

PUERTO RICO: INTERIOR/EXTERIOR

ARTISTS CONSIDER PUERTO RICO AFTER MARIA

GALLERY GUIDE

THE ART GALLERY @ GCC

SPRING 2019

Puerto Rico: Interior/Exterior is an invitation to contemporary Puerto Rican artists, to help us understand the complex relationship between the mainland United States and the island of Puerto Rico. All of the artists in this exhibition share two things: they are native to Puerto Rico and they cherish and value art-as-social-discourse.

At the center of the exhibition is Puerto Rico's unstable status vis a vis the US - sometimes "in," as part of the US world view and sphere of influence and sometimes "out," treated as an unincorporated outsider or *de facto* colony. The troubled aspects of this relationship had been unexamined - especially by the average Los Angeleno/a over 3000 miles away - until Hurricanes Maria and Irma devastated the island and thrust Puerto Rico - and the federal government's response - into the national spotlight.

Almost every artist in this exhibition was making work about deteriorating US/ Puerto Rico economic and social relations before climate disaster changed the lives of everyone on the island. Their views overlap and diverge, as the artists range in age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and cultural status, and think in visual media as diverse as fabric, video, printmaking, and figurative painting.

The purpose of this exhibition is three-fold: first, it is a method of thinking about identity, diversity, inclusion, economic growth, responsibility, recovery and fairness, as it impacts Puerto Rico. Second, the exhibition illustrates how artists think through culture and politics and examines what can be articulated with images and things beyond words. And third, the exhibit also calls into being a world where there isn't any "in" or "out" in the face of suffering, even as it questions the unbalanced relations between territories.

Please join us **Saturday, April 6th from 5 to 8 pm** for a community event to raise awareness about Puerto Rico. Enjoy with us food, music, and short gallery walk through.

www.glendale.edu/artgallery • instagram: @artgallerygcc

Jo Cosme

The Crónicas

I am a multidisciplinary artist born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. My work extends from photography and video to installations, sound pieces and illustrations. My intention is to use art as a medium for social advocacy and resilience to address political and social issues that can provoke critical thinking and dialogue amongst the viewers.

The *Crónicas de un futuro catastrófico* tarot set visually narrates what happened in Puerto Rico after Hurricane María. It depicts how the hurricane not only took away our home's roofs, but it also took away the blanket that was covering all the lies, corruption and deceit by both the local and federal government. Everything is now exposed for everyone, especially for those who were still in denial.

Erika P. Rodríguez

Untitled, documentary photography

El huracán María azotó a Puerto Rico el 20 de septiembre de 2017 con lluvias torrenciales y vientos sostenidos de 155 millas por hora. Durante un período de 30 horas, María devastó gran parte de la isla, convirtiéndose en el peor desastre natural en tiempos modernos en abatirlos.

La tormenta colapsó el sistema de electricidad y comunicaciones, cerró escuelas y hospitales, y creó un éxodo masivo. En los meses posteriores al huracán y tras una respuesta de alivio lenta, se estima que 2,975 residentes murieron como resultado del huracán, según un informe de la Universidad George Washington. La cifra oficial de muertes se deriva de éste estimado, no se espera que se determinen los números actuales.

Como fotógrafa puertorriqueña, busco arrojar luz sobre esta catástrofe histórica, pero también resaltar la perseverancia y el coraje de quienes permanecen en la isla, incluso mientras luchan por reconstruir sus vidas y comunidades. Hasta que todos estén conectados al sistema eléctrico, hasta que todos tengan acceso a agua, hasta que todos tengan un techo sobre sí y hasta que todos los muertos hayan sido nombrados, ninguna recuperación puede ser declarada.

Elsa María Meléndez

Sprout Again/Retoñar

Sprout Again / Retoñar, es una serie de piezas en proceso, cuya producción comenzó en diciembre de 2017, en un momento crítico y de gran vulnerabilidad para el pueblo de Puerto Rico. *Sprout Again / Retoñar* documenta el último año y 5 meses viviendo en medio de las consecuencias del huracán María. En las piezas han sido integrados textiles y materiales rescatados de una tienda de telas destruida por el huracán.

En *Sprout Again / Retoñar*, realizo una comparación entre el retoñar de la naturaleza y el despertar del pueblo puertorriqueño en términos de la crisis política. En este momento histórico, María vino a raspar el pellejo a muchas realidades y conflictos con los que el pueblo puertorriqueño venía atravesando y, que se han recrudecido y acelerado. Puerto Rico despertó del huracán en medio de grandiosos gestos humanitarios, pero mientras reverdecían los montes, también despertamos a la poca o ninguna respuesta al desastre. A los dos días de pasado el huracán, los árboles caídos comenzaron a retoñar, pero los puertorriqueños seguían muriendo a través de los meses posteriores, viviendo en modo de sobrevivencia, ante una corrupción gubernamental mucho más rampante, el robo de fondos públicos y la privatización de nuestro patrimonio.

Las tres piezas más recientes de esta serie son las que se exponen en "Puerto Rico: Interior/Exterior" en The Art Gallery at Glendale Community College. Para dar forma al duelo colectivo, "Raspando", "La cola del aftermath" y "Es una trampa", se enfocan en sensaciones abstractas de incertidumbre y dolor. Representan consuelo en medio del proceso de transformación, tanto de nuestras ruinas, como de las cicatrices de nuestra historia.

Elsa María Meléndez

Sprout Again/Retoñar

Sprout Again / Retoñar, is a series in the process, which production started on December 2017, in a critical moment or great vulnerability for Puerto Rico. *Sprout Again / Retoñar* documents the living circumstances within the last year and five months after hurricane Maria. The artworks incorporate textiles and materials rescued from a fabric store destroyed by the hurricane.

Sprout Again / Retoñar, realize a comparison between the sprout of nature and the awakening of the Puerto Ricans in terms of the political crisis. In this historical moment, Maria came to scrape the skin of many realities and conflicts that the Puerto Rican community was going through, and that has gotten worse and accelerated. Puerto Rico was awakened while the mountains got greener; we woke up as the result of little or no response to the disaster. Two days after the passage of the hurricane, the fallen trees were blooming, but ironically Puerto Ricans were dying through the following months, living in survival mode, in front of the growing government corruption, stealing of public funds and the privatization of our heritage.

The most three recent artworks of this series are shown in *Puerto Rico: Interior/ Exterior* at The Art Gallery at Glendale Community College. To give form to the collective mourning, "Raspando," "La cola del aftermath," and "Es una trampa," focus in abstract sensations of pain. They represent comfort in the middle of the transformation, of both our ruins and the scars of our history.

Martín García Rivera

selections from "Archive de asombro cotidiando"

"¿Pero qué es la historia de América toda si no una crónica de lo real maravilloso?"

Alejo Carpentier , "El reino de este mundo" (1949)

"Por la imaginación el hombre coloca frente a sí al objeto: por tanto, esta facultad es la condición del conocimiento: sin ella no habría ni percepción ni juicio."

Octavio Paz , "Los hijos del Limo" (1974)

This selection of eight artworks are part of a major group series entitled *Archivo de asombro cotidiano* (Daily Wondrous Archive) consist of intaglio burin engravings and drypoints created since 2013.

As fundamental reference for creating these group of original prints I use the Latin American and Caribbean Magic Realism, the artistic Expressionist movement and the Spirituality of Diasporic African Art and Culture in the Americas. I combine these art movements with my personal feelings and thoughts to express a metaphorical language that moves from art to everyday life and vice versa.

The images I draw could be seen as grotesque metamorphosis or mysterious. My ideas shift between consciousness and subconsciousness, between reason and free ideas while integrating elements from culture that are alienated from its nature. These scenes can be visualized as extractions of a type of "Theatre of the absurd" or merely as a heap of figurative forms living in a particular state of being. Those inner resources of ideas and feelings entwines personal beliefs and obsessions in a way to build an artistic work in which past, present, dream and reality are brought together.

The technique I used, intaglio burin engraving and drypoint, provides me with fundamental means in drawing expression that allows me to build a sketchy, fluid and expressive line that I use as a protagonist mark that moves in and out the figures and forms.

It is my intention to form new cultural meanings from my ancestral traditions as an effort to portray a particular reality between the objective visual world and the bizarre subjective world. With this I create a kind of personal-mythical history of my country; I seek to present the sublime and terrible that coexists in the contemporaneity of Puerto Rico.

Awilda Rodríguez Lora

¡BÁILATE ÉSTA!

Colaboración entre Awilda Rodríguez Lora (La Performera) y Curá de Espantos Hecho y creado en Puerto Rico por transfeministas.

Video performance, creado como una primera colaboración entre la coreógrafa del performance, Awilda Rodríguez Lora y Curá de Espantos. Este video/pieza de arte posiciona a la mujer puertorriqueña en múltiples espacios que fotografían al Puerto Rico hoy, el Puerto Rico olvidado, el Puerto Rico vendido, el Puerto Rico impune. Contamos hasta 25, por la memoria de las 25 víctimas de feminicidios en Puerto Rico contados en el 2018. La mujer, representada por La Performera nos presenta un país florecido, pero precisamente en ruinas, abandonado por sus habitantes, corporaciones y gobierno como representación del estado que hace caso omiso a los casos de violencia de género en Puerto Rico.

MANIFIESTA

Porque la colonia me exotisa, báilate ésta
 Porque la impunidad romantiza nuestra muerte, báilate ésta
 Porque vivimos bajo el paternalismo sistémico, báilate ésta
 Porque no creo en tu P.R.O.M.E.S.A., báilate ésta
 Porque mi nombre es muy complejo pa' tu lengua, báilate ésta
 Porque tu seudo-norma me la pela, báilate ésta
 Porque mi culo es mio, solo mio, báilate ésta
 Porque mis caderas truenan contra el patriarcado, báilate ésta
 Porque no soy cosa, soy PERSONA, báilate ésta
 Porque la matastes, tú, GOBIERNO, MACHO, VIOLENTO, báilate ésta
 Porque la cuerpa que erotisas es FUCKING mia, báilate ésta
 Porque nunca estuve sola
 Porque la calle es para todas
 Porque aunque degolladas y amarradas, la rabia es rampante,
 Porque nuestras heridas no se ocultan en bolsas negras,
 Porque tu violencia no desaparece nuestra identidad, somos más
 Porque somos más de 25,
 porque no seremos más,
 porque tu, macho, instrumento colonial, opresor, oprimido, mi nombre no olvidarás,
 NI UNA MENOS, NI UNA MÁS,
 ¡BÁILATE ÉSTA!

Curá de Espantos

Compuesta por Lale Namerrow y Lara Medina. Dos artistas, gestoras, curás de la escena del arte. Este proyecto/iniciativa, que lleva años cocinándose, surge de la búsqueda de espacios de solidaridad y sororidad dentro del mundo artístico cultural. Con una mirada transfeminista apuestan arte contestatario virtual como arma anti-patriarca. Trabajan casi todos los aspectos del arte, dándole una mirada refrescante y crítica a todos los proyectos.

Awilda Rodríguez Lora

¡BÁILATE ÉSTA!

Collaboration by Awilda Rodríguez Lora (La Performera) and Curá de Espantos. Made and created in Puerto Rico by tranfeminists.

Video performance created as part of the first collaboration between Performance choreographer, Awilda Rodríguez Lora and Women Art Collective "Curá de Espanto". This piece positions the Puerto Rican women in multiple spaces the reflects the Puerto Rico of today, the forgotten Puerto Rico, the stolen Puerto Rico, the impugned Puerto Rico. We count to 25, in remembrance for the 25 women victims of femicide in 2018. The women, represented by La Performera exposes a flourished island, but with the apparent abandonment of its inhabitants, corporations and government as a portrayal of their disregardance of gender violence incidents in Puerto Rico.

MANIFIESTA

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Porque la impunidad romantiza nuestra muerte, báilate ésta
Porque vivimos bajo el paternalismo sistémico, báilate ésta
Porque no creo en tu P.R.O.M.E.S.A., báilate ésta
Porque mi nombre es muy complejo pa' tu lengua, báilate ésta
Porque tu pseudo-norma me la pela, báilate ésta
Porque mi culo es mio, solo mio, báilate ésta
Porque mis caderas truenan contra el patriarcado, báilate ésta
Porque no soy cosa, soy PERSONA, báilate ésta
Porque la matastes, tú, GOBIERNO, MACHO, VIOLENTO, báilate ésta
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Porque tu violencia no desaparece nuestra identidad, somos más
Porque somos más de 25,
porque no seremos más,
porque tu, macho, instrumento colonial, opresor, oprimido, mi nombre no olvidarás,
NI UNA MENOS, NI UNA MÁS,
¡BÁILATE ÉSTA!

Curá de Espantos

Formed by Lale Namerrow and Lara Medina. Two artists, cultural producers, "Curás" (or they've seen it all) of the art scene. This project/initiative has been 'cooking' for years, come from the need to find spaces of solidarity and sorority within the art and cultural world. With a transfeminist outlook they bet on digital rebellious anti establishment art as a anti-patriarchal weapon.

Adál

Puerto Ricans Underwater

Puerto Ricans Underwater was my first project when I returned to live on the island in 2010. It began as a reflection on the economic condition affecting Puerto Rico and how it was paralyzing the island. Then in the middle of the project Hurricane Maria unexpectedly hit the island causing devastating results that affected thousands of people. As a reaction and believing that recognizing the causes of one's condition is the beginning of the healing process I began photographing my friends and colleagues submerged underwater in my bathtub as a metaphor for that sense of depowerment; the sense of denial of self-determination imposed by the Federal government, and the sense of not being in control on your life, not having a voice, and feeling impotent inside of your own condition.

My approach with each model was to tell them that there were three ways of responding to this social and political crisis. One was to assume the mindset of a colonized mentality, accept those circumstances and to let oneself go with the current and drown in the process. Another position was to assume a more independent mindset and resist and fight the current to the bitter end. The last position was to say, Fuck it, I don't care about politics I'm here to survive and have a good time. The world can fall apart around me. I asked them to meditate and to decide which of these three conditions they identified with and to come prepared to project that position submerged in water from the bottom of the bathtub. The images in the *Puerto Ricans Underwater* series are representative of that collaboration.

8, 9. rear gallery, right

Patrick V. McGrath Muñiz

United Citizen Ship & Cruz y Ficcion(es)

As an artist with a Roman Catholic background and growing up during the 1980's and 90's in the island of Puerto Rico, the oldest colony in the Western Hemisphere, my work responds to our capitalist society and consumerism with its indifference to the rising threat of climate change by tracing its origins to the time of Columbus. Adopting Renaissance painting techniques on canvas and retablos reminiscent of Spanish colonial art, enables me to emulate earlier indoctrination strategies and devices from the time of the conquest of the Americas. This in turn provides historical continuity between the Colonial and the Neo-colonial narratives present in the Anthropocene, an epoch defined by the enormous impact of human activities on the Earth's ecosystems. Through satirical narratives and anachronisms present in my art I'm able to explore, understand and question the Imperialist agenda with its colonial roots and the ruling Corpocracy with its Neo-colonial ramifications and environmental consequences in our time.

After experiencing Harvey in Houston, where I now reside, witnessing Hurricane Maria passing over Puerto Rico and Irma in Florida, where most of my family and friends live, the issue of Climate Change became even more personal. As an artist, I feel a responsibility to re-tell the story of climate change the way I know best, in drawings, paintings and altarpieces. By appropriating figures and icons present in Art History, Pop Culture, Christian Iconography and Mythology, I now create nautical scenes that mirror my own experience living in a world of stronger storms, hurricanes and floods. This re-contextualization of history allows me to start a conversation about what it means to be living in the Anthropocene while shedding new light on how our capitalist and consumerist doctrines have modified our appreciation towards history, nature and ourselves.

Ricardo Rodríguez

Status[Quo]

Humans connect through universal and individual experiences, and Puerto Ricans have experienced an uncertainty of political and cultural truths. The instability and fractured status penetrate deep into our identity. Most Puerto Ricans, experience a detachment culturally and physically from the United States, regardless of being part of the diaspora or living in the island.

For Puerto Ricans, the sea forms an essential element of our history and identity. Therefore, I adopted elements associated with the sea to represent the literal and metaphorical disconnection that exists between our worlds. Usually, a dock serves as something stationary and firm to which boats can be secured, maintaining them from going adrift. Through the juxtaposition of two piers, I create a dialog regarding the colonial status and paradoxical relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

The contradiction between the two docks is analogous to the status between two countries which does not seem to find a resolution from the status quo. Similarly, the narrow and vertical photograph of the sea serves to heighten the physical and metaphorical void between our worlds, and the incapability to reach or distance ourselves from our reality. Ironically, Donald Trump, afterward Hurricane María, used the distance from our countries to excuse the lack of aid provided by his administration. As he said: "This is an island surrounded by water, big water, ocean water."

I attempt to represent visually the repeating dialog of fictional liberty, dependence, statehood, and how our truth gets distorted as a result of the uncertain status. By looking at this work, I invite the viewer to wonder about interdependencies and uncertainty of change.

Frances Gallardo

Pentagramas

The San Juan cityscape is saturated with power lines. These become the inevitable grid of clouds, wind and the sky. Parting from the sound installation "Huracán soundscape" (2012), I wanted to establish more visual connections, in this case, between a musical score and an electrician's marks on the city's power line grid. With this series of paper cut-outs and collages, I created a visual narrative of the progression of sounds during a storm. Most compositions are based on Bayoán Rios' music score titled 'Survival', among others.

list of artworks

1. **Jo Cosme**, *The Crónicas*, tarot deck of 22 cards, 6" x 10" Each, 2019
2. **Erika P. Rodríguez**, *Untitled*, archival pigment print, 30" x 22", 2018
- 3, 4, 5. **Elsa María Meléndez**,
La cola del aftermath, Silkscreen printed on stuffed and sewn fabrics, embroidery, 132" x 44", 2019
Raspando, Stuffed and sewn fabrics, embroidery, synthetic materials and tulle fabric 81" x 57.5", 2019
Es una trampa, Silkscreen printed on stuffed and sewn fabrics, embroidery, 51" circumference, 2019
- 6,10. **Martín García Rivera**
Fuera de alcance, Butil, 12" x 19 ¾", 2014
Zaramambiche Danguillere Performance, Punta Seca, 11 ¾" x 22", 2015
Mucho en común, Butil, 11 ¾" x 15 ½", 2013
El preparamiento, Butil, 11 ¾" x 15 ¾", 2015
Guiados por el olfato, Butil, 13" x 15.5", 2014
147 después de la revuelta, Butil, 12 2/16" x 5 2/16", 2015
Han dado la señal, Butil, 12 ¼" x 16", 2018
Fuera del desafío, Butil, 11 ½" x 20", 2017
13. **Awilda Rodríguez Lora**, *¡BÁILATE ÉSTA!*, video, 2019
7. **Adál** -*Puerto Ricans Underwater*, 16" x 25" (Left to right and top to bottom)
Calin Dover Tarrats, 2016
Cecilia Argüelles Ramos, 2016
Pizarro Mim, 2016
José Luis Cortes, 2016
Jeannette Betancourt, 2016
Rafael Acevedo Al Rafah, 2016
Dorothy Bell Ferrer, 2017
Pablo Del Hierro, 2016
Marco Trevidani Montresor, 2016
Bold Destrou, 2017
Francisco Félix, 2016
Carlos Cutito Soto, 2016
12. **Frances Gallardo**, *Pentagramas Series*, paper cut-out, 18" x 12" each, 2012
- 8,9. **Patrick V. McGrath Muñiz**
UNITED CITIZEN SHIP, Oil on canvas 48" x 48", 2016
CRUZ Y FICCION(ES), Oil on canvas 42" x 80", 2018
11. **Ricardo Rodríguez**, *Status [Quo]*, Installation, dimensions vary, 2018-19

credits

Curatorial/Concept

David John Attyah
Ricardo Rodríguez

Gallery Director/Co-Curator/Production
Co-Curator/Area Expert/Artist

Production

Michael Rollins
Aileen Hovanesian
Anai Gonzalez Consenza
David Novoa
Nicolas Shake

Preparator
Installation Support/Staff
Installation Support/Staff
Installation Support/Staff
Installation Support

Financial

GCC Student Equity
Susan Courtney, Business Services

Curriculum and Learning

Rhona Blaker
Rory Cohen
Krysten Gonzalez
Bea Valls Rodríguez
Lourdes Girardi
Stacey Jazen
Maria Hernandez

Contextualized Learning/Curriculum
Catalog/Journalism
Curriculum
Press/Community Outreach
Curriculum Support
Curriculum Support
Curriculum Support

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