CORPUS
Landscapes of Memories and Eternal Sprouting

CURATED BY
Constanza Valenzuela

THE RUBELLE AND NORMAN
SCHAFLER GALLERY
CORPUS

Landscapes of Memories and Eternal Sprouting

PRESENTED BY
School of Art
Department of Exhibitions

SUPPORTED BY
Somos Pratt
Center for Equity & Inclusion
Black Alumni of Pratt
Alumni Relations
Pratt Presents

CURATED BY
Constanza Valenzuela (BFA Sculpture and Art History '17)

THE RUBELLE AND NORMAN SCHAFLER GALLERY
August 29 - September 30, 2022

COVER ART BY
Lydia Allende Hernandez, Cuánto Duele Tu Amor, 2021

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY
Kate Therrian
Welcome to Corpus: Landscapes of Memories and Eternal Sprouting, Pratt’s first collective School of Art student exhibition.

This year, in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, and in partnership with Pratt’s Department of Exhibitions and Somos Pratt, we are celebrating the work of School of Art students and recent alumni who identify as Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, Hispanic or Latin American. Who are these students and alumni as Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, Hispanic, Latin American artists? Or, are these outdated terms? Are there alternative ways to fully understand, recognize, and respect this diverse group of artists in broader contexts? To help us navigate these issues, we have invited alumna Constanza Valenzuela (BFA Sculpture and Art History ‘17) to curate this exhibit.

Trying to classify artists under one banner can prove to be challenging. It tends to homogenize a group of artists of diverse backgrounds and experiences, sometimes minimizing their impact. Arlene Dávila, in her book Latinx Art: Artists, Markets, and Politics, describes how this kind of “representation elides the different histories and particularities of what it is to live and work as an artist, as a racial minority working in the US, or as a national or unmarked artist in Latin America.”

Although labels can be problematic, they have also contributed to efforts to elevate the work of unseen, marginalized artists, introducing a whole new set of artists to the culture at large and promoting visibility and discussion. If the work involved is surrounded by a conscientious discourse, which allows us to explore its historical relevance and value, the experience overall may lead to equity for these artists and eventually help expand our understanding of art.

What should our strategy be in making sure these artists are not invisible and that they don’t end up just being part of an umbrella category? How can we elevate their work? I hope Corpus will help us explore these questions.

To encourage further discussion, we have organized two panels around this exhibition:

Voces: Exploring Latin American/Latinx Artists @ Pratt, led by Fine Arts Adjunct Professor Analía Segal

Art and Identity: Allocating resources to the development and representation of Latine/@/X artists, closing night panel led by curator Constanza Valenzuela

I would like to thank Daisy Rivera and Analía Segal for the idea of doing something for our Latinx/Latin American students, Kate Therri-Barron, who, with her vision, creativity, and magic, embraced this idea and made it a reality, Nicholas Battis and Kirsten Nelson, who were open to partner with us and provide their gallery space and resources, Marcus Civin for his steady guidance and for being an amazing copy editor, Jazmin Peralta for her support and advice, our faculty and staff for encouraging students to submit their work, all the students who submitted their work, and Constanza Valenzuela for her passion to promote the work of Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, Hispanic and Latin American artists. I would also like to thank Pratt’s Department of Exhibitions, the Center for Equity and Inclusion (CEI), Somos Pratt, Pratt Presents, Black Alumni of Pratt (BAP), and Alumni Relations for their support.

Congratulations to all the students and alumni featured in Corpus.

Enjoy!

Jorge Oliver
Dean, School of Art
Pratt Institute

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CORPUS:
LANDSCAPES OF MEMORIES AND ETERNAL SPROUTING

August 29 - September 30, 2022
Curated By Constanza Valenzuela (BFA Sculpture and Art History ’17)

Lydia Allende Hernandez (BFA Communications Design ’25)
Mateo Arciniegas Huertas (BFA Photography ’23)
Julio Cardenas-Arana (BFA Fine Arts Painting ’23)
Andrea Garcia (BFA Fine Arts Painting ’22)
Felix Lugo (BFA Art & Design Education ’23)
Ariana Milan (BFA Fine Arts Painting ’22)
Emily Morillo (BFA/MA Art & Design Education ’26)
Kristina Naso (MFA Photography ’22)
Christian Ocampo (BFA Film/Video ’22)
Dariana Portes (BFA Photography ’23)
MADeleine Riande (MFA Fine Arts ’22)
Andrea Robles (BFA Fine Arts Painting ’24)
Aysia Ciel Ramirez Segura (BFA Digital Arts 2D Animation ’22)
Gina Somma (BFA Fine Arts Painting ’23)

ABOUT SOMOS PRATT

Each year, Pratt Institute celebrates Somos Pratt from September 15 to October 15, to celebrate diversity, rich histories, cultures, and contributions of the Hispanic/Latinx community and their ancestors from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.
Constanza Valenzuela (Ecuadorian, b. 1995) is a curator and cultural worker dedicated to the representation of immigrant and LatinX artists. Valenzuela is currently the Curatorial & Exhibitions Assistant at the High Line in New York City. The High Line is committed to showing curated exhibitions of contemporary public art that directly engage with cultural, social, and political currents. Valenzuela oversees the production and installation of public art installments on the High Line, along with adjacent programming. Previously, Valenzuela worked as the Programming Assistant for Creative Time, a public arts non-profit organization also in New York City. Valenzuela has an MA in Visual Arts Administration from New York University (2019), and a BFA in Sculpture and Art History from Pratt Institute (2017).

Together with Jack Radley, she is the co-founder of ACOMPI, a New York-based curatorial project that foregrounds interdisciplinary practice and collaboration to expand the intersection of independent curatorial practice and site-responsive public engagement.
The human body is central to how we understand facets of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. The artists in this exhibition, *Corpus*, explore the complex and fragmented Latine/@/X identity through representations of the body, reflection, presence, and autonomy. In thinking about the body as a vessel of memories, *sentimientos*, and compartmentalized traumas – and its direct relationship to change, growth, and healing – the artists use the body as a medium to tell a personal narrative and explore a perpetual sense of belonging.

As the body is a site for expressing identity, artists historically have used depictions or taken inspiration from the body for thousands of years to convey and comment on culture, power, social structures, spiritual beliefs, and cultural values. While the Latine/@/X identity is increasingly contested as a unifying ethnicity for over thirty countries with diverse and complicated histories tied to a colonial and racially segregated past, there is an increasing urge in Western institutions for the visibility of Latine/@/X folks and culture, which have previously been neglected, under-resourced, and under-scholarized. Building on a growing presence of Latine/@/X students and faculty at universities in the United States, it is crucial to create and hold space to further examine identity and its ties to historical oppression, media stereotypes, and erasure. From this point on, we can embark on an open-ended discussion of the body and its relationship to diaspora and the Latine/@/X identity.

Let us take a moment to consider the metaphysical understanding of searching for belonging. In a diasporic sense, most work in relation to identity is autobiographical, drawing from a personal history of being displaced, misunderstood, and in pursuit of self-determination. Themes in this exhibition include but are not limited to memories, family, trauma, absence, guilt, reflection, healing, sexuality, language, connection, folklore, classicism, *Syncretism*, and mortality. The body in some shape or form makes a consistent appearance throughout the exhibited work to speak through these themes, their differences and their commonalities.

The human body occupies an ambiguous, even paradoxical role in cultural categorizations – from the cosmologies of archaic societies to the concepts and practices of modern civilization. The body is both a subject and an object of practices and knowledge; it is both a tool and a raw material to be worked upon. In thinking about practices and knowledge, the function of memory is to serve as the faculty of the mind by which data or information is encoded, stored, and retrieved when needed. It is the retention of information over time for the purpose of influencing future action. If past events could not be remembered, it would be impossible for language, relationships, or personal identity to develop. The artists in this exhibition, including Mateo Arciniegas Huertas, Andrea Garcia, Ariana Milan, and Emily Morillo, use memory as an artistic tool to confront a self-understanding of origins. The body as a vessel holds individual and collective memories. Through a diasporic lens, the literal layering of memories that contribute to the self as a whole and understanding can be seen in Garcia’s and Morillo’s paintings that incorporate domestic scenes and recollections of childhood that contributed to a present understanding of identity. The eerie absence of bodies in Arciniegas Huertas’ series Olvido pa’ Recordar (Forget to Remember) creates a feeling of loss or estrangement with one’s own memories.

In contrast to exploring the past, other artists in the exhibition use their bodies as tools for self-reflection and understanding of presence, physically and consciously. Artists such as Felix Lugo, Kristina Naso, Dariana Portes, and Andrea Robles feature their bodies to further explore the formation of identity. Throughout history, artists have depicted themselves in self-portraiture and used their bodies as artistic elements to explore identity in terms of culture, gender, sexuality, and connection to nature. The political act of *taking up space* is crucial to the further representation of diverse voices and perspectives. Lugo’s work explores her own identity as a transgender, Afro-Latin artist in relationship to growing up in a Catholic home and the associated guilt, as well as a sense of love and belonging in an accepting community. Domestic traumas often influence how we see ourselves, and this exploration can be seen in the photo work of Portes as therapeutic acts of healing.

\*We* in the progressive unifying sense

\*Sentimientos* is the Spanish word for ‘feelings’

\*Syncretism* is the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religious, cultures, or schools of thought. Often used to speak about the Catholic and Pre-Columbian indigenous practices that have merged under the contemporary understanding of Catholicism in Latin and Central America.

\*Ana Mendieta* (November 18, 1948 – September 8, 1985) was a legendary Cuban-American performance artist, sculptor, painter and video artist who is best known for her “earth-body” artwork.
**Kristina Naso** video work forefronts the idea of the self and the multifaceted layers that contribute to self-identification, most obviously seen in *American Dream*, in which she has compiled found video footage of her mother's hometown on the rural Texas-Mexican border mashed up with stereotypes of Mexican-American characters from famous sitcoms. **Robles** takes a more symbolic approach to self-portraiture and incorporates colors and distortions to express feelings.

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Collectively, the artists in the exhibition display the pluralism of Latine/@/X representation and the varied perspectives and layered complexities that contribute to an individual and collective understanding of identity. Like the body, the Latine/@/X identity is ever evolving.

The body can be conceived in parts, as a mortal subject, as a part of something larger, such as the cosmos, and as an everlastin6g changing module. Artists **Lydia Allende Hernandez**, **Christian Ocampo**, **MADeleine Riande**, **Gina Somma**, **Aysia Ciel Ramirez Segura**, and **Julio Cardenas-Arana** use the idea of the body to express a personal narrative or a collective perception. **Allende Hernandez** creates mystical creatures with human qualities to explore folkloric tales and traditions. **Riande** uses consistent motifs of the brain and the eyeball and focuses on how trauma physically affects neurological pathways and perception. Similar to the previous mention of exploring one’s own body in relation to la pachamama⁶, **Somma** paints bodies close to nature or becoming nature as seen in *That Which Remains Greater*. In the oil paintings of *Cardenas-Arana*, one can see the repeated theme and use of the classical character of the cherub or putti in various domestic settings and displayed as religious icons to explore identity in a removed yet humanistic way that references a variety of styles and traditions in the history of painting itself. In contrast, to Ocampo’s recent documentary film, *la subida*, display the will, power, and endurance of the human body as well as the interactions and camaraderie and found community in cycling. Lastly, the video of Ramirez Segura shows everyday activity and interactions with others through a fantastical first person character lens.

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⁶ *Pachamama* is usually translated as Mother Earth. A more literal translation would be "World Mother" (in the Aymara and Quechua languages). The Inca goddess can be referred to in multiple ways - the primary way being Pachamama. Other names for her are: Mama Pacha, La Pachamama, and Mother Earth.
ARTISTS & WORKS
Lydia Allende Hernandez (Mexican, b. 2002) is based in, Tamaulipas, MX, Houston, TX, and Utica, NY. She primarily uses digital mediums including illustration, video, and animation. Inspired by Mexican folk art, surrealism, and abstraction, she uses her artwork to represent her connections with others as well as her emotions, bringing an extension of her inner world into real life.
Mateo Arciniegas Huertas (Colombian, b. 1993) is a Brooklyn-based photographer. Arciniegas Huertas’ work focuses on the self-reflecting and autobiographical as the vehicle for understanding and accepting the passage of time and mortality. With the physicality of the analog photographic process and an obsession with the archive, Arciniegas Huertas explores his familiar transgenerational past and present. Resulting in a catharsis overcoming trauma and psychological difficulties. Arciniegas Huertas was selected as a finalist for Encontros da Imagem Photo Festival (Braga, Portugal) 2022, shortlisted for Helsinki Photo Festival (Helsinki, Finland) 2021, and Descubrimientos PHoto España (Madrid, Spain) 2020. Arciniegas Huertas has exhibited in group shows in New York, Braga, and Bogotá. In 2021, Arciniegas Huertas created Domingo a las 4, an outdoor public exhibition at Reinaldo Salgado Playground in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, presented by ACOMPI. In 2020, Arciniegas Huertas presented a solo exhibition Olvido pa’ Recordar at Miriam Gallery (Brooklyn, U.S.). Arciniegas Huertas has self-published zines including +571, La Atenas de Sudamerica (2020), and Fuck You Don’t Tell (2017).
Julio Cardenas-Arana (Peruvian, b. 1992) began his career in Lima. He currently works in Brooklyn, New York, where he is a senior in Pratt Institute’s BFA Painting program. He uses oil painting as his main media emulating Baroque aesthetics as a way to explore cultural interactions.
Andrea Garcia (Venezuelan, b. 1999) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Garcia recently graduated from Pratt Institute with a BFA in painting. Her most recent body of work explores childhood, its enduring effects, and the interlacing of the past and the present. Images of her childhood are combined with images of volcanoes to express reflections of the unconscious mind. Lava is a force similar to the unconscious: explosive, concealed, and deep-seated. Although these forces can be destructive, they are always illuminating – revealing and releasing what is within through emergence. By way of reflection, this surfacing of deep internal matter sets into motion a process of transformation, just as the earth’s exterior re-molds with the cooling of lava from a volcanic eruption.
FELIX LUGO  
(BFA Art & Design Education ’23)

Felix Lugo (Dominican-American, b. 2001) currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Lugo is a transgender, non-binary sculptor, mixed media and performance artist who explores themes of gender, sexuality, and love. She attempts to reconcile their identity with both their culture and lived experience. These explorations fabricate an idea of her body outside of the confines of the gender binary; redefining, reclaiming, and reinventing their cultural heritage to fit their own perspective of the world.
Ariana Milan (New York-Puerto Rican, b. 1997) is an interdisciplinary artist based between New York City and the Hudson Valley. Through painting, Milan deepens her understanding of the ‘Nuyorican’ experience by translating family narratives and historical research into folklore. Ariana is profoundly interested in perreo, memory, intimacy, violence, trauma, and spirituality, which are primary concerns in her practice.
Emily Elise Morillo (Ecuadorian, b. 2003) was born in New Jersey and is currently living in Brooklyn studying at Pratt Institute to become an Art Educator and Art Therapist. Morillo’s focus shifted to the art world when her ACL tore during a soccer game in high school leading her to believe it was her destiny to pursue art. Now, Morillo works in mixed media utilizing paint, charcoal, pen, colored pencils, digital art, and collage. Her works consist of both imagination and reference with a sense of personal emotion and storytelling. Morillo strives to connect with her viewers on an emotional level through expressive lines, contrast, and colors. She often enjoys illustrating hands in her works to aid the viewer in connecting to her art as if these hands were their own. Morillo believes that hands are one of the most expressive body parts and thinks it is only appropriate to use them to further elaborate on the emotion of a piece.
Kristina Naso (Chican@, b. 1994) is a multimedia artist primarily using video, photography, and written text to explore their self through the creation and recreation of persona and memory. Their subject matter is specific to their own family dysfunction, but because of its vulnerable specificity, it becomes universally relatable. Using dry humor, personal archives, and uncanny simulation in the work, Kristina creates a physical distance between creator and observer in which the observer can question the truth of Kristina’s world.
Christian Ocampo (Cuban-American, b. 2000) is a Miami-born, Cuban-raised, New York-based visual artist. Christian uses his global knowledge of cycling, Hispanic Heritage, and the world around him to influence the work he produces. He is deeply fascinated making work about cycling that is different than the industry standard. He incorporates what he defines as successful visual art strategies into his filmmaking.
Dariana Portes (Dominican-American, b. 2001) was born and raised in Washington Heights, currently residing in Brooklyn, NY. Portes’ work is primarily lens-based in combination with multimedia, often using text to further elevate the experience concerning the viewer. Keenly aware of perception, Portes creates significance within the importance of one’s surroundings, memories, and traumas reflective within the formation of individuality. Making use of light and personal settings in a manner that often references romanticism, the currents of empathy are explored. Portes has exhibited at Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute (Utica, NY), The International Center of Photography School and Museum (New York, NY), NAEA Studio and Gallery (Alexandria, VA), and Sonder Exhibition (New York, NY), among others.
Madeleine Riande (Panamenian, b. 1992) currently works and lives in Brooklyn, NY. Riande works in installations, video, sculpture, performing and kinetic art to question how the brain works through trauma as repressed events ignored by consciousness. Flashbacks, nightmares are diffused images from trauma. All memory is partly fiction. Riande works with the study of biological processes of the brain and how it is plastically transformed from experiences. How the brain evolves by society and technology (“We are Cyborgs”). Riande went to the Savannah College of Arts and Design (Savannah, GA) for a BFA in Industrial Design and Pratt for an MFA. Her work has been exhibited at the MAC Panamá, CCI- Centro Cultural Internacional, Galeria Mateo Sariel, Galeria Habitante (both in Panama City, Panama), among others.
Andrea Robles (Puerto Rican, b. 2000) currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. Robles works in painting, drawing, sculpture, jewelry, illustration and printmaking. Heavily inspired by contemporary artists such as Aleksandra Waliszewska and Christiane Cegavske, Robles creates self-portraits that allude to themes of vulnerability, spirituality, and symbolism in a dark, fantastical dreamscape. Robles has participated in exhibitions such as the Women’s History Month Celebration at IATI (Manhattan, NY), Come to Matter at Pratt Institute (Brooklyn, NY), and others.
AYSIA CIEL RAMIREZ SEGURA
(BFA Digital Arts 2D Animation ’22)

Aysia Segura (Texan & Mexican, b. 1999) is a Latino artist originally from San Antonio, Texas and now based in NYC. She recently graduated from Pratt this past spring with a BFA in 2D animation and digital arts, gathering experience by working on all aspects of the 2D animation pipeline. Out of everything that goes into making a 2D film, Aysia specifically finds excitement when working on pre-production roles such as concept and character design. Right now her art and animation style is intentionally flat and loose, with a focus on playing with skewed perspective, funky colors and characters, and storytelling!
Gina Somma (Peruvian-American, b.1999) works and lives in Brooklyn but was born and raised in Costa Rica. Somma uses oil paintings to create intricate images exploring the complex relationship between humans and their physical and psychological environments. She uses motifs of plants and landscapes inspired from her upbringing as well as the human figure to create emotionally charged narratives.