



Carolina Caycedo and David de Rozas. *Bloom Boom* (detail) from the Greetings from West Texas series, 2020. Collage. 6 5/8 x 10 1/2 in. (16.8 x 26.7 cm) framed. Courtesy of the artists. Commissioned by Ballroom Marfa.

Traveling exhibition from Carolina Caycedo & David de Rozas Premieres at the Visual Arts Center

Austin, TX – Debuting at the Visual Arts Center (VAC) in Austin, *The Blessings of the Mystery* is an exhibition from artists Carolina Caycedo and David de Rozas, expanding on ideas manifested in their multidisciplinary practice with a new film and a series of installations rooted in West Texas. Organized by Ballroom Marfa, *The Blessings of the Mystery* premieres at the Visual Arts Center and will be on view from September 24 – December 3, 2021.

The project crystallizes Caycedo and de Rozas' extended research into the connections and tensions between the cultural, scientific, industrial and socio-political forces of three key locations: the McDonald Observatory in Fort Davis, the Amistad Dam on the Rio Grande and the Permian Basin oil fields. At the exhibition's center is *The Teaching of the Hands* (2020), a single-channel film that recounts the region's complex histories of colonization, migration and ecological precarity from the perspective of Juan Mancias, Chairman of the Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe of Texas. The film combines observational and experimental documentary with oral histories, reenactments, archival footage and documents. The film's narrative grows out of the

land where both Indigenous and settler knowledge have been historically produced. Weaving together scenes from the present day to 4,000 years in the past, *The Teaching of the Hands* highlights the environmental memories and consciousness of these interconnected places across Texas.

The exhibition also features a site-responsive installation incorporating both historical and contemporary surveying tools and artifacts used to fabricate parcels of land into legal existence. Suspended from the VAC's vaulted ceiling in a configuration of wires and cabling, the floating objects that comprise *Measuring the Immeasurable* (2020) refer to the region's history of land speculation and the rapid privatization of land that displaced people, animals, and reshaped the landscape. Lastly, alongside original artworks are a selection of objects culled from special collections at The University of Texas at Austin. Original, rarely-seen watercolors produced in the 1930s by artists and amateur archaeologists Forest and Lula Kirkland are on loan from the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratories. These watercolors document the ancient rock art of the Lower Pecos, captured before many of these works were destroyed by flooding, erosion or human interaction. Extinct and near extinct species of West Texas flora and fauna are also on loan from the Biodiversity Collections and the Billie L. Turner Plant Resources Center at UT Austin.

Situated in its inaugural presentation on the campus of The University of Texas at Austin, *The Blessings of the Mystery* offers Austin visitors a multi-sensory experience grounded by the resources of the world's leading research universities. Caycedo and de Rozas examine themes of environmental activism, encounters between history and memory, Indigenous rights, and the formation and dissemination of knowledge. They are joined in associated exhibition programming by scholars and researchers from across Texas and the nation to explore and articulate complicated and layered histories, connections, and tensions present in West Texas.

The Blessings of the Mystery is organized by Ballroom Marfa and curated by Laura Copelin, Director, with Daisy Nam, Curator. The VAC presentation is organized by MacKenzie Stevens, Director. The exhibition will travel to the Rubin Center for the Visual Arts at The University of Texas at El Paso and Ballroom Marfa. The Rubin Center for the Visual Arts presentation is organized by Kerry Doyle, Director.

Lead support for the exhibition is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the VIA Art Fund. Major support is provided by the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, Kevin Sherman, the Susan Vaughan Foundation, and The Brown Foundation, Inc. Generous support is provided by The City of Marfa and the Texas Commission on the Arts. Public programming for this exhibition is supported, in part, by Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

[Carolina Caycedo](#) (b. 1978, London, England) lives and works in Los Angeles. She has had solo exhibitions at MCA Chicago (2021); Oxy Arts, Los Angeles (2021); Art Gallery of Guelph,

Ontario (2020); ICA Boston (2020); Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, Poland (2019); Orange County Museum of Art, Santa Ana (2019); Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College (2019); Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto Mississauga (2018); amongst others. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at the El Museo del Barrio Triennial (2021); ICA Richmond (2020); Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg (2020); TEA-Tenerife Espacio de las Artes (2020); International Women's Film Festival, Cologne (2020); 45 Salón Nacional de Artistas Colombia (2019); Chicago Architecture Biennial (2019); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); MASP, São Paulo (2019); Royal Academy of Art, London (2019); Lille 3000, France (2019); Musée d'art Pully, France (2019); LACE, Los Angeles (2019); MAMM, Medellin (2019); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2018); Disjecta, Portland (2018); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2018); amongst others. She is the recipient of a number of fellowships and awards, including VIA Art Fund, Artist Direct Grant (2020); Betty Parsons Fellow, Art Matters (2020); Inaugural Borderlands Fellowship, Center for Imagination in the Borderlands, Arizona State University, and Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School, New York (2020); Wanlass Artist in Residency, Oxy Arts – Occidental College, Los Angeles (2020);/five Initiative, Artist in Residence, The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens (2018); Visual Artists Fellowship, California Community Foundation, Los Angeles (2017); Creative Capital Awardee (2015), amongst others.

[David de Rozas](#) (b. 1979, Burgos, Spain) lives and works in Los Angeles. De Rozas' films have been screened in festivals and film curated series worldwide, such as Visions du Réel (2018); True/False (2018); Sheffield Doc/Fest (2018); and Kassel DocFest (2018), among others. De Rozas is an Emmy-nominated and award-winning filmmaker who directed and produced "GIVE," winning seven international awards including Best Experimental at the Smithsonian African American Film Festival at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC (2018), and Best Short Documentary at FullFrame Film Festival (2019). He is the recipient of a VIA Art Fund, Artist Direct Grant (2020); The Flaherty Film Seminar Fellowship (2019); McEvoy Family Award, San Francisco (2021); Visual Artists Fellowship, California Community Foundation, Los Angeles (2017). De Rozas is a 2021 Artist in Residency at the Headlands Center for the Arts, and a lecturer at the School of Cinema housed in the College of Liberal and Creative Arts at the San Francisco State University.

On View

September 24 – December 3, 2021

High-resolution images are available upon request and with caption information at [this Box link](#).