

## ***and so the broken mend themselves***

PV Wednesday, 9th October, 7-9 pm

10th October - 16th November

at Somers Gallery

96 Chalton St, London NW1 1HJ

**Somers Gallery**, in collaboration with curatorial duo **LATAMesa** and Argentine nomadic gallery **Intemperie**, is pleased to present *and so the broken mend themselves*, a six-week exhibition featuring the work of six Latin American women artists: **Alejandra Mizrahi, Mara Caffarone, Lulú Lobo, Eilen Itzel Mena, Camila Barvo, and Ume Dahlia**. Their practices—spanning painting, sculpture, textile, graphic art, and performance—explore notions of mending as both a technical act and a poetic symbol.

In *and so the broken mend themselves* the act of mending transcends mere repair, becoming an expression of resilience, adaptation, and memory. Each work invites reflection on how materiality, colour and techniques, often passed down through generations, serve as conduits for narratives of resilience, transformation, and the continuous negotiation of identity. Mending embodies the symbolic suturing of the self following personal or collective trauma, where healing, invention, and growth emerges through the process of repair.

The participating artists employ varied approaches—both materially and thematically—in their creative practices and engagement with the subject. Eilen Itzel Mena's practice is characterised by its intuitiveness and playfulness, allowing her to navigate grief through the pursuit of joy. Ume Dahlia's work also addresses trauma through the use of the oyster as a symbol of resilience and personal growth. Mara Caffarone's research-based practice aims to repair fractures in historical narratives while reclaiming space for often-forgotten indigenous worldviews. Alejandra Mizrahi seeks to restore connections to ancestral indigenous craftsmanship, while Camila Barvo intertwines personal and cultural narratives through the tactile art of embroidery. Lastly, Lulú Lobo employs technical printing processes, where the irregularities within repetition allows for the re-generation of new forms and meanings.

As these artists thread, unthread, and rethread along an unstable horizon—navigating from a decentered centre, from the displaced periphery which is Latin America—their works reflect the ongoing process of mending. Each gesture, line, and colour functions not only as a form of expression, but also as the threads that weave a binding connection, fostering repair and the creation of something new. In this exhibition, mending emerges as a powerful metaphor for resilience, inviting viewers to engage with their own narratives of healing and transformation.

## Alejandra Mizrahi

Alejandra Mizrahi's artistic practice is rooted in textiles, where she combines a wide array of sewing techniques. Her work weaves together ancestral craftsmanship with experimental approaches, as she engages with fabrics and natural materials to create new dimensions in textile art. Central to her practice is the desire to revive and acknowledge specific ancestral methods, with a focus on *Randa*, a traditional lace-making technique she learned, researched, and studied from the local community of El Cercado in Tucumán, Argentina.

The pieces displayed in the exhibition embody Mizrahi's commitment to reclaiming ancestral techniques and giving visibility to the labour-intensive craftsmanship of embroidery, revealing its connection to traditional female labour. There is also a deep reverence for the naturally sourced materials she uses, with careful attention to their origins and the paths they have travelled to reach her hands.

One of the exhibited works, *Arrastrera*, is part of a series of sculptural pieces where Mizrahi explores the three-dimensional potential of her textile practice. As she describes it, three-dimensionality emerged from observing fabrics—not just their surfaces, but their edges and reverse sides, understanding them as bodies with boundaries. This realisation prompted her to move beyond two dimensions. The title, *Arrastrera*, refers to trawlers used in illegal, indiscriminate fishing practices that sweep up everything in their path. In her work, however, Mizrahi reclaims this concept, highlighting the act of drawing everything up from the depths. Just as trawling indiscriminately gathers from the ocean floor, she incorporates a multitude of techniques into her practice, as if pulling from the sea's depths.

## Eilen Itzel Mena

Eilen Itzel Mena's artistic practice navigates the diverse landscapes, emotions, and languages that define the femme Afro-diasporic journey. Her work delves into themes of growth, transformation, community, ancestry, and selfhood, investigating how individuals within the African and Latin diasporas navigate their personal and collective purpose through the pursuit of joy, even amidst adversity.

Rooted in drawing, Mena's paintings are spontaneous and intuitive, using oil sticks and a vibrant palette that reflects her time in Brazil and the Dominican Republic. These works embody the energy of her lived experiences, with an exploration of joy at their core, as she seeks to understand and overcome grief without allowing it to define her.

By tapping into her inner child, Mena reconnects with her subconscious and lets intuition guide her creative expression. Her paintings visualise both real and imagined spaces, to re-envision reality and expand the dialogue around identity and resilience.

Through a blend of semi-representational and abstract forms, she crafts a visual language that captures the interplay between body and spirit, fostering alignment and reconnection. Rather than allowing trauma to define her subjects, Mena reframes their narratives through a celebration of joy and resilience.

## Camila Barvo

Through the craft of embroidery, Camila Barvo explores the layered narratives embedded within textiles, using it as a form of personal and cultural expression. Her work intricately merges the tactile qualities of embroidery with the symbolic act of caring for and manipulating hair. As an extension of the body, hair carries our DNA, history, and heritage, serving as both a literal and metaphorical thread that weaves together identity and memory.

Barvo's work draws on a rich heritage of textile art practised by women, inspired by feminist artists like the Feminista Collective of the 1970s. These artists used textile-based craft techniques to challenge traditional gender roles and bring visibility to caregiving's often invisible labour. In her works *Braid Wrap* and *Sculptural Braids*, both soft sculptures made from wool and dyed with henna, Barvo uses wool fibres to evoke hair filaments, exploring themes of the female body's memory, femininity, and identity.

The delicate interplay between materials and gestures in Barvo's work speaks to a broader dialogue on resilience and adaptation. Her practice honours traditional craft, and as she explains, she uses haircare gestures 'as an approach to create, understand textiles, and map lived experience.

## Lulu Lobo

Lulu Lobo employs the language of drawing and printmaking to create intricate paper artworks that exist at the intersection of sculpture and print. She works with *pattern paper* —and *capricho fabric*, traditionally used in bookbinding and linocut printing, as a structural foundation for her pieces. The only predetermined element in her creative process is the matrix; beyond that, she embraces the unpredictable nature of printmaking, allowing the stamping process to unfold vigorously and spontaneously.

Each piece is composed of various prints that connect and interact like a kaleidoscope. The resulting forms are organic geometries—shapes nesting within one another—creating a visual language that explores connections and disconnections. These are fictional structures that house all sorts of natural morphologies.

Lulu's work exists between structure and ornament, exploring the tension between the original and the multiple. Her practice is rooted in the hypothesis that repetition can function as an insubordinate principle, embracing chance, differentiation, and displacement. The contingency of each print generates a unique plurality, an idea the artist extends into a broader cosmovision.

When these paper structures hang in space, their folds breathe and shift, bending under their own weight and exposing the fragility of their materiality. They inhabit a haptic space, a *tactile visuality*, where senses merge—as if the eyes could feel the surfaces they perceive. Through the interplay of crevices and the irregularities of repetition, the materials—like words—alternate and converge, generating new meanings.

## Ume Dahlia

The image of the oyster holds profound significance in Ume Dahlia's work. Using sea mollusks as a symbol, she reflects on the delicate interplay between pressure and trauma. Just as pearls form in response to irritants breaching the oyster's shell—triggering a natural defence—Ume Dahlia connects this process to her own journey of overcoming trauma. Her work conveys resilience's transformative power, with mother-of-pearl serving as a beautiful and potent example of strength born from adversity.

*Yonic Phallus* and *Perla* 西川 explore the transformative, feminine symbolism of the shell and pearl. The ceramic sculpture *Yonic Phallus* delves into the duality of female and male reproductive forms, with the oyster's shape linked to the yoni—a Sanskrit term for the female reproductive system. The artist merges this with a phallic shape to represent male sexuality. This subtle fusion, resulting in an *Ostrea chilensis*, navigates an intimate journey through sexual trauma.

Meanwhile, the painting *Perla* 西川, displayed alongside, portrays the intangible metamorphosis of trauma into resilience. It captures the mysterious path of healing, from the human body to the vast landscapes of Dahlia's homeland, symbolising the recovery of hidden, wounded territories.

Together, these works express a fragile yet persistent interplay between vulnerability and growth, reflecting the continual negotiation involved in the construction of one's identity.

## Mara Caffarone

Mara Caffarone's research-based practice employs a revisionist historical lens to explore the ongoing negotiation of Argentinean and Latin identities. In her series of small window grilles, she delves into the interstitial spaces between colonialism and identity, and how the European imposition of private property dramatically reshaped indigenous worldviews in Latin America. These colonial window grilles serve as potent symbols of "protection" and territorial demarcation, reflecting the appropriation of indigenous lands and the erasure of native cosmologies.

Caffarone's art pieces, handcrafted from raw clay, draw inspiration from the morphology of colonial architectural details found in Buenos Aires. Each work is unique—more invention than replication—allowing her to revisit and reshape these colonial imprints. The use of terracotta, combined with lead inserts—pierced into the clay like wounds—creates a material rhetoric that evokes the violence of conquest. The clay symbolises the land itself, while the lead represents its subjugation, offering a space to reconsider foundational narratives of territory and identity. Additionally, this combination of materials serves as an act of mending—repairing fractures in historical narratives while reclaiming space for often-overlooked indigenous perspectives.

Through her engagement with the concept of territory—both materially and thematically—Caffarone challenges Eurocentric notions of property, inviting a deeper reflection on how colonial symbols and histories continue to shape the discourse around identity among Latin and Argentine people.

### **About Somers Gallery**

Somers Gallery was established as a project space in 2015 under the name Chalton Gallery in London. In 2022, they changed their name to Somers Gallery, and in 2024, they began representing artists from Latin America and the UK. The purpose of Somers Gallery is to promote Latin American and British art both in the UK and Latin America. Their mission is to present an ambitious programme of exhibitions and events showcasing British and Latin American art, as well as to catalyse new levels of collaboration between artists, curators, and institutions from both sides of the Atlantic. The gallery is committed to supporting the wider ecosystem of art by nurturing new generations of artists and promoting art education. The gallery's annual programme includes three months dedicated to emerging artists. Young artists are provided with gallery space, a small bursary, mentorship, and other available resources.

Somers Gallery is located in Somers Town, between Euston and King's Cross & St Pancras stations. Some visionaries refer to this area as 'The New Palo Alto' and 'The New Mile Square.' It is indeed an incredible area, home to leading global organisations working in AI, fintech, and life sciences, while the neighbourhood is notably progressive. They collaborate with many of these organisations.

### **About LATAMesa**

LATAMesa is a curatorial initiative founded in 2023 by Carolina Orlando and Pilar Seivane with a clear mission: to build and sustain a strong network among Latin American artists and art professionals based in London. Our objective is to foster connections among individuals rooted in Latin American identities, diaspora communities, and supportive structures. At our core, we prioritise collaborative work and embrace notions of community and solidarity. Our activations are not just an experiment in care and performative action, but also a bold statement of our collective commitment to promoting Latin American culture. We are passionate about creating a supportive community where participants can exchange discourses and experiences, sustaining a network that serves as a framework and safe haven for exploring the vast realm of Latin American identities and amplifying their voices within London's arts ecologies.

LATAMesa's past events and projects includes the curation of the group show "Primordial Soups" at Mucciaccia Gallery (July - September, 2024), "IN/BETWEEN/NESS: Women Tales from Latin America" at Somers Gallery (April, 2024); LATAMesa + Latitud Club Social in collaboration with Daniel Rey's solo show at Koppel Collective (November, 2023); LATAMesa in collaboration with "De, Desde, En, Entre, Hacia" exhibition at SET Woolwich (July, 2023) and LATAMesa Launch Event at HArt Slane (June, 2023).

In November 2023, we launched our editorial branch, primarily featuring interviews with some of the artists who compose LATAMesa's social fabric.

### **About Intemperie**

Intemperie was conceived in 2018 as a nomadic project. Reversing the logic of the traditional gallery, the team constantly seeks new spaces to exhibit its artists. Each exhibition involves selecting a location intimately connected to the artist and their work, with a focus on the relationship between the pieces and the place of display. Intemperie has worked in public spaces, unconventional venues, galleries, and institutions, always striving to find the ideal space for the artworks while generating site-specific proposals.

The team consists of 10 artists who work within a process-oriented dynamic, exploring transitory spaces, ephemeral interventions, and virtual scenes that align with artistic processes.

Intemperie is managed by artist Gonzalo Maggi.