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About the Cover Artist: Jennifer Agricola Mojica

Courtesy of Ricardo Romo PhD.

San Antonio-based artist Jennifer Agricola Mojica paints vibrant, ephemeral spaces that offer belonging in a discordant world. Her superimposed compositions cross genres of abstraction and figurative painting. By stripping and rebuilding thick layers of paint, Agricola Mojica creates visual tensions that allude to fractured memory and the deception of time. In *The Sixteen Dollar Cake*, a sleeping figure is positioned under a lush canopy of monstera plants as lingering smoke rises from the wicks of extinguished birthday candles, alluding to memories and the passage of time.

Jennifer Agricola Mojica's paintings in the exhibition portray the transience of navigating through grief and motherhood with fragmented forms.

Mojica's work conveys shifting perspectives and figures, layers that conceal and reveal, monotonous repetition punctured by shapes, and suggestions of a fragmented time and space.

"I explore the complexities of human connection, the search for meaning in motherhood, femininity, and domesticity, and the fragile nature of our sense of security in an ever-

changing world. In recent years, my paintings have embarked on an existential journey, delving into the transient concepts of safety and vulnerability. Through abstraction and raw, visceral responses, I investigate the fragility of these spaces. My process begins with disruption and ends with a subtle, harmonious stillness. Planes shift, shapes repeat, and forms emerge from varying perspectives. Figures fragment and reassemble, capturing fleeting moments of unity amidst complexity.

Each brushstroke reflects a search for an image that resonates with a deeper sense of belonging. As I navigate the challenges of raising two children, I find myself in a constant state of learning, where discomfort and beauty intertwine. These experiences infuse my work, shaping the compositional space with the echoes of everyday life.

Motifs like houses, birds, and figures walk the line between realism and abstraction, exploring themes of rest, vulnerability, and maternal instinct. In my practice, I build and deconstruct—constructing, covering, and uncovering compositions. This dynamic process creates a dialogue between the artwork, the creator, and the viewer. Through layers of distortion and repetition, I invite a reflective contemplation on the ever-evolving nature of connection and selfhood."



Latina Artists Take Texas Culture to New York City

By Ricardo Romo PhD.

The Ruiz-Healy Art Gallery in New York City presents *Vast and Varied: Texan Women Painters*, a group exhibition that includes works by Marta Sánchez and Eva Marengo Sánchez. The exhibit will be on view at the gallery from June 12 to August 15, 2025. *Women Painters* tackles the Latina cultural milieu through themes of cityscapes, motherhood, mementos, and domesticity.

Marta Sánchez has been an influential figure in Chicano/a and Latina art since her inclusion in the *Mira!* show in 1984, the first national Chicano/Latino art exhibition in America.

Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, Sánchez has been painting and teaching art in Pennsylvania for the past 30 years. She constructs a cultural identity portrait by merging everyday life scenes with folkloric expression. Sánchez approaches her artistic life with the idea of



Marta Sánchez, "Ms. Kirtie's Still Life, 2015." Courtesy of Ruiz-Healy Art.

"sharing art, history, and activism."

Sánchez' love of art began at age five when an aunt bought her an art print from a street vendor. Early in life she also collected and read comic books which led her to begin teaching herself the art of drawing. Her appreciation of art grew as she ventured downtown on the city bus by herself at age nine to browse through the art bookshelves of the San Antonio Public Library.

Sánchez earned her BFA in Art Education

from the University of Texas at Austin in 1982 and later an MFA in Painting from the Philadelphia Tyler School of Art at Temple University. Her time in Austin was formative—she was introduced to the Chicano Movement through fellow artist Santa Barraza and began to see art as a form of social activism.

To find her voice as an artist, Sánchez gained inspiration from Austin's many exhibitions, plays, and jazz sessions. Sánchez wrote: "My work slowly turned from



Marta Sánchez, "Rome 1982." Courtesy of Ruiz-Healy Art.

being purely artistic to becoming art that served a purpose as I evolved from being a student, to an artist, to a Chicana artist."

A significant amount of Sánchez' work is deeply influenced by traditional Mexican folk art, and she is one of the leading Chicana artists engaged in retablo paintings and ex-votos, the small devotional paintings on tin that honor saints and express gratitude or petitions in Mexican

Catholic tradition. She is also inspired by contemporary social issues and uses her art to reflect on both her heritage and present-day concerns.

Sánchez' artistic practice includes linocuts, monotypes, and works on aluminum or tin, often exploring themes of migration, community, and memory. Notably, she has created a series of prints and paintings focused on the San Antonio train yards



Marta Sánchez, "Sunday Tea." Courtesy of Ruiz-Healy Art.

near her childhood home, examining the role of trains in Mexican migration and the city's history. She has collaborated with other artists and poets, including a project with Chicana poet Norma E. Cantú that resulted in the book *Transcendental Train Yards* (Wings Press, 2013).

Sánchez has lived in Pennsylvania for the past three decades. Nonetheless, she remains deeply connected to her Texas roots and frequently references her childhood and Chicana identity in her work.

Another San Antonio artist, Eva Marengo Sánchez, uses her art to brilliantly capture

the state of mind, color, and flavor of her hometown. She has been featured in stories by Texas Public Radio and Texas Monthly magazine. Sánchez paints canvases in her studio, images on concrete highway pillars, and murals on tall buildings. She is a rising star in the Latino art scene.

Following her graduation from a small liberal arts college in Richmond, Virginia, Sánchez began an internship with Andy and Yvette Benavides at their San Antonio South Flores frame shop in 2013. The following year, Sánchez traveled to Mexico City where she worked on her

Spanish and studied Meso-American art and architecture. Her interest in the art of the great Mexican

muralists grew as she visited museums and saw the best of Mexican art in public buildings.

Eva left Mexico with a strong desire to devote herself fulltime to painting. Eager to strengthen her artistic skills, she enrolled in several art classes at San Antonio College. At the same time she developed a deep interest in the color and texture of Mexican food which led her to painting pan dulce, tacos, and frutas frescas commonly found in Mexican restaurants and bakeries on the Westside of San Antonio. Sánchez' murals of pan dulce [Mexican sweet bread] at the San Antonio International Airport and on downtown highway columns adjacent to the city's Mexican Mercado have contributed to her reputation as a realistic still life painter.

A show at the Presa House Gallery in 2019 curated by Rigo Luna helped "jump start" her career. More recently Sánchez participated in the "Soy de Tejas" show in San Antonio



Eva Marengo Sánchez, "Highway Esperanza." Photo courtesy of the artist and Ruiz-Healy Art.

and Fort Worth, Texas. Several years ago when Sánchez was a participating artist in virtual discussions of contemporary art at the McNay Museum in San Antonio, Harriett and I heard her describe her use of still life and food as a way of talking about cultural identity.

Eva's work in the Ruiz Healy exhibit presents on canvas her realistic "still life portraits" of seemingly mundane subjects. The oil on canvas painting titled "No, I can fix it! To: Tia Lupe" is an excellent example of ordinary objects in life that capture her attention.

Ruiz Healy noted, "Sánchez explores the complexities of grief, guilt, and regret that arise from attachment to an inanimate object. She delves into the intersection of longing, hope, love, and nostalgia, exploring deep sentimental ties to the ordinary." The *Vast and Varied: Texas Women Painters* exhibit will introduce East Coast viewers to a complexity of South Texas and Borderland culture that is definitively vast and varied and very exciting to experience through the eyes of these Latina artists.