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Diffused Reflections

Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts presents the 31st anniversary of Sólo Mujeres, DIFFUSED REFLECTIONS. This powerful exhibition captures and reveals the diffused reflections caused by our rough political and social climate. The fifteen artists included in this exhibition are the light that hits the uneven surface, their art is the reflection we are viewing. Their artworks offer a reflected alternative to the unnoticed and at times invisible narratives that society fails to acknowledge. DIFFUSED REFLECTIONS is a casting of images and representations; it is a moment of consideration and meditation for local, regional, and national artists to reflect and share their individual perspectives and communal narratives.

Featured artists include: Jessica Alvarenga, Natalia Anciso, Sarah Castillo, Crystal Galindo, Ghazal Ghazi, Ester Hernandez, Sanaz Jamloo, Alex Martinez, Itzel Alejandra Martinez, Breena Nuñez, Alejandra Pérez, Yolanda Reyes, Sasha Silveanu, Maritza Torres, and Danielle Wright.

Guest curated by Marissa Del Toro, an art historian and curator who currently works at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

"The Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts (MCCLA) was established in 1977 by artists and community activists with a shared vision to promote, preserve and develop the Latino cultural arts that reflect the living tradition and experiences of the Chicano, Central and South American, and Caribbean people. MCCLA makes the arts accessible as an essential element to the community's development and well-being."

The San Francisco Arts Commission

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The Latino Action Network

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts for providing the space, opportunity, and support for me to share my vision as a guest curator. As a Chicana, it has been an honor working with such a prominent and leading institution within one of San Francisco's and the overall nation's Latinx, Chicanx, and Caribbean cultural arts center.

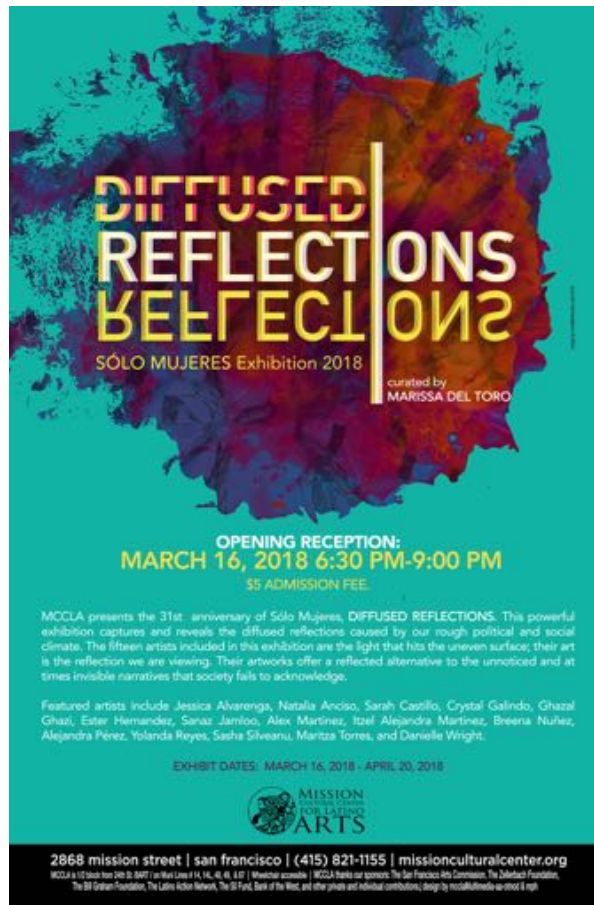
This exhibition would not be possible without the dedicated staff and volunteers of MCCLA who are the physical force behind it. A special thank you to Angelica A. Rodriguez, the amazing gallery coordinator, for her positive spirit, keen insight, and experience as coordinator for handling the installation process from beginning to end. Additionally, many thanks to the installation crew: Yolanda Lopez for directing, Orlando de la Garza, Clemente Mendez, and Jiayi Pan for being the physical support in handling the arrangement and display of all the amazing works in this exhibition. Also, thank you to Mara Hernandez for creating such a beautiful and dope exhibition logo design.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, many thanks to the fifteen artists: Jessica Alvarenga, Natalia Anciso, Sarah Castillo, Crystal Galindo, Ghazal Ghazi, Ester Hernandez, Sanaz Jamloo, Alex Martinez, Itzel Alejandra Martinez, Breena Nuñez, Alejandra Pérez, Yolanda Reyes, Sasha Silveanu, Maritza Torres, and Danielle Wright for submitting and choosing to be a part of DIFFUSED REFLECTIONS. Without your artworks and narratives this show would not be possible. Thank you for entrusting me with the power to share your artworks and stories.

Special shout out to Chris Valles for donating pieces of their zine collection to the zine library, as well as Reina and Anna Rosa for contributing their personal zine works. Also, thank you to Chari Lee, Tía Sugar Del Toro, and Dr. Lillian Gorman for their keen eyes and editing contributions.

As always, many thanks to mi gente, mi familia, mi hermana, y mis padres for their unrelenting support and love.

-Marissa Del Toro



Jessica Alvarenga, *Nossa Puta Sagrada: Luke 7:36*, 2016. Photography

Jessica Ofelia Alvarenga is a visual geographer and storyteller based out of Houston, Texas. Coupled with her background in journalism and social justice organizing, she uses photography as a way to document and reimagine immigrant narratives, particularly that of the Central American Diaspora. Her interests include urban political economies; religion and sexuality; diasporic identities; and volcanoes. She is the co-founder of *Mujeres en Medio*, an online media collective for women of color. In Spring 2017, she was awarded an Individual Artist Grant from the Houston Arts Alliance and the City of Houston. Jessica holds a Bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of Texas-Austin.

Website: jessofelia.com
Instagram: [@jessicalaputa](https://www.instagram.com/jessicalaputa)



Natalia Anciso, *Sobrevivir (Land of the Free)*, 2017. Pen on fabric

Natalia Anciso is a Chicana-Tejana visual artist and educator. Born in Weslaco and raised in Mercedes, small, hardscrabble towns in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Deep South Texas, she received her BA in Studio Art from The University of Texas at Austin in 2008. Shortly thereafter, she moved to Oakland, California, attending the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, and earning her MFA with an emphasis in Painting and Drawing in 2011. In 2015, Anciso was named a Berkeley Distinguished Graduate Fellow, earning her MA in Education at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education.

In addition to practicing art and exhibiting her work throughout the United States and internationally, she has taught art to a diverse array of youth through non-profit organizations, as well as undergraduate and graduate students through various venues and forums.

Currently, she lives and works in Oakland.

Artist Statement: *Sobrevivir (Land of the Free)* is a domestic abstraction of the American flag, modeled after hanging clothes on a clothesline. All figures drawn into the “flag” (which comprises of 26 pink and white stripes), are Latinx women farmworkers of different ages, including children and an infant. This is related to the complicated realities of living in the United States as Latinx. This work pays homage to my grandmothers and the forgotten mujeres (past and present), many of whom are mothers, who toil and work our fields, harvesting the food on our tables. Female farm workers across our country endure nearly all the issues male farm workers face, as well as some that are largely unique, such as sexual harassment and assault, pregnancy and gender discrimination, on top of having the extra responsibility of being the primary caregivers of children. The majority of those that experience sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination suffer in silence. Each figure is intertwined between the stripes, as a means to show the visible and invisible sides of this narrative.

Website: nataliaanciso.com
Instagram: @nataliaanciso



Danielle Wright, *U Can't Touch This*, 2016. Artist's hair, straight pins, tack board, paint, time

Danielle Wright is a multidisciplinary visual artist whose work concerns the politics and poetics of witnessing. Her work investigates the language of materials and how notions of identity, intimacy, and trauma overlap and intersect. She is particularly interested in softening distinctions between artist and viewer/participant. Additionally, she serves as a Teaching Artist at Creativity Explored, an internationally recognized nonprofit art gallery and studio for adults with developmental disabilities in San Francisco's Mission District.

Artist Statement: Claudia Rankine outlines in her book *Citizen, An American Lyric*, there is a self-self and historical self. As a black/white/both and/trans-racial individual, reading her work felt like reading my own private journal entry. Regarding how my piece relates to the exhibition, hair is a significant part of my racial identity. I draw on the notion that the personal is inherently political, a concept developed by second wave feminists. It is personally upsetting to have my boundaries violated by “friends” and strangers who touch my hair without asking. The immensity of the anger, pain, indignation, and sadness that arises when I consider how black bodies have historically been treated in this country nearly defies expression. In these moments, I am reminded that my body does not necessarily belong to me. This work is an attempt to carve out a space of resistance to this. As a counter balance to the work's emotional weight, I attempt to incorporate humor by alluding MC Hammer in his prime (with a nod to Solange as well). It is my hope that the contrast serves as both a means of engaging viewer, participants, co-creators as well as a way to name and play with the inherent tension created by text and subject matter.

Website: daniellewright.info



Maritza Torres, *Waves*, 2016. Ink on paper

Maritza Torres is best known for her graphic style and portrayal of the empowered woman. The focus of her work becomes clearer as she grows as an artist with themes that explore the feeling of otherness a Chicana/ Chicano deals with in the group of works entitled 'Cactus Face'.

Torres grew up as the eldest daughter of a large Mexican-American Mormon family. In 2001 she moved to Los Angeles to study at Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising and graduated with her Associates degree. In 2010 She began her Art career in earnest.

December 2016 Maritza was given a warm welcome by the San Antonio art community with her first solo show entitled 'Bleeding Heart' which was featured in the SA Current. Hosted by Pan Dulce and promoted by St. Sucia. A local zine which features the piece 'Lookin For Change' as the cover art of their 2nd issue. Issue No. 2 has recently been added to the Chicano studies syllabus at UC Santa Barbara. In 2017, she was honored to have her solo exhibit 'I think of you when I see the color blue' at Espacio 1839 in the heart of the anti-gentrification movement Boyle Heights.

Website: maritzatorres.tumblr.com



Sarah Castillo, *Amethyst*, My Creative Talisman from the CHICANA FEELINGS series, 2017. C-print

Sarah Castillo is an artist based in San Antonio, Texas working in mixed media and portraiture. Born and raised in San Antonio, Castillo obtained her master's degree in Bicultural Studies from the University of Texas at San Antonio with her thesis titled: *Art as an Embodied Practice: Artistic Expression, Conocimiento, and Identity Formation*. She is co-founder of Mas Rudas Collective, Creative Director of Lady Base Gallery, and Resident Artist at Clamp Light Studios & Gallery. She has shown at the University of Texas at San Antonio, Artpace, Institute of Texan Cultures, Mexic-Arte Museum, and was selected for the IV Biennial with El Paso Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez in 2015. She was recently awarded a grant from the National Association for Latino Arts and Culture in 2016.

Artist Statement: *Remedies for Re(membering)* are retablo-like collages that embody an emotional connection to what has been lost and found. These cultural deities of the earth and home intertwined with a narrative of violence and heartache documents a self-healing process. My hand covers the eyes of the human skull on Coatlicue's belt because sometimes we resist new knowledges of insight into our trauma. My mother wears a crown made up of the Teatro Nacional to nostalgically speak of social spaces that provided cultural connections to our history and culture. My hands cover the breasts of Coatlicue because we are taught to be ashamed of our sexuality. My hand covers the mouth of Tonanztin because our indigenous traditions are silenced. It is both a colonial contestation and a decolonial representation of what's rejected and embraced; a self-reflective process using family photos.

CHICANA FEELINGS is an auto ethnographic project that works to represent a Chicana experience in San Antonio, Texas by aiming to articulate a self-reflexive artistic conversation to actualize a tactile reality of Mestiza Consciousness. A response to what has been rejected and embraced, it is the process of resolving conflict and loss in the context of mental health. I am guided by questions framed to understand the ways that art, identity, and healing expand our notions about relationships to Self, and the sociocultural world. How do artists enact agency to understand the conditions of themselves? How does oppression operate against the body? And how does this translate through art? Chicana Feelings articulates my graduate thesis - *Art as an Embodied Practice: Artistic Expression, Conocimiento, and Identity Formation*, a project that makes meaning of survival as it engages in a dialogue between anonymity and preservation.

Website: sarahcastillo210.com



Crystal Galindo, *Nopalconcha*, 2017. Acrylic on wood

Crystal Galindo was born in Visalia, CA in 1983. She lived in Visalia until six years old, when her parents moved the family to the small town of Exeter. Growing up with three siblings meant a lack of privacy among the noises of a busy working-class family.

As a shy, somewhat introverted kid, Crystal found comfort in reading countless books and making art. She watched her father draw tattoo style portraits of people in sketchbooks that never were completed. She watched her parents give up their love for the arts to take care of their four children. Crystal vowed to pursue her own passion for art, regardless of outside responsibilities, making a name for herself and making her parents proud.

Crystal started drawing at an early age. Her first sketches began on the blank header pages of storybooks and lined sheets of paper her mom bought in packs. Ballpoint pen, marker, and colored pencils were her tools of choice until she started community college and learned to use charcoal, watercolor, and oil paints.

Crystal started to articulate stories of inner struggle, self-esteem, and society's beauty standards in 2009 when she began her series of self-portraits called "Selfies." Her expressions of identity were all topics of exploration, and her self portraits took on a magical realism that set her work apart from the norm. Despite scrutiny from her peers and teachers when she attended the BFA program at Sonoma State University, Crystal's work continued to evolve into a celebration of self, of womxn of color, and an unapologetic testimony of a shift in paradigm. Her work challenged white supremacy, eurocentric beauty standards, and the male dominated art world.

In 2014, Crystal debuted "Multifacética" a series spotlighting powerful Chicanas adorned by sacred icons and imagery reminiscent of precolonial Mesoamerica. In 2016, she debuted "Dulceria" a series dedicated to womxn and femmes of color reclaiming autonomy, indulgence, and pride. Crystal is currently working on "Xingonxs" a series that uplifts and empowers womxn and femmes of color making changes for their collective communities.

Website: crystalgalindo.com

Instagram: [@crystalgalindoart](https://www.instagram.com/crystalgalindoart)



Sasha Silveanu, *Mass Grave*. VHS Tape

Sasha Silveanu is an artist, anthropologist and mother whose work bridges conversations across identity, history, creativity and social change. She is inspired by her mother's memories of the Former Yugoslavia and the relationships she has nurtured with members of Native American Tribes and refugees from Afghanistan for over a decade. Sasha has shown her work at SOMArts, the Noh Theatre and in The Forum Magazine of City College of San Francisco.

Artist Statement: Sasha Silveanu offers, "My Mother's Tapes," a woven representation of the archive of VHS cassette tapes her mother developed while recording broadcasts of the civil war in the Former Yugoslavia. Creating a conversation between mother and daughter about women and war, the ribbons have been ceremoniously removed from their cases, unfurled, methodically cut and meditatively woven together. These are not empty ribbons but display invisible narratives and create surfaces of intersections and distorted reflections. The difference in stories between family members, reporters and countries parallels ongoing socio-political distress within the United States and internationally. The material compositions reflect an impulse to make sense of rearranged boundaries and identity and the struggle to stay rooted from afar. The limited color palate highlights shades of gray. Matte and shiny surfaces offer variations in how light and dark are portrayed.



Yolanda Reyes, *A Persides Night*. Watercolor

Yolanda Reyes was Born on Kessler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. She graduated from high school in South Carolina in 2002. She attended Trident Technical College in South Carolina and majored in website design and computer animation. In 2006 she transferred to Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California to study fine art photography and cinematography. By day she teaches adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities photography and painting at Studio 700. By night she continues her education at American River College where she is pursuing an Associates in mathematics and electrical engineering. A nationally exhibiting, award winning multi-media artist, having had two solo exhibitions, one in Sacramento and one in Las Vegas. It was during this time that the artist started //motherBoard an oil painting series, inspired by her current area of study, representing the artist's mental and emotional state from 2013-16. Tonalpohualli, meaning counting of the days' in Nahuatl, is a watercolor series currently in production, the first in the series is Las Chingonas. She resides in Northern California with her Peruvian Inca Orchid service dog Xochitla.

Artist Statement: A Persides Night is part of a 20 piece watercolor series titled Life in Color, which represents the artist's therapeutic response to challenges she faced concerning her housing/food insecurities and unemployment. This picture depicts the 2013 Meteor Shower, one of the oldest recorded events of its kind always falls in August. Being homeless in 2013 allowed the artist the privilege of spending the hot summer months of 2013 outside sleeping under the stars. The Ocelotl (jaguar) coat reminiscent of the night sky, capable of traversing both the earth realm and spirit realm, watches over the artist.



Ghazal Ghazi in collaboration with Iranian-American artist, Sarah Ghazi-Moradi, *Kaf is for Kabreet*. Illustrated accordion book

Ghazal Ghazi embodies a point of convergence between three continents and multiple visual languages, guided by a dedication to exploring the commonalities between marginalized communities and honoring ancestral knowledge. As a multidisciplinary transcontinental Iranian painter and poet who has lived and worked in the Middle East as well as both North and South America, she is interested in multiplicity, complexity, and intersections. She looks to our collective memory for solutions to modern challenges and struggles. She is interested in themes such as memory, (im)migration, water, healing, textiles, and genealogy. She is passionately dedicated to advancing the narratives of diverse communities whose stories and needs have historically been marginalized and to connect these expressions with the unique ecologies of our planet. As a public artist, she deeply believes in the power of murals in particular, not only as a democratically accessible art form, but also as a means of rewriting narratives – so that the communal interaction that is implied in the creation of public art is an expression of transformative social and cultural intervention.

Artist Statement: This collaborative artist book explores the intersections of language, power, and women. The Arabic and Persian letter “Kaf” is the first letter of the word “Kabreet” which means “match” in both languages. The match represents power, the spark to maintain connections and engage. On the cover of the book, the letter “Kaf” is drawn in its calligraphic form, contained and measured according to its proportions, according to the rules of the traditional calligraphic script al-khat al-mansub. This book was made in collaboration with the Iranian-American artist, Sarah Ghazi-Moradi, who drew the illustrations of Muslim women in Islamic garb. The faces of the women are diverse and expressive, with various expressions, fashions, and personalities, resulting in a profound humanization of Muslim women that simultaneously recalls the media's hand in dehumanizing Muslim women and intentionally causing a “forgetting” of Muslim women and their inherent humanity. These ideas are explored in the format of a handmade accordion book, which is a dynamic medium through which to explore these illustrations since the perspective and meaning of the piece changes upon the opening and stretching of the book.

Instagram: @zynb.graffiti



Ester Hernandez, *Nasty Liberty*, 2017. Screen-print. © 2017 Ester Hernandez

Ester Hernandez was born in California's San Joaquin Valley to a Mexican/Yaqui farm worker family. The UC Berkeley graduate is an internationally acclaimed San Francisco-based visual artist. She is best known for her depiction of Latina/Native women through her pastels, prints and installations. Her work reflects social, political, ecological and spiritual themes.

Hernandez has had numerous national and international solo and group shows. Among others, her work is included in the permanent collections of the National Museum of American Art – Smithsonian; Library of Congress; Legion of Honor, San Francisco; National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago; Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo, Mexico City; Museum of Contemporary Native Art, Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM; Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Her artistic and personal archives are housed at Stanford University.

Artist Statement: Nasty Liberty is a call to action that is inspired by the right-wing regimes new era of horrific backward thinking that is attempting to destroy civil and human rights, science, equality, etc. Viva La Libertad!!

Website: esterhernandez.com



Alejandra Pérez, *Ventana [Mothers, Love & Dementia]*, 2016. Old window featuring found and collected objects including dried poppies and sweet peas from abuelita's garden, image transfers, jar lids, light fuses, thread, agua de alcazar, and the only blue donkey in all of Jalisco.



Alejandra Pérez, *Mesa [Mothers, Love & Dementia]*, 2016. An interactive piece featuring a homemade table with letterpress drawer including Maceo's patience, poppy seeds, matches, waxed blossom buds, confetti, spices, quail eggs, agua de alcazar and pigments.

Aguas Migrantes (participating artist **Alejandra Pérez**) is a multidisciplinary artist collective based in the Bay Area that was founded in 2015 by two queer migrant womyn artist-educators, Susa Cortez and Vreni Michelini Castillo, strengthened by collaborators Ana Gloria Bedolla, Onyinye Alheri and Alejandra Perez. The mission of Aguas Migrantes is to support one another and connect artists to our transnational communities through art by learning (or to learn) about the migration patterns, traditions and cultural productions of Guanajuato. This is accomplished by engaging with members of our communities through free art, writing and medicinal workshops, mural projects and culminating exhibitions.

- Onyinye Alheri is a visual artist born in Lagos, Nigeria and currently residing in northern California. She earned a BA from Macalester College in International Studies & Philosophy.
- Ana Gloria Bedolla holds a BFA from the Academy of Art University in Sculpture.
- Susa Cortez is an artist and educator from La Loma a rural town of Moreleon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Currently living and working in San Francisco, CA. She holds a BFA from the University of Delaware and a MFA in sculpture from Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Her hometown is a major inspiration for her work as well as immigrant struggles.
- Vreni Michelini-Castillo has an MFA from UC Berkeley and a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University.
- Alejandra Pérez holds a BA in Studio Art and Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Davis. As a twin, Arizona-California native and churro enthusiast, she spends her time between teaching in Woodland and her studio practice in San Francisco.

Website: aguasmigrantes.org; alejandraperez.studio
Instagram: @aguasmigrantes; @alejandraismakingthings



THE OUTLINES OF YOUR CURVES ARE CRESCENDO THAT LEADS TO
THE CLIMAX OF THE LANDSCAPE. THEY SEE A PIECE OF NATURE
TO BE EXPLOITED, BUT YOUR USE YOUR BEAUTY AND TALENTS
FOR SELF PRESERVATION OF UPHOLDERS.

LOS CONTORNOS DE TUS CURVAS SON CRESCENDO QUE
CONDUCE AL CLIMAX DEL PAISAJE. ELLOS VEN UN PEÑASCO DE LA
NATURALEZA PARA SER EXPLOTADOS, PERO TU USAS DE TU
BELLEZA Y TALENTOS PARA LA AUTO
PRESERVACION DE LA HON.

Breena Nuñez, excerpt from Center of my Heart zine

Breena Nuñez is a comic book artist born and raised in the Bay Area of California. She is currently pursuing a MFA in Comics through California College of the Arts and is creating comics that are centered on Central American and Afrolatinx identity. The artist has self-published zines since 2013 and has traveled across the U.S. hustling her artwork while exchanging her stories with other zinesters at their local festivals. Zines and comics are highly valuable to the artist's identity because these mediums have empowered her to create art and writing that's not only accessible but valuable to those who are in search for art that speaks about the Central American experience from a weirdo artist's perspective.

Artist Statement: The artwork featured in this exhibit are original pieces that are a part of larger projects involving the Latinx diaspora. The comic book pages of "They Call Me Morena" are the response to the question of what does Latinidad mean to us. This question was asked to several comic book artists who contributed to the anthology, *Tales from La Vida: A Latinx Comic Anthology* which will be released by September 2018. This short story is a memoir piece that expresses the heaviness the artist goes through as she questions her own sense of Latinidad. Being Latinx does not just mean you are one type of Latinx, but you are a body containing multiple narratives that tell stories of resilience and survival.

The portraits featuring characters from the Central American diaspora are also part of a collection of illustrations published as a zine titled *Center of My Heart*. This zine also contains positive affirmations to all of the mujeres and queer Central Americans who have inspired and reaffirmed the artist for generating artwork and literature for her community. *Center of My Heart* is a love letter to all of you who have reminded the artist that the emotional labor that Central Americans contribute to society is precious and needs to be valued.

Tumblr: breenache.tumblr.com
Instagram: @breenache



Sanaz Jamloo, Untitled from series Insomnia, 2012. Digital Photography

Sanaz Jamloo is a San Francisco-based fine art photographer and researcher. Her works mainly concern theories of self-subjectivity, cultural identity, commemoration, and the role of photography in reconstructing visual connectivity between the past and the present. Sanaz holds a MFA in photography from Academy of Art University, and BFA in photography from the Art University in Tehran, Iran.

Artist Statement: Exploring the notion of self-representation, my *Insomnia* series illustrates the disruption in people's life as a result of dislocation. In this series, I make a cultural representation of issues surrounding me, confronting the patriarchal visual and social culture in which I have found myself. The images highly reflect on my past life in Iran, and my current life in the U.S. as a single female immigrant. Through the *Insomnia* project I try to draw a mental map of the world of a forgotten and baffled Iranian generation who were born and raised in a post Islamic revolution and post Iran-Iraq war in Iran with the intent to share my truth that I found it appalling. On January 27, 2017, president Trump signed off the Muslim ban executive order, and listed citizens of seven countries including Iran as banned from easily traveling to the U.S. This executive order exacerbated the already broken diplomatic relationships between Iran and the U.S. It left many Iranian-Americans speechless and hopeless without any connection to their country of heritage, their family, and their cultural identity. Through the *Insomnia* series, I hope to invite viewers to witness the traumatized and innocent people who left everything behind to come to the U.S. in the hope of having a better future.

Website: sanazfoto.com



Alex Martinez, *La Malinche Malinalli*, 2018. Acrylic on Canvas

Alex Martinez is a first-generation Chicana, raised among nopales, strawberries and canneries in Watsonville, California. She began my formal fine arts education at San Francisco State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Studio Art focusing on Printmaking and Painting. Working towards inclusive arts education, she became a dually credentialed General Education and Special Education Teacher focusing on students with mod/severe disabilities.

Her paintings explore themes of transition, identity, spirituality, ritual, healing and growth. Seeking to expand on traditional concepts of painting, she implores elements of printmaking, embroidery, weaving and adornment techniques, to portray the immense complexity and capacity of women-identified and queer people of color to transform ourselves, communities and environments. As a founding member of the Dar + Luz Collective, an art collective founded to empower and highlight the work of artists in the POC and the LGBTQI community, she is invested in community arts engagement and education.

Artist Statement: La Malinche, Malintzin, Doña Marina or Malinalli, the young Nahuatl slave given to the Spanish, has long been synonymous with betrayal, represented as evil or a scheming temptress. She has been vilified for her involvement in the overthrowing the Aztec Empire as the translator to the conquistador Hernán Cortés. Here Malinalli is reflected in a different light, as a survivor, she reclines nude, connecting eyes with the viewer unashamed of her body, reclaiming her freedom, sexuality and posing rather comfortably behind a bed of nopales and flores in a dreamscape of her own making. She is accompanied by her protectors, nopales, an ornate sorriso signifying hope and a serpiente for justice.

Website: Alexandriamartinez.com
Instagram: @lafiufiu



Itzel Alejandra Martinez, *Homegirls*, 2017. Digital Photo GIF

Itzel Alejandra Martinez utilizes mediums such as photography, gifs, and video to recontextualize established narratives. Her work is a direct reflection of her upbringing on the border of El Paso- Juárez and experiencing the constant ambivalence of living in the transnational metropolitan area. Itzel is actively experimenting on ways to document her observations on borders, technology, spirituality, pop culture, racism, and feminism, through her visual work. For the past four years she has been working as a multimedia journalist focused on documenting the lives and stories of the Latinx population in the United States. From artist to chefs, social movements to music festivals, Itzel's work provokes dialogue and debunks preconceptions of the Latinx community. Itzel Alejandra Martinez currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Website: itzelalejandra.com
Instagram: @itzelalejandra.gif