



Maria A. Guzmán Capron, *Siempre* (detail), 2021. Fabric, thread, batting, and latex, spray, and acrylic paints, 40 x 62 inches

Maria A. Guzmán Capron

Celaje

November 13 – January 8

Opening Saturday, November 13, 5pm – 8pm

Walk-ins welcome, appointments encouraged.

Shulamit Nazarian is pleased to present *Celaje*, a solo exhibition of new textile sculptures by Oakland-based artist Maria A. Guzmán Capron. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles.

Through a combination of hand-sewn textiles and paints, Capron joins together an array of patterns and striking colors to fashion bodily forms. Merging figuration with abstraction, these works explore cultural hybridity, pride, and the competing desires to assimilate and to be seen.

Capron's shaped wall-works are rooted in her background as an immigrant. Born in Milan, Italy to Colombian and Peruvian parents and later relocating to Texas as a teenager, Capron recognizes the challenges of toggling between various cultures and geographies. Her practice explores how clothing is used as a marker of class, gender, and cultural identity. The artist

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shares, “As a non-English-speaking immigrant, I was always aware of *visual* language and the role it plays in describing and signaling identities. Now, as an American, I am still searching for a material aesthetic that fits me.”

Celaje, a Spanish word for a wispy, polychromatic cloudscape, speaks to how Capron thinks of identity as something that constantly shifts and evolves. The artist primarily uses discarded fabric to evoke the body, constructing figures that are simultaneously extensions of herself and collective portraits of those who often influence identity formation, such as lovers, caretakers, and friends.

Exaggerated body parts—signature moves in Capron’s work—render muscular arms that embrace, puffy fingers that clasp together, and slinky legs that intertwine to become one. The most petite figure in the exhibition serves as a self-portrait. “She presents herself to you as the narrator of the story; she welcomes you into the space,” says the artist. Capron’s practice emphasizes that we consist of several identities, some that we repress and some that we exalt. Her works highlight the diversity within many of us, where several individual personas assembled together can be understood as reflections of a single person.

Capron’s use of recycled fabric is central to the genesis of her work. Privileging off-cut fabrics—literally centering materials that have been cut and rejected as excess—becomes a metaphor for centralizing that which society undervalues. The artist shares, “It’s my way of valuing and focusing on the Other and, in it, finding my personal way of describing powerful brown bodies.” By contrasting common fibers like cotton with more luxurious fabrics like silk, the artist addresses material hierarchies in art and fashion to parallel the power dynamics that exist within class and gender. She is invested in the friction of mistranslations—of failing to “dress the part” or having one’s pride in self-expression overcast by exoticization.

The works in *Celaje* borrow from the poetic moment when the light in our day shifts to create a momentary cloudscape, where billowing clouds take on temporarily identifiable shapes or forms. Through eclectic fabric and subtly painted brushstrokes, Capron constructs various permutations of fluid identities. The interlaced figures confront the viewer, reflect the most intimate relationships in our lives, and become an invitation for vulnerability, openness, and individual expression.

Maria A. Guzmán Capron (b. 1981) was born in Italy to Colombian and Peruvian parents. She received her MFA from California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA in 2015 and her BFA from the University of Houston, TX in 2004. Solo exhibitions include Texas State Galleries, San Marcos, TX; Premier Junior, San Francisco, CA; Roll Up Project, Oakland, CA; and Guerrero Gallery San Francisco, CA. Select group exhibitions include Buffalo Institute for Contemporary Art, Buffalo, NY; NIAD Art Center, Richmond, CA; Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles, CA; pt.2 Gallery, Oakland, CA; CULT Aimee Friberg Exhibitions, San Francisco, CA; Deli Gallery in Brooklyn, NY; and Mana Contemporary in Chicago, IL. Her works have been written about in *Hyperallergic*, *Variable West*, *Bomb Magazine*, and *Art in America*.