

BALLROOM MARFA

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The Blessings of the Mystery
Carolina Caycedo & David de Rozas
May 26–September 4, 2022
Opening Celebration: Saturday, June 4, 2022



Carolina Caycedo & David de Rozas, detail of *Bloom Boom* from the *Greetings from West Texas* series, 2020. Courtesy the artists and Ballroom Marfa.

MARFA, TX—Ballroom Marfa presents *The Blessings of the Mystery*, a multidisciplinary exhibition opening May 26, 2022. Artists Carolina Caycedo and David de Rozas have created a new film and series of installations rooted in West Texas. The project crystallizes the artists' research into the connections and tensions between the cultural, scientific, industrial, and socio-political forces across locations like the McDonald Observatory in Fort Davis, the Amistad Dam on the Rio Grande, and the Permian Basin oil fields.

The presentation centers around *The Teachings of the Hands*, a single-channel film that depicts 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 video-installation combines observational and experimental documentary with oral histories, reenactments, and archival footage. 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 Teachings of the Hands* highlights the environmental memories and cosmologies of interconnected places across Texas.

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The artists' pull from different materials and sources to expand on concepts in the film—they create immersive installations of surveying flags and tools, render several series of drawings and collages, and select from a collection of original watercolors from the 1930s by artists and amateur archaeologists Forrest and Lula Kirkland that depict the ancient rock art of the Lower Pecos. On loan from the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin, these rarely seen plein air paintings document the original forms and vibrant colors of murals that were still visible in the 30s, before flooding, erosion, and human interaction damaged or destroyed them.

The Blessings of the Mystery emerges from Caycedo and de Rozas's multidisciplinary practices, which are centered around environmental justice, encounters between history and memory, and Indigenous rights and cosmologies. For this exhibition and its iterations across Texas, Caycedo and de Rozas investigate the transformation of *Somi Se'ke** by way of industry, infrastructure, and private property.

**Somi Se'ke* means the Land of the Sun and is the way the Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe refers to the land known as Texas.

The Blessings of the Mystery is organized by Laura Copelin, former Director & Curator, Ballroom Marfa.

The exhibition traveled to the Visual Arts Center (VAC) at The University of Texas at Austin in September 2021 and to the Rubin Center for the Visual Arts at The University of Texas at El Paso in January 2022. The VAC presentation was organized by MacKenzie Stevens, Director, and the Rubin Center for the Visual Arts presentation was organized by Kerry Doyle, Director.

Lead support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and VIA Art Fund.
Major support is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation; and Kevin Sherman.

Generous support is provided by The City of Marfa and the Texas Commission on the Arts. Exhibitions at Ballroom are supported by The Brown Foundation, Inc.; Fairfax Dorn & Marc Glimcher; Virginia Lebermann & Family; Lebermann Foundation; Ballroom Marfa's Board of Trustees, International Surf Club, and Ballroom members.

About the Artists

Carolina Caycedo (b. 1978) is a multidisciplinary artist known for her performances, video, artist's books, sculptures, and installations that examine environmental and social issues. She has held residencies at the DAAD in Berlin and The Huntington in San Marino; received funding from Creative Capital and Prince Claus Fund; participated in the Chicago Architecture, Sao Paulo, Venice, Berlin, and Whitney Biennials; recent solo shows include ICA Boston and MCA Chicago. She is a 2020-2022 Inaugural Borderlands Fellow at the Center for Imagination in the Borderlands, Arizona State University, and Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School.

David de Rozas (b. 1979) is a multidisciplinary artist and award-winning filmmaker whose practice merges experimental documentary and contemporary art forms, revisiting and relocating the politics of memory. De Rozas films have been screened in festivals and film curated series worldwide, such

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as Visions du Réel, Sheffield Doc/Fest, True/False, and Kassel DocFest. His recent film 'GIVE' was nationally broadcasted on POV, and won Best Short Documentary at FullFrame and Best Experimental at the Smithsonian African American Film Festival. He is a 2021 Artist in Residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts.

For further information about the exhibition or to schedule interviews, please contact Ballroom Marfa at press@ballroommarfa.org or (432)729-3600.

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About Ballroom Marfa

Founded in 2003 by Virginia Lebermann and Fairfax Dorn, Ballroom Marfa is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and a dynamic, contemporary cultural arts space housed in a converted dancehall that dates to 1927. Ballroom Marfa's mission is to serve international, national, regional, and local arts communities and support the work of both emerging and recognized artists working across all media: visual arts, film, music, and performance.

Location, Hours, Admission

Ballroom Marfa is located at 108 E. San Antonio St. / Highway 90 West, and is open Thursday through Saturday, 12-6pm. Admission is free.