



## Grupo Ñ, *Defining Ñ*

September 27 - October 18, 2025

Opening: Saturday, September 27, 6-9pm

**Defining Ñ** is the first institutional presentation of the Los Angeles-based collective **Grupo Ñ**, founded in 2023 by artists **Sophia Le Fraga**, **Michele Lorusso**, and **Pedro Alejandro Verdin**. Having met as students in the Master of Fine Arts program at the California Institute of the Arts, the collective formed around a desire to articulate its identity through a shared language despite cultural complexity. Le Fraga inscribes poetry onto clothing labels and book cards, Lorusso deconstructs words through sculptural forms, and Verdin draws from song lyrics in his paintings. The character “Ñ” from the Spanish alphabet, often mispronounced by non-Spanish speakers, symbolizes the challenges and misunderstandings inherent in defining the self.

Grupo Ñ presents an ever-changing installation that unravels over four weeks and closely resembles a functional office space. A standard printer and blank sheets of paper are used to create text-based works reflecting the collective’s shifting concerns. These works draw on photographic documentation of past projects, excerpts from contemporary literature, visual references, and transcribed conversations among the members, recorded on-site by multilingual interpreter Alexia Veytia-Rubio. Within this clerical setting, a martini piñata, beer and soda cans, Doritos’ *Incognito* chip bags purchased from the Tijuana border, and plethora of found objects also circulate. Every word, idea, and exchange accumulates into a public record. The act of witnessing the collective’s process makes visible the negotiations between individual voices and the labor required to shape a shared practice.

Each week, the text-based works are assembled into a publication, culminating in three distinct editions released on Saturdays. Each launch is paired with a public program that invites critical engagement and highlights the linguistic contributions of immigrant communities within vernacular culture, where words gain new meanings, and shift in tone and usage. The process repeats once, twice, or more, echoing the collaborative process itself. Available for visitors to read in the gallery (or leaf through over a drink, alone or with friends), these works question the authority of the “finished” text and foreground the ways language is used, reused, overheard, and felt.

## **Upcoming Programming:**

On Saturday, October 4 at 12pm, Grupo Ñ presents *Eso, eso, eso (index finger gesture)*, a marathon screening of the recently released HBO series *Chespirito: Not Really on Purpose*, alongside a community market inviting local food vendors into the JOAN space in solidarity with the Latino community affected by the recent ICE raids in Los Angeles.

On Saturday, October 11, Grupo Ñ presents *Te escribí un poem*, a bilingual poetry reading that brings together writers across languages and geographies. Further details will be announced soon.

On Saturday, October 18 at 7pm, Grupo Ñ closes its exhibition with *Sing your life*, a karaoke night hosted by Los Super Elegantes, the music duo founded by Mexican artist Milena Muzquiz and Argentine artist Martiniano Lopez Crozet.

This project is part of JOAN's second Chapter of programming (April 2024-January 2026), which brings together artists and collectives exploring varying communal structures of intervention and support as experiments toward liberatory futures.

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**Sophia Le Fraga** uses objects, images, and poems to explore how language accumulates, circulates, and leaves traces over time. She has exhibited and performed at the MOCA; MoMA PS1's *Greater New York*; Camden Arts Center; Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève; and PERFORMA15. She is the founding editor of *No Issue* and a member of the international artist group Collective Task. Together with Joseph Mosconi and Corina Copp, she co-curates Language Garden in Los Angeles, where she lives.

**Michele Lorusso** is an artist whose practice explores language as an active and performative device—one that structures reality while also revealing its limits, contradictions, and possibilities for escape. His work moves between critical deconstruction and poetic exploration, engaging words, objects, and space as tools for affective, political, and social reflection. Lorusso's work has been presented at LACMA, Basel Social Club, Performance Space New York, John Doe Gallery, Espacio Cabeza, and LACE. He co-runs Visa Projects, a collaborative curatorial project with Andy Medina.

**Pedro Alejandro Verdin** works across painting, music, writing, and curation, creating projects that weave tenderness and playfulness. Verdin's work has been presented at Shoot the Lobster, Gene's Dispensary in Los Angeles, and Gordon Robichaux in New York, and he co-runs Kol-Bee, a collaborative poster project with Henry Fey.

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Grupo Ñ, *Defining Ñ* is curated by Nahui Garcia, JOAN's assistant curator.

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