

tierra.

sanjos.

otro.

Rafa Esparza

WITH

**Carmen Argote, Nao Bustamante, Beatriz Cortez,
Timo Fahler, Eamon Ore-Giron, Star Montana**

AND

**Sandro Cánovas, Maria Garcia,
Ruben Rodriguez**

AUGUST 25, 2017 – MARCH 18, 2018

Tierra. Sangre. Oro. is a group exhibition envisioned by Rafa Esparza that includes new work by Carmen Argote, Beatriz Cortez, Esparza, Timo Fahler, Eamon Ore-Giron; new and existing photographs by Star Montana; a major body of work by Nao Bustamante; the contributions of adoberos/artists Sandro Cánovas, Maria Garcia, Ruben Rodriguez, as well as many hands from the community of Marfa.

Rafa and I began a conversation in June 2016. I had followed his work closely before we met, and had seen two of his adobe interventions next to the Los Angeles River, *building: a simulacrum of power* (2014) and *Con/Safos* (2015). The generous and generative nature of his practice was immediately apparent to me, each architecture offering itself up both as a surface for other artists and as a physical embodiment of labor and land. Those two projects convinced me that Rafa should come to Marfa to see the vernacular adobe architecture of the region, and many months later we started dreaming, together, about a project for Ballroom.

It has been a great privilege to work with Rafa and all of the artists that manifested this exhibition. In Marfa, Rafa worked alongside Sandro Cánovas, Maria Garcia, and Ruben Rodriguez for over two months, mixing adobe and molding bricks, to produce tons of building material that he used to create a rich ground for his peers and Ballroom's visitors.

Beatriz Cortez and Rafa collaborated on reorienting the entrance to Ballroom's galleries, and together built an arch inspired by ancient Mayan architecture. Now, visitors are invited to pass through an entry point of the artists' own creation, and to move through the galleries from north to south, towards the border and Mexico. Most of the bricks for this monumental structure were made by Don Manuel Rodriguez, an expert adobero living in Ojinaga, Mexico, and were brought over the border particularly for this sculpture.

Star Montana's striking medium format portraits of female-identifying people of color confront viewers from their monumental adobe mounts at the front of the gallery. Most of Star's portraits are taken in her community in Los Angeles, but *Maria* was made in Marfa at the worksite where artist Maria Garcia built bricks with Rafa for the exhibition. Rafa's four hulking adobe structures that hold up these portraits are named in honor of Aztec deity Coatlicue, the mother of the gods, the sun, the moon and the stars.

Carmen Argote spent two weeks in Marfa meeting locals by collecting their cardboard boxes. From these disposable containers, Carmen created the large painted tapestry hanging in the center gallery, that maps both shapes and interactions. She created playful paper mache sculptures to echo the muslin hanging, as well as two wearable mantas that reflect Marfa's singular skies. Eamon Ore-Giron's wool pancho, *Talking Shit with Quetzalcoatl...* is wearable too, woven by craftsmen in Guadalajara, it is a translation of one of the artist's iconic compositions. A pair of adobe plinths by Esparza, one indoors and one outdoors, are tailored to the weaving's dimensions. The plinth outside provides a space for the pancho to be spread out and sat upon, used as a blanket for contemplation and conversation, and a stage for performances to come.

Timo Fahler's hydrocal spikes border the courtyard, evoking a homemade security system, monstrous teeth or snake-like forms. Timo spent weeks working alongside Rafa as well, pouring adobe in cinderblock molds and experimenting with colliding those two dissimilar building modes. The resulting stacks and structures become bodily proxies, occupied by found objects, cacti, and colorful appendages.

Nao Bustamante's expansive body of work around soldaderas, the under recognized women soldiers of the Mexican Revolution, occupies the south gallery. Rafa's adobe floors and pedestal ground Nao's videos, Kevlar costumes, historic photographs, and objects. The installation re-presents and reinvents the soldadera's role in the Revolution and in the present day, re-inserting her into history and into our contemporary consciousness as a symbol of strength and power. Just outside of Nao's installation, visitors are invited to flip through books on adobe building practices and admire the collection of gavelas, adobe brick molds, are from Sandro Cánovas's personal collection.

Altogether *Tierra. Sangre. Oro.* is many things: It is a group exhibition but it is also over 2,000 adobe bricks; it is, in Rafa's words "a Brown laboratory"; it is a platform for artworks and performances and happenings; it is a conversation between artists manifested in space.

– Laura Copelin
Curator and Director

Dear Carmen, Nao, Beatriz, Timo, Eamon and Star,

I've been talking to you about this work I've been preparing for this summer and I'm happy to formally invite you with great enthusiasm to join me in working on a project together that will culminate in an exhibition this summer at Ballroom Marfa, in Marfa, Texas. The project is titled **tierra. sangre. oro.** Throughout the years I've been deeply immersed in creative processes that help me value, and interrogate my relationship to land, time, space, and the body--all themes suggested in the title, which I think of expansively and that threads through many of our respective practices. Most recently at The Whitney Biennial, I worked with a few artists together to presence our works/practices within an adobe rotunda, a round space made out of brown matter. I've been curious to work in differently configured adobe spaces that can speak to many ideas I have about labor, land and the politics of the white cube, that also offers itself up as a Brown laboratory for dialoguing, thinking, working and making together with my peers.

I recently visited Marfa, TX and it inspired many new thoughts and ideas. Through this invitation, I'd like to expand the idea of a Brown laboratory, less physicalized as a Brown adobe container but instead still present in its materiality located within an art space and both the architecture and natural landscape of the Southwest.

My residency in Marfa will begin late June (last week of the month), through the end of August. The exhibition will open August 25th. I've been working closely with the Curator and Interim Director, Laura Copelin who has been a great supporter of this work and is working hard to secure resources for transportation and lodging for everyone to be able to spend time in Marfa together. As of now we're able to secure 1-2 weeks of lodging plus flights and an artist stipend for everyone I've invited. The time each person spends there will depend on the scope of our respective engagements there and everyone's availability and schedule; though, it would be GREAT for us to try and all be there together at least once early during the course of the residency (1st week of July?) to be able to take in the town, the landscape and our shared company.

I'm excited about the prospects of continuing to dialogue and work together. Please let me know if this is something you are interested in joining me for. I am VERY much looking forward to working with you this summer!

Yours,

rafa

Gallery Entrance

- 1 Beatriz Cortez and Rafa Esparza
Portal Sur, after Copan, 2017
 Steel, adobe made with soil from the Americas, South of the U.S. Border
 Courtesy the artists and Don Manuel Rodríguez, adobero in Ojinaga, Mexico

North Gallery

- 2 Star Montana
Maria, 2016
 All works archival inkjet print
 All works courtesy the artist
- 3 *Ruby*, 2017
- 4 *Sarah*, 2017
- 5 *Krystal*, 2017
- 6 Rafa Esparza
Coatlicue 1-4, 2017
 Adobe
 Courtesy the artist

Center Gallery

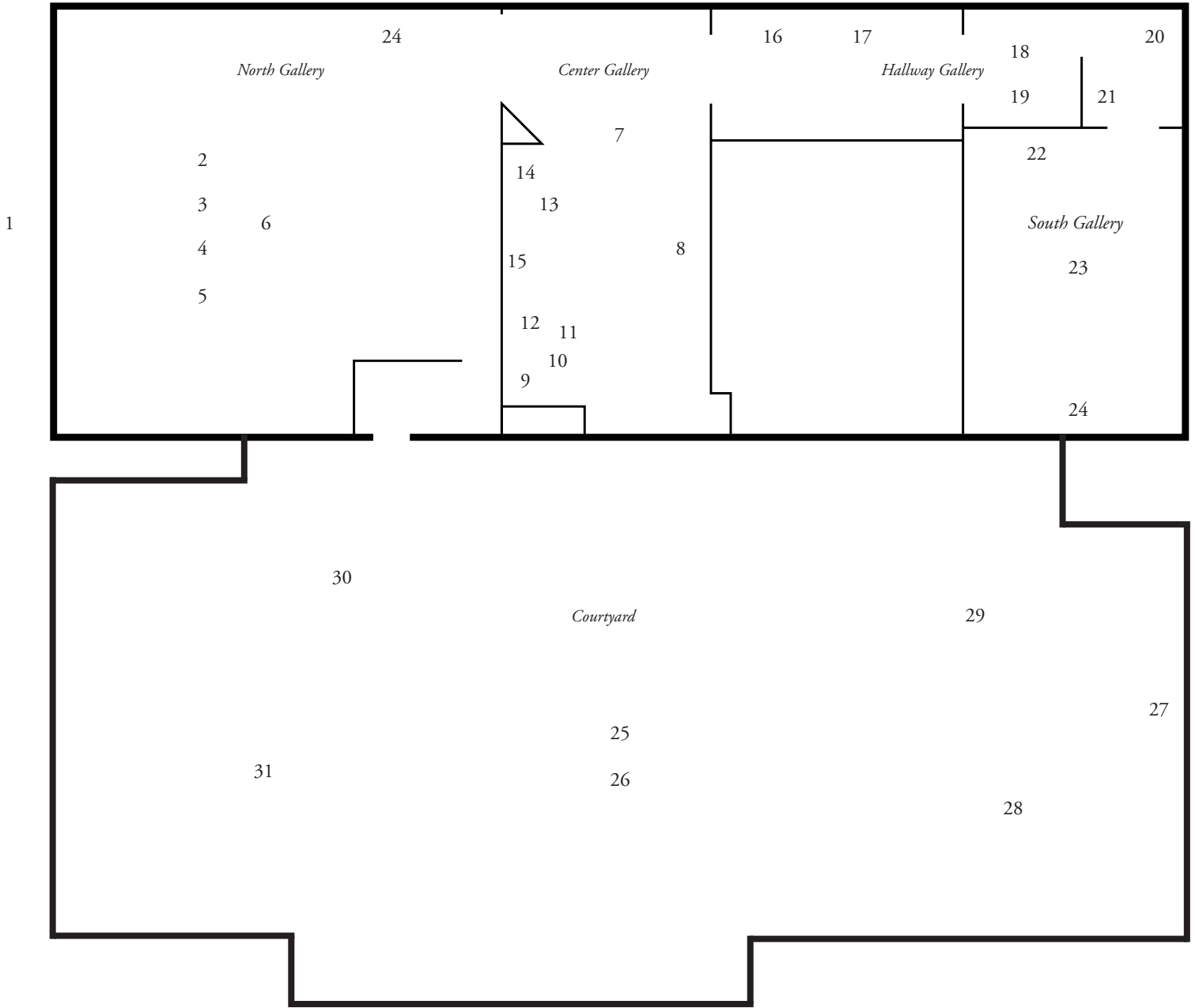
- 7 Rafa Esparza
Adobe Ground for Hunting and Gathering, 2017
 Adobe
 Courtesy the artist
- 8 Carmen Argote
Hunting and Gathering, 2017
 Acrylic on muslin fabric, cardboard boxes
 All works courtesy the artist
- 9 *Object Box: French Blue*, 2017
 Paper mache
- 10 *Object Box: Smokey Beige*, 2017
- 11 *Object Box: Azul Silvestre*, 2017
- 12 *Object Box: Citron*, 2017
- 13 *Object Box: Sweet Pea*, 2017
- 14 *Object Box: Cafecito Claro*, 2017
- 15 *Oh wow... The Marfa Sky*, 2017
 Acrylic on wearable muslin

Hallway Gallery

- 16 Gaveras and publications from the collection of local adobero Sandro Cánovas
- 17 *A Soldadera's Archive*
 From the holdings of Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

South Gallery

- 18 Nao Bustamante
Tierra y Libertad - Kevlar® 2945, 2010
 Protective Kevlar® wearable fighting costume, 9mm slugs
 All works courtesy the artist
- 19 Rafa Esparza
Adobe Ground for Soldadera, 2017
 Adobe
 Courtesy the artist
- 20 Nao Bustamante
Chac-Mool, 2015
 Mixed media: stereoscopic video, custom upholstered stool, custom headphones by Jarrod Davis, stereoscope
- 21 Leandra Beccara Lumbreras (b. 1887 d. 2015)
Peacock in Profile, 1978)
 Embroidered by Lumbreras, from the collection of Mariá Álvarez Del Castillo.
- 22 *Rebozo*, 2015
 Kevlar®
- 23 *Kevlar Fighting Costumes* (set of 5), 2015
 Protective Kevlar® wearable fighting costume
- 24 *Soldadera*, 2015
 Speculative reenactment video with archival photography



Courtyard

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>25 Eamon Ore-Giron <i>Talking Shit With Quetzalcoatl/ I Like Mexico and Mexico Likes Me</i>, 2017 Wool, copper, adobe Courtesy the artist</p> <p>26 Rafa Esparza <i>Raised Adobe Ground for Talking Shit With Quetzalcoatl</i>, 2017 Adobe Courtesy the artist</p> <p>27 Timo Fahler <i>seguro dentro del dia (safe inside the day)</i>, 2017 Hydrocal, hay, fabric dye All works courtesy the artist</p> | <p>28 Timo Fahler <i>la busqueda del oro (the search for gold)</i>, 2017 Adobe, lava rock, found objects</p> <p>29 <i>aqui con mi sangre (here with my blood)</i>, 2017 Adobe, hydrocal, hay, dye, lava rock, found objects</p> <p>30 <i>el oro te regalo (the gold I give you)</i>, 2017 Adobe, hydrocal, hay, dye, lava rock, found objects</p> <p>31 <i>regrasamos al tierra (we return to the earth)</i>, 2017 Adobe, hydrocal, hay, dye, lava rock, found objects</p> |
|--|--|

Carmen Argote

Carmen Argote is a Los Angeles based artist whose work focuses on the exploration of personal history through architecture and the spaces that she inhabits. Argote received her MFA from UCLA in 2007 and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2009. She exhibited at the Vincent Price Museum 2013 and is currently exhibiting work as part of *Mi Tierra: Contemporary Artists Explore Place* at the Denver Art Museum, *The 2017 California Pacific Triennial: Building As Ever* at The Orange County Museum of Art and *Home-So Different, So Appealing* exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art as part of the Getty Foundation's initiative Pacific Standard Time LA/LA. Argote's work will be included in Proyectos LA with Instituto de Vision this September. Her next solo exhibition *Pyramids*, will be at Panel LA in September as well.

Nao Bustamante

Nao Bustamante is an internationally known artist, residing in Los Angeles. Bustamante's work encompasses performance art, video installation, filmmaking, sculpture and writing. Bustamante has presented work in galleries, museums, universities and underground sites all around the world. She has exhibited, among other locales, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, the New York Museum of Modern Art, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Sundance International Film Festival/New Frontier, El Museo del Barrio Museum of Contemporary Art, First International Performance Biennial, *Deformes* in Santiago, Chile and the Kiasma Museum of Helsinki. Bustamante is an alum of the San Francisco Art Institute, New Genres program and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Currently she is a Professor of Art at the USC Roski School of Art and Design where she also serves at the Vice Dean of Art and the MFA Director.

Beatriz Cortez

Beatriz Cortez is an artist, a writer, and an educator. She was born in El Salvador and has lived in the United States since 1989. She has exhibited nationally and internationally. Her work is currently on view as part of the California Pacific Triennial at the Orange County Museum of Art and at the *Why Art Matters!* exhibition at the Torrance Museum of Art. Cortez will be included in *Mundos Alternos: Art and Science Fiction in the Americas* as part of the Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA initiative at UCR ArtsBlock in Riverside, California. She holds an MFA in Art from the California Institute of the Arts, and a doctorate in Latin American Literature from Arizona State University. She is professor of Central American Studies at California State University, Northridge. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Rafa Esparza

Rafa Esparza is a multidisciplinary artist who was born, raised, and is currently living in Los Angeles. Esparza has performed in a variety of spaces including AIDS Project Los Angeles, Highways Performance Space, REDCAT, Human Resources, SOMArts, Vincent Price Museum, LACE and various public sites throughout Los Angeles. He is a recipient of an Emerging Artist 2014 California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Arts, a 2014 Art Matters grantee, and a 2015 recipient of a Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant. Esparza was recently part of the 2016 Made in L.A. Biennial at the Hammer Museum and the 2017 Whitney Biennial.

Timo Fahler

Timo Fahler was born 1978 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He studied at San Francisco City College, Kansas City Art Institute, and received an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2012. Recent solo exhibitions include *a most imperfect understanding, a most slanted manner* at LA><ART, Los Angeles, *In* (with Rafa Esparza) at Club Pro, Los Angeles, and *slow relief*, at Ibid Gallery, Los Angeles. Fahler lives and works in Los Angeles where he co-organizes the migrating exhibition platform BBQLA and the youth-oriented art club and community building contextual conversation MEATGRINDER.

Eamon Ore-Giron

Eamon Ore-Giron (b. 1973) received a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute (1996) and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles (2006). He has had solo exhibitions at LAX ART, Los Angeles (2015); Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York City (2014); MUCA ROMA, Mexico City (2006); Queen's Nails Annex, San Francisco (2005) and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia (2005). His work has been included in group shows at the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City; Prospect 3, New Orleans; the Perez Art Museum, Miami, and Deitch Projects, New York. Ore-Giron's work has been covered in The New York Times, Art Forum, ANP Quarterly, and SFAQ, among other publications. Eamon Ore-Giron is based in Guadalajara, Mexico, New York and Los Angeles

Star Montana

Star Montana (b. 1987) is a photo-based artist who lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. She was born and raised in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles, which is predominantly Mexican American and serves as the backdrop to much of her work. Star's imagery deals with class, social environment, and identity within the personal, her family. *Tear Drops & Three Dots* a long term project with her family that has dealt with fragmented histories, loss, and the hope of the next generation was recently on view at the Vincent Price Art Museum and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. More recently, she has begun to work on her themes within a larger scope of Los Angeles residents via portraiture and video. Montana received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2013.

BALLROOM MARFA

Tierra. Sangre. Oro. is made possible by the generous support of the Moody Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; Brown Foundation Inc.; City of Marfa; National Endowment for the Arts; Texas Commission on the Arts; Fairfax Dorn & Marc Glimcher; Virginia Lebermann & Family; Melony & Adam Lewis; Kristina Van Dyke & Jeff Fort; Ballroom Marfa Board of Trustees; and Ballroom Marfa Members.

In-kind support provided by Big Bend Brewing Co.; The Capri; Sandra Harper, Eliza, Sophia & Hamilton Fish; Hotel Saint George; and SAVED Wines..

Special thanks to Oscar Agüero; Baeza Feeds LLC; Lalo Baeza; Oscar Bedford; The Big Bend Sentinel; Blackwell School Alliance; Abby Boyd; Chip Briscoe; Michael Camacho; Vicente Celis; Chinati Foundation; Clockshop; Tim Crowley; Anthony DeSimone; Gretel Enck; Ramon Esparza; David Fenster; Cuca Flores; JD Garcia; Alfredo de la Garza; Alex Gates; Trey Gerfers; Vilis Indie; JD Samson & MEN; Judd Foundation; Rainer Judd; Marcus Kuiland-Nazario; Minerva Lopez; Marfa Hardware; Marfa Public Radio; Marfa Recording Co.; Susannah Lipsey & Alex Marks; Jeff Matheis; Liz Miller; Lauren McMurry; Rachel Monroe; Alejandro Luperca Morales; Riley O'Bryan; Sullivan Patten; Elise Pepple; Bobby Ramirez; Zeke Raney; Don Manuel, Victor & Jose Rodriguez; Francisco Rosas; Silla Marfa; Gory Smelley; Emilie Sullivan; Ramona Tejada; Taller Mexicano de Gobelinos, Guadalajara; Laura Tucker; UC Riverside's Tomás Rivera Library; Emma Whelan; Mac White; the Whitney Museum of American Art; and WNP Industries. Gory Smelley; and Judy Upjohn. And also to our friends at Austin Art Services, the Big Bend Sentinel, the Chinati Foundation, Judd Foundation, Marfa Public Radio and UNA Art Logistics.



The Andy Warhol Foundation
for the Visual Arts



Texas
Commission
on the Arts



National
Endowment
for the Arts
010207