

## **Avenue 50 Studio**

the main gallery features

### **Madre, Mother**



“Espiranza” Celina Jacques



### **the Mujeres de Maiz Collective**

featuring the artwork of:

**Margaret Alarcon, Ofelia Esparza, Textli Gallegos, Jessica Gutierrez, Celina Jacques, Michelle L. Lopez, Felicia Montes, Lilia Ramirez, Lilia Reynoso, Martha Rodriguez, Rosalinda Ruiz, Maggie Santiago, Linda Vallejo, Joan Zamora**

Mother earth is a quintessential notion of motherhood, a sacred living entity we are ceremoniously tied to. As la Madre Tierra undergoes an onslaught of losses and unethical actions, movements to take back our bodies and defend the earth inspire revolutionary changes; these include movimiento for indigenous ways of cooking and eating, community efforts to grow our own food, explorations of the vegana indígena lifestyle and much more. How do you personally experience motherhood and/or connect to mother earth? How do we survive mother earth’s healing process? Or our own healing processes? How do you nurture your relationship with mother earth? With your body? With your mother? With women mothering around the world?

#mdm2015 #MujeresDeMaiz

Madre, Mother – Mujeres de Maiz Collective

**Opening Night Reception: Saturday, March 14th 7:00-10:00**

Exhibit Runs: March 14, 2015 through April 4, 2015

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## **ABOUT THE MUJERES**

### **Margaret Alarcon**

My work investigates the evolution of feminine identity and the impact of civilization. Cultural history and memory as process inspire my work and is designed to encourage dialog about the transformation that occurs when connecting with the wisdom of ancient instinct. I follow my intuition, or what Gloria Anzaldúa refers to as La Facultad.

My process is cerebral, instinctual and intentional. It involves the exploration, discovery and release of feminine trauma inspired by ancient aboriginal symbols, ceremonies and practices. In the adoption and modification of these images, culture is re-interpreted and passed on with the hope to offer something meaningful for future generations.

### **Michelle L. Lopez**

My artistic goal is to successfully produce thoughtful work that causes viewers to consider his or her life, their place in the world and how we are all connected through experiences.

My work is primarily photo based although I may not necessarily take the photograph myself. Most recently, I have been primarily working with my own family photographs, as they are vast and rich with possibilities for projects.

The work I produce is inspired by family dynamics, childhood, memories, identity, and love. I create my work by repurposing existing family photographs. *Noni's Table* is an investigation of my memories through my great-grandmothers kitchen table.

*Noni's Table* is the outcome of reconstructed memories. This table seemed irrelevant to me during my youth. I saw it as just a place to sit and eat. Looking back, I see how central it was to my family. Even now when I think about sitting at the table I remember the smell of my great-grandmothers kitchen. The object has so much power to it that it causes my physical body to remember. The smells and flavors that came from around the table are forever instilled into my senses.

### **Ofelia Esparza**

*Raíces Urbanas* Silkscreen Monoprint

This piece is about my Mayan and Purepechuan roots which I inherited from my mother who was born in Mexico, but who "brought" her *tierra* and her *costumbres* with her when she immigrated to this country. Although I was born in East Los Angeles, I was raised in my mother's cultural traditions and practices. I grew up knowing about my heritage and being proud of my mexicaness despite the overt discrimination I (and many others) experienced outside of my immediate neighborhood. The bonds among Mexican immigrants like my parents that were formed in my era, became a lifeline of support for their children. It provided an ambiance of belonging, an environment that felt safe even in a greater place like Los Angeles. I imagined, then, that where I lived in my barrio, must have been like living in the small villages where my mother and other immigrants came from. These are my urban roots.

### **Textli Gallegos**

Hi, my name is Textli Gallegos and I'm 16 years old. I have always loved photography and I recently have been taking more and more photos. This photo in particular spoke out to me when I thought of the theme "Madre, Mother" for many reasons. The biggest reason being that this woman is my own mother. Another reason is because this photo shows a feminine energy through her strong presence. I've grown up going to Mujeres de Maiz every year because my mom is a part of In Lak Ech which created this powerful event. My mom doesn't only share the amazing gift of motherhood with me but to

Mujeres de Maiz as well. To me, she represents all the strong mothers and women that stand up for what they believe in and it only seemed right for me to use her in my photograph.

### **Jessica Gutierrez**

#### *Transmutation*

Transmutation is a singular piece, illustrating the process by which an object can be transformed. It is a self-contained story which begins in the early stages of transformation. Through photographs documenting time, the subjects appearance changes from clear, to red, to black. The subjects ending appearance is drastically and irrevocably altered.

This piece began as an experiment, playing on the concept of change in relation to time, and if, once an effect has taken place would there be any possible chance of reversing the effect. The conclusion being there is no way to undo an effect that has already caused a chain reaction; the subject is transformed into a new state of being.

Although the subject in this piece is water being altered, the overall concept of cause and effect can illustrate humans interaction with the Earth. Humans create and cause a series of events to take place; causing animals to become extinct, natural landscapes of the Earth to be altered by inhabiting space, using up natural resources, etc. There is a point of no return, where we can no longer undo what we have done to the natural world.

### **Celina Jacques**

My work is strongly influenced by my cultural experience as a Chicana growing up in the Southwest, my love of the desert, family traditions, and from my own personal growth as woman and a human being. The work of surrealist artists, action painters, and the practice of Mindfulness informs my technique and approach. My work ranges from watercolor paintings, portraits, playful fantasies, to surreal and personal interpretations of Dia de los Muertos imagery and womanhood.

I draw inspiration from my focus on the process of healing through meditation and symbolism. Imagery in many of my pieces is intimately connected with my experience of physical pain, emotional loss, and spiritual growth; laden with references to birth and death, time, and mystery. My most recent series has chronicled the journey from a frail and broken empty shell of a lost girl, to the unfettered union of spirit, body, and strength that is a whole woman.

My artwork has been featured in a solo show at the Pasadena City College Library, has shown in group exhibitions for the Los Angeles County Psychological Association, Mujeres de Maiz, Blue Milagro, Self Help Graphics and Arts, and was featured on the cover of the Mujeres de Maiz Annual Zine, "Ofrendas of the Flesh." My artwork can be found in various local establishments and I am always available for commission. I hold a BFA in Studio Art, BA in Psychology, and Masters Degree in Psychology. I currently work as a psychotherapist/Art Therapist, live and create artwork in the greater Los Angeles area.

## **Felicia Montes**

### *Prayer Placazo*

The silkscreen is documenting part of a Performance Intervention by the Los Angeles Xican@ ARTivist community initiated by Felicia 'Fe' Montes, concept collaboration with Miguel Paredes. Base Photograph by Robert Loza/SolSoul Photography.

An intervention ceremony-ritual was shared on October 12, 2010 to honor ancestors and spirit. It was also done in order to create a meaningful work that highlighted the complex understanding of the commemoration of Indigenous People's Day also commemorated in many locations as Christopher Columbus Day or Dia de la Raza. The main focus of this prayer intervention was to have a welcoming and blessing to the Olmec stones and statues which were on exhibit at LACMA. The prayer intervention was done on Indigenous People's Day (10/12/10) and consisted of an unannounced and unauthorized use of certain locations at LACMA for prayer including indigenous drumming, song, and dance.

It was important to do this ceremony at LACMA because of the Olmec exhibit, but also because it referenced Chican@ art history in that it spoke to Asco's 1972 intervention "Spray Paint LACMA" where the chican@ performance artist spray painted LACMA's walls with their names as a statement to show how there was a lack of Chican@ artists exhibiting at LACMA. This 2010 version threw our own creations on the wall as virtual placazos in a hi-AzTECH style and asked the same question as to where are the Chican@ artists— this time pushing the question to where were the women, queer, indigenous and spiritually identified Chican@ artists? In creating these prayer interventions at key locations and on key days across Los Angeles we purposefully put engaged meaning to locations that had other meanings, performed protest and created collective prayer.

## **LILIA RAMIREZ** a.k.a "Liliflor"

Liliflor's art is a testament in her abilities to converge and experiment in plural environments.

Her art applies the traditional elements of her ancestors with a personal L.A. urban experience. Lilia's work is a quest, constantly transforming. Whether its her journey with vibrant colors on canvas, her jewelry, poetry, an installation or a cameo street performance she takes the viewer into a magical journey of her visions, dreams, frustrations, and love of humanity.

Since 1994 Lilia has been at the forefront of the Los Angeles youth movement; as co-founder of the Peace and Justice Center (PJC) in 1995, an innovative youth run center in Los Angeles. A decade later she received her B.A from UCLA's World Arts and Cultural Studies. Lilia co-founded First Street Studios, and later transitioned into Liliflor Collective Studios, she has served as Director of Annual Exhibitions for Mujeres de Maiz, 2009-2011, and curator for The Jean Deleage Gallery housed in Casa 0101 New Theatre, in Boyle Heights.

Lilia is also a cultural art educator championing youth in the arts, using art as a tool for healing and transformation. Artist Residencies include: L.A.'s Best A.S.A.P, Theatre of Hearts/Youth First, L.A.

Commons, Mac Arthur Park Public Art Installation Project, City of Los Angeles Summer Night Lights, Arts 4 City Youth- Art As Resistance, Earth Day South LA Mural.

“The quest is to find truth and art facilitates that need.” -Lilia Ramirez

### **Lilia Reynoso**

Lilia Reynoso is a Visual Artist, a Traditional Aztec Dancer and an Educator from the Decoto District in Union City. As a self-taught painter and muralist, and as the president of the Art Association of the East Bay Inc., she combines her leadership skills with her art and individuality to help teach and retell his/herstory's. Lilia is inspired by the vibrant beauty of life and she focuses her artwork on the connection between earth, women, animals, youth and traditional Indigenous culture. It is through public art that Lilia exposes youth to art by developing community based mural projects. Each mural is informed and shaped by the issues facing the community (e.g., healthier living, environmental justice issues, violence within low-income communities, education empowerment, etc.) The combined images, colors, and symbols that make up each mural are critically imagined and defined by the participants and guided by the chosen theme.

In addition, Lilia currently sits as Chair on the Union City Public Art Board. In addition, she was the winner of the Health Through Art 8th Call for Art Contest, and her art piece will be converted into outdoor mass media. The art piece represents hope for positive changes for a healthier living, specifically promoting community building with a slogan of: “Know Community, Know Culture, Know Self, No Hate.” In 2010 Lilia was the youngest in over decades to be awarded as a recipient of the 2010 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award.

Lilia believes art has a transformational power of spreading knowledge, therefore she strives to use her art as a positive influence.

### **Martha Rodriguez**

My art is based on my intuitive feelings of life and living. As a recent cancer survivor, I have experienced a rebirth and see life in a new myriad of colors, shapes and feelings. Trusting my intuitions to guide my work, I use my identities as a mother, an educator, a Chicana, a partner and a survivor to guide me through a multitude of beliefs, experiences and observations.

Each theme I work with is expressed through bright, contrasting colors. Shapes are round and large. My subjects make a statement, attract attention and provide a commentary. Life force is not subtle in my artistic expressions. Whatever is being expressed is meant to hold your attention and stay in your memory. In my rebirth as a cancer survivor, I am learning to let go of the negatives: comparisons to others, lack of formal artistic training and embrace my natural ability for creative ideas, color groupings. I trust in myself, my ability and my desire to create. Like most humans, I am a work in progress. My art is a reflection of my progress. Each day I strive to see something already known in a new light. Each day, I allow myself to show a new side of who I am. Each day, I strive to improve with a new shade, a new

shape or texture, or immersion in a new style. I will live the remainder of my life with a powerful desire to let go of hesitations and express my true uncensored self.

### **Rosalina Ruiz**

This painting was inspired by beautiful, strong mujeres that have guided me through the most extraordinary places inside the realms of my dreams. The moon Goddess Coyolxuatli is ascending into the vast sky created with oil paint and spray paint. The red algae and frog constellation were created with oil paint to represent the healing and cleansing of madre tierra.

Parents migrated from Mexico, Guerrero, to Santa Barbara. She comes from a family of six. Rosalinda was born and raised in Santa Barbara a gorgeous place by the beach and mountains can't get any better than that! She is currently an art instructor for an all girls after school program. Rosalinda is someone who tries to inspire those around through art. She loves working with youth and helping develop consciousness through art. Work has also been displayed at Woodbury University, Los Angeles, and has had a solo exhibition at the University of California, Los Angeles.

### **Maggie Santiago**

My body is a clock attuned to that of my Mother Earth. I am her child and I embrace what she has blessed me with. My art revolves around menstruation, celebrating the cycle that unites all women. I do the work that I do in hopes of connecting women and encouraging them to be orgullosas of their natural cycle instead of being at a constant battle with it.

For *Orgullo de Sangre*, I allowed myself to be guided by instinct throughout the project. I chose natural elements such as clay, copper, manta, and wood to compliment a woman's naturally occurring cycle of menstruation. Working with clay was a beautiful challenge as it taught me patience and persistence.

I draw inspiration from my past embarrassment and frustration at my body. From all the times I have stained beds, chairs, underwear, pants, etc. The fact that some consider women "unclean" while on their cycles really pushed me into action. When I am against my period, I am fighting myself. It is like telling myself how much I dislike being in correlation with my Mother Earth. When I am guided by my menses and embrace it, I feel powerful and in control of my body and my life.

### **Linda Vallejo**

"*Madre Celestial* was produced as a part of a series entitled *Los Cielos/The Heavens*. This portfolio of work (1996-2000) integrated my understanding and experience of nature, and recollection and healing through nature by illustrating celestial figures floating in surrealistic skylines. It is my firm belief that woman is the symbol of the earth and that each woman can learn aspects of loyalty, integrity, honor, generosity, and courage directly from the earth. *Madre Celestial* depicts the female form superimposed on a brilliant sky to open dialogue about a metamorphic relationship with nature. The figure reveals a balanced and harmonious countenance of a woman poised with nature."

Dr. Edith Tonelli wrote in *ArtScene* (October 1991): “It did not take me long to realize that although this is an artist whose ties are to a very different heritage and community than mine, she is addressing very common human problems. I was soon to realize that the artist sees her work this way as well, informed by her Native American heritage and experience, but with hope that it reverberates for anyone who has suffered in life and persevered. Vallejo believes that human strength is the result of a connection with nature and an internalizing of natural power. Her experience with indigenous people and her understanding of a personal relationship to the land and natural forms has healed her time and again and has the potential, she believes, to be a teacher to anybody.”

In 2000 Sybil Venegas wrote: “*Los Cielos/The Heavens* is a reflection of Linda’s love of indigenous spiritual community and her personal healing through ceremony and nature. While this has been at the center of her work for the past twenty years, *Los Cielos* takes us inside the indigenous spirit of the Americas. Evocative of ceremony and the feelings one experiences upon making ceremony with community and the ancestors, these paintings have a primal impact on the viewers. In *Los Cielos*, the heavens are anthropomorphized into a female aspect of the creator; a benevolent Grandmother watching over us. These paintings are beautiful prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving.”

In 2000, Armando Duron stated, “Linda’s art is among the most indigenous-based of any of the Chicano artists of Los Angeles. Her art works over the past twenty-five years evoke the spirit of a Meso-American shaman chronicling the story of her people’s creation and journey through transcendent time and space, especially its women.”

In 2010, Betty Ann Brown, stated: “Like Ana Mendieta, Vallejo has created work rooted in the connection between nature and the female body. And like Mendieta, Vallejo has turned to the ancient world for precedents. Both artists seem to sense that ancient cultures were more in tune with the power of nature than our contemporary world. For Mendieta, ancient cultures possessed “an inner knowledge, a closeness with natural resources” that endowed them with a certain “authenticity.” But whereas Mendieta’s female silhouettes recall Neolithic goddesses from Egypt and Europe, Vallejo’s female images are recognizably Mexican in origin. They often have eyes drawn from Mixtec manuscripts and poses echoing Aztec stone sculpture or Zapotec ceramic urns.”

### **Joan Zamora**

My art work is about everyday events and the people I meet. As Nan Goldin said, “My work was all about homage, because I thought they were the most beautiful people I’ve ever met”. I paint the people and events I cannot stop thinking about. The materials I use range from charcoal, acrylic to hair and coffee. My goal is to offer a new perspective on women, and Los Angeles.

<http://avenue50studio.org/madre-mother>