

MATRIX 282

GRISELDA ROSAS YO TE CUIDO



MATRIX 282 / Griselda Rosas: Yo te cuido presents new textile drawings and sculptural installations by Griselda Rosas (b. 1977, Tijuana, Mexico). Based between San Diego and Tijuana, Rosas considers the complexities of the US-Mexico border region by drawing from colonial histories, familial traditions, and personal experience. From a cross-border perspective in which migration is both commonplace and multidirectional, Rosas explores how

certain materials and objects have persistent influence over time. Themes of inheritance and intergenerational knowledge recur in Rosas's work, as do references to single motherhood. In her early work, Rosas developed a distinctive sculptural language of organic forms that juxtapose everyday materials such as plaster and lace. These works frequently address the circulation of goods through global networks following Europe's colonization of the Americas. Through her own research into these histories, Rosas uncovers connections between seemingly disparate cultural traditions. For example, she often uses lace to chart the similarities and differences between historical fashions, such as the ruff, a lace collar popularized in Elizabethan England, which resembles the *resplendor*, a headdress still worn today in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Rosas often examines these histories by looking at their influence in her own life and family. Her interest in lace relates to her grandmother's work as a seamstress for wedding dresses, for example. She also regularly creates sculptures using inherited objects, such as pieces of her grandmother's china or wood taken after the demolition of her family's house. Through these works, Rosas evokes the surprising networks in which objects circulate and considers how violent histories are embedded in sentimental objects.

Much of Rosas's work is informed by her experience as a mother. In practical terms, motherhood has shifted her studio practice away from large sculptures to drawings and collages. Working at her kitchen table, Rosas develops richly layered works that combine drawings, photographs, and textiles. In these works, she adopts embroidery skills learned from her mother, grandmother, and aunts, often using her son's drawings as foundations on which to layer, stitch, and build. Incorporating

natural pigments and collage, she combines these inventive images with historical imagery to evoke the collision and circulation of cultures.



In her recent textiles, Rosas focuses on the introduction of Catholicism to Indigenous customs in the Americas as part of Spanish colonization. Images of saints and the Virgin of Guadalupe appear alongside figures dressed in Aztec regalia. Frequently, she draws on distinct artistic traditions from both Europe and the Americas, as in the drawing *Tragaluz* (Skylight, 2021–22). The three huddled figures depicted on the left side of this work are drawn from a 1946 watercolor, *Hopi Tashaf Kachina Dance* by Fred Kabotie (Hopi Pueblo, Second Mesa, 1900–1986). Painted with black and white stripes and conical headdresses, these clown figures frequently perform in Hopi dances, satirizing forms of misbehavior to enforce social norms. In *Tragaluz* they appear next to a group of fighting animals, whose unusual and somewhat comic expressions are familiar to European tapestries. Rosas collage this somewhat disjointed scene against a colorful background of watercolor and printed patterning.

For *Yo te cuido*, Rosas created two new sculptural installations. In these works, she again incorporates familiar materials into organic forms. Hovering between the recognizable and the unfamiliar, they appear as oversize slingshots as much as objects unearthed from an archeological site. With bands of rubber stretching from the sculptures, the installation extends along the walls like another kind of drawing. The slingshots that comprise *Un camello en el ojo de una aguja* (A Camel in the Eye of a Needle, 2022) have a distinctive shape, with looping handles. Encased in cement that has been colored red, the base resembles terracotta, a material the artist considers typical of Tijuana. In *Cabeza de Vaca* (2022), the cement has been screen printed with a decorative pattern that evokes Talavera pottery, a Spanish tradition popular throughout Mexico. The distinctive blue color that is commonly used is itself credited to the import of Ming dynasty ceramics to Mexico.

In tracing these global influences, Rosas often engages with violent motifs of war and invasion, while simultaneously drawing our attention to their appearance as objects of child's play. The slingshot is at once a weapon and a toy; a figure on horseback is both a soldier and a child playing make-believe. Rosas's textile drawings are frequently made in collaboration with her son, embroidered directly onto his drawings of superheroes and wrestlers. Noticing the similarity between objects in his drawings and the regalia she has encountered through her own research into Aztec cultural traditions, Rosas asserts that even seemingly coincidental relationships draw meaning through forms of ancestral knowledge that are perhaps unconsciously accessed across generations.

In *Caballito de monedas de a peso* (Horse of Peso Coins, 2022), Rosas's son, Fernando, rides a mechanical rocking horse. Taken from a family photograph, the drawing reflects a memory not only of her son but also of her own childhood, riding this same horse outside a store in Tijuana. Several other drawings depict children holding animals, conveying a sense of youthful innocence. The exhibition's title, *Yo te cuido* (I Take Care of You), foregrounds the ambivalence of the potent symbols and objects throughout Rosas's work. An endearment expressing care, this phrase is also a cautionary promise of protection. By understanding how colonialist images and actions are entrenched within our history, Rosas's playful drawings and sculptures craft new ways of imagining our entangled present.

MATRIX 282 / Griselda Rosas: Yo te cuido is organized by Anthony Graham, Senior Curator and former MCASD Associate Curator, with Jill Dawsey, PhD, MCASD Senior Curator.

MATRIX 282 / Griselda Rosas: Yo te cuido is part of BAMPFA's ongoing MATRIX series of contemporary art exhibitions. Founded in 1978, MATRIX provides artists with an experimental platform to make and show new work.

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Biography

Griselda Rosas (b. 1977, Tijuana, Mexico) is a visual artist whose practice encompasses textiles, drawing, and sculpture as she explores themes of cultural hybridity and identity. Working in the US-Mexico border region, she is guided by her experiences in the binational area. Rosas received a BFA in painting and printmaking and an MFA in sculpture at San Diego State University, where she then taught from 2013 to 2022. Solo exhibitions include *Yo te cuido*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (2023); *Forged Dialect*, Quint Gallery, La Jolla, California (2022); and *Regata Abscisa*, Oceanside Museum of Art, San Diego (2020). Notable group exhibitions include *Stories from My Childhood*, Northern Illinois University Art Museum, DeKalb (2022); Cannon Gallery Invitational, Carlsbad, California (2022); First International Festival of Manuports, Kohta, Helsinki, Finland (2021); and San Diego Art Prize Exhibit, Bread & Salt (2020); among others.

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