LÓPEZ

In-Dependencia, 2021-2022

silkscreen, acrylic on fabric

dimensions variable

each of 16 flags is 3 x 5 feet

MIGUEL LUCIANO

Sonia, DREAMer Kite, 2012

paper, string, wooden dowels, photograph

on vinyl

48 x 48 x 3 inches

Francisco, DREAMer Kite, 2012

paper, string, wooden dowels, photograph

on vinyl

48 x 48 x 3 inches

Felipe, DREAMer Kite, 2012

paper, string, wooden dowels, photograph

on vinyl

48 x 48 x 3 inches

Framed Saturday, December 8, 2012, Washington Post front page cover article: "Written on the Wind", photo by Bonnie Jo Mount.

16 x 20 inches

NARSISO MARTINEZ

Then and Now, Hope and Dignity, 2024

acrylic, gouache, charcoal, collage, and simple leaf on produce boxes

76-1/2 x 68 x 15-1/2 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

ANGEL OTERO

Look out your Window, 2024

oil paint and fabric collaged on canvas

95-5/8 x 143-1/4 x 1-1/2 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Travel Toys, 2024

oil paint and fabric collaged on panel, 6 parts

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth

EDISON PEÑAFIEL

¡Correlé, correlé, correlé, Por aquí, por aquí, por allá, Correlé, correlé, correlé, Correlé que te van a matar! [Run, run, run, Over here, over here, over there, Run, run, run, Run 'cause they're going to kill you!], 2016

multichannel video installation

8 mins loop

dimensions variable

SHIZU SALDAMANDO

Jaime with Peyote, 2024

colored pencil, wash paper, prism paper, on paper

40 x 32 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

Pam in Miami (La Nicoya), 2023

oil, collage, glitter spray paint, and decals on wood panel

72 x 48 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

Young at Commonwealth, 2023

oil, wash paper, and gold leaf on wood panel

60 x 48 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

YIYO TIRADO-RIVERA

Tropical Blizz Ball Sale: After David Hammons, 2021

sand, beach towel, wooden table

74 x 40 x 30-1/2 inches

Retreat II (Summer), 2024

polyurethane paint, wood & rebar

48 x 48 x 3 inches

RODRIGO VALENZUELA

Weapons #29, 2024

screenprint and acrylic on collaged time cards on canvas

60 x 96 in.

Weapons #30, 2024

screenprint and acrylic on collaged time cards on canvas

60 x 96 in.

Weapons #45, 2024

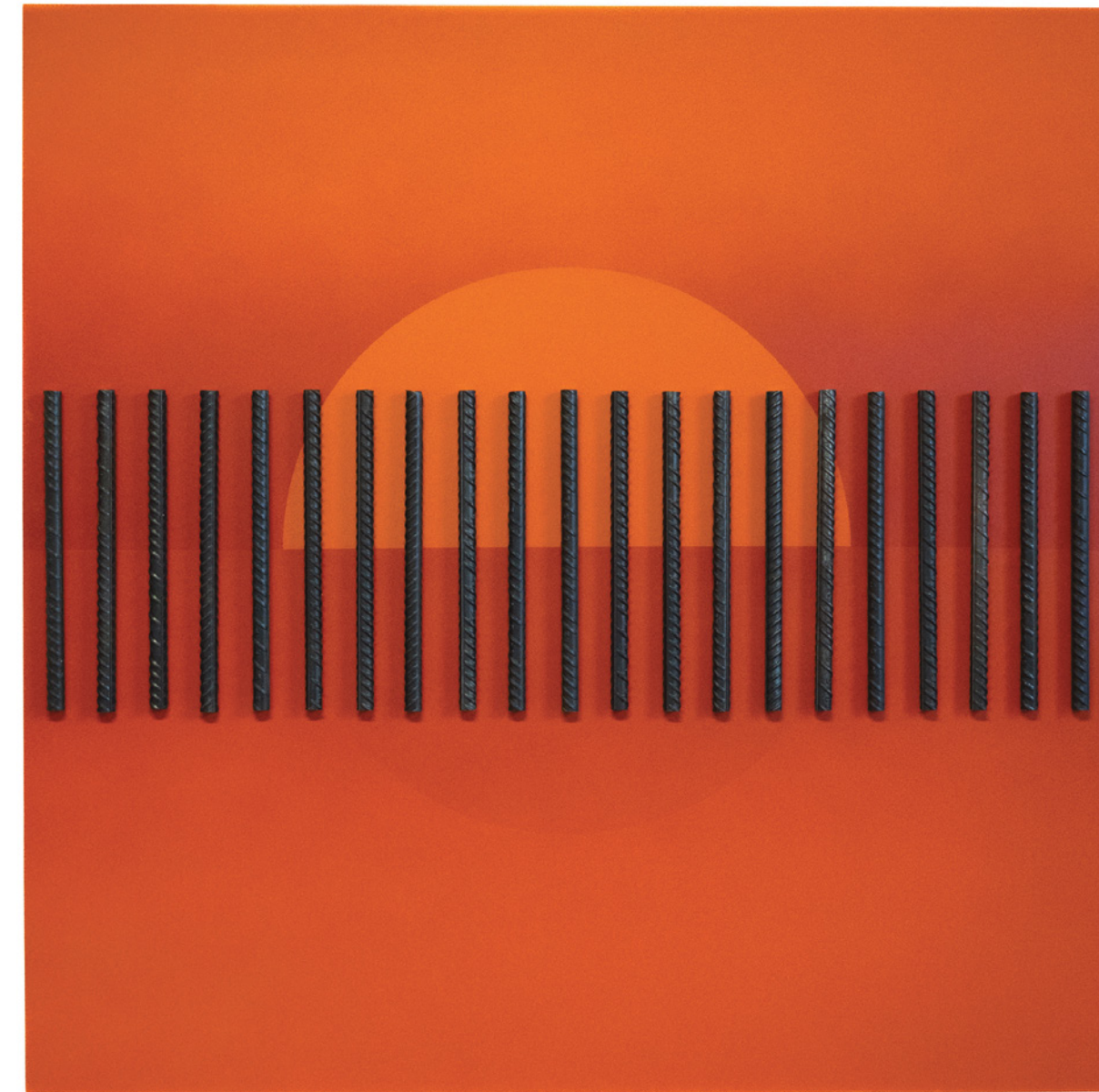
screenprint and acrylic on collaged time cards on canvas

96 x 60 in.

X FACTOR

Latinx Artists and the Reconquest of the Everyday

January 17 – March 8, 2025, USF Contemporary Art Museum



Gabino A. Castelán // Gisela Colón // Danielle De Jesus // Lucía Hierro // Karlo Andrei Ibarra
Laura Perez Insua // José Lerma // Eddy A. López // Miguel Luciano // Narsiso Martínez
Angel Otero // Edison Peñañiel // Shizu Saldamando // Yiyó Tirado-Rivera // Rodrigo Valenzuela

(ENGLISH/INGLÉS)

UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
College of Design, Art & Performance
Contemporary Art Museum



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
for the ARTS
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X Factor is curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné, CAM Curator at Large, and organized by USF Contemporary Art Museum.

X Factor is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding came from contributions from members of our Director's Circle, the Kathleen Binnicker Swann Endowment, the Lee and Victor Leavengood Endowment, the Dr. Allen W. and Janet G. Root CAM Endowment, the Sara Richter IRA Operations and Program Fund, and The Frank E Duckwall Foundation.

The Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

Cover image: Yiyó Tirado-Rivera, *Retreat II (Summer)*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.

X FACTOR: LATINX ARTISTS AND THE RECONQUEST OF THE EVERYDAY

GABINO A. CASTELÁN

b. 1986, **Epatlán, Mexico** // *Lives and works in Deerfield Beach, FL*
 Gabino A. Castelán's artworks draw on autobiography, literature, and art history to depict colorful figures in highly geometric architectural spaces. For *X Factor*, USFCAM commissioned Castelán to create a site-specific mural into which a pair of mixed media paintings have been introduced. The resulting trompe l'oeil artwork is described by the artist as "an immersive environment that explores the psychological and spiritual impacts of aesthetics, perception, and the power of myth."

Titled *Life's Journey—Right to Exist* (2025), Castelán's idiosyncratic version of expanded painting encompasses worlds in a powerful instance of painting made landscape. According to Castelán: "My artistic practice is influenced by the Nahuatl concept of 'Nepantla,' a space between two realms where one's cognitive, psychic, and material points have the potential to transform. Through layering drawing, painting, and collage, I depict the figure as a phenomenon on an epic journey of metamorphosis, where human potential encounters the tragedy of economic exploitation, while evoking interconnectedness and affirming our right to exist as individuals and communities."

Castelán is an alumnus of the 39th AIM Fellowship program at the Bronx Museum. He has participated in exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, The Bronx Museum, and Kunsthau Baselland.

GISELA COLÓN

b. 1966, **Vancouver, Canada** // *Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA*
 Gisela Colón is a Puerto Rican-American artist whose environmental installations and totemic, light-activated sculptures use high-tech materials like optical grade acrylics and carbon fiber, as well as soil harvested from sites connected to the artist's own life. Colón is known for pioneering the concept of "organic minimalism"—the term is her own coinage—which harnesses "earth's energy, ancestral biological memories, as well as concepts of time, gravity, and universal forces of nature."

Colón uses the term "plasmatic" to describe her own experience, and that of Latinx people generally (it refers, she says, "to a fourth state of matter created under superheated, intense pressure"). "Like plasma," she says about third culture people, "we are born of deep oppression, becoming mountains bursting from geological forces beneath the earth, or supernovae exploding into space." These forces, she explains, embody the "evolutionary nature" of a struggle where poverty and privilege engage in "a synergistic dialogue with cultural, ethnographic, and historic conditions." Colón's sculptural materials frequently point to possible utopian futures. For instance, she describes her *Monolito Parabólico Basáltico (Bosque Tropical de El Yunque, Luquillo, Puerto Rico)* as cast from "aurora, stardust, cosmic



LEFT: Gabino A. Castelán, *Life's Journey—Right to Exist*, 2024-2025. Commissioned by USFCAM 2024. RIGHT: Artist Gabino A. Castelán with one of the two paintings for the site-specific mural *Life's Journey—Right to Exist*, 2024-2025. Courtesy of the artist.

radiation, intergalactic matter, ionic waves, organic carbamate, earth, gravity, energy, and time."

Colón has exhibited sculpture and land art around the world. Her work is in the permanent collections of institutions such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Norton Museum of Art, and the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico.

DANIELLE DE JESUS

b. 1987, **Brooklyn, USA** // *Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY*
 Danielle De Jesus' artworks relay stories of growing up Nuyorican amidst gentrification and displacement in Bushwick, Brooklyn. An artist who combines the sweep of street photographer Helen Levitt and the kitchen table portraiture of Alice Neel, De Jesus' photo-based mixed-media works frequently feature some of New York's most colorful if least represented residents.

As De Jesus told one interviewer, "My paintings are based on images or, as Barkley Hendricks once described them, 'photographic sketches' that I've made over decades in New York City. There are photographs that I make with the intention of their remaining photographs, and there are images that I make with the intention of converting them into paintings." De Jesus' painting of a neighborhood street sign is a case in point. Drawn from photographs she took of a "STOP" sign topped by a police surveillance camera, her picture speaks both to her affection for her neighborhood (she grew up on an adjacent street), but also to an insider's awareness of place.

De Jesus received her MFA from the Yale School of Art. Her work has been exhibited at MoMA PS1, the Akron Museum, and most recently, the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Perez Art Museum Miami and the Whitney Museum.

LUCIA HIERRO

b. 1987, **New York, USA** // *Lives and works in New York, NY*
 Lucia Hierro is a Dominican American artist born and raised in Manhattan's Washington Heights/Inwood neighborhoods. Her work incorporates elements of Pop, Minimalism, and Conceptualism to highlight an evident social reality: the identities of people, places and groups are intimately tied to seemingly banal objects and things. These objects, Hierro suggests, signal class and lifestyle, time past and present, and frequently serve as building blocks of individual and group identity.

Hierro leverages interest in digital media, painting, installation, collage, and color theory to craft visual experiences that showcase everyday items in striking yet familiar ways. Her sculptures point to retail objects as vectors of cultural knowledge, as well as sources for self-image. Her XL depictions of products stocked at Latin bodegas—bags of Cafe Bustelo and bottles of Palmolive soap—turn plain grocery



Eddy A. López, *In-Dependencia*, 2021-2022. Courtesy of the artist.

store items into objects of contemplation, while pointing to larger economies of production, consumption, and waste.

Lucia Hierro's work has been featured in exhibitions at the Aldrich Museum, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, El Museo del Barrio, and the Bronx Museum. Her work is in many public collections, including that of the Perez Art Museum Miami, the Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

KARLO ANDREI IBARRA

b. 1982, **San Juan, Puerto Rico** // *Lives and works in San Juan, PR*
 Multidisciplinary artist Karlo Andrei Ibarra works with geopolitical issues that concern the Caribbean, Latin America and beyond. The artist's creative output—which includes objects, sculptures, installations and photography—is best described as visual poetry, especially as informed by his deft brand of Conceptualism.

Ibarra treats objects, materials, and words with remarkable directness. The context provided by Puerto Rico's bilingualism becomes especially significant when considering the sculpture *Draft for a Star Shaped Island* (2014). A satirical take on the myth and advertising that describes Puerto Rico as the "star island of the Caribbean," the artist's work was assembled from discarded police barriers. A commentary on the island's status as a tourist paradise, the work also speaks volumes about overlooked materials as carriers of political commentary and poetic nuance.

Ibarra's work has been exhibited at, among other institutions, the Portland Art Museum, El Museo del Barrio, and the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach. His work is represented in the collections of the Museo Tamayo, the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, and the Cisneros Fontanals Collection.

LAURA PEREZ INSUA

b. 1994, **Santa Clara, Cuba** // *Lives and works in Tampa, FL*
 Laura Perez Insua is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores perceptions of power through a diverse range of media. Using her experiences in Cuba as a prism, Insua has become expert at analyzing, critiquing and portraying dysfunctional political frameworks.

Insua's video *Hombre Nuevo* (2021)—the title refers to Ernesto "Che" Guevara's 1960s-era ideal of a "new man"—is inspired by Noam Chomsky's writings on revolution and social change. The film portrays a stubbornly ideological and contradictory figure, a character "caught between hope and disillusionment." Among the questions the work raises: What happens to failed belief systems? And, when does ideology become myth?

Insua is a recent graduate of the MFA program of the USF School of Art and Art History. Exhibitions include the XII Havana Biennial, and the group show *El fin del Gran Relato* (The End of the Grand Narrative) at the Cultural Projects Office, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.



Miguel Luciano, *Francisco, DREAMer Kite*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

JOSÉ LERMA

b. 1971, **Seville, Spain** // *Lives and works in San Juan, PR*
 José Lerma is a multimedia artist who works primarily in portraiture. Art history is of particular interest to him, as is the way in which artistic representation redounds to social and political power. His portraits are widely celebrated for their distinctive materiality, which he obtains by using a signature impasto.

Lerma portrays his subjects in ways that elevate the mundane and trivialize the grand. "My aim is to make works that collapse the personal and the art historical within a single frame," Lerma explains. So it is with his recent portrait, *Gobernador Ramon de Castro, 1801. After Campeche* (2024). A thick, nearly frosted take on an early nineteenth century portrait of a Spanish colonial governor in the collection of the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Lerma's version gamely distorts details from the original canvas—painted by José Campeche y Jordán, widely considered to be Puerto Rico's first visual artist.

Lerma has exhibited widely in galleries and museums around the world. Among his solo presentations are exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Raleigh. His work is in numerous collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Contemporary Art Foundation, Tokyo, and the Whitney Museum.

EDDY A. LÓPEZ

b. 1978, **Matagalpa, Nicaragua** // *Lives and works in Lewisburg, PA*
 As a child, Eddy A. López fled war-torn Nicaragua. López and his six remaining siblings gained political asylum in the US; his parents stayed behind. This personal history has shaped the artist's vision, especially his work in print. Made material through ink, burin, and pixel, López's story connects to the stories of other US immigrants, as well as to millions of displaced people around the world.

López uses what he terms "big data, averaging algorithms, and various print media to create wide-scale collage compositions that try to find meaning in a chaotic world." His sprawling installation *In-Dependencia* (2021-2022) consists of a mural made up of sixteen individual cloth flags, each representing a Latin American country. Printed atop every banner is a black rendition of the United States flag, creating a superimposed image that alludes to more than a century of US intervention across the hemisphere.

López's work has been exhibited at, among other venues, the International Print Center New York, The Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and the North American



Narsiso Martínez, *Then and Now, Hope and Dignity*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles.

Print Biennial. His work can be found in the collections of the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, the Frost Art Museum, the Zuckerman Museum of Art, and the Miami-Dade County Public Library.

MIGUEL LUCIANO

b. 1972, **San Juan, Puerto Rico** // *Lives and works in New York, NY*
 Miguel Luciano is a multimedia artist whose work explores themes of history, popular culture, social justice, and migration. A resident of East Harlem, Luciano has long used his role as an artist to engage with local communities through collaboration, resource building, and education.

One such public project, titled *DREAMer Kites* (2012), saw Luciano collaborate with undocumented youth in Washington, D.C. After starting a workshop in which participants made giant kites emblazoned with their own self-portraits, Luciano and company flew their kites on the National Mall, lifting images of undocumented youth into the skies above the US capital to raise awareness for the DREAM Act. A piece of legislation that provides a pathway to legal status for immigrants brought to the United States as children, the DREAM Act has failed to pass Congress with every administration since it was first introduced in 2001.

Luciano's work has been exhibited widely. His work is in the permanent collections of many institutions, including the Whitney Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, El Museo del Barrio, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

NARSISO MARTINEZ

b. 1977, **Oaxaca, Mexico** // *Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA*
 Narsiso Martínez's drawings and mixed media installations include multi-figure compositions set amidst agricultural landscapes. Derived from his own experience as a seasonal picker, Martínez's portraits of farmworkers are painted and drawn on discarded produce boxes collected from grocery stores.

Rendered directly on stacks of cardboard, Martínez's newest sculpture proves a tour de force of humanist representation. A symbolic portrait of a largely invisible population of "essential workers," the artist's figures float atop the corporate branding of agribusiness—Sunkist, Nature Fresh Farms—along with depictions of the literal fruit of their labor, in what amounts to a life-sized, three-dimensional painting. Titled *Then and Now, Hope and Dignity* (2024), the work memorializes the human potential of millions of undocumented people—a population for whom, not incidentally, visibility is always connected to enfranchisement.



Angel Otero, *Look out your Window*, 2024. © Angel Otero. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo Credit: Thomas Barratt.

Martínez's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally. It has been collected by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Los Angeles Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum, the Buffalo AKG Museum, the University of Arizona Museum of Art, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

ANGEL OTERO

b. 1981, **Santurce, Puerto Rico** // *Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, and San Juan, PR*
 Angel Otero's highly innovative techniques challenge his chosen materials while revealing the plastic, even magical qualities of oil paint. Otero is best known for his "oil skin" works: an ongoing series in which he applies oil paint to glass, peels it off in layers or "skins," and then uses these same elements to compose entirely new patterns and images on canvases.

Otero's latest work continues to explore chance-based processes and their potential to convey memory and history through materiality. Among his most recent is the collaged oil and fabric painting *Look Out Your Window* (2024). A giant jealousy, or window screen, such as are found throughout Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Otero's giant horizontal canvas reveals as much as it hides—by making monumental an overlooked domestic detail whose function it is to serve, alternately, as an entryway or impediment to human sight.

Otero's work is in numerous public and private collections including the Istanbul Modern, the Bronx Museum of Art, the DePaul Art Museum, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, the Margulies Collection, the Guggenheim Museum, the Speed Art Museum, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

EDISON PEÑAFIEL

b. 1985, **Guayaquil, Ecuador** // *Lives and works in Miami, FL*
 Edison Peñafiel uses drawing, sculpture, photography, and video to decontextualize and reconstruct absurd scenarios that produce poverty, prejudice, exploitation, and various forms of abuse of power.



Edison Peñafiel, *Correlé, correlé, correlé, Por aquí, por aquí, por allá, Correlé, correlé, correlé, Correlé que te van a matar!* [Run, run, run, Over here, over here, over there, Run, run, run, Run 'cause they're going to kill you], 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

For his video installation titled *¡Correlé, correlé, correlé, Por aquí, por aquí, por allá, Correlé, correlé, correlé, Correlé que te van a matar!* [Run, run, run, over here, over here, over there, Run, run, run, Run 'cause they're going to kill you] (2016), Peñafiel devised a multichannel portrait of a dangerous migrants' journey. Inspired by Chilean protest singer Víctor Jara's song "El Aparecido," the artist's looping images imitate cycles of global migration. "The multiscreen work displays journeys in graphic, black-and-white triptychs," Peñafiel explains. "The travelers appear naked yet masked, tapping into the idea of hiding and being undocumented. The title creates a tension, while also pointing to contemporary routes of escape: from Mexico to the US, from the Middle East and Africa to Europe, and so on."

Peñafiel has exhibited in the US and Europe at, among other institutions, the Bass Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, the Orlando Museum of Art, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts. His work is in various institutional collections, including Madrid's Centro de Arte 2 de Mayo.

SHIZU SALDAMANDO

b. 1978, **San Francisco, CA** // *Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA*
 Shizu Saldamando's work depicts shifting American social spaces through inspired portraiture. Her mother's family is Japanese American by way of Los Angeles' Boyle Heights/Sawtelle areas; her father, a Chicano from Nogales, AZ.

"I do portraits celebrating people, friends and peers, many of whom are activists, brown, queer, trans, Indigenous, immigrants, femme, and the like, who exist regardless of legislation and historical erasure," Saldamando explains. "I use bare wood panels as a ready-made backdrop, while also referencing the scrap wood sculptures my grandfather would make when he was incarcerated in the Japanese American prison camps during WWII." Works on wood panel such as *Pam in Miami (La Nicoya)* (2023) and *Young at Commonwealth* (2023) turn sculptural, Saldamando says, when "the transparency of the oil paint allows the wood grain to show through in order to acknowledge a more ephemeral, and fluid subject-hood."

Saldamando's work is in the permanent collections of various institutions, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Crocker Art Museum, the Princeton University Museum of Art, the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

YIYO TIRADO-RIVERA

b. 1990, **San Juan, Puerto Rico** // *Lives and works in San Juan, PR*
 Yiyo Tirado-Rivera is a multidisciplinary artist who employs various materials and media, among them engraving, photography, installation, sculpture, neon, sand, and carved books. His work engages four core themes: architecture, construction, the visitor economy, and the portrayal of the Caribbean as a paradise.

His newest body of work consists of a series of *ocazos*, or sunset-inspired paintings, of which *Retreat II (Summer)* (2024) is one. Like Monet's forty-one versions of Waterloo Bridge, his pictures trick the mind's eye with suave efficaciousness: each depicts the crepuscle, but as a prison. A second work is titled *Tropical Blizz Ball Sale: After David Hammons* (2021) in homage to the



Rodrigo Valenzuela, *Weapons #30*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.



Shizu Saldamando, *Jaime with Peyote*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo © 2024 Joshua and Charles White; photo credit Joshua and Charles White, Joshua White Photography.

influential Black American conceptualist and his landmark 1983 New York performance. Swapping sand for snow to activate an equally absurdist artwork, Tirado-Rivera's tabletop sculpture amplifies Hammons's critique of American commercialism to environmentalism and the beach.

Tirado-Rivera has exhibited his work widely. Recent shows include the Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai, the Whitney Museum, the Americas Society, and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico. His work is in the permanent collection of the Whitney Museum.

RODRIGO VALENZUELA

b. 1982, **Santiago, Chile** // *Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA*
 Rodrigo Valenzuela works across photography, video, and installation, merging interests in popular culture, art history, architecture, and the history of labor. Valenzuela typically builds scenes inside his studio, using building materials like cinder blocks, wooden pallets, corrugated metal, and two-by-fours. His monochrome photographs shift between documentary images and science fiction, flatness and architectural space, producing a push and pull that invites both contemplation and belief.

Valenzuela's *Weapons* series offer photo-based tableaux of working tools—knives, screws, rope, and chains—reconfigured as *Toy Story*, the revenge fantasy version. Valenzuela's arrangements push the envelope on photography's materiality. To make each large-scale work, Valenzuela assembles found objects, develops his photographs, screenprints images onto canvases collaged with repurposed timecards, and then smears the results with black ink. The process is physically demanding—the better, the artist suggests, for him to add his own handmade labor to steampunk visions of an automated, post-industrial present.

Valenzuela has exhibited at the New Museum, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, the Orange County Museum of Art, the Portland Art Museum, the McColl Center, and the Ulrich Museum of Art. His artwork has been collected by, among other institutions, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Getty Museum, the Frye Art Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Whitney Museum.