

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Margarita Cabrera

“Security” ... “Seguridad” ... “Seguridad”
“Control” ... “Control” ... “Control”
“Safety” ... “Protección” ... “Protección”
“Power” ... “Poder” ... “Poder”

September 8 — October 20, 2023

Reception: Saturday, October 7, 3 – 5 PM

Artist Talk: 3:30 PM

Free and open to the public

David B. Smith Gallery is proud to present a solo exhibition by San Antonio, TX-based artist Margarita Cabrera. Featuring charged materials such as reclaimed Border Patrol uniforms, cochineal insect dye, and traditional Mexican terra cotta pots, Cabrera’s practice steps forward with powerful commentary on the state of Mexican-U.S. border relations. For her debut with the gallery, Cabrera will present selected sculptures and works on paper from three ongoing series throughout the Main Gallery and Project Room.

In the Main Gallery, *Space in Between*—an ongoing series started in 2010—features hand embroidered sculptures made from upcycled Border Patrol uniforms and traditional Mexican terra cotta planter pots. Created in collaboration with Mexican immigrants, traditional embroidery techniques from Los Tenangos, Hidalgo, Mexico, tell the border crossing stories in a craft language historically used to reflect the popular culture, rituals, and myths of Otomi indigenous communities. Appearing as cacti and desert plants, these fabric and mixed media works act as testaments of strength, will, and hope as they both bear witness and carry deeply personal and politicized narratives.



Margarita Cabrera, *Space In Between - Nopal (Amanda Hinojosa)*, 2022, Border Patrol uniform fabric, copper wire, thread, and terra cotta pot, 47 x 54 x 15 in. (119.4 x 137.2 x 38.1 cm)

Flujo de Extracciones / Flow of Extractions takes its name from the word *extracciones*, a term commonly used to refer to the extraction of natural resources from Latin American countries by the American oil and mining industries. Developed by the Aztecs, cochineal dyes are exported around the world and have been highly sought after for hundreds of years. In Cabrera’s *Flujo de Extracciones*, brightly colored purple, pink, orange, and red cochineal dyes extracted from insects that feed on prickly pear cactus plants create beautifully abstract, amoebic forms on paper reminiscent of figures or topographical maps. Collaged alongside colorful gouache shapes, Border Patrol uniforms appear again and act as a looming reminder of government enforcement and regulation.

In the Project Room, interactive sculptural works from *Pepita Para El Loro Para Que Hable o Calle/ A nugget for the parrot to speak or be quiet*, chatter to visitors and one another alike. Outfitted with individual voice recording devices, soft sculptures sewn from Border Patrol uniforms play a complex game of telephone that mimics the transfer of stories and knowledge as it travels mouth-to-mouth across communities and borders. Created in the image of over-poached, endangered red-crowned amazon parrots, the legality of the exotic pet trade and its exploitation of wildlife and ecological systems tells a separate but related story of conquest, misinformation, and public discourse surrounding who and what the U.S. welcomes across its borders.

Delicately embroidered into the former garments of governmental protagonists/antagonists of the American border landscape or spoken into the ears of allies and adversaries, Margarita Cabrera’s work is underscored by the labors of love and duty. Crucial topics surrounding personhood, citizenship, and the right to exist are expressed with gestures of beauty and humor, invoking the complexity of the wrought U.S. immigration system. In her presentation of these three bodies of work, Margarita Cabrera’s ingenuity, honesty, and razor sharp wit stands on the crest of a rapidly unfolding transcultural conversation.

About Margarita Cabrera

Margarita Cabrera was born in Monterrey, Mexico, and moved to El Paso, TX at the age of 10. She received an MFA from Hunter College in New York, NY. Cabrera is an assistant professor at the Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, TX; and the Wellin Museum of Art, Clinton, NY. Her work has been included in exhibitions at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, TX; the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX; the Ford Foundation Gallery, New York, NY; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; the Sweeney Art Center for Contemporary Art at the University of California, Riverside, Riverside, CA; the Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Location; El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY; and El Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico.

In 2012 she was a Knight Artist in Residence at the McColl Center for Visual Art in Charlotte, NC. Cabrera was also a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, presenting a community public art sculpture commissioned by Lego at Discovery Green in Houston, Puentes Culturales. In May 2019, Cabrera unveiled her monumental, participatory public sculpture *Árbol de la Vida: Memorias y Voces de la Tierra* in San Antonio, Texas, and was named Texas Artist of the Year. Cabrera has also been selected as a recipient of the 2023-24 Latinx Artist Fellowship.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

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