



# DIÁLOGOS

JUNE 25–NOVEMBER 20, 2022



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# DIÁLOGOS

The exhibition *Diálogos* features works by seven local Latinx artists. These artists represent Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and the United States. The artworks presented in the exhibition represent a variety of mediums including: installation, new media, printmaking, and painting.

Each of the artists, through their work, explores their experiences of being a Latinx artist in the United States, while addressing themes of dislocation, integration, cultural identity, and politics. Through their respective mediums, the artists answer these questions personally, challenging the audience to actively engage in dialogue via the bridge created by their work. The dialogue between artists and visitors hopefully leads to a deeper examination, exploration, and understanding of the role of the Latinx experience in the United States.

# MEET THE CURATORS



**EGLÉ GATINS:** Eglé Gatins was born in Paris, France. Her American/French/ Colombian family settled in Atlanta, Georgia in the 1950's.

Gatins attended the Académie Julian in Paris, (1968-1969), Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, (BVA 1973), and The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, (MFA 1975).

Gatins resides in Columbus, Ohio.

She has exhibited her work for the last 40 years in the Ohio area, Atlanta, New York, and Zimbabwe, Africa.



**ELENA OSTERWALDER:** Elena Osterwalder was born in Mexico in 1941. She moved to Columbus, Ohio in 1970 where she attended the Columbus College of Art and Design from 1971 to 1975.

Osterwalder is an installation artist and curator. In her artistic practice, she uses pre-hispanic colors and paper to make contemporary installations, with these materials she brings forward the history and culture of the Pre-Hispanic civilization.

In 2007, Osterwalder was awarded a grant from the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC) for her exploration of “earth – friendly colors”.

She is the author of various articles on Amate – bark paper and the producer of “Amatl” – a documentary of the history of the natives of San Pablito Pahuatlán – an Otomi town in the state of Puebla in Mexico.

Currently Osterwalder lives in Columbus, Ohio with her family.

[elenaosterwalder-atelier.com](http://elenaosterwalder-atelier.com)

Photo by Todd Yarrington

## A LETTER FROM THE CURATORS

There is a rich tradition of fine art in Latin America that is not well known in the United States. People are more familiar with a certain style that is inspired by crafts and folk art with brilliant colors and patterns.

Each of the artists in *Diálogos* has their own unique approach to their respective experience as a Latinx artist working in the United States. Their style of artwork demonstrates a serious commitment to creating strong and challenging works through which they express their unique narratives, intellectual and political examinations, and original use of media.

It is the intent of the co-curators and the artists that the experience of viewing *Diálogos* will provide for the audience, an enriched appreciation for and awareness of the rich traditions represented.

-Eglé Gatins and Elena Osterwalder

# DIÁLOGOS ARTISTS

Eliana Calle Saari

Christian Casas

Florence Gouvrit-Montano

Mabi Ponce de León

Pedro Prieto Jr

Elsie Sanchez

Micaela de Vivero

# CHRISTIAN CASAS

"The pyrographed alphabetic boards, composed of the Spanish alphabet, depict figures integral to histories of anticolonial resistance. For example, 'T' stands for Taíno, the first Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean who encountered Christopher Columbus in 1492. The letter 'H' represents Hatüey, the tenacious leader of the Taíno people, who traveled to Cuba to warn Indigenous tribes of Columbus's incoming fleet. Uncoupling these familiar associations with didactic material introduces us to these vital historical figures within an institutional space – the art gallery – which has frequently undermined the histories and aesthetic traditions of the Other. Moreover, the material used to transform the alphabet evoke folk and craft art traditions carved out of wood."

-Statement written by Dareen Hussein

Christian Casas is a first-generation Cuban-American artist, curator, and educator from Hialeah, Florida. In his work, he uses colonial history, found objects, video, pyrography, archives, printmaking, and painting to explore intergenerational memory, selfhood, and erasure within identity.

Christian received his BA in English from the University of Florida and his MFA in Sculpture from Ohio State University.

[christiancasas.org](http://christiancasas.org)

**ABC's (detail)**  
Pyrographed pinewood, dye  
2021–2022



# ELIANA CALLE SAARI

"My installations and prints are inspired from being born and raised in Colombia, a country known for its culturally rich heritage and where the slippage between "the actual", "the ideal" and "the magical" are simple everyday occurrences, my work is directly indebted to my heritage. Going through life experiencing and perceiving a world that blurs the lines between realistic and fantastical, my life today is made of all the things that were (and are) my absolute belief in the spiritual forces of the universe.

Regardless of the form of my work, the intent is always to engulf the viewer in an experience. Whether is the intimacy of an Artist book or an all-around installation. With my life-size print installation, I try to re-create that feeling of walking by everyday people, unaware of their exact purpose in life. The life size images of people walking or just standing, are suspended in air to allow them to move subtly and be ever changing with the play of light and shadow on their surfaces. This creates a more immersive environment that allows the viewer to participate and to "lose" themselves in the crowd and at the same time, experience moments of beauty exemplified not only by the imagery itself, but by the silk and its movement. The gossamer-like fabric that mutes the images through the visual layering of space and the action of the viewer walking among the figures evokes the ethereal quality of walking among angels.

Wherever I travel, I'm constantly taking photographs of as many moments as possible. Families together, strangers passing by, nonspecific inanimate objects, and a plethora of other potentially mundane examples. These photographs are by no means of any good quality, they are often blurred or have unusual compositions. Throughout the hundreds of blurred photos I take, usually one photo, or perhaps a small piece of it, will begin the inspiration for an entire body of work. Combining drawings and photographs, I create my preliminary images, then I transfer them to a block of wood where I take my time drawing. After my drawing is complete the carving and printing process becomes simple effortless, almost meditative. A recurring motif that appears in my work are monarch butterflies. To me, monarch butterflies represent the inexplicable magic within the universe, the idea of reincarnation, and the symbolic representation of Colombia, not only because Colombia holds the world's largest variety of butterfly species; but rather for their ability to mesh reality and fantasy. Implementing them in my work creates a sense of strangeness yet maintains a subtle familiarity. I create portraits through combining and juxtaposing dissimilar subject matters like human figures and forest elements. I place the subjects in a whimsical place full of magic, where butterflies surround you while playing with your hair and let their wings kiss your skin producing a smile and leaving you with an internal warmth every time you feel their touch.

Even though I left Colombia many years ago, it will always be my home and what has shaped me into the person I am today. My work is an optimistic memoir that demonstrates a bridge to my past, culture, and brings childhood memories and stories to life. Although immensely personal, my work is meant to create a sublime and slightly absurd feeling; with the ultimate intent to cover every viewer's eye in rose-colored glasses, shielding them from the ever shadowing cloud of darkness life may bring."

-Eliana Calle Saari

Eliana Calle Saari was born and raised in Medellin, Colombia and is currently based in Gahanna, Ohio. Her installations and prints are inspired by Colombia, a country known for its culturally rich heritage and where the slippage between "the actual", "the ideal" and "the magical" are simple everyday occurrences. Her artistic process begins with a photograph from her travels. The photograph is not good quality and is instead often blurred or has an unusual composition. That photograph becomes the inspiration for an entire body of work. A recurring motif in her work are monarch butterflies as to her they symbolically represent Colombia for being the location of the world's largest variety of butterfly species and also for their ability to mesh reality and fantasy.

[elianacallesari.com](http://elianacallesari.com)

***Mariposas Amarillas (detail)***  
Woodcut print, paper  
2022



# MABI PONCE DE LEÓN

“ I explore what it feels like to ‘be’ from two places and belong to neither. Intellectually, one can understand moving long distances across the globe. The resulting disorientation is inexplicable and daunting. Through the layered juxtapositions of found and new images, I analyze symbols and meanings – interpretation and misinterpretation.

As a transplanted South American and a student of history, I think about where I am now and how I fit in here and how all my ancestors (the conquerors and the conquered) fit into the history and conflicts of this enormous continent. Through art, I also look for answers more metaphorically -- in the landmarks, in the architecture, in the soil.”

**THE ART PROCESS:** In the installations, I arrange photos and materials I collect from the landscape in significant patterns relating to the location.

In the paintings, I start by collaging maps and other elements, then I begin my painting process. I work in layers – thick and thin, tiny and huge, precise then expressive, opaque and translucent, controlled and uncontrolled, dripped, thrown. Each layer guides the next one. Some layers highlight elements, others conceal or obscure. I superimpose painted maps and diagrams that echo the collaged elements and painted site.

**THE TITLES:** Fascinated by mapping systems, lately I've been using the Earth coordinates of each place. While this provides some information, it also allows viewers to discover the work's elements in their own way. I prefer to provide less concrete, more metaphoric elements.

The larger work alludes to the Andean world. It's based on a visit to Peru's Sacred Valley and, specifically, to the Inka archaeological site of Pisac with its stunning rounded terraces, stone roads, and stone architecture. Along with the map of the region, I included the chakana -- a diagram of the Andean world that symbolizes the different pachas or time-spaces.

The smaller work reveals four places on the North American continent that have been important in my life. Each one features maps, the landscape or an element of the landscape, and a superimposed diagram of ocean currents painted in red and visually connecting the works. Unlike the larger work, I left these canvases more raw, less layered. The title „Axis Mundi“ alludes to the belief in the existence of a center cosmic axis around which the universe revolves. In many cultures, an important or central element of the landscape or sacred architecture represents the axis mundi.

Midwest-based Mabi Ponce de León was born in Argentina and has also lived in Mexico. Ponce de León works with a variety of both analog and digital media. Strongly influenced by culture, maps, location, and origins, research plays an important part in Ponce de León's work. The recent installation work makes use of manipulated natural and manufactured materials whereas the two-dimensional work relies on juxtapositions of found and new images. Over a ground of maps, charts, and other found images, she superimposes larger diagrams and related motifs. Layered juxtapositions of concrete, symbolic, and abstract elements develop into complex, intuitive scenes.

Ponce de León has shown in university and commercial galleries, art centers, museums, and non-profit exhibition spaces. Additionally, she has curated shows and has worked with arts organizations, including assisting with the former ACME Art Company's fundraisers and serving on the board of the Ohio Art League. In addition, she is a member of Woman Made Gallery in Chicago.

She has received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Florida International University and a Master of Fine Arts from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and is currently working on a PhD in art history at The Ohio State University.

[mabiponcedeleon.com](http://mabiponcedeleon.com)

**13°25'27"S 71°51'28"W (detail)**  
Acrylic, mixed media, canvas  
2022



# PEDRO PRIETO JR

"I was born in Blacksburg, Virginia, to Mexican parents. While it is true that my antecedents may somehow inform my engravings and paintings, the drive to create new pieces is foreign to my foreign roots. Pun intended. I have produced linoleum are inspired by the most diverse motifs, from daily urban themes to domestic appliances and colonial architecture. A print of an electric transformer perched on a wooden post and the cables coming out from it resulted from a momentary inspiration on the importance of ordinary urban implements of life. Transformers in Mexico City, Columbus, or Queens are silent companions of life in the city. They seem to be unpleasant conveniences until you see them as silent partners of our daily toiling. The urge to paint or produce prints does not come from an ethnic vision of the world. In some paintings, I surround portraits of female actors from the 50s and 60s with extraneous elements, such as the top of a Doric column. I felt the need to associate the mundane and the sublime because that association exists, and I can visualize it in specific ways. The contradictions that assail the sons and daughters of immigrants may be part of my subconscious bias. Still, I believe that these anxieties are no different from the pressures experienced by those who live in poverty or experience other types of turmoil. The urgency to create pieces originates from an inexplicable psyche component that I cannot tie to my national origin. My sympathy for Basquiat and his work is more important to me as a source of inspiration than Diego Rivera, Botero, or Dr. Atl. One could argue that Basquiat was a perennial foreigner and that, in that sense, we are related. As I complete a piece, the momentary feeling of purpose diffuses with time until I can barely remember what motivated me initially. Where and who I come from, I do not forget. The emotions that provided the energy to complete a piece go back to where they came from and never come back in the same form."

-Pedro Prieto Jr

Pedro Prieto Jr was born in Blacksburg, Virginia to Mexican parents and now resides in Columbus, OH.

His artistic practice of engravings and paintings are not consciously based on his national origin. Instead, the contradictions that assail the sons and daughters of immigrants may only be part of his subconscious bias. His motivations to create a piece are different each time, never coming back in the same form and are mostly forgotten when completing the piece.

[pedro-prieto-jr-blog.tumblr.com](http://pedro-prieto-jr-blog.tumblr.com)



# ELSIE SANCHEZ

"I've always been fascinated by the intricacies of medieval tapestries: the texture of the weaving and the detailed patterns of all kinds. These characteristics continue to inspire my abstract paintings. But before I put oil onto canvas, I make countless quick pen-and-ink line drawings on paper. I am looking for something: an interaction or pattern that my inner eye recognizes as something more than just a line—an expression. As each painting develops and changes, the drawing serves only as a reminder of that special interaction or detail of line that initially spoke to me. Almost always, however, a remnant or ghost of that special something will have its place in the finished painting.

The intricacies in my paintings suggest the complexities of our bodies. The paintings' dimensions relate to and speak of the human body: the height of a person, perhaps with arms raised, the reach of spread arms in the larger canvases; the expanse or intimacy of gestures in smaller ones. Their physicality—the weight and deep texture they end up conveying—result from my physical process, in which I weave the paint, adding and removing thin glazes while little by little selectively allowing remnants of the glaze to penetrate the crevices. In this way I seek to instill each passage of painting with a myriad of possibilities that I then conceal or painstakingly pull out to reveal.

The impulses and intensity that my body and hand use to create, obscure, uncover, and obliterate details and patterns reflect my efforts to reconcile what the painting wants and what I want. Often this produces a feeling that the compositions move in and out or vibrate; I like to say that the paintings breathe. Their density and physical depth are offset by a little awkwardness that comes from the struggle of my interaction or conversation with each painting. I want this to provide a sense of vulnerability through which viewers can enter and connect with my work. Through my physical and nurturing connection to painting I hope to capture such sensations as calmness and intensity, vulnerability and strength, agitation and peace."

-Elsie Sanchez

Elsie was born in Havana, Cuba and immigrated to the United States at the age of nine. She earned her MFA and BFA (Summa Cum Laude) both in Painting and Drawing from The Ohio State University and lives and works in Dublin, Ohio. Elsie's paintings have been exhibited broadly for many years, and in 2019, she was selected to display her work at the XIII Havana Biennial in Matanzas, Cuba. She has also shown her paintings at the Columbus Museum of Art, the Mansfield Art Center, the Southern Ohio Museum, the Ross Art Museum, and the Strathmore Hall Arts Center in Bethesda, Maryland. She has participated in a multitude of solo, two-person, juried, and group shows, and is represented by Keny Galleries in Columbus, Ohio. Among the awards she has received are the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award and the Greater Columbus Arts Council Arts Partnership Award.

Her large cloth-like abstract paintings suggest the complexities of our bodies. Through Elsie's physical and nurturing connection to painting and inspiration drawn from intricacies and patterns of medieval tapestries, she hopes to capture tangible and intangible sensations that may not so much be seen as felt.

[elsiesanchez.com](http://elsiesanchez.com)

**Entredós (detail)**  
Oil, canvas  
2021



# MICAELO DE VIVERO

"A critical idea in my installation work involves the conceptualization of installations as associations between viewers and space. An installation entails many relationships: between the viewer and the art, between structure and movement, and between space and circulation. In my own practice, I think while making. I make through lines, volumes, colors and space, which are my tools. I create relationships between my work and the spaces it inhabits. I make artwork out of soft, malleable, porous materials, which many times are suspended and take their shape through the relationships with other elements that form the work. In my work, through these relationships, I privilege empty space over mass, lightness over weight, movement, precariousness, fragility, ephemerality and instability over stability. The pieces I create become large-scale sculptures or multi-object installations in which the viewer must move and participate with their presence. I approach my installations as compositions in space in which I create an opening for the viewer to circulate through the installation, experiencing it physically, emotionally and visually. I create environments that are larger than human-sized. I want them to be monumental in scale, making the viewers feel small in relation, and questioning their own sense of self. The audience's experience while circulating my installations, is of extreme importance to me. The act of circulating the installations I create, is a journey of introspection and discovery, which leads ultimately to establish connections between the viewer and the art.

I have been engaged in producing artwork that has ambiguity, eloquence and challenges established formats. For this I consider political and social issues that are part of feminist and decolonial practices. I make art from where I come from, from my lived experiences as a woman of color in the United States of America and from my position as a first-generation immigrant with mixed Latin American background. As such I'm interested in responding to the associations as well as the misunderstandings that unbalanced relationships between hegemonic and historically oppressed cultures generate. My contribution to the field is to create strong statements with apparently delicate materials and in that way to destabilize power relations.

In this latest body of work, I have been making hand-made paper and embracing its rips, wrinkles and imperfections. I have been adding gold leaf and its association with European colonization and exploitation of the Americas, as well as the current significance of gold in our current highly capitalist society. Gold was extracted from the American colonies, while native and African slaves were put into slavery for its extraction. This unleashed a cycle of greed and injustice, which in many ways started the unequal power structures we are still struggling with today."

-Micaela de Vivero

Micaela de Vivero was born in Munich, Germany, grew up in Quito, Ecuador, and now lives in Newark, Ohio, USA, where she is Professor of Art at Denison University. Micaela has been an artist in residence at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, NE, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, Ireland, Chretzeturm in Stein am Rhein, Switzerland, Koli Ryynanen in Koli, Finland, Rondo Marienmühle in Graz, Austria, Acoss Foundation in Yerevan, Armenia, Frankfurter Kunstverein in Germany, Camac in Marnay-sur-Seine, France, Institute for America Universities in Aix-en-Provence, France and Wool Museum in Covilhã, Portugal. These trips have helped her to learn about equality, about people, about the world and herself. She is Associate Professor at Denison University in Granville OH. She has exhibited her work in Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, the USA, Canada, Ireland, Finland, Austria, Spain, Bulgaria, France, Portugal and Armenia.

[micaeladevivero.com](http://micaeladevivero.com)

**Red**

Gold leaf, wood, dyed sisal, acrylic paint, polyurethane  
2001



# FLORENCE GOVRIT-MONTANO

"As a New Media artist, I create experiences where perceptions and emotions are mediated by digital mediums, layering reality and virtuality, allowing the viewer to be observer and performer. My work involves mainly interactive installations, physical computing, data visualization, immersive environments, video, and sound.

I am inspired by conversations about artificiality, virtuality, non-linearity, emotions, and critical technology. My body of work explores the way we construct and interpret human responses and reactions to the environment we inhabit. I deconstruct emotions, sensations, and reactions and I reconstruct them in a non-human body. I create experiences that prompt recognizing our emotions. I believe in the role of art to examine, visualize, interpret and transform data into a story. Data needs to be more human to empathize with each other's experiences.

My previous artworks, "in silico", and "the mapping projects", were based on the artificial/natural dialectic and the different ways authors such as Haraway, Latour, or Echeverria understand it. In the GPS tracking and visualization system 11PTS: Paranoid-Tracking-System I examined how in a metropolis like Mexico City, the concept of safety is based less on the reality of the area than on ideas created by the media. Resulting from or showing sincere and intense conviction is an immersive video-installation about loss, pain, narcissism, relationships, presence, and absence.

I grew up in Mexico City, with a French family on my father's side. Being bicultural always defined how I perceived the world. My father left France to go work in Mexico, a country he didn't know when he was 20. It always felt natural that you could just pack and go to a place you had no ties if it meant doing something interesting. Family was important, but never restraining. They would always be there. No matter where you were. I came to the United States ten years ago, a country I didn't know. It felt natural. It was supposed to be temporary. It might still be. I embraced another culture, as my dad did before me.

As an artist, multiculturalism is not a theme in my work, but it is a filter to understand, sort, and deconstruct the world. My experiences have to be broken apart in real-time in a way I can understand. Translated and filtered into my referents. Put back together without my interlocutor perceiving I unwove and rewove the conversation, often adding some new string or losing some in the process. In my artwork, I don't need to reweave it into a single language to be understood. I can expose the parts or weave the pieces into something new, and let the viewer deconstruct and filter and translate into their own referents."

-Florence Gouvrirt-Montano

Florence Gouvrirt-Montano (b. Paris, France) is a Mexico City/Columbus-based new media artist. She holds a BFA (2002) from the National School for Painting, Sculpture, and Engraving "La Esmeralda," a Master in Philosophy of Science & Technology (2007) from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and an MFA in the Art & Technology (2011) from the Ohio State University. She started in New Media working in virtual reality and art theory research in the Multimedia Center in Mexico City until 2000, then taught at Ohio State University and Columbus College of Art and Design until 2019. Her work is based on synthetic emotions, artificiality, human machine interaction, empathy, culture, and technologically mediated behavior. She utilizes interactive video installations, robotics, data visualization, and digital fabrication.

Florence received the FONCA Fellowship for young creators twice (2002, 2004) among other international awards and has shown her work, published, and as a speaker in conferences in Mexico, Spain, France, and the United States.