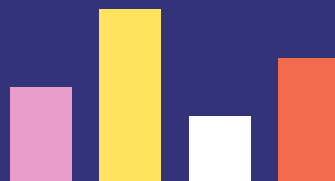
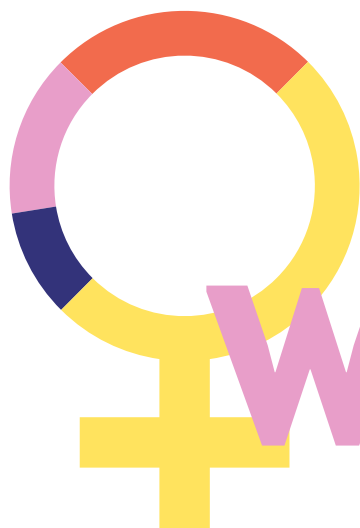


STATUS OF
WOMEN
IN SAN ANTONIO

Reflections on the Pursuit of Gender Equality



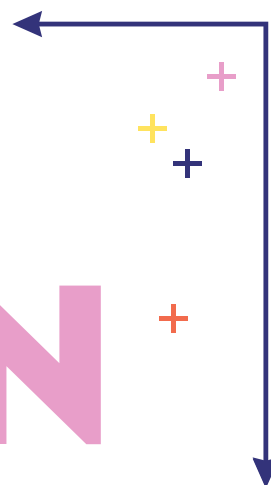


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Reflections on the Pursuit of Gender Equality



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEPARTMENT OF
ARTS & CULTURE

SANANTONIO.GOV/ARTS



VIOLENCE
PREVENTION





This publication accompanies the exhibition *The Status of Women in San Antonio: Reflections on the Pursuit of Gender Equality*, presented by the City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture at Culture Commons Gallery, San Antonio, Texas, March 22 – November 18, 2022.

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The successful San Antonio of the future that many of us envision can only come to fruition **when barriers that hamper women from reaching their full potential are eliminated.** When women achieve parity with men, not only will their own lives be enriched, but also those of their families and the sustainability of their communities. Simply put, **everyone wins when we achieve gender equality and eliminate patriarchy.**



Rogelio Sáenz and Lily Casura in "The Status of Women in San Antonio,"
Page xi and 59.

FOREWORD

The artwork featured in the *Status of Women in San Antonio: Reflections on the Pursuit of Gender Equality* covers profound and deeply important topics women throughout San Antonio face daily.

This exhibition was inspired by the 2019 report: “The Status of Women in San Antonio” by Rogelio Sáenz and Lily Casura with the University of Texas at San Antonio and was developed pre-pandemic, with most artists completing their work in early 2020. With the COVID-19 forced closure of our galleries, we unfortunately had to put the exhibition on hold. As we re-emerged in late 2021, the importance of finally presenting this powerful body of work to the community increased, as the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on women made the works and topics more relevant than ever.

The personal, tender, and moving artworks in this exhibition examine issues ranging from domestic violence to equal pay to reminding women to take time for themselves. The exhibit not only shines a spotlight on the incredible artistic talent that resides in San Antonio, but is also a true testament to how art can be a powerful catalyst to influence positive change with the conversations it sparks. We are extremely grateful to the 15 artists who participated in this exhibit for sharing their stories with us.

Krystal Jones, Director
City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture

WHEN WE GET HOME

by

Bonnie Ilza Cisneros

domestic (adjective)

1. *of or relating to the home, the household, or human habitations.*
2. *devoted to home duties or household pleasures.*
3. *no longer wild; tame.*
4. *of or relating to one's own or a particular country as apart from other countries.*
5. *Indigenous.*

— Merriam-Webster.com

I.

The United Nations deemed gender equality as one of the key components to healthy communities and a better world. To better understand the challenges faced by local women, the City of San Antonio commissioned Dr. Rogelio Sáenz and Lily Casura of the University of Texas at San Antonio to conduct research and formulate statistics about the status of women in the city.

The 74-page report¹ is comprised of their findings within 13 dimensions, from health and education to economics and civic engagement. They categorize women in four overarching racial categories (Latina, Black, White, Asian), divide them into age groups, and then compare their statistics to women in Travis, Dallas, and Harris counties to “provide a touchstone for community leaders as they seek to establish programs and policies to better the lives of women and ultimately to eliminate gender disparities.”

If you grew up in San Antonio, like me, and if you were raised amongst women, chances are you don't need 74 pages to know that a report on the status of women in this city, despite decades of advancements in equal rights, contains this sad fact: “unfortunately, the results point to few positive spots and many areas of concern.”

I pored over the various categories, charts, and graphs of the report, but I'm not just a disseminator of data, and these are not just numbers. I am one of 1.5 million people in the seventh largest city in the United States; I proudly identify with 64.5% of San Antonio's Hispanic² population. I am a woman in San Antonio who is

raising two school age girls, so to say that the report conjures strong emotions in me is an understatement.

II.

Art can show us what statistics cannot, so it makes sense that in 2019, the Department of Arts & Culture and the Metropolitan Health Department's Violence Prevention Program collaborated to “highlight the report findings and celebrate women artists.”

The 15 artists in the exhibition represent different facets of this jewel we call San Antonio: some are educators, others work at art institutions and nonprofit organizations, a few are gig workers, and one is a registered nurse. Some of the women are mothers, a lot of them are mentors; a few are descended from multiple generations of San Antonio *familias*, some transplanted to San Antonio as adults.

They all create art to express their emotions, visions, and ideas; they all alter the world with their work. When I was commissioned to write this essay, I read the report back-to-back with two intense visits to the gallery, and all I could think of is how a woman's creativity is an energy that we are very privileged to explore.

The report states that “while women have experienced important gains in educational attainment, there continues to be a wide gender gap in earnings.” Economic hardship, many times an intergenerational inheritance, diminishes a woman's access to high quality educational opportunities, which often leads to

¹ *The Status of Women in San Antonio* report is accessible online at www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/health/News/Reports/StatusOfWomen/StatusOfWomen-Full.pdf

² I will use *Hispanic* interchangeably with *Latina* for continuity's sake in place of terms like *Chicana*, *Tejana*, *Native*, *Mexican-American*, *Latinx*, and a myriad of other identities that describe people from regions in the Americas where Indigenous lands were colonized by the kingdom of Spain.



low paying yet physically stressful employment, which leads to poor housing in neglected neighborhoods, which leads to inability to pay for basic necessities, which can lead to brushes with crime and violence, which can result in incarceration and fractured families, which is...a really hard cycle to dismantle.

For many of us, this fact from the report does not necessitate a spoiler alert: "Latina and African American women fare much worse than White and Asian women across the 13 dimensions."

III.

In early May 2022, I had the opportunity to sit alone in the quiet and cold Culture Commons Gallery for two weekday mornings in a row. I worked at a long metal

table where a city meeting had been and where another would soon be, and I took jaunts about the gallery, spending my sweet time with the exhibition, absorbing each piece visually and viscerally, reading over each artist statement, thinking my thoughts, and feeling my feelings, which even now feels like a very decadent way to spend my day.

Right away, slightly shivering in the frigid air-conditioning, I knew that there was a through line that connects the artwork besides the obvious elements of womanhood, San Antonio, and the commissioned report.

The through line is HOME. In one way or another, each artist focuses on an aspect of the domestic. The home tends to be the epicenter of a woman's world, even more so considering the last two years

when our houses became a sanctuary for our bodies, the flesh-and-bone homes we occupy during our earthly existence which are currently being debated about and legislated against, as if women are incapable of taking care of our own *cuerpos y casitas*.

The works commissioned for this show were created during the early months of the COVID-19 lockdown, so I was curious to find out how the artists' relationships to their own homes was altered during the pandemic. Most of the pieces were created at their home studios, so this collection is quite literally a time capsule of 15 women's lives during a global pandemic.

III.

Let us begin with a stroll down the front hallway of Culture Commons Gallery where we are greeted with San Antonio native **Kat Cadena's** *Down on Leigh*, a largescale diptych, blazing in bold kaleidoscopic colors, in oil on canvas, two house portraits neighbored up to each other. When faced with the report, Cadena realized that she "fall(s) in the places no one wants to fall," and she was tasked with reflecting on the ever-present Latina wage gap in San Antonio.

The first painting, a dream house version of Cadena's grandma's *casita*, is juxtaposed with a structure in the style of the rampant influx of new constructions in old neighborhoods that many San Antonians cannot afford. The first house is surrounded by *nopales* that are lush, overgrown, and prickly with yellow blooms practically popping out of the

painting, while the greenery of the second dwelling is manicured and uniform, contained and coiffed.

During the early days of the lockdown, Cadena took walks through her Eastside 'hood, taking photos that she later played around with on her iPad, collaging compilations of images that inspired the diptych: "The painting was painted in a house just like it," she writes, "about 100 years old, everything recycled, warm, inviting and so full of love."

Now, no one is saying that such warmth and memories cannot be created in the new lofts where new San Antonians reside, but we are saying that women like Cadena's grandmother make their homes a place of beauty and respite despite many obstacles—and that the sanctuaries they create deserve respect. Women who have made so much out of so little should not fear being pushed out of their homes and neighborhoods because wealthy newcomers desire their own version of a Pinterest-worthy urban lifestyle.

Can the neighborhoods remain balanced now that the developers are so hungry to tear down and build up? We can see how in *Down on Leigh*, the street name is a placeholder that could just as easily be E. Ashby, W. Mulberry, Kirk Place, N. Cherry, and on and on. We know that the Latina wage gap is directly tied to housing; *Down on Leigh* reminds us to keep knocking on doors with our concerns and opening windows so that those in power may see what we see: "I'm honestly at a loss," Cadena tells me when I ask her what can be done about the dreaded G-word³, "my neighborhood's *mi barrio no se vende* signs don't seem very effective. In my mind, it's an SOS situation."

3 Gentrify, from Old French *genterie*, "noble birth, aristocracy" is defined by Merriam-Webster as "a process in which a poor area (as of a city) experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses and which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents."

If wage disparities and housing are at a crisis point, it is valuable to look to real San Antonio women activists whose work and fight for rights, collectively known as *la lucha*, has shifted the city closer to justice and equality. **Adriana M. Garcia**, a painter and muralist who comes from San Antonio's historic Westside, builds upon her family's creative legacy and intergenerational activism with paintings that "honor those who have come before and those who continue to lead by example." During the early Chicano Movement, art was a way to tell history and inspire pride (murals) and was a way to communicate ideas and spark action (screen-printed posters and pamphlets).

Garcia hails from that legacy, and her triptych of portraits feels very much like a Chicana Hall of Queens. *María Victoria de la Cruz*, *Emma Tenayuca*, and *Rosie Castro*, three paintings in acrylic on wood panels, come to life in Garcia's signature delicate yet bold strokes, a form of labor unto themselves, that beam with reverence for the three women. Garcia says that in the process of researching for the project, she realized "ours is an ecosystem that supports, protects, and breathes life to each other."

María is a domestic worker and activist, Emma was a fearless leader whose heart led her path, and Rosie is a brilliant organizer and epitome of Chicana motherhood. Garcia's masterful work is a form of respect for the women, a trilogy of real-life San Antonio royalty. How often do we see names like Travis, Bowie, Crockett uplifted as heroes compared to how often the women who demographically fare so tragically in the report get depicted in statues and fine art? A lot of times, in this city, it is when Garcia is at the helm of a project.

When asked how women of this generation took care of themselves, Garcia says that "taking care of others who were dependent on them was taking care of themselves and their future...because if the

community thrives, we all thrive."

When we reach the end of the front hall, we come to Detroit-raised **Rhys Munro's** *Breadwinner* and *Moxie*, a diptych in acrylic on canvas, depicting tools that she sees as "symbolic of both strength as well as the additional hardships that women face in the workplace due to race and gender-biases." Munro has years of experience under her belt in such nontraditional, male-dominated fields as construction and art handling, so micro-aggressions such as "we gotta find you a pink hardhat," inspired her to paint an intensely detailed version of her own hardhat in a high-gloss, femme color.

The works are a study in shadow and light achieved in her home studio during the pandemic, and Munro recounts that "rendering them realistically...gave me a sense of control during the uncertainty of the early COVID-19 days." The hardhat and handkerchief are marked with telltale signs of sweat and dirt; when placed next to the portrait of the mallet we are reminded of women's labor that requires strength, precision, and sheer will to tear down stereotypes and build a new world.

Cadena's duo of domiciles, Garcia's trio of labor activists, and Munro's pair of tools, all work together to tell us how women's homes and women's work are intrinsically bound: *why do we work if not to maintain our homestead and create sanctuary for ourselves and our families?*

The report tells us that housing and basic needs are not guaranteed for women; these works of art remind us how much labor we still have ahead of us.

IV.

Let us step into the main gallery now, where 12 works of art reflect intersecting elements of the report.



Carmen Cartiness Johnson's *I Used to Be Someone* is a portrait of an unsheltered woman, noticeably bruised and scratched, who represents those who flee their homes escaping violence and abuse. The woman wears a jacket collaged with photos of unhoused people and her t-shirt reads: *I Am Somebody*, a statement Johnson says is "reminiscent of the Reverend Jesse Jackson's Black Pride rally chants of the sixties and seventies to confirm self-worth." Johnson infuses printed text throughout the piece that displays data and lists local resources that exist to help women fleeing domestic violence.

The woman rests upon a wall of statistics and facts that uphold why she is unsheltered: *"Bexar County has the highest rate of reported domestic violence*

per capita in Texas and one of the highest in the nation." Johnson's piece reminds us that the woman in the painting, like women on the streets, is, in fact, somebody, even if she's no longer the "someone" she used to be. We as a community should know who she is and care about where she is headed. In Johnson's words, *I Used to Be Someone* is "a statement to human tenacity, preservation, and affirmation, to what it takes to survive."

Tenacity is tied in with hope. San Antonio native **Laura Mijangos-Rapp** has spent decades studying and creating art in Texas. For *The Status of Women*, she worked in quarantine to convey her emotions and reactions to the report: "I was feeling... isolation, grief for the world, and even guilt that I

was powerless to help the many that were truly suffering." The result, a mixed media painting called *Hope is the Thing with Feathers*, named for an Emily Dickinson poem, illustrates how most women, even when faced with sad statistics and disheartening reality, still feel hope, what Dickinson describes as: "the thing with feathers - / That perches in the soul - / And sings the tune without the words - / And never stops - at all."

Mijangos-Rapp found the poem after she painted a bird perched upon the arm of a young girl who she says, "has already begun to armor up as she takes on the labels and limitations that caregivers and society have placed on her." The girl is bound by society and her circumstances, represented by her metal cage bodice. Her voluminous tulle skirt is intertwined with shredded fibers that the artist says represent "unravelling potential." The feathers, the hope, are her way out of difficult circumstance—if she is allowed the chance to fly.

Hope is the Thing with Feathers, is an exploration in *esperanza*: despite the darkness, our work is worth the effort. Mijangos-Rapp quotes Tarana Burke, founder of the #MeToo movement who says, "If you can't hear me, you can't see me" and says she hopes that the report and exhibition allow us to "hear and see the marginalized women of San Antonio and understand how the trauma of poverty, abuse, and violence severely sets the trajectory of their lives."

#MeToo is one movement among many waves of women's activism and battles for equal rights and the freedom to exist in a safe world. **Sarah Fox**, an artist

known for what she describes as "corporeal hybrid creatures" and a pillar of the San Antonio art scene, resonates upon the idea of hope after abuse in *For Momma*, a cyanotype she created about women "in the tangle of abuse, (who) still have confusing feelings of love for (their) abuser, but untangle (themselves) and walk forward in the hope of breaking cycles of violence for future generations."

For Fox, the feminist adage *the personal is political*⁴ infuses all facets of her work. The report shows that current policies are not enough, and art is another way to, in Fox's words, "take really abstract, emotionally difficult ideas...out of the mind and the body and turn them into an object...something visual to respond to."

For Momma finds Fox further exploring her fascination with cyanotype, a process of using chemicals and ultraviolet sunlight to develop layers of oftentimes natural objects and images, collage-like, in deep watery shades of blue. Fox's cyanotype centers a pregnant figure whose face is obscured with her hands, surrounded by bands of snakes that create a sort of womb within the womb. In her belly, a clutch of eggs; she cries a rainstorm of teardrops.

The cool and calming blues evoke the healing nature of water, and Fox lives with her small child near the San Antonio River, which she says, "saved (her) during the pandemic...and helped (her) create this idea of nature as a sort of home too."

Nature is the home we all share, and the body too is a type of home. Both are central to women's safety and happiness; both are subject to control

4 For me, this statement that took flight during the second-wave feminist movement, simply means that women's personal lives, often centered upon homelife and relationships, and therefore seen as private, should be addressed publicly with strategies and policies that improve quality of life by bringing the personal to light.

and abuse. Like many of the artists in the show, **Mari Hernandez**, a native San Antonio photographer and cultural arts worker, makes a life for herself by pushing through the cracks in the report where some women can get trapped. Known for her historical self-portraiture, Hernandez proclaims: "where I live grounds me, it speaks to my identity and my lineal history."

Of Women is a triptych of photos where Hernandez sits for her own camera and captures three individual portraits showing "the ways women build communities to support each other." The two outer images depict women whose dresses are draped into forms akin to wings, lending protection and support to the central figure, whose face is obscured with flowers. In this series, Hernandez says the "tangible manifestations of feelings, emotions, perspectives, and ideas...pay homage to the strength and perseverance of survivors."

When faced with the report, Hernandez felt compelled to consult with Patricia Castillo, director of the P.E.A.C.E. (Putting an End to Abuse through Community Efforts) Initiative, a local organization determined to support survivors of violence for over 35 years. Hernandez found inspiration in Castillo's assertion that "real healing for survivors often takes place in community...and through the support of other survivors."

The triptych form gives the viewer a sense of balance, while their airy lightness, achieved by layering photos selected from hundreds of images and the use of a fog machine, captures the emotional power of "women uplifting, helping, healing, and protecting each other."

If we see women's bodies as a type of home, then our health is the number one factor that determines the quality of our day-to-day existences. Further,

traditional arts and crafts such as sewing, cooking, gardening, and crafting began as domestic arts, so it feels important that textile art is included in this show. Known as "The Quilt Lady," **Karen Robinson** began her career as a registered nurse in the U.S. Air Force, worked in healthcare research and administration, and also co-founded and served as past-president of the African American Quilt Circle of San Antonio.

When given the report, Robinson naturally gravitated to women's health issues, as she is "constantly teaching and talking to (her) loved ones and strangers about taking care of their bodies." Her quilt, *Our Health and Wellness*, tells a story with its use of rich color, symbols, and panels of text that "share statistics in a visual way" and highlight women from all demographics who are faced with health issues such as "prenatal care, low-birth weight, infant mortality, suicide, Alzheimer's disease, domestic violence, stroke, cancer, heart disease, and chronic liver disease."

More than a list of maladies, Robinson's precise mastery of textiles bring the issues to life with informative text listing women's health centers and resources contained in Bexar County-shaped appliqué. In the center is a silver lamé face, which can be seen as a mirror, an object that both asks the viewer to see herself in the piece and serves as a symbol of femininity.

Quilting is an art rooted in tradition, and Robinson's work speaks to modern issues that afflict Black and Brown women at much higher rates than others. When asked what can be done to help inspire healing, Robinson said, "We can do more to help one another by sharing our hurt and pulling each other up...by sharing resources and opening doors to opportunities. There are times when we can just listen, but after that we need to act and encourage."

Our health is wealth, and though death is inevitable, there are rising numbers in what are known as “deaths of despair,” which include “drug overdoses, suicides, and alcohol-related liver mortality.” Ohio-born, Brooklyn, New York-raised ceramicist, and assistant professor **Jennifer Ling Datchuk** is known for her use of porcelain, textiles, and human hair to create monuments to Asian-American biculturalism and intersectional feminism in her signature style that mixes modern twists and traditional craft.

For *The Status of Women*, Datchuk created a pair of mourning wreaths in porcelain and human hair displayed in plexiglass cases as a “form of remembrance for the women who have become invisible by society but not to the people they have left behind” entitled *Gone But Not Forgotten* and *Forgotten But Not Gone*. Datchuk sees deaths of despair as failures on the part of government and society who do not do enough to help women in dire circumstances, and she takes inspiration from Victorian mourning wreaths and jewelry from the 18th and 19th centuries made from hair to commemorate love, loss, and grief.

The pieces are encased in reflective plexiglass which forces the viewer to see themselves reflected in the mirror; we are invited inside the mourning wreath where Datchuk’s meticulous styling of donated hair “depict(s) the styles and diversity of these women who mirror the demographics represented in the deaths of despair of the women in San Antonio.”

While deaths of despair are on the rise, death at the hand of an intimate partner is an all-too-common tragedy in our city. **Ana Hernández** was born and raised on the U.S./Mexico border, studied art history, and is a painter, muralist, and museum worker who painstakingly painted 30 eye portraits in enamel,

acrylic, oil, and embroidery on found objects and Arches paper to represent victims of violence, survivors, and allies.

Entitled *Watching Eyes*, the portraits draw inspiration from *Lover’s Eyes*, artwork commissioned by Georgian nobility that captured portraits of loved ones’ eyes to wear as jewelry. Hernández says she painted upon platters, saucers, and trinket dishes “to invoke formal behavior and represent the power of the female gaze and the fragility of a woman’s life.” *Watching Eyes* is also influenced by borderland aesthetics, where the remixing of cultures is a way of life. The collection is also inspired by the Mexican tradition of *ex-votos* (“the vow made”), small paintings that give thanks for divine help.

When faced with 30 individual eyes, I can’t help but think of *mal ojo*, the evil eye, and the idea that eyes can also alert others of danger and bounce off bad energy. Hernández’s eyes are served up to us (literally, on platters) and feel like they are both warning and protecting all at once. *Ay te wacho*, old school Pachuco lingo for “I’ll see you later,” is flipped when I see *Watching Eyes*, to more of a feeling that “I’ll watch out for you.”

Hernández’s work, at once delicate and ornate, is also a reminder of strength in numbers, she hopes *Watching Eyes* “remind(s) women to keep an eye out for each other and display healthy relationships for the little eyes who are watching us and learning what love and relationships look like.”

Building upon this concept of protection, South Texas artist and Presa House Gallery co-owner **Jenelle Esparza** explores the ties between women’s bodies and the land upon which we live in *Shelter, My Avalanche*, a series of 30 charcoal rubbings on muslin. Esparza connected the dots between the

troubling statistics in the report and how current escalating legislation seeking to control women's bodies is "similar to the need for control and consumption of land based on its value."

Esparza has spent her career exploring connections between "earthly and bodily experiences recorded in our respective flesh," and she sees *Shelter, My Avalanche* as a map that "navigates the relationship of two powerful sources of life." Each rubbing in the "avalanche of wisdom and strength" can be seen as a symbol that unites to form a whole: feather, leaf, human hand, flower, flame, bellybutton, ear, mouth, nest, tree bark, heart, nose, and the word *mother* etched on 13 of the panels act as banners that illustrate how

women's bodies are invaluable resources because they give and sustain life.

Esparza uses the natural element of charcoal, a carbon residue produced by heating wood in minimal oxygen, on muslin, a cotton fabric of plain weave, to capture earthly patterns and familiar textures to create an avalanche, a sudden arrival in overwhelming quantities, to "show the softness and the raw vulnerability of our individual selves, while also showing the strength in numbers of our collective mass."

If we take a step back from the collective, and focus in on women's individual domestic lives, we are reminded of that adage about women's work: it is



never done. **Megan Harrison** is a prolific artist who has shown her work internationally, but as a mother of small children, she responded to the report's findings on wage disparities and concluded that this is partly due to a simple lack of time.

Women who are lucky enough to have partners to share the workload and responsibilities still find themselves lacking, as Harrison puts it, the luxury of time "where you can zoom out and see the bigger picture, allowing a level of awareness, focus, and curiosity... professional insights, personal A-ha moments, and creative ingenuity."

For the show, Harrison created *Time is Also Yours*, in ink and gesso on paper, which she sees as "a visually contemplative space which offers a mantra." When I came to the piece, I knew my time at the gallery was dwindling, and I would soon have to leave to pick up my Kindergartner from school. I saw the circle as a numberless clock, its watery textures of shadows and light telling me time is mine felt like a portal into which I didn't have...enough time to enter.

Later, I was able to communicate with Harrison, who found snippets of minutes to zip off a thoughtful response to me about her process: "the letters are painted on white paper with white gesso so that they only become visible once the ink is spilled, like a secret message emerging or a message appearing in a wishing well. Painting the letters on the paper is slow and tedious and invisible, splashing the ink instant, carefree and reveals the composition like magic."

Despite both of our packed schedules and the endless obligations of early motherhood, I found comfort in Harrison's emails confirming my own relationship to creating art while raising children and her assertion that "women in general receive a

lot of messages that time...belongs to her family and her community."

I was not surprised to find out that she almost turned down the opportunity to be part of this show, but eventually pushed aside that worry and realized she "deserve(d) the time to pursue (her) career, and felt it was important given the theme of the exhibition to make work directly about this experience."

Time to dream and create isn't even an issue when one's physical and mental safety is shattered by domestic violence. **Kallie Cheves** is an artist, educator, and mother whose surreal photographic constructions "hold deep roots in Surrealism, composed of allegorical pageants with costumed characters who share stories of domestic drama." *Between Broken Bonds* is a photograph printed in archival ink on German paper and mounted on a distressed plywood door.

For Cheves, a door protects and provides privacy, and the choice to include this part of the home is an homage to her mother's experience as a survivor of domestic violence. The photo depicts a staged scene of a family in a snowy setting wearing handmade paper Elizabethan collars "meant to protect injuries from further damage," while an empty chair, also adorned in the same rolled-up paper, is placed to symbolize the concealed aftershocks of violence, and a pair of empty boots serve to "echo the wearer who is now ever-absent." Bright pink ribbons are placed strategically throughout the scene to show how the subjects as well as the objects are united in the aftermath of violence.

The photograph is mounted upon a distressed wooden door placed on its side, which reminds us that a door is also a passageway. When asked how the irregular form of the photo reflects her vision,

she tells me that “the diagonals, cuts, and crops create a unique aperture to suggest these are select moments in time, the way trauma stitches bits together as an assemblage of tangled roots.”

How do we break cycles and leave when the unknown is so vast and mysterious? **Hiromi Stringer** hails from Kyoto, Japan, is the recipient of many art accolades, and works as a drawing lecturer at UTSA. For *The Status of Women in San Antonio*, she focused on education in all its myriad forms to create *Untitled (michi)*, in graphite and pastel on tinted paper, a dream landscape that represents “important guideposts of life (that) point us...through the unknown and onto the path where we belong.”

Michi means *road; path; street; passage*, and the drawing is composed of the darkest blue hues layered with precise graphite markings that create a texture that is both harmonious in pattern and chaotic in rhythm. A clear path through the darkness leads into a horizon where light blooms a “color of right before the dawn.” When I fall into the landscape of *Untitled (michi)*, I remember how we are all striding (sometimes stumbling) through the unknown on a *michi* paved by the women before us, trying to make it more accessible towards a world where women and girls can belong to themselves, belong to each other, and just be.

While working during the early pandemic, Stringer, like most of us, found herself dealing with challenges from “being an artist to being a mixture of (herself)—art instructor (adjustments from in-person class to online sessions), a caregiver to in-laws/family members, and a foreigner who lives in the U.S. in contrast to living in Germany and being a foreigner who lived as a visitor for a limited timeframe.” Stringer poured herself into drawing,

she says that “spending (time) on the artwork was just like making a mandala.” I asked her what is at the end of the path for the women in San Antonio, to which she replied: “I think that there will be no end of the path. We just get going rain or shine.”

Which brings us the final artwork in *The Status of Women*.

Audrya Flores is a Tejana artist, educator, and mother whose work centers on the natural world and elements of healing. Like 40% of the artists in the show, Flores chose to focus on the domestic violence statistics in the report. *May Your Vessel Be*, in acrylic on canvas, is a painting of a woman superimposed upon a circular formation of *nopal* cactus that includes an incantation in Flores’s artist statement: *May your vessel be protected. May your vessel be healed. May your vessel be replenished. May your vessel be.*

The *nopal* is a recurring motif in Flores’s work, and its abilities to survive harsh environments, protect itself with thorns, and regenerate itself make it the perfect metaphor for her commitment to healing herself and inspiring others with her work. She elaborates: “I cannot think of a fiercer and more capable protector. Nature is constantly revealing its magic to us...reminding us that we are part of that magic. It reminds us that we, too, are sacred. That we, too, are cycling miracles.”

Flores describes the painting as her “whispered prayer...lit *vela*...buried bundle of talismans” for women experiencing domestic violence. Her color choices also offer a visual spell—oxidized *sangre*-red, rust-colored *nopales*, maize-yellow skin, cornflower blue dress, and crow-black hair.

Maybe because she and I were born in the same place, Brownsville, and we grew up in the same

city, San Antonio, I feel like Flores speaks for many of us when she writes: "The report felt heavy. Numbers are so impersonal, but they shine a light on what we already know. We know these women. We are these women...It was very difficult to create this work. I put it off for a long time because the subject matter was so triggering. But honestly, this is the realm I often work in. My work, my craft is for healing. And healing requires us to examine the wound."

V.

Studying the report, immersing myself in the artwork, and communicating with 15 artists for this project led to me to a through line, a trail of breadcrumbs, that led to one central place: home. Be it our planet, getting scorchingly hotter as each year passes, be it our country, run amok with hatred and violence, be it our city, gentrifying at a rapid pace, be it our houses, increasingly unaffordable, be it our bodies, controlled and conspired against, we are all in pursuit of a better world for the *m'ijas* to come.

The women of San Antonio are here, making the case for why we deserve equality or, in some tragic instances of toxic machismo and archaic patriarchy, why we deserve to even live at all. The official report and subsequent art exhibition are a starting point, but I really think it boils down to this key line from the report: "areas where women have achieved higher levels of socioeconomic status tend to have safer environments for women as they have greater autonomy."

I offer this poem as a house-warming gift for the women of San Antonio pursuing health, wealth, and safety on the streets and in their own homes.

We will get there.

*As for me, I'll see you down on Leigh.
María, Emma, and Rosie are out there waiting patiently.
We will win that bread, con mucho moxie.*

*Remember, you are still,
will always be, somebody.*

*"La esperanza" - the thing con plumas -
never stops - nunca.*

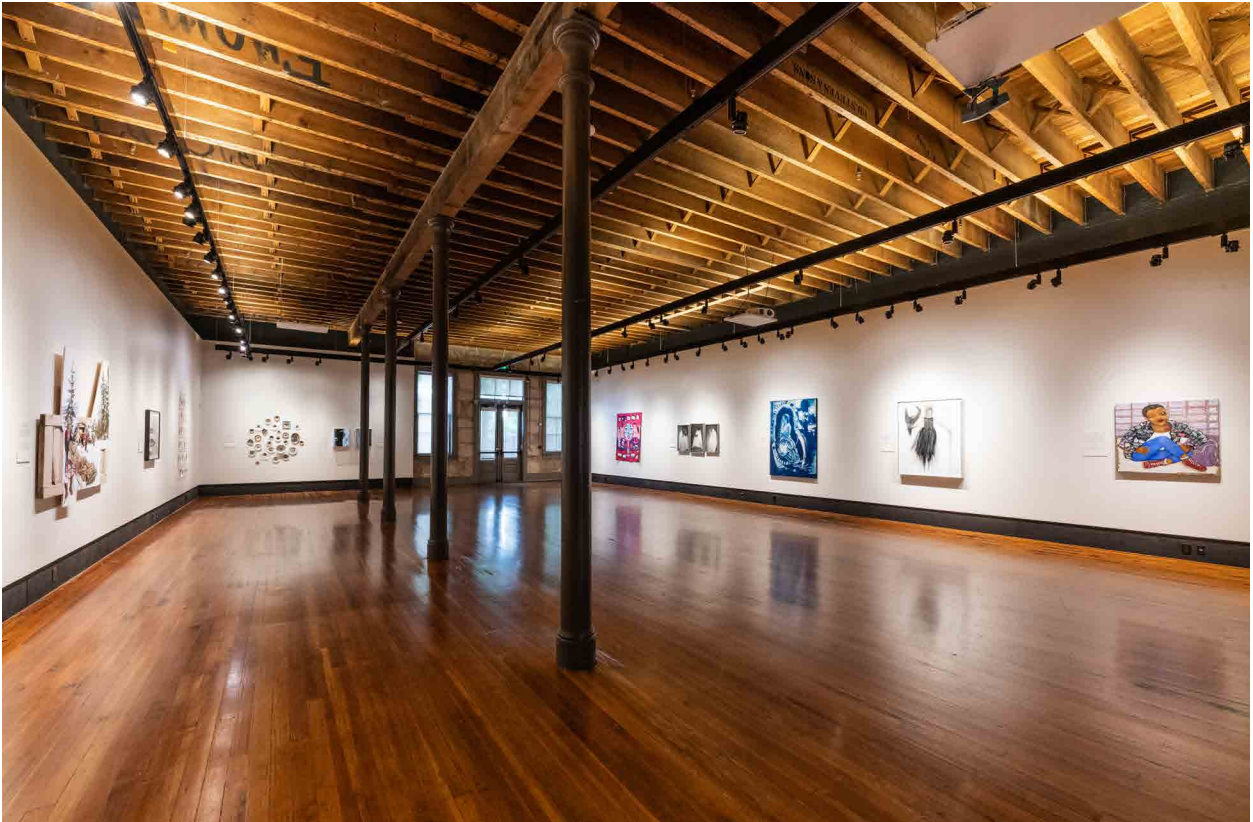
*Somos de mujeres, we are of women, begotten.
For Momma, a quilt of health and wellness.*

*For those whose despair does not define them—
y'all are never gone, never forgotten.*

*May our eyes always look out for each other.
May an avalanche of shelter be our protection.*

*Mama, time is yours, so take it.
Baby, those bonds were broken so we can make it.*

*Meet us in the michi, the road to the unknown.
May our vessels be healed, for real.
May our status as women lead us all, safely, home.*



Bonnie Ilza Cisneros is a fourth-generation educator in a line of Tejana schoolteachers. She taught middle school English for five years in San Antonio Independent School District and coordinated the *El Placazo Barrio* Newspaper program at San Anto Cultural Arts. Bonnie earned a Creative Writing Master's degree from Texas State University, was altered forever at the Macondo Writers Workshop in 2016 and was awarded the first artist grant she ever submitted from NALAC in 2018. Her poems and essays appear in *El Retorno*, *Chicana/Latina Studies*, *River Teeth*, *Porter House Review*, *Infrarrealista Review*, *La Voz de Esperanza*, *Buckman Journal*, and *Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*. Moonlighting as DJ Despeinada, she spins all-vinyl soundscapes of the borderlands. Throughout the pandemic, she has led workshops and published zines at San Antonio Public and Chicago Public libraries, presented lectures for community colleges and universities, recorded radio shows for WFMU, and curated a vast variety of cultural experiences within her community as part of an ecosystem of local artists who cross-pollinate their talents, resources, and energies for collective healing. All the while, Bonnie and her husband raise two m'ijas and keep a flock of six gallinas in San Antonio, Texas. She has many exciting upcoming projects which can be found on her digital archive: www.bonniecisneros.com.

FEATURED
ARTISTS



KAT CADENA



DOWN ON LEIGH, 2020

OIL ON CANVAS • 53 1/8 X 35 1/8 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

I wanted to respond to San Antonio's wage gap issue by taking a look at the differences in the homes in our city, even within the same neighborhood and on the same street. The city's data reflected unfair wage disparities that need to be rectified as they directly affect access and quality of life, and this work is sort of an acknowledgement to families who have done so much with few resources for years. Despite this enormous difference in income and the quality and condition of homes, poor Latinx families not only persevere, but work with what they've got to make any house a real home. I wanted to use this opportunity to acknowledge my family and reflect

on what full and rich lives we've experienced so far with so little. I am proud to come from people who can transform an aged and worn house into a place of gathering, warmth and sanctuary. So I painted two houses: one that feels familiar to me and so many others who grew up here, that reminds you of your grandma's house where, despite the chipped paint and the burglar bars, feels homely and safe, like you can't wait to get inside to talk and eat with your family. And the other is one that we've seen pop up recently, but doesn't pack the same reminiscent punch as the other, and is a bit imposing and without warmth and true familiarity.

CARMEN CARTINESS JOHNSON



I USED TO BE SOMEONE, 2020

ACRYLIC PAINT AND PAPER ON CANVAS • 36 X 36 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

The work speaks to two global problems, domestic violence and homelessness with emphasis on Texas and San Antonio. The piece uses statistical data retrieved from the internet as part of the background. Within the artwork there are the faces of homeless persons and information on organizations that provide aid to San Antonio's unsheltered persons.

The majority of the organizations cited specifically help women and women with children, and pregnant women. Also organizations that help abandoned youth and LGBTQ youth are listed. The work speaks to who the unsheltered people are, the working poor, the elderly, college students, emotionally and physically challenged people to name a few.

KALLIE CHEVES



BETWEEN BROKEN BONDS, 2020

**ARCHIVAL INK PHOTOGRAPH PRINT ON HAHNEMUHLE GERMAN ETCHING PAPER, MOUNTED ON PLYWOOD • 6 ½ X 5 FEET
COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

Between Broken Bonds captures the breath that exists from remnants of domestic abuse. Traumas heal while being ever aware of what was abandoned and unfinished, challenging the intrinsic gravity of norms subscribed from parent to child. Mounted upon a broken door, this portrait explores how a door protects and shields while creating privacy,

standing as a symbol of what it hopes to be- a support. In the symbolic duality that exists in homes of domestic violence, a door also holds evidence to violence, absorbs violence, is between violence. This piece exposes the bruises that forever live on its structure and creates discourse of severed kinship cords.

JENNIFER LING DATCHUK



***GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN* AND *FORGOTTEN BUT NOT GONE*, 2020**

PORCELAIN, HUMAN HAIR, PLEXIGLASS • 12 ¼ X 8 ½ X 3 INCHES, EACH • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Victorian mourning jewelry and objects were made in the 18th and 19th century to honor deceased loved ones. They represent love, loss, and grief but encapsulated sentimentality and remembrance. *Gone But Not Forgotten* and *Forgotten But Not Gone* are mourning wreaths for the women in San Antonio who have lost their lives to deaths of despair.

Suicides, drug and alcohol induced and overdose deaths are painful reminders that we have failed so many with our lack of health and well-being government resources like healthcare, mental well-being, and food and nutrition programs. These porcelain and human hair pieces honor their lives and what we all can do to be better for our communities.

JENELLE ESPARZA



SHELTER, MY AVALANCHE, 2020

SET OF 30 CHARCOAL RUBBINGS ON MUSLIN • 5 X 6 FEET

COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

This is a piece about two very powerful sources of life - Mother Earth and Mother, land body and female body. It represents an avalanche of wisdom and strength, like a shield. These two entities are very similar and the power in each is at the root of why they are in such

high pursuit. It's the reason why women's bodies are being legislated against and why entire cultures were eradicated for their land and resources. The value of each body is bigger than any price tag in any current market. Control over each is control over life itself.

AUDRYA FLORES



MAY YOUR VESSEL BE, 2020

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS • 48 X 48 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

The nopal cactus thrives in harsh conditions. Its succulent flesh is protected with needle-like spines. It regenerates easily.

These traits make the nopal cactus an ideal refuge for those in need of food, drink, or shelter.

This piece is a response to the Domestic Violence portion of The Status of Women in San Antonio report.

This artwork invokes the sacred nopal in a protection spell or prayer for women experiencing domestic violence in our city and beyond:

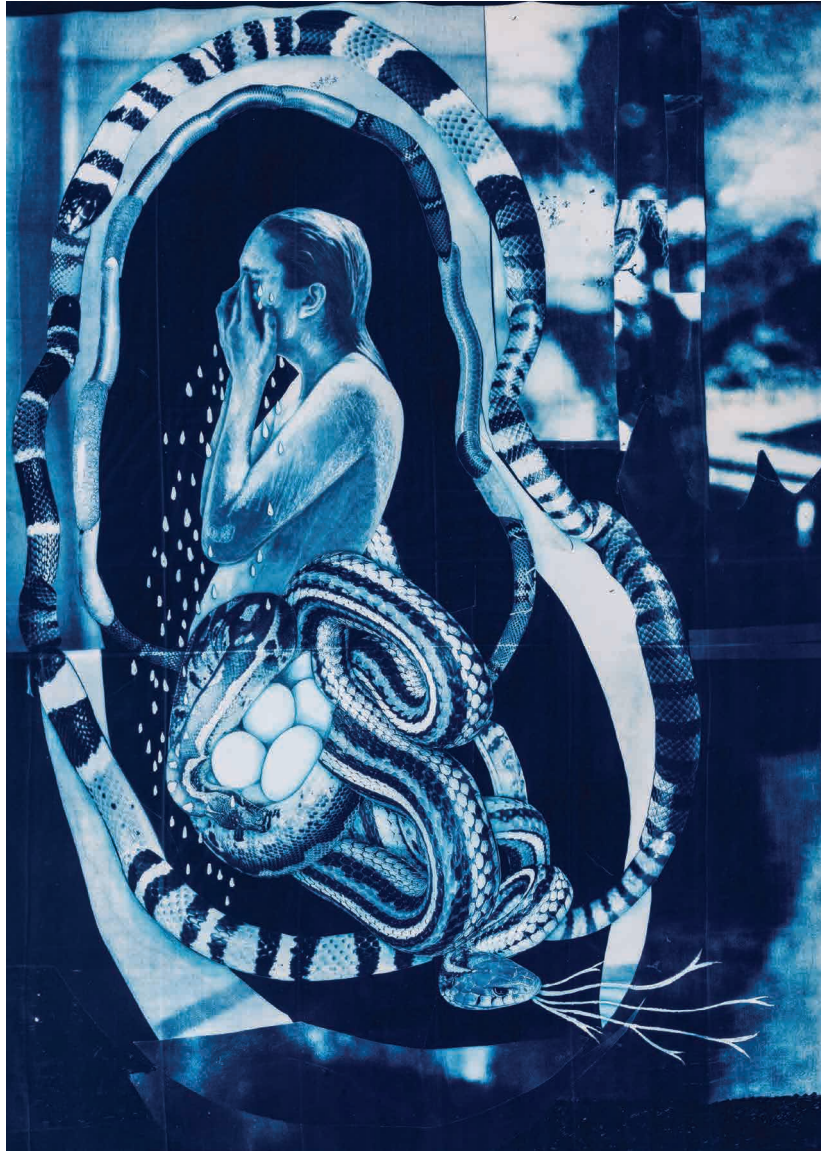
May your vessel be protected.

May your vessel be healed.

May your vessel be replenished.

May your vessel be.

SARAH FOX



FOR MOMMA, 2020

CYANOTYPE • 66 X 48 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

I made this piece for my mother, and other women like her. Some women, when they are finally able to leave abusive relationships, still have feelings of love for their abuser. The woman in this piece, is still in the tangle of abuse, still has confusing feelings of

love for her abuser, but untangles herself and walks forward anyways. She walks forward not for herself, but in the hope of breaking cycles of violence for future generations.

ADRIANA GARCIA



MARIA VICTORIA DE LA CRUZ, DOMESTIC WORKER, & TOP ACTIVIST, 2020

ACRYLIC ON WOOD PANEL • 42 X 48 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Maria Victoria de la Cruz has been a domestic worker for 20 years. She has a repertoire with house owners and they consider her indispensable. While her whole family are citizens and live here in San Antonio, Maria Victoria is undocumented. She sits on the board of Texas Organizing Project (TOP) an organization that promotes social and economic equality for Black and Latino Texans. Her activism includes organizing her community

and communicating with other undocumented individuals about their rights as immigrants and of services that they can access. It was a tremendous honor to create Maria's portrait. I hope it conveys her dedication to work, family and community. She and the people she works with at TOP are an inspiration. To find out more, please visit organizetexas.org.

ADRIANA GARCIA



EMMA TENAYUCA, 2020

ACRYLIC ON WOOD PANEL • 42 X 48 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

I was asked to paint Emma Tenayuca, a labor leader, union organizer, and educator from San Antonio. As a young girl I remember hearing stories about how fierce she was - arrested at the age of 16, in 1933, when she joined a picket line of workers. Over the years I've listened to songs, saw plays, heard poems, read children's books, and viewed documentaries about her work organizing Mexican pecan shellers and leading the strike in 1938. In my eyes she is San

Antonio's patron saint of organizers and embodies the city's legacy of "la lucha." When I came across this rarely seen photo of Emma I knew I wanted to paint it. It felt like a candid look at her humanity. I'm struck with how much power came from her.

The photograph of Emma Tenayuca used as a reference for this painting was used with permission from the San Antonio Express-News.

ADRIANA GARCIA



ROSIE CASTRO, 2020

ACRYLIC ON WOOD PANEL • 42 X 48 INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Creating this painting of Chicana activist Rosie Castro was special for me as an artist because I was brought up learning of San Antonio West Side activism, of barrio intellectuals, and among them Rosie's civic achievements.

I remember my father recounting how, as a member of Committee for Barrio Betterment (CBB), they selected four candidates to run for City Council office in the 1970s. Their hopes were that the West Side gain better representation by persons who were from

and understood the neighborhood. Rosie Castro was one of the candidates. My father credits Rosie, along with Choco Meza and Dr. Charlie Cottrell with creating the maps dividing San Antonio into 10 City Council districts which are still used today.

My mother thinks Rosie's legacy is her twin sons, former Mayor of San Antonio and Democratic presidential candidate, Julian Castro; and United States Congressman, Joaquin Castro who continue her activism at a City, State and National level.

MEGAN HARRISON

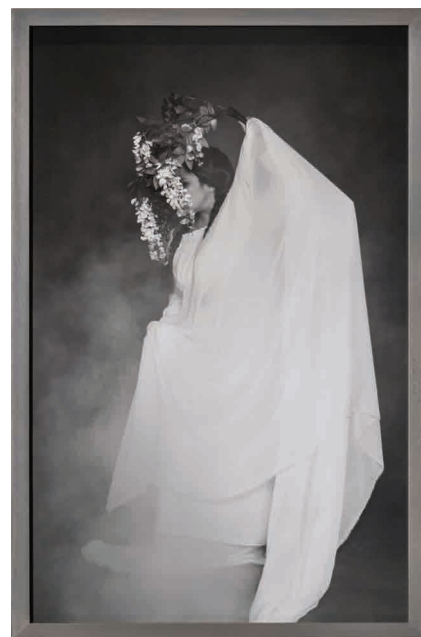


TIME IS ALSO YOURS, 2020

INK AND GESSO ON PAPER • 25 ½ X 25 ½ INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Time is Also Yours presents a visually contemplative space which offers a mantra of sorts, reminding women that they deserve uninterrupted time in their day to focus on that which is most meaningful to them.

MARI HERNANDEZ



OF WOMEN, 2020

INKJET PRINT ON PHOTO RAG • 58 X 30 • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

This artwork focuses on the ways women build community in support of survivors of domestic violence; communities where women protect, uplift, and fiercely support one another. It pays homage to the monumental strength, spirit, and resilience of

women. The artwork references the history of portrait photography which coincides with the growing presence of women in public life who advocated for women's rights. It takes inspiration from historical portraiture and explores themes of group identity.

ANA HERNÁNDEZ



WATCHING EYES, 2020

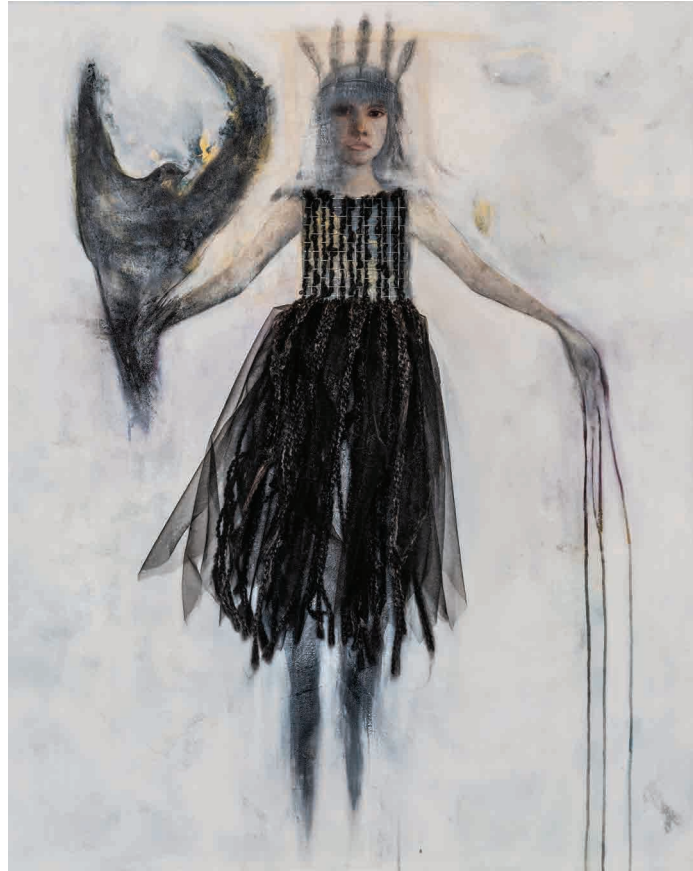
**ENAMEL, ACRYLIC, OIL, EMBROIDERY ON FOUND OBJECTS AND ARCHES PAPER • DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

Watching Eyes consists of 30 eye portraits of women who have been murdered by their intimate partners, are survivors of abuse, and their allies. Painted on found and salvaged objects, the portraits are inspired by Lover's Eyes from the European Georgian era and Mexican votive paintings of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The portraits are non-specific and vary in materials.

Eyes are a strong signal of perception for humans. With this installation, I hope to remind the viewer that not only are our actions and inactions being noted by the women around us, but to also look out for one another.

LAURA MIJANGOS-RAPP



HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS, 2020

MIXED MEDIA • 51 X 41 ½ INCHES

COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

After reading the report, I wanted to make a statement about the seriousness of the situation but also about hope. Studies show the very early months and years of our lives form the lens through which we view ourselves and the world. So, my painting is of a young girl who's already begun to armor up as she takes on the labels and limitations that caregivers and society have placed on her. To portray those limited resources, I used wire to create a cage-like bodice. The tulle symbolizes her fragile future and intertwined in the tulle are

unraveling plies of yarn which represent unravelling potential. Her face is done very realistically because I wanted her to be seen, for the viewer to look in her eyes and see a real human being, not an impression of one. Her expression speaks of many different emotions—anger, sorrow, and in the deep recesses maybe even grit, which can lead to hope. Hence the bird that floats alongside her, the feathers on her head, and under her dress. We can see if we peel back the layers, hope still lives within her, despite her circumstances.

RHYS MUNRO



BREADWINNER AND MOXIE, 2020

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS • 27 X 32 INCHES, EACH • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

As an artist my work often focuses on the underrepresented, overlooked, and marginalized members of our communities. As the Status of Women report shows, women in San Antonio have a 40% higher poverty rate when compared to men. Which is why it is so important for women to have the same economic opportunities, as well as equal pay. My latest work represents women working in

nontraditional jobs. My investigation comes from personal experience of several years spent working in the male dominated industries of construction and art handling. More than just utilitarian objects associated with masculinity, the hard hat and mallet are symbolic of both strength, as well as the additional hardships that women face in the workplace due to race and gender-biases.

KAREN ROBINSON



OUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS, 2020

QUILT WITH ASSORTED FABRICS, LACE AND RICK RACK TRIM, EMBROIDERY, CRYSTALS, PHOTO TRANSFER, APPLIQUES, THREAD PAINTING, FABRIC PAINT, YARN. WOOL BATTING AND LONGARM QUILTING • 56 X 62 INCHES
COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

This quilt represents some Health and Wellness issues identified in the Status of Women in San Antonio report. The Venus symbol for female is the central focus of the quilt. A woman's face is captured behind a mirror encircled by females of various ages and races. The issues illustrated include: prenatal

care, low-birth weight, infant mortality, suicide, Alzheimer's disease, domestic violence, stroke, cancer, heart disease, and chronic liver disease. The three main colors in the quilt are red, purple and pink. Can you guess what issues these colors represent? Can you find Bexar County on the quilt?

HIROMI STRINGER



UNTITLED (MICHU), 2020

GRAPHITE AND PASTEL ON TINTED PAPER • 18 X 25 ½ INCHES • COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Sometimes, life is just like walking in the darkness. I believe that education comes from not only recognized institutions such as schools and universities, but also from non-institutional sources such as family and role models. These important guideposts of life point us to the michi, through the unknown and on to the path where we belong.

ARTIST
BIOGRAPHIES





Kat Cadena is a multimedia artist, celebrated muralist, and independent illustrator. She was raised by multiple generations of strong, proud, and fierce mestiza women in San Antonio, Texas. She is known for her bright pink mural *And Yet, We Bloom*, located in the heart of downtown San Antonio on Houston & Navarro St., as well as unflinchingly emotional and colorful portraiture of feminine-identifying subjects.



Carmen Cartiness Johnson is a self-taught artist. Her work was initially based on summer visits spent on her grandmother's farm. Her earlier works were flat colored graphic shapes, but she has progressed to a more dimensional painterly style. The narrative art she likes to create takes a snapshot of people interacting in social situations. Most of her images are faceless. She feels this will allow the viewer to be able to place themselves in the situation on canvas. The inspiration for her work comes from poems, songs, novels, movies, and current affairs.



Kallie Cheves is a mother, artist, and art educator who lives in Bulverde, Texas. She is a resident artist and co-director of Clamp Light Artist Studios in San Antonio, Texas. She received her BA in Studio Art from Trinity University in 2013 and earned her MFA in Studio Art from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2016. For the past six years, Cheves has taught art to all age levels while exhibiting extensively internationally, nationally, and throughout Texas. Her photographic constructions hold deep roots in Surrealism, composed of allegorical pageants with costumed characters who share stories of domestic dramas.



Jennifer Ling Datchuk is an artist born in Warren, Ohio and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Trained in ceramics, the artist works with porcelain and other materials often associated with traditional women's work, such as textiles and hair, to discuss fragility, beauty, femininity, intersectionality, identity and personal history. She holds an MFA in Artisanry from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and a BFA in Crafts from Kent State University. In 2017, she received the Emerging Voices award from the American Craft Council and was named a United States Artist 2020 Fellow in Craft. She is an Assistant Professor of Ceramics at Texas State University and lives and maintains a studio practice in San Antonio, Texas.



Jenelle Esparza is an interdisciplinary artist who was born in the coastal city of Corpus Christi, TX. She attended the University of Texas at San Antonio and received her BFA in photography in 2010. She currently lives and works in San Antonio.

Esparza examines the lesser-known history of cotton and labor in South Texas through photography and textiles, and incorporates concepts of body movement, history, gender, identity, culture, and race. Her recent projects consider the intersections of Mexican and American culture and the implications of generational trauma. In *El Color de la Obra* (2016), Esparza used photography, two-way mirrors, and bronze cotton plants to examine the interconnected histories of South Texas cotton fields and began her exploration into this history which runs several generations deep in her family. Her recent projects utilize textiles and found objects as representations of bodily and human experiences.

Esparza has exhibited nationally in institutions such as The DePaul Art Museum in Chicago, IL; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and The Momentary in Bentonville, AR; and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA. She is the recipient of numerous honors including 2015 National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC) Artist Grant and the summer 2018 Artpace International Artist Residency. Her work is also included in the permanent collection of the San Antonio Museum of Art.



Audrya Flores is a Tejana artist, educator, and mother from Brownsville, Texas who creates assemblage and installation work exploring themes of healing. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Education from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She has exhibited at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Mexic-Arte Museum, Lady Base Gallery, Provenance Gallery, Luminaria Contemporary Arts Festival, Centro de Artes, Central Library Gallery at San Antonio Public Library, and Blue Star Contemporary. Flores lives and works in San Antonio.



Sarah Fox's multi-media narratives and characters are created from embodied female experience. Stories of life, loss, sex and love are told through corporeal hybrid creatures. The resulting collages, cyanotypes, and animations suggest a childlike fairytale but with an undercurrent of dark symbolism.

Her work has been shown throughout Texas, as well as in the Kinsey Institute (Bloomington, Indiana), Field Projects Gallery (New York, New York), Espacio Dörffi (Lanzarote, Canary Islands), Casa Lu (Mexico City), and Darmstädter Sezession, (Darmstadt, Germany). In 2019 she was a recipient of a Sustainable Arts Foundation grant that allowed her to live and work at the Women's Studio Workshop in NY with her son. She received an Individual Artist Grant from the City of San Antonio in 2021.

Fox lives and works in San Antonio, Texas with her 4-year old son and is a resident artist at Clamp Light Studios and Gallery. She teaches at Texas State University and runs the summer Nature of Art Camp for young artists at Confluence Park.



Adriana M. Garcia creates as a visual artist and is a big fan of portraits and loves depicting strong women as a way to honor those who have come before and those whom continue to lead by example. Garcia likes to paint large—a side effect of working on community murals for various schools and non-profits. Garcia hopes her brushstrokes convey a portion of the strength and resilience that these women embody.



Megan Harrison earned a BFA from Metropolitan State University of Denver, 2008, and an MFA from the University of Texas San Antonio, 2012. Her work has exhibited nationally and internationally, including works on permanent display at the George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston and City Hall of San Antonio. Locally her work has exhibited at the McNay Art Museum, Blue Star Contemporary and Sala Diaz. She was awarded a full fellowship at The Vermont Studios, 2015, and was selected by the Blue Star Contemporary for the Künstlerhaus Bethanien residency program in Berlin Germany, 2019 where she lived with her Husband and young son for 6 months.



Mari Hernandez is a multidisciplinary artist. A career in non-profit arts organizations led her to explore socially engaged and identity-based art. Group exhibitions include McNay Art Museum, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, Artpace San Antonio, the Institute of Texan Cultures, Centro de Artes, and Catherine G. Murphy Gallery in Minnesota. Solo exhibitions include the Southwest School of Art and Staniar Gallery at Washington and Lee University in Virginia. Hernandez is a graduate of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Leadership Institute and Arts Advocacy Institute; she participated in the inaugural Public Art San Antonio Mentorship Course. She was awarded the Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Grant, and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Fund for the Arts Grant. She lives and works in San Antonio, Texas.



Ana Hernández's work explores the female identity in response to contemporary culture. Born and raised on the US/Mexico border in 1986, she draws from Neo-Mexican imagery as well as American popular culture. Her work explores and celebrates the certainties and ambiguities of personality, relationships. Hernández holds a Bachelors in Fine Arts with a concentration in painting and a minor in art history. Hernández exhibits regionally and internationally and has worked in various public art projects in San Antonio, Texas and Tamaulipas, Mexico.



Laura Mijangos-Rapp was born in San Antonio, Texas and graduated from Trinity University in 1979. There she received her BA in Fine Arts where she focused on sculpture under Phillip Evett. Later she studied painting with her father, the late Alberto Mijangos. Laura is a figurative abstract artist who works primarily in mixed media. Her inspiration is often life experiences and the lessons they teach. She still resides in San Antonio and exhibits her work throughout Texas.



Rhys Munro, originally from Detroit, is currently based in San Antonio, Texas. Munro has a Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas San Antonio. In addition to her studio practice, she is a muralist dedicated to bringing art out of the gallery and into the community. Additionally, Munro is the Conservation Technician at the McNay Art Museum.



Karen Robinson is a professional Fiber Artist and Quilter who is passionate about documenting history using quilts. Through community engagement Robinson expands the traditions of quilting and storytelling by creating interactive projects. Often called the "Quilt Lady," Robinson has shared her collection of Black History Quilts with local schools, libraries, organizations, and churches throughout San Antonio since 2002.

In San Antonio, Robinson has exhibited quilts at the Institute of Texan Cultures, St Philip's College and the Carver Community Cultural Center. In addition, Robinson has had the pleasure of exhibiting at the Houston International Quilt Festival and the Atlanta Quilt Festival. Robinson is the past President and co-founder of the African American Quilt Circle of San Antonio.

Robinson is a registered nurse (retired) and Air Force Veteran. She began sewing as a teen and quilting some years later. Creating custom quilts that capture a lifetime of cherished memories bring her the greatest joy. Robinson is loving her second career as an entrepreneur creating Memory Quilts and smiles!



Hiromi Stringer was born in Kyoto, Japan. Currently she is a Senior Lecturer of drawing and painting at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Stringer was awarded the 2019-2020 Dedalus Foundation Master of Fine Arts Fellowship. She was selected for artist in residency programs, the 2019-2020 Blue Star Contemporary Berlin Residency Program/ Künstlerhaus Bethanien International Studio Program, Berlin, Germany and the 2021 Summer Arts Faculty Residency program at Ox-Bow School of Art & Artists' Residency, MI. In 2014, She won a grand prize for Eyes Got It!. A resident of the San Antonio area, her works are in public, corporate and private collections in Japan and the US. In San Antonio, Stringer has exhibited at artpace, the Blue Star Contemporary, the McNay Art Museum, the Southwest School of Art, the University of Texas at San Antonio Art Gallery.

ABOUT CULTURE COMMONS GALLERY

Culture Commons Gallery is a public, cultural space that integrates the arts into our civic conversation by encouraging creativity, supporting local culture, and engaging our community in transforming the future.

The gallery is located in the Plaza de Armas Building behind City Hall at 115 Plaza de Armas. It is managed by the Department of Arts & Culture and is free and open to the public.

For more information, visit SanAntonio.gov/Arts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to the Department of Arts & Culture's Cultural Events and Exhibits division who organized and implemented this exhibition.

This exhibit was a collaborative effort with the City of San Antonio's Metropolitan Health District and its Violence Prevention Program. If you or someone you know needs help, please visit SanAntonio.gov/Health/ViolencePrevention.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEPARTMENT OF
ARTS & CULTURE

SANANTONIO.GOV/ARTS



VIOLENCE
PREVENTION

