

Review of the Fall 2024 Artists-In-Residence Exhibitions at Artpace San Antonio

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Walking into Artpace San Antonio was nostalgic. I last entered Artpace as the Summer 2022 director's intern for Riley Robinson, where I learned more about the ebb and flow of helping artists create their artwork in a structured environment. Twice a year (down from three times a year in previous years), Artpace invites a guest curator to select three artists to create and exhibit art in their downtown San Antonio institution, with multiple galleries. For Fall 2024, the Guest Curator was Beverly Adams, the Museum of Modern Art's Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art. The selected artists are Celia Eberle, from Ennis, Texas, Julianny Vólquez, from the Dominican Republic, and Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, from Gualala, California.

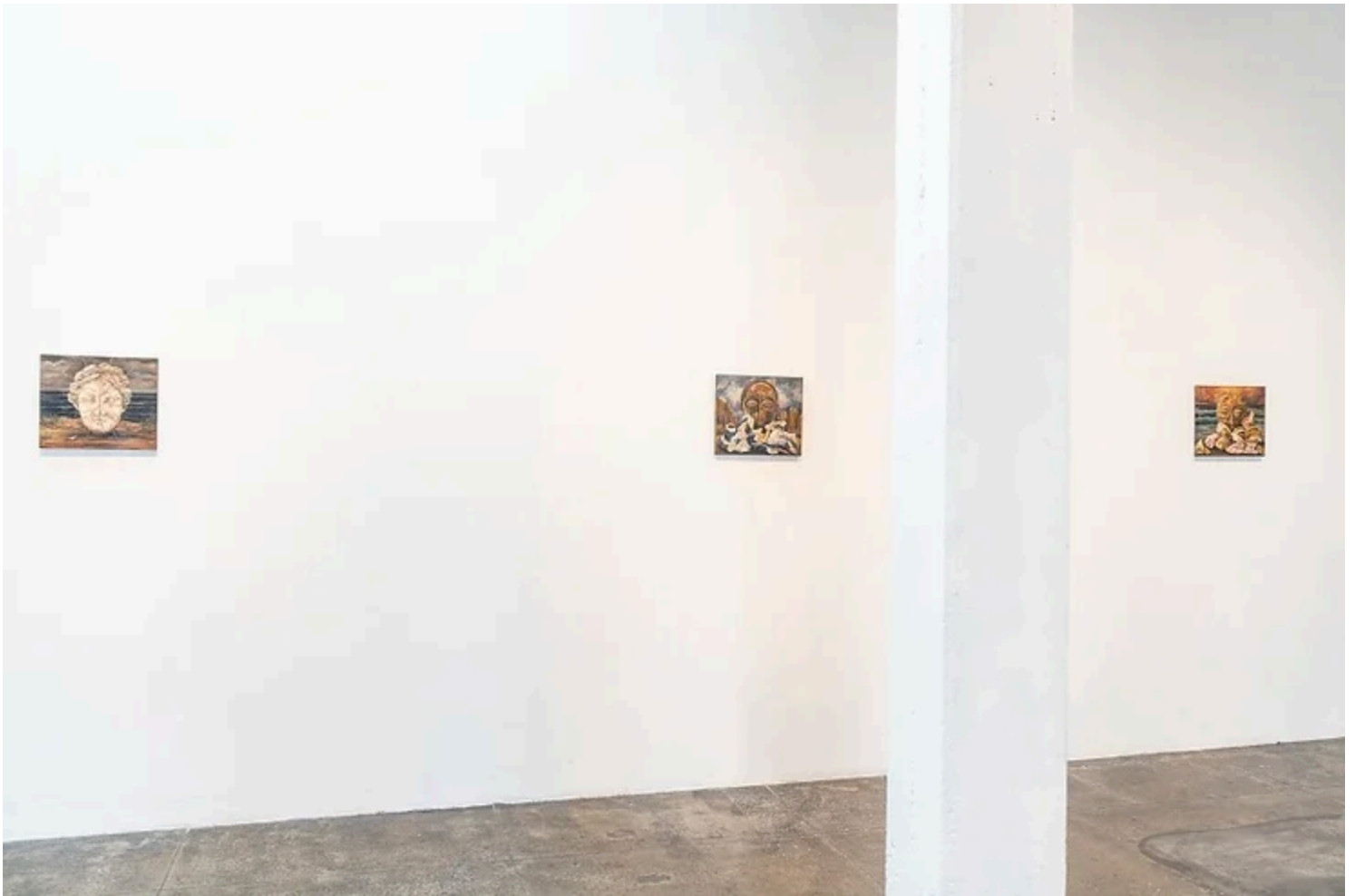


Celia Eberle. View of "She," 2024, mixed media installation. Photo: Christopher Karr.

Celia Eberle is the Texas artist represented in this exhibit. At the heart of the installation sits a large, mechanical hand, with fingers that move in sync with an eerie, melodic soundtrack. The ambient lighting shifts with the music, casting a glow across the gallery.

One wall features a series of small heart sculptures, each illuminated by its own LED light that changes colors in harmony with the music. These hearts are intricately designed, incorporating a variety of symbolic elements, such as castles, butterflies, swords, and hands.

On the opposite wall hangs a serene painting of the Garden of Eden. The trees stretch into a sky imbued with the warm hues of a sunset, their branches shielding a tranquil pond filled with lily pads and flowering plants. Eberle blends themes of origin and human vulnerability, tying creation back to a woman's deed and reshaping the narrative of genesis. This juxtaposition of light and shadow, nature and artifice, evokes a sense of peace, grounding the mechanical elements with a timeless landscape.



Julianny Vólquez, View of "Amas de Leche," 2024, mixed media installation. Photo Courtesy of [Julianny Vólquez](#).

The next artist, Julianny Vólquez, is the international artist in this exhibit. Her show, *Amas de Leche*, immerses viewers in the coastal landscapes of the Dominican Republic. Central to this experience are paintings of African face masks lying on the beach. The mouths are concealed by broken ceramics. The masks' features resemble the *Pwo* masks of the Chokwe people, which honor female ancestors in Angola. Here, the ancestors protect the fragmented ceramics, symbolizing their role as guardians of both history and the present, watching over women and children.

The entire exhibit pays homage to wet nurses—and in particular the enslaved Black women who nursed the children of their enslavers during colonial times. The exhibit invokes traditional African symbolism to reflect on endurance and cultural memory.

Consuelo Jimenez Underwood is the National Artist in this exhibit. Underwood presents viewers with *UNDOCUMENTED TALES OF THE FUTURE: NOW*, an immersive cosmic experience, with a focus on elements of space, such as Earth and different constellations. At the heart of the installation lies a flat globe, titled *Divine Homecoming*, with a striking visual: the United States divided in two. Delicate strands of barbed wire stretch across the chasm, as if struggling to hold the fractured nation together, encircled by scattered buttons and safety pins.



Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, "Divine Homecoming," 2024, mixed media installation. Photo Courtesy of Artpace, Ruiz-Healy Art, New York / San Antonio. Installation image by Beth Devillier.

What stands out the most is Underwood's decision to separate the Southwest USA from the rest of the country, provoking thoughts on identity, division, and unity. This symbolism feels especially relevant in an election year, where political discourse continues to deepen the divides within our nation. The impact feels even more prominent considering Artpace's location, nestled in the heart of deeply democratic downtown San Antonio. The institution and its surroundings are contrasted by the broader Republican landscape of Texas, making Underwood's vision resonate all the more powerfully.

Overall, the Fall 2024 Artpace Artists-in-Residence explore themes of place through deeply personal and cultural lenses, offering diverse perspectives on identity, history, and connection. Celia Eberle's *She* features a hand connected to hearts, symbolizing the intimate bond between body, emotion, and connection. Julianny's *Amas de Leche* honors the legacy of wet nurses in the Dominican Republic, shedding light on their vital role in nurturing life and shaping community identity. Meanwhile, Consuelo Jimenez Underwood's *UNDOCUMENTED TALES OF THE FUTURE: NOW* dissects national borders and cultural divisions, using barbed wire and symbols of unity to challenge notions of belonging. Together, these artists weave a compelling narrative about how spaces—emotional, cultural, or political—shape and transform the human experience.

The Fall 2024 Artists-In-Residence Exhibitions at Artpace San Antonio are on display until January 19, 2025.