
Vaivén: 21st-Century Art of Puerto Rico and Its Diaspora

September 9 - December 6, 2025

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

Derived from Spanish for “back-and-forth movement,” *vaivén* is most associated with the supposed ease at which Puerto Ricans migrate between the US and Puerto Rico. Beyond the comings and goings of travel, this word invokes something much more profound, naming decades of physical, cultural, and emotional ebb and flow that has resulted in more persons of Puerto Rican descent living across the fifty United States than in Puerto Rico itself. To be “of Puerto Rico” is to be inextricably linked with diaspora, Black and Caribbean epistemologies, and a constant reimagining of home and belonging. In response, *Vaivén: 21st-Century Art of Puerto Rico and Its Diaspora* gathers forty-three artists whose work bears witness to a quarter century of cultural, political, and migratory oscillations, while challenging dominant cultural narratives of “island” post-disaster resiliency versus “mainland” diasporic neither-here-nor-there identity. By tracing conceptual and aesthetic intersections across a range of approaches to image- and mark-making, sculpture and installation, and sound and video, artists in the exhibition explore the hybridity of memory, language, place, and ancestral knowledge as they relate to acts of witnessing, resistance, and connection. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue document new constellations of artists who challenge geographic and cultural authenticity, racialization, and classism, that have shaped which voices define Puerto Rican contemporary art, and which continue to be devalued.

The exhibition is organized by the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, operated by the Department of Art, in association with Hidrante, San Juan. A fully illustrated bilingual English and Spanish accompanying catalogue includes contributions from Arlene Dávila, Yomaira C. Figueroa-Vásquez, Teréz Iacovino, María Elena Ortiz, José López Serra, Carlos Ortiz Burgos, and Monica Uszerowicz. *Vaivén: 21st-Century Art of Puerto Rico and Its Diaspora* is made possible by support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, the Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts, the University of Minnesota Imagine Fund, and Ann and Michael G. Hofkin.

EXHIBITION ARTISTS

Candida Alvarez, Genesis Báez, Sula Bermudez-Silverman, Ricardo Cabret, Melissa Calderón, Rodríguez Calero, Nayda Collazo-Llorens, Gisela Colón, Cristina Córdova, David Antonio Cruz, Maritza Dávila-Irizarry, Larissa De Jesús Negrón, Ada del Pilar Ortiz, Estrella Esquilín, Mónica Félix, Cándida González, GeoVanna Gonzalez, Ivelisse Jiménez, Juanita Lanzo, Natalia Lassalle-Morillo, Olivia Levins Holden, Ricardo Levins Morales, Nora Maité Nieves, Héctor Méndez Caratini, Colectivo Moriviví, Javier Orfón, Josué Pellot Joey Quiñones, Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz, Elizabeth Robles, Amber Robles-Gordon Jezabeth Roca González, Shellyne Rodriguez, Luis Rodríguez Rosario, Raúl Romero, G. Rosa-Rey, Juan Sánchez, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, Amarise Deán Santo, Edra Soto, Bibiana Suárez, Nitza Tufiño, William Villalongo

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Exhibition Checklist



Candida Alvarez, *Hopscotch*, from *Air Paintings* (2017–2019), 2017.
Latex ink and acrylic on PVC mesh with aluminum and wood, 81 × 71 × 26 in. (205.7 × 180.3 × 66.0 cm).
Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.



Genesis Báez, *Condensation (San Juan Airport)*, 2019. Archival pigment print, 32 × 40 in. (76.2 × 101.6 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Sula Bermudez-Silverman, *Beneath, Below, Behind*, 2024. Salt, epoxy resin, and wood. 6 ¼ × 5 ½ × 1 ¼ in. (15.9 × 14 × 3.2 cm). Courtesy the artist and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles.



Melissa Calderón, *Island del Encanto*, 2008. Single-channel video: color, sound, 4:26 minutes. Courtesy the artist.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=3kV5hdTyxPc>



Rodríguez Calero, *Messenger*, 2016.
 Acrollage on canvas, 48 × 36 in. (121.9 × 91.4 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Nayda Collazo-Llorens, *GeoDis/connect 5*, 2020. Wall installation with printed maps and color paper. 360 framed images, each 4 × 6 in. (10.2 × 15.2 cm), 60 × 180 in. (152.4 × 457.2 cm) (approx.) overall. Courtesy the artist.



Gisela Colón, *Estructura Totémica (Piedras Contra Balas, Aguas del Yunque)*, from *Estructuras Totémicas* (2022–present), 2022. Monolith form composed of aurora particles, stardust, cosmic radiation, intergalactic matter, ionic waves, organic carbamate, earth matter, energy, gravity, and time, stacked upon bullet-resistant Lucite base containing layered matter, from bottom to top: pulverized bullets, Puerto Rico red earth (fango Borinqueño), Western desert sands, and cosmic dust, 87½ × 7 × 8 in. (222.2 × 17.7 × 20.3 cm).

Courtesy the artist and Efraín López, New York.



* Colectivo Morivivi, *Paz para la Mujer (Peace for Women)*, 2015.
Public mural (San Juan, PR), 5,000-square-feet (approx.). Courtesy the artists.



* Olivia Levins Holden in collaboration with James Autio, Samie Johnson, Magdalena Kaluza, Katrina Knutson, Camila Leiva, Chaka Mkali, Juliette Myers, Nell Pierce, Crystal Price, Simone Rendon, Claudia Valentino, Mattie Weiss, and Missy Whiteman, *Defend, Grow, Nurture Phillips*, 2019. Acrylic on Polytab and stucco, 36 × 100 ft. (10.9 × 30.4 m.) (approx.). Located at 1035 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota. A project of Hope Community's Power of Vision Mural Project with Project for Pride in Living and Minneapolis Institute of Art.

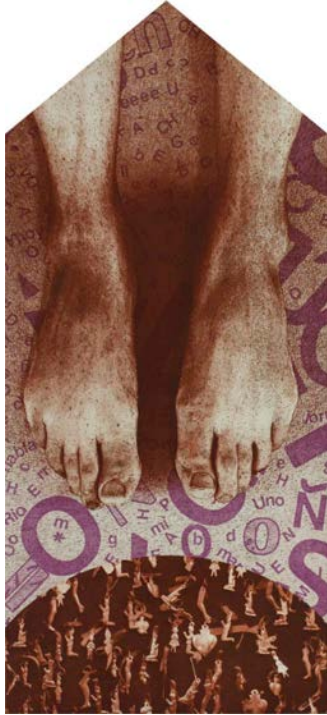
* Representative works related to the forthcoming collaborative mural commission between artists Colectivo Morivivi and Olivia Levins Holden.



David Antonio Cruz,
and they will wait to see the fire and seas in their eyes. green wind, green branches, the ship upon the sea and the horse on the mountain, from *chosen family* (2021-present), 2023. Oil, Flashe, ink, and wax pencil on wood panels with aluminum backing, each 72 × 60 × 2 in. (182.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm); 72 × 123½ × 2 in. (182.9 × 313.7 × 5.1 cm) overall.
 Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.



Cristina Córdova. *Dame flores III*, 2022. Ceramic,
 9½ × 13 × 8 in. (24.1 × 33.02 × 20.32 cm). Courtesy the artist and Ferrin Contemporary.



Maritza Dávila, *Milagros*, 2017.
Three-color lithograph, 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ \times 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (75.6 \times 34.3 cm). Edition: 40. Courtesy the artist.



Larissa De Jesús Negrón, *Waiting to come back home*, 2024. Spray paint, acrylic, color pencil, paper, and soft pastels on canvas, 40 \times 30 in. (101.6 \times 76.2 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Ada del Pilar Ortiz, *Obrero I (Worker I)*, from *Aguirre* (2017–18), 2017. Flaked exterior house paint on aliphatic resin mounted on fabric, 72 × 96 in. (182.8 × 243.8 cm). Courtesy the artist and Osvaldo Santiago.



Estrella Esquilín, *Between You and Me*, 2012. Photogravure on Hahnemühle Ingres paper, image 6 × 4 in. (15.2 × 10.2 cm), sheet 11 × 8 in. (27.9 × 20.3 cm). Courtesy the artist.



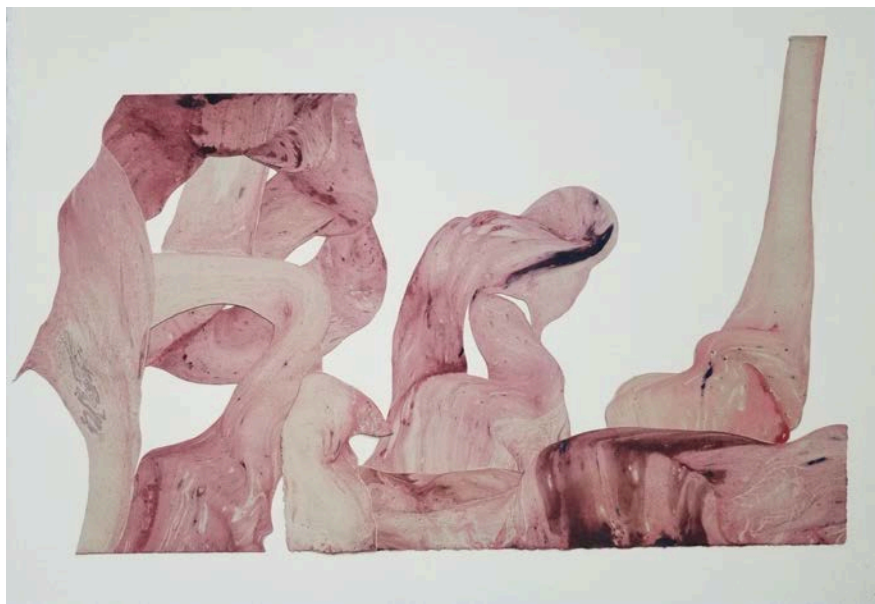
Cándida González, *I Wear Gold to Talk to My Ancestors*, 2024. Variable installation of found and handmade objects, digital prints, 72 × 60 × 24 in. (182.9 × 152.4 × 60.9 cm) (approx.). Courtesy the artist.



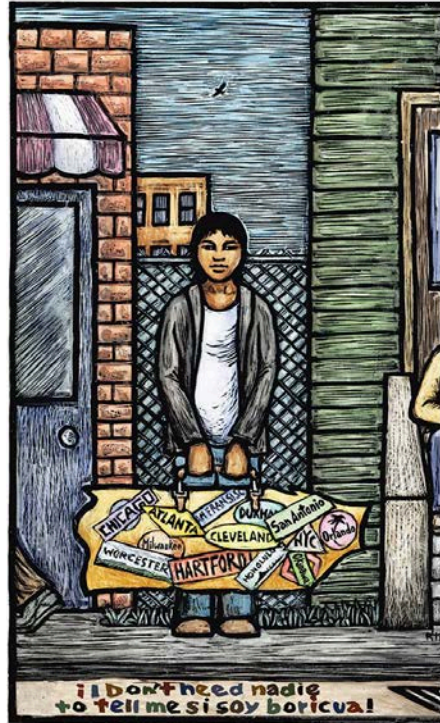
GeoVanna Gonzalez, *PLAY, LAY, AYE: Act 4*, 2020. Painted steel, expanded metal, and plexiglass, installation at the NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 60 × 36 × 36 in. (152.4 × 91.4 × 91.4 cm) each, total of (6) objects. Courtesy the artist.



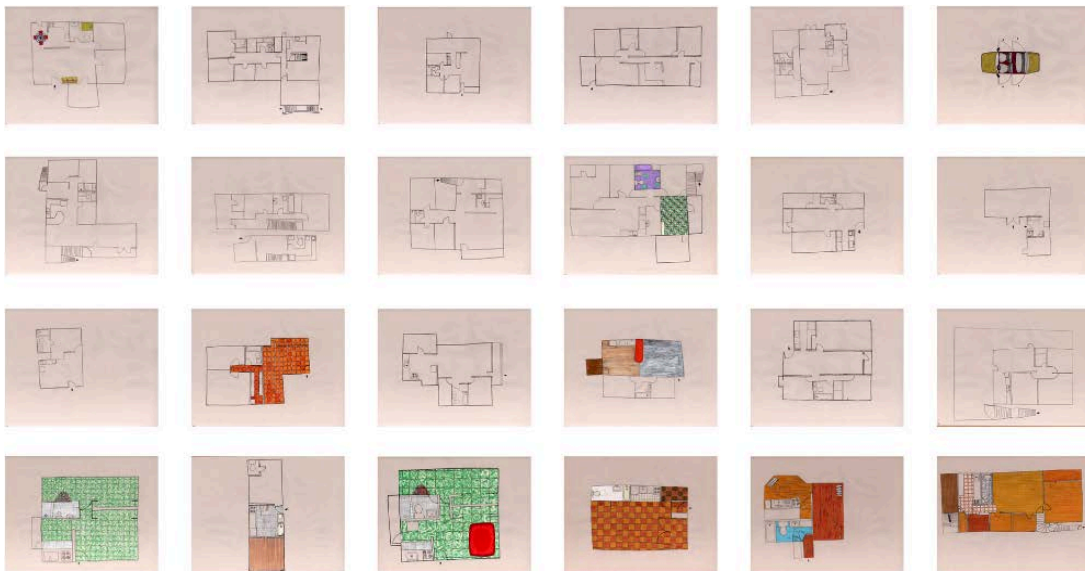
Ivelisse Jiménez, *Detour #21*, from *Detour* (2010-21), 2013/2021. Enamel paint on vinyl, plexiglass, acrylic on canvas, polystyrene, wire, paper, ceramic, and powdered pigment, 80 × 100 × 25 in. (203.2 × 254 × 63.5 cm).
Courtesy the artist.



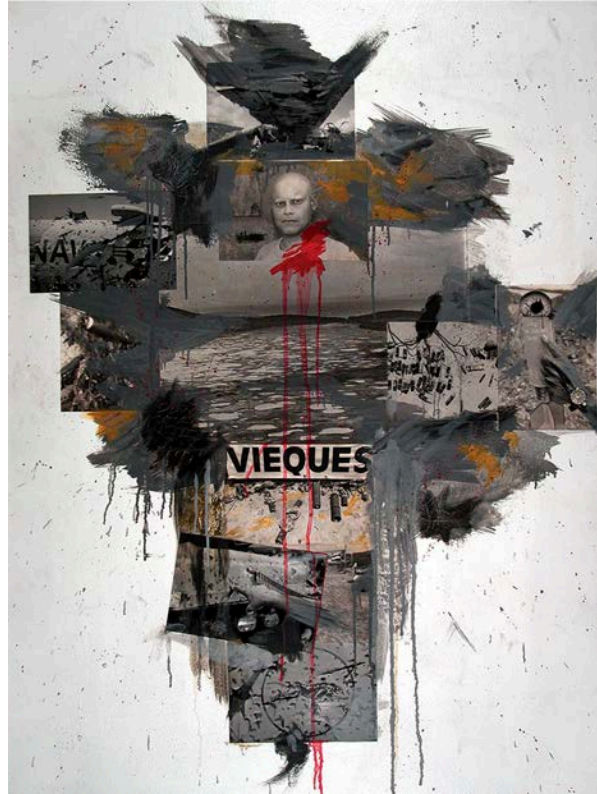
Juanita Lanzo, *Remains*, 2003–4. Collage on Reeves BFK paper, 15 × 22¼ in. (38.1 × 56.5 cm).
Courtesy the artist and Hidrante, San Juan.



Ricardo Levins Morales, *Soy Boricua* (I Am Puerto Rican), 2010. Digital print, image $9\frac{1}{8} \times 15$ in. (27.9 \times 43.2 cm), sheet 11 \times 17 in. (27.9 \times 43.2 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Nora Maité Nieves, *Places I've lived in . . .* (Campo, Abuela, Fordham (University Gardens), El Vedado, Harvard (University Gardens), Galant, Baldrich, Mi Tía, Vina, Miramar, Papi, San Gerardo, Tallahassee FSU, MMO, Tallahassee, Tallahassee, Papi, Carolina, Pisos de Don Manuel, New York, Pisos de Don Manuel, Chicago 1103, Chicago 822, Chicago 2144), 2009–11. Graphite and color pencil on Mylar, 24 drawings total, each 9 \times 11 in. (22.9 \times 27.9 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Héctor Méndez Caratini, *Via Crucis III*, from *Vieques: Crónicas del Calvario*, 2000. Mixed media, photograph, and acrylic on canvas, 48 × 36 in. (121.9 × 91.4 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Javier Orfón, *Tratado de muchas cuevas*, 2018-19. Antillean pottery, found objects, wood, Ceramics: dimensions variable, Table: 16 × 79 ½ × 31 in. (40.64 × 201.93 × 78.74 cm).
Courtesy the artist and Hidrante, San Juan.



Josué Pellot, *Temporary Allegiance*, 2007. Nylon, 69 × 116 in. (175.2 × 294.6 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Joey Quiñones, *De Colores (Blanca, Morena, India, Trigueña, Prieta, Negra)*, 2018/2021. Porcelain, tile, wood, and acrylic, 11 × 55 × 15 in. (38.1 × 139.7 × 27.9 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz, *Wig Variant #6: Sanctuary series, Nested #1 (performance portrait)*, 2021. Archival pigment print (wig: hair extensions, spray foam, gold and copper leaf, beads, and Spanish moss), 40 × 30 in. (101.6 × 76.2 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Elizabeth Robles, *Fermentación de la lengua*, 2007. Pigmented encaustic on linen, stainless steel fitting, 7½ × 16¾ × 7⅞ in. (19.1 × 42.5 × 18.1 cm). Courtesy the artist.



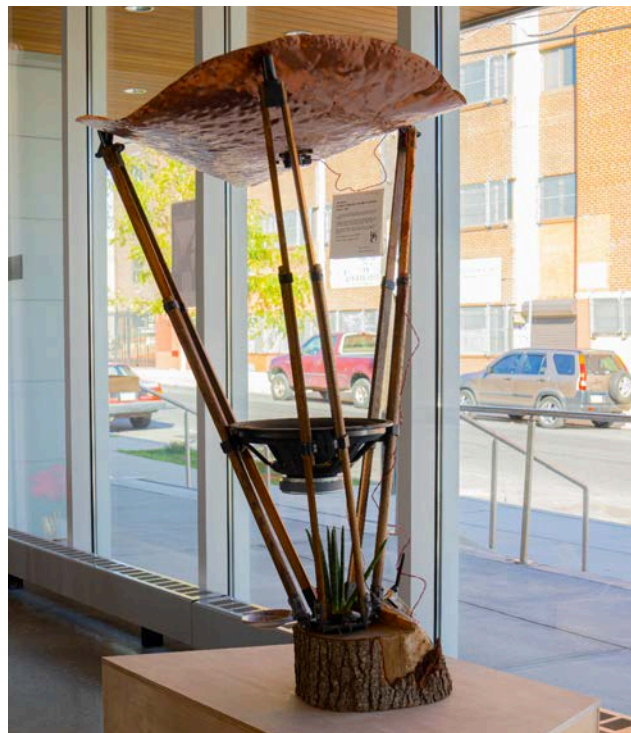
Amber Robles-Gordon, *Puerto Rico Political I* (recto), *Puerto Rico Spiritual I* (verso), from *Successions: Traversing US Colonialism* (2020-21), 2021. Mixed media on quilt, 90 × 104 in. (228.6 × 264.1 cm). 1 of 7 quilts.
Courtesy the artist.



Shellyne Rodriguez, *Deity (in the spirit of the Garbage offensive)*, 2015. Ceramic, wood, azabache charms, and brass ringlets, 54 × 24 × 42 in. (137.2 × 60.9 × 106.7 cm). Courtesy the artist and P•P•O•W, New York.



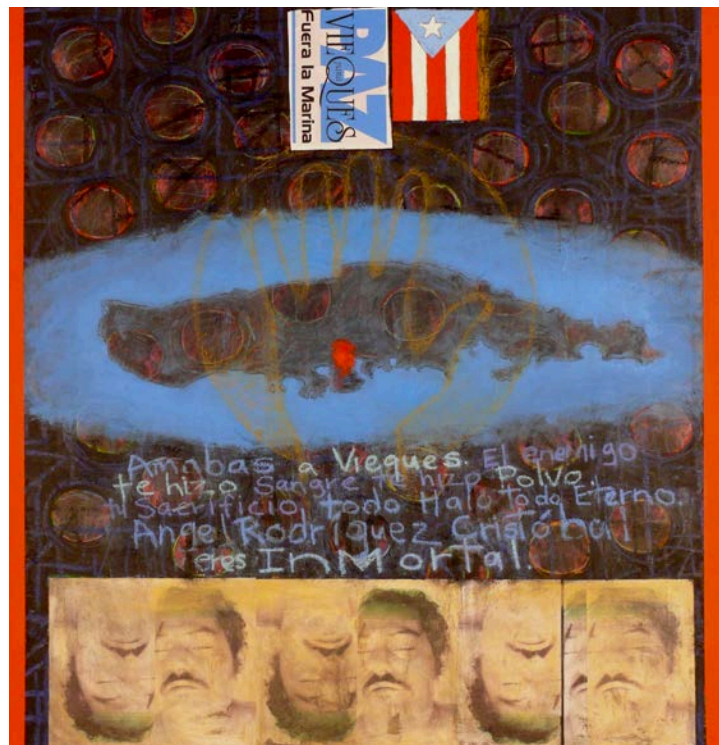
Luis Rodríguez Rosario, *Mecanismo de constreñimiento*, 2014. Maple, steel, latex balloon, and brick, 13 × 14 × 4 in. (33 × 35.5 × 10.1 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Raúl Romero, *A vessel for infrasound: Transmission from Arecibo (Onomonopoetics of a Puerto Rican Landscape)*, 2020. Copper, wooden tripod, speaker, frog exciter, *Dracaena angolensis*, *Quercus* stump, light reflection dish, water, audio components, and ambient sound, 50 × 25 × 23 in. (127 × 63.5 × 58.4 cm) (approx.). Courtesy the artist.



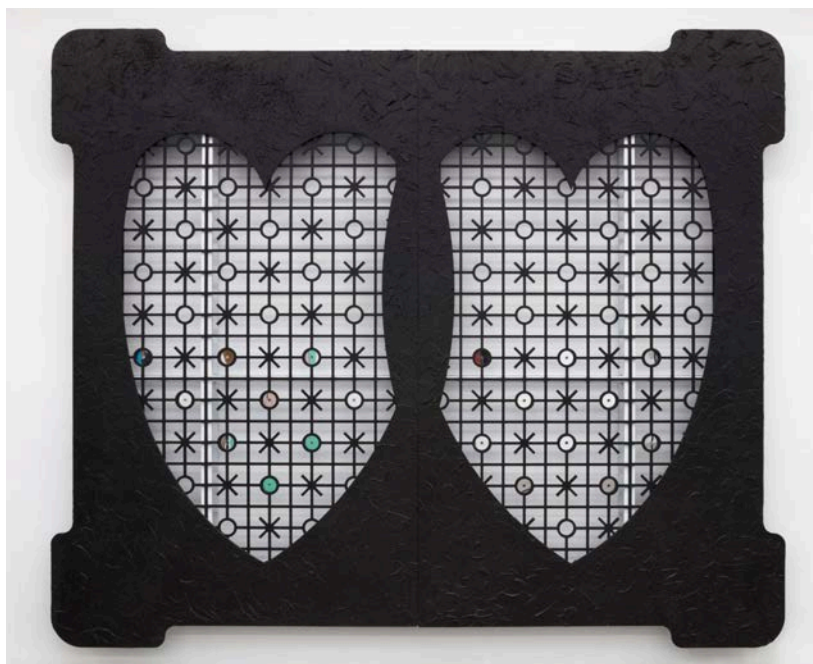
G. Rosa-Rey, *Region in the Mind*, 2022. Acrylic, sand, and sandpaper on paper, 17½ × 17½ in. (44.4 × 44.4 cm); 23 × 23 in. (58.4 × 58.4 cm) framed. Courtesy the artist.



Juan Sánchez, *Para Ángel de Vieques*, 2006. Oil and mixed media collage on wood panel, 72 × 74 in. (182.8 × 187.9 cm). Courtesy Guariken Arts Inc. and Hutchinson Modern & Contemporary.



Amarise Deán Santo, *Our scales like mirrors to the light*, 2023.
Color film, inkjet print, wood, cement, and rosaries, 12 × 26 in. (35.5 × 71.1 cm). Courtesy the artist.



Edra Soto, *The Myth of Closure | El Mito del Cierre*, 2021. MDF, plaster, paint, Sintra, aluminum tube, mirrored acrylic, and viewfinder, 120 × 144 × 7 in. (304.8 × 365.7 × 17.7 cm).
Courtesy the artist and Luis De Jesus, Los Angeles.



Bibiana Suárez, selections from the series *Memoria (Memory)*, 2005–11. Mixed media on aluminum panel, 35 objects, each $23\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{1}{2}$ in. (59.7×59.7 cm); $112 \times 318\frac{1}{2}$ in. (284.5×808.9 cm) (approx.) overall. Courtesy the artist.



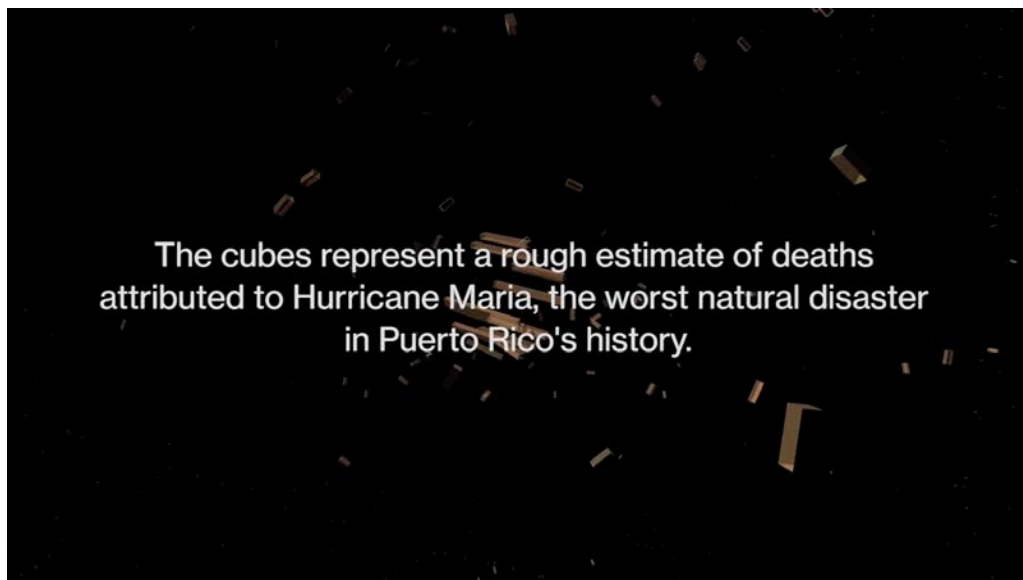
Nitza Tufiño, Selections from *Tenderete* (1974–present), 2023. Archival inkjet prints and mixed media sewn to cotton fabric with thread, 5 double-sided objects hanging from a clothesline, each 38×20 in. (96.5×50.8 cm) (approx.); 120×38 in. (304.8×50.8 cm) (approx.) overall. Courtesy the artist.



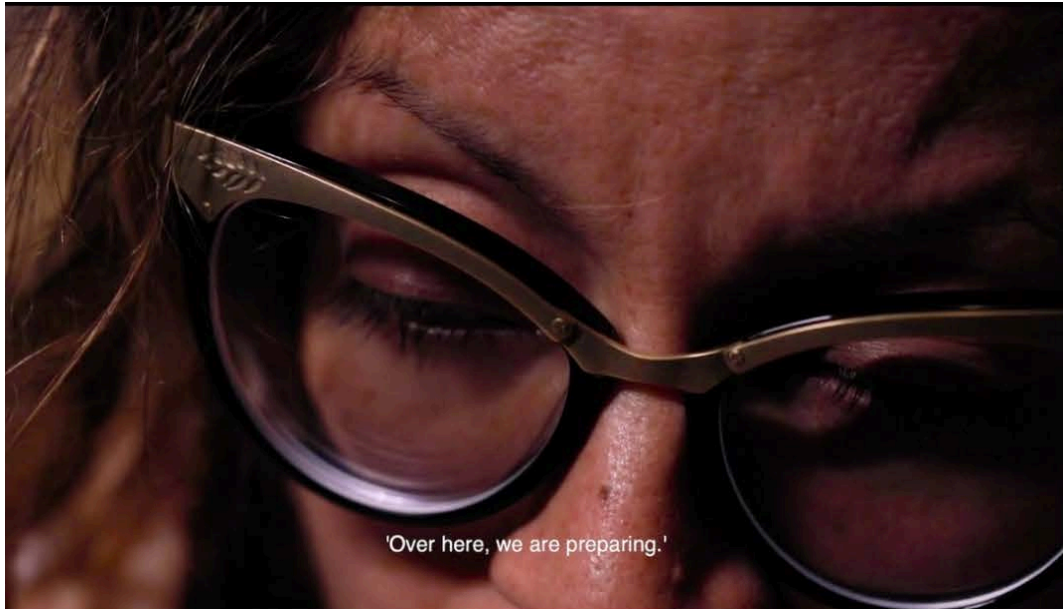
William Villalongo, *Specimen*, 2022. Stenciled linen pulp paint on black cotton with black abaca layered on top and collaged inkjet prints, 21 in. (53.3 cm) diameter. Courtesy the artist and Dieu Donn , New York.

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Exhibition Checklist Continued: Projected Filmworks

Projected films have been formatted as a compilation totaling approximately 120 minutes. The films activate (3) 4 ft. \times 8 ft. hanging screens at any given time as they range between single, two, and three channel projection.



Ricardo Cabret, *Origen*, 2018. Single-channel video: color, sound, 2:14 minutes. Courtesy the artist. vimeo.com/451361519.



Mónica Félix, *Vaivén*, 2019. Two-channel HD video: color, sound, 14:46 minutes.
 Courtesy the artist. monicafelix.com/Vaiven.



Directed by Natalia Lassalle-Morillo in collaboration with Erica Ballester, Nina Lucía Rodríguez, Raquel Rodríguez, Emma Suárez-Báez, chorus in collaboration with Xenia Rubinos, *En Parábola/Conversations on Tragedy (Part I)*, 2024. Three-channel 4k video, digitized 16 mm and 8 mm film: color, sound, 60 minutes.
 Courtesy the artist.



Jezabeth Roca Gonzalez, *House Tour*, 2020; *Vortex*, 2022; and *Isla Flotante* (still pictured here), 2022–25. Single-channel HD video compilation: color, sound, 08:09 minutes. Courtesy the artist. vimeo.com/user36915522.



Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, *Otros Usos* (still pictured here), 2014, *Post-military cinema*, 2014, *Ojos para mis enemigos*, 2014, Single-channel HD video and digitized 16mm film compilation: color, sound, 31:52 minutes. Courtesy the artist and Sociedad del Tiempo Libre.