

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

ANA VILLAGOMEZ



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An abstract artwork featuring a prominent vertical red line that divides the composition. To the left of the line, there are organic, leaf-like shapes in shades of green, blue, and red against a black background. To the right, there are similar organic shapes in shades of green, yellow, and white, also against a black background. The word "BIOGRAPHY" is centered across the red line in white capital letters.

BIOGRAPHY

ANA VILLAGOMEZ

b. 1991, Houston, TX, US

Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US

Ana Villagomez develops her paintings in a series of layers that vary stylistically between loose painterly brushwork and clearly defined shapes that are rendered in vivid colors. Construction and excavation are two important ideas in Villagomez painting process that she utilizes in equal measure. Each of her painting's preliminary layers is sanded, peeled, scrubbed, and ultimately painted with a new layer - simultaneously concealing and revealing what has come before. In many instances, Villagomez uses digital technology to manipulate her drawings and project them onto her canvases, which adds another unique dimension to her richly layered images. The finished paintings culminate with a sense of history, motion, depth, structure, and brilliant color. There is a topographical quality to Villagomez's work, a sense that her densely packed colors and forms are the result of cultivation and reverence for what has come before.

Ana Villagomez (b. 1991, lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US) received a BFA from University of Houston in 2013, and an MFA from CUNY Hunter College in 2021. She has had recent solo exhibitions with Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US; Pazda Butler, Houston, TX, US; and a solo project at ADAA Fair with Pazda Butler, New York, NY, US. Her recent group exhibitions have been with Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US; Britz + County, Palm Beach, FL, US; Deli Gallery, New York, NY, US; Christies, New York, NY, US and Martha's, Houston, TX, US. In 2023 and 2024, Ana Villagomez was Adjunct Assistant Professor at Hunter College, New York, US.



Photo: Marcarson.



SAMPLE WORKS

**sample selection does not reflect current availability*



Sweet Subterraneans (Dulces Subterráneos), 2025
Signed, titled, and dated on verso
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
70 x 64 in
177.8 x 162.6 cm
(AVI25.006)

People Haggle With Us Even Over Our Shadows, 2025
Signed, titled, and dated on verso
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
40 x 30 in
101.6 x 76.2 cm
(AVI25.010)





La Máquina de Sueños (Dream Machine), 2025
Signed, titled, and dated on verso
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
64 x 50 in
162.6 x 127 cm
(AVI24.016)

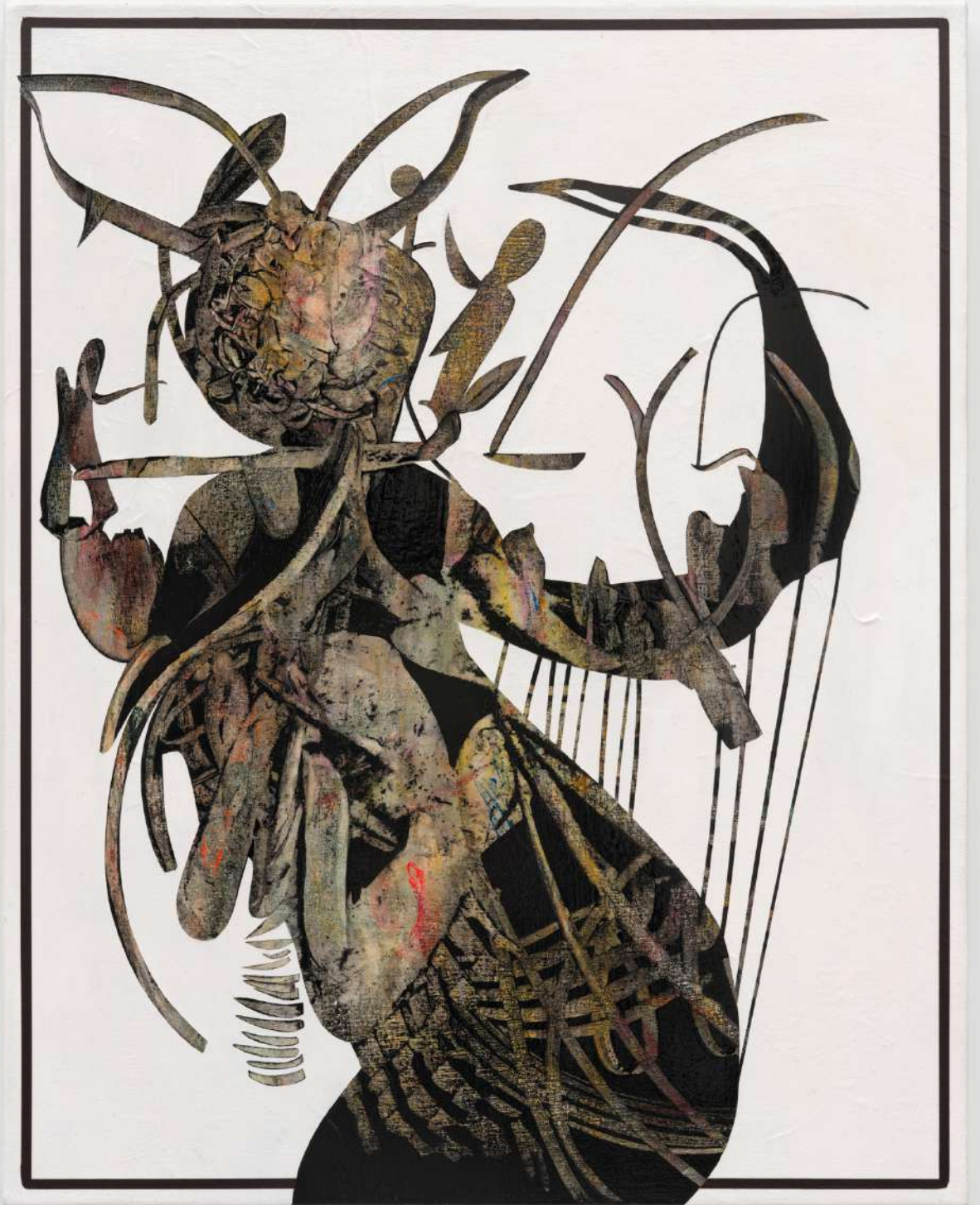
People Haggle With Us Even Over Our Shadows, 2025
Signed, titled, and dated on verso
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
40 x 30 in
101.6 x 76.2 cm
(AVI25.010)





Tender Echoes, 2025
Signed, titled, and dated on verso
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
75 x 59 in
190.5 x 149.9 cm
(AVI25.007)

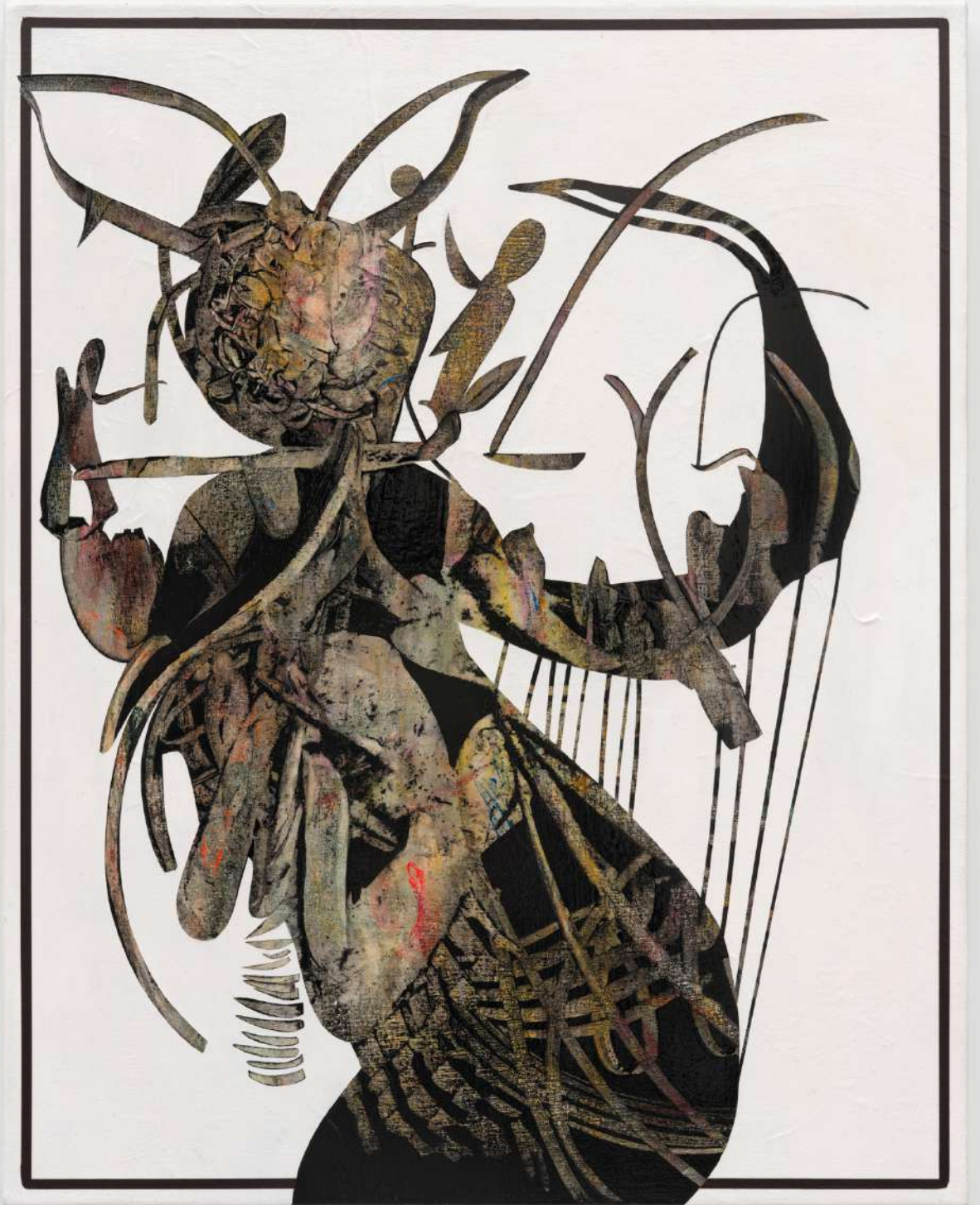
Water Bearer, 2024
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
30 x 24 in
76.2 x 61 cm
(AVI24.002)





Minor Devils, 2023
Acrylic and flashe on linen
30 x 24 in
76.2 x 61 cm
(AVI24.001)

Water Bearer, 2024
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
30 x 24 in
76.2 x 61 cm
(AVI24.002)





Private Shock Machine, 2024
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
60 x 54 in
152.4 x 137.2 cm
(AVI24.005)



Lake In My Brain, 2024
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
72 x 66 in
182.9 x 167.6 cm
(AVI24.010)



Most Distant Visible Part of the Sea, 2024. Acrylic and flashe on canvas. 74 x 96 in, 188 x 243.8 cm (AVI24.007)



Shadow Haggler, 2024
Acrylic and flashe on canvas
76 x 62 in
193 x 157.5 cm
(AVI24.012)

An abstract painting featuring a complex composition of vibrant colors and expressive brushstrokes. The palette includes deep reds, bright yellows, lush greens, and earthy browns, all set against a lighter, textured background. The brushwork is dynamic and varied, with some areas showing fine, delicate lines and others featuring bold, thick applications of paint. The overall effect is one of intense energy and visual richness.

SELECTED EXHIBITONS AND PROJECTS

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

SWEET SUBTERRANEANS

2025

NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

SHADOW HAGGLER

2024

NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY

THE DOG HAD ATE THE HAND

2023

JOSH PAZDA HIRAM BUTLER
HOUSTON, TX

JOLIE LAIDE

2023

HARPER'S APARTMENT
NEW YORK, NY



SWEET SUBTERRANEANS

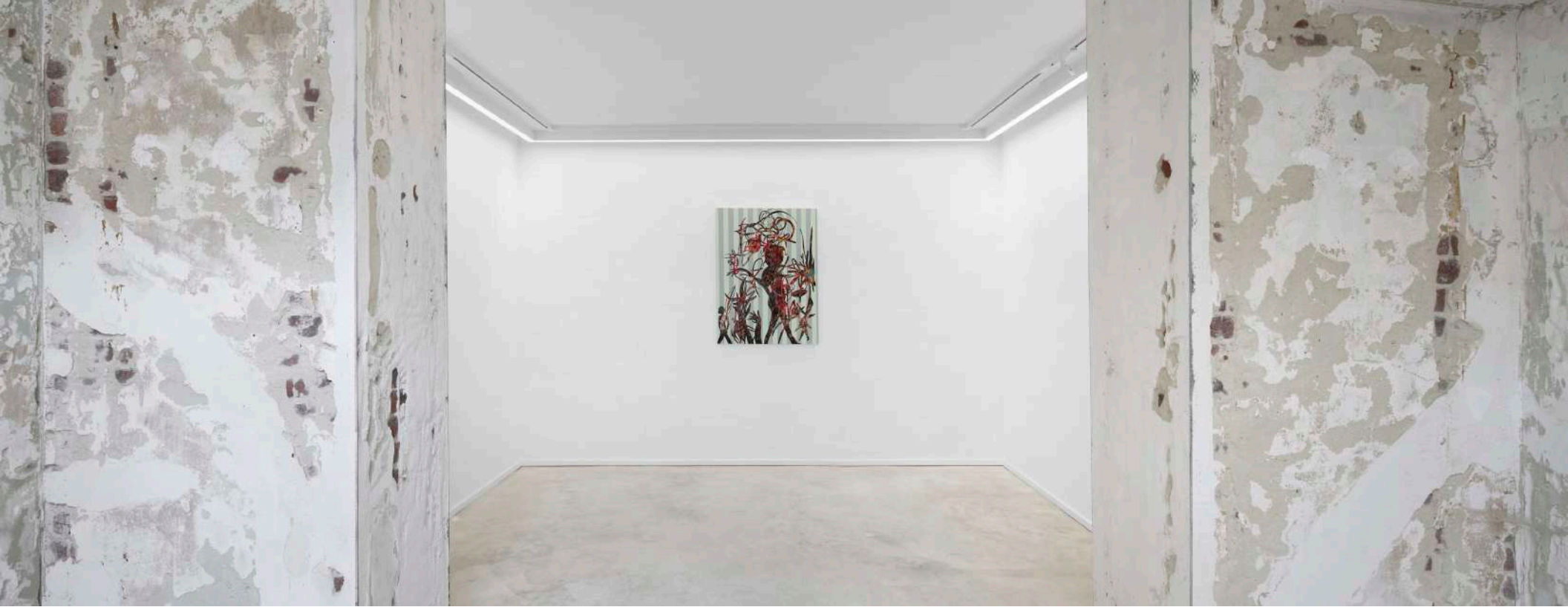
2025

NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

*“The house in which she had lived as a child was the house of the spirit which does not live blindly but is ever, out of passionate experience, building and adorning its four-chambered heart—an extension and expansion of the body, with many delicate affinities establishing themselves between her and the doors and passageways, the lights and shadows of her outward abode, until she was incorporated into it in the entire expressiveness of what is outward as related to the inner significance, until there was no more distinction between outward and inward at all.”**

Ana Villagomez’s works are multi-chambered organisms in their own right. The different layers in her collage-like paintings interact with each other while also maintaining their own distinct presence. Like a beating heart, they are in constant dialogue, allowing meaning to circulate and take shape in the eye of the viewer. As one attempts to decipher what unfolds on her canvases, new meanings and connections rapidly emerge. Abstraction intertwines with illusionism, and the multiple densities and textures—achieved through the blending of different paints—add further depth to her compositions.

In Villagomez’s intuitive scenes, the emotional and the rational become entangled, while the recognizable and the mysterious engage in an ongoing dance. More than ever before, the works in *Sweet Subterraneans* form a vast, cohesive world—more defined, densely layered, and punctuated by cutouts. These cutouts, sometimes highly recognizable, are removed from their original context, mirroring the human impulse to relocate and reinvent. The theme of movement and the search for a new home is deeply personal to Villagomez. Born and raised in Texas, she later relocated to New York, where she currently lives and works. Despite this, she remains closely connected to her roots abroad. As she puts it: *“I could not make this work without my roots—I am Mexican American.”* In today’s political climate, however, this identity has taken on a newfound complexity. Questions of belonging that once seemed unthinkable have now become pressing. *“For the first time in 30 years, my American Identity is being questioned by those in power”*, she reflects.



Villagomez's Mexican heritage and border-spanning culture are both subtly present and deeply embedded in her work. Folktales such as that of *La Lechuza*—a wronged woman who transforms into an owl at night to haunt wayward nocturnal wanderers—or the vintage covers of 1970s Mexican science fiction novels once sold in her parents' Houston-based bookstore, are enduring influences in her life and art. The shapeshifting, transformative nature of her forms and compositions clearly embodies this sense of magical realism.

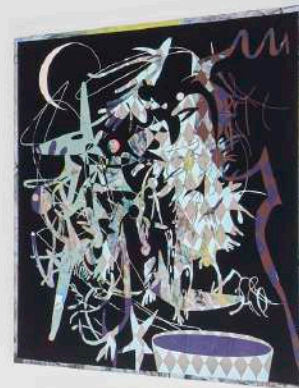
*"...love, the great narcotic, lined fingertips with clairvoyance, pumped iridescence into the lungs for transcendental x-rays, printed new geographies in the lining of the eyes..."**

The creation of Villagomez's works is an intuitive, physical experience. Spreading her canvases across the floor, she approaches them with surgeon-like precision. The quick drying time of acrylic paint heavily influences the shapes that emerge, and often, forms only reveal themselves to her over time as she reassesses what she has entrusted to the canvas.

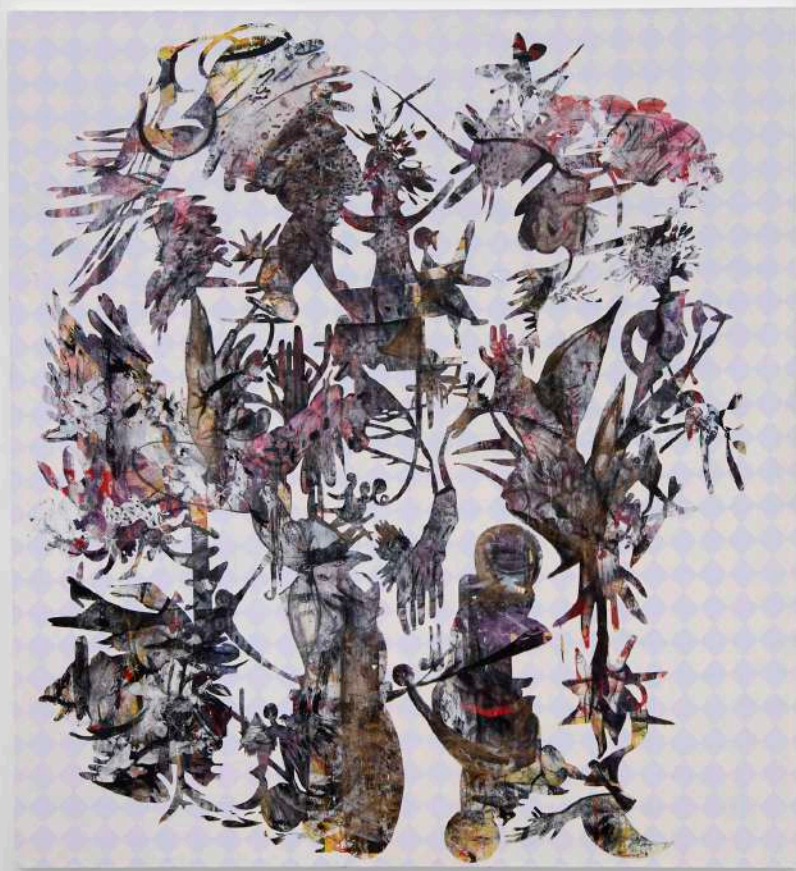
Water-soluble mediums are essential to her process. To counteract the rapid drying of the paint, she sprays or drenches her works with water, inviting the natural forces of evaporation and absorption to play a role in their formation. It is in these moments that plants, figures, and limbs seem to magically appear.

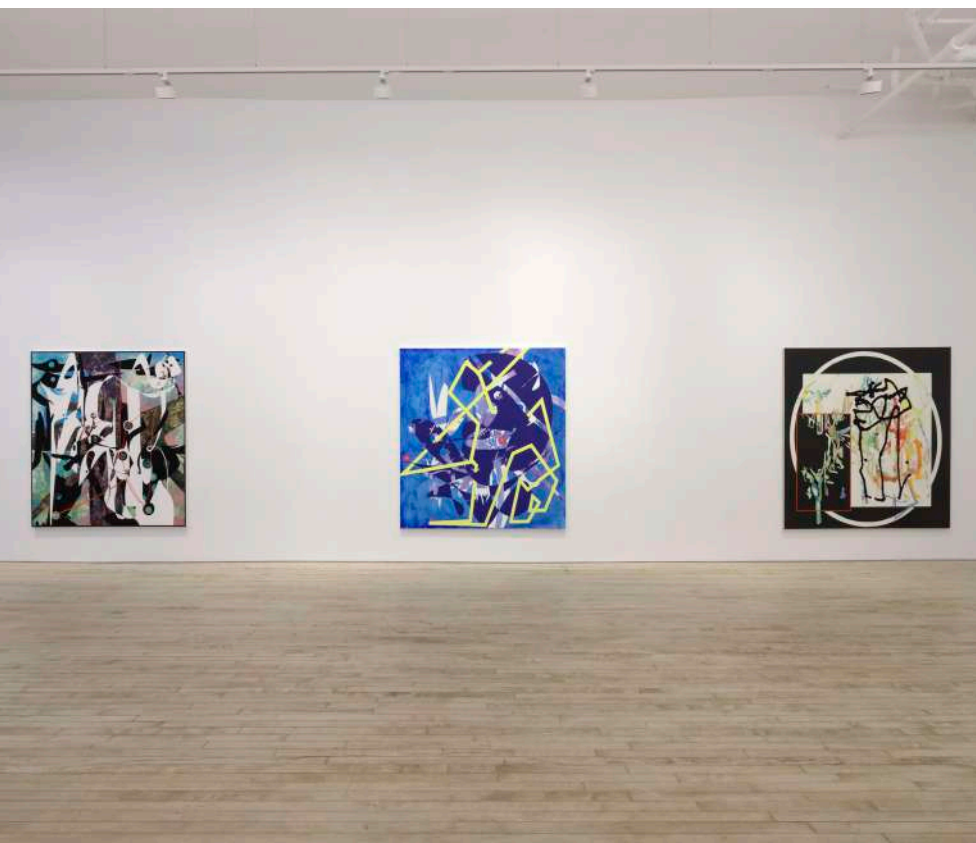
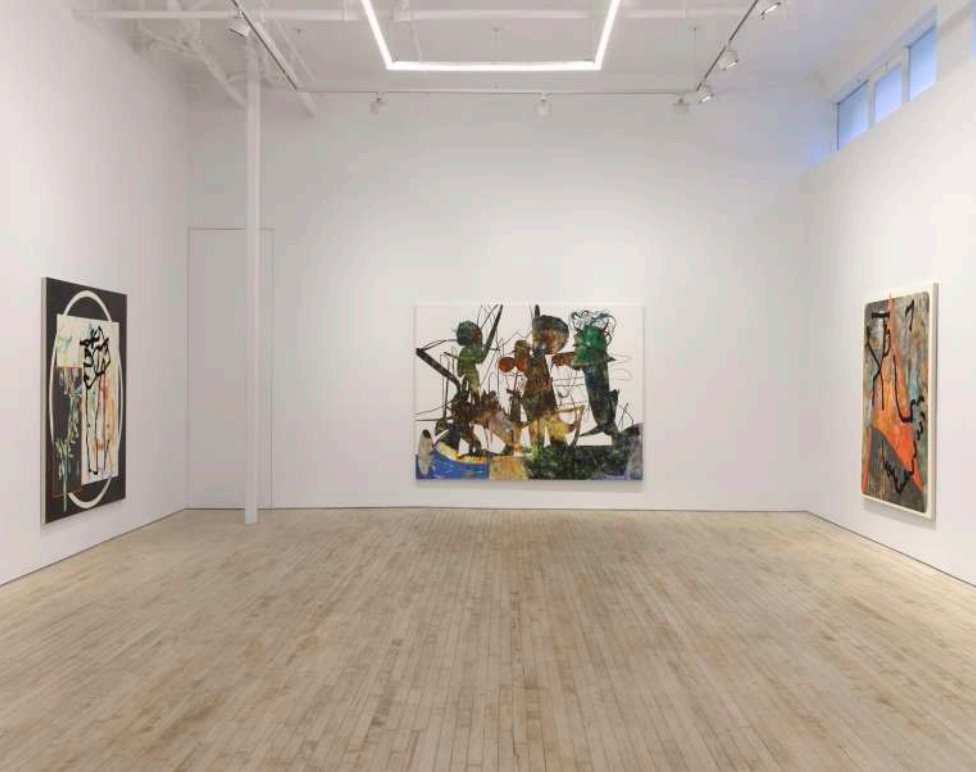
Rather than using conventional paintbrushes, Villagomez paints with her hands and body, giving her work a deeply corporeal identity. When she does not engage her body directly, she turns to discarded or repurposed household materials—old socks, duvet covers, and rags. This practice resonates with her roots, as Mexican muralists have long used such materials in their work.

* denotes quotes from the novel *The Four-Chambered Heart* by Anaïs Nin (1950).









SHADOW HAGGLER

2024
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY, US

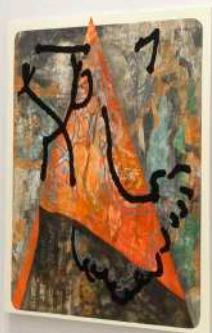
Nino Mier Gallery is thrilled to present *Shadow Haggler*, our first solo exhibition by New York based artist Ana Villagomez. Featuring a series of paintings, the exhibition delves into the subconscious through layered, evocative paintings that inflect abstraction with personal memory, landscape, and history. The exhibition will be on view from June 21 to August 9 at our Tribeca location.

Throughout *Shadow Haggler*, bold patterns juxtapose more fluid, protean washes of color. Rigid geometries contain ghostly forms, to varying degrees of effectiveness. This overall tension between the orderly and the spectral begins with the construction of each work. In making each painting, Villagomez embarks on a transformative process of erasure and addition that begins with an automatic underpainting, which she then covers in darker hues that have been watered down. Utilizing tools such as scour pads, spatulas, and rags, she scrubs, lacerates, and effaces sections of the top layer of darker paint to reveal the underlying compositions. This method resembles an excavation, where the act of erasure is as critical as painting, producing surfaces akin to complex topographical maps. The paintings emerge as subconscious geographies, mapping her inner world through a tactile and dynamic process.

In creating her compositions, Villagomez channels inspiration from a diverse array of sources. The sharp juxtapositions and graphic techniques in her work echo works from art history as much as they do the visual language of pulp novels and historietas from her childhood, shaped by time spent in her family's bookstore. The landscapes of her upbringing, too, influence her work. Villagomez grew up in various regions of Mexico as well as in Houston, Texas. Memories of Mayan architectures and the ritualistic atmosphere of exorcism tourism in her family's hometown infuse her work with a sense of mysticism and its commodified afterlife in an increasingly globalized economy.

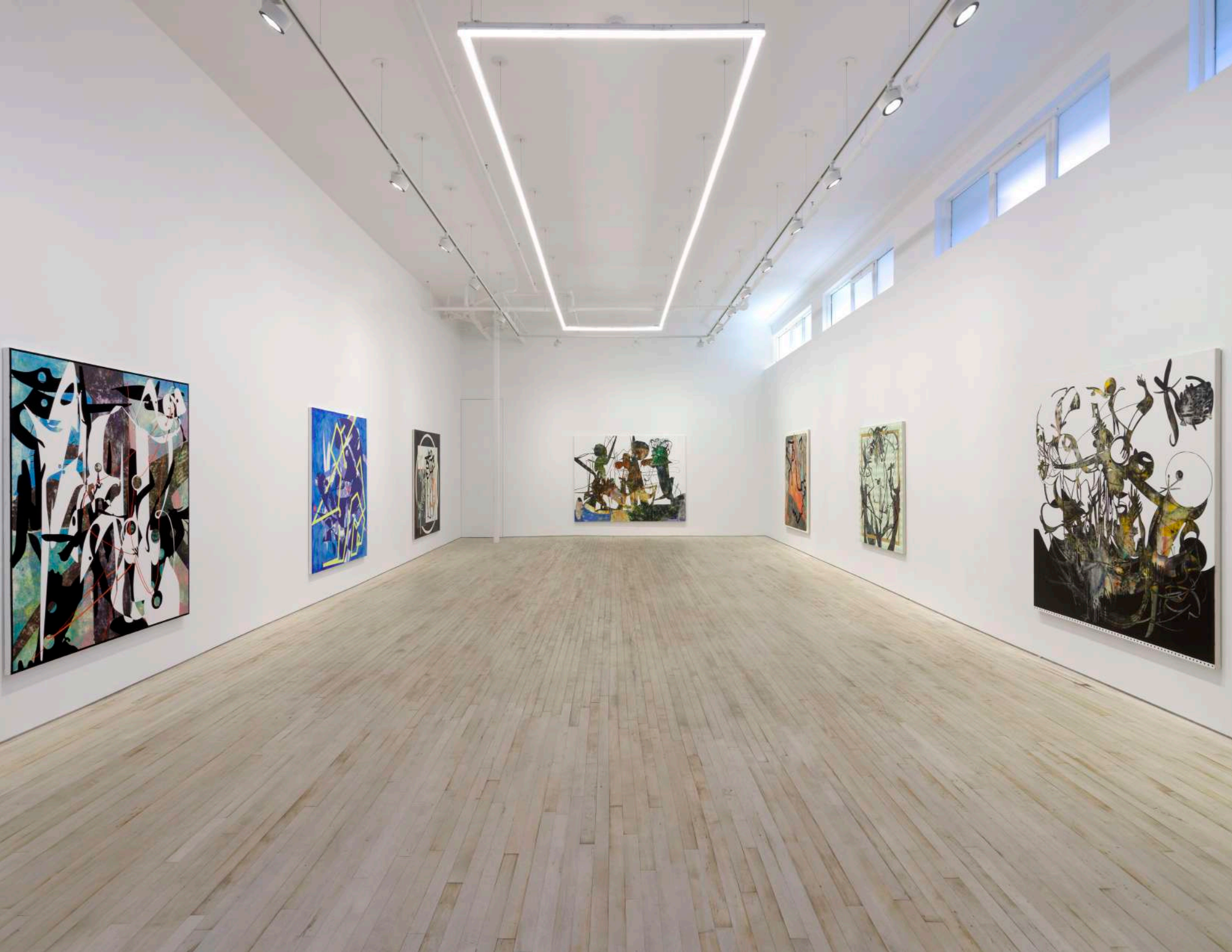
The rich historical and cultural narratives of Villagomez's upbringing are now latent in her painting. The continuous recycling and repurposing of materials in her neighborhood, painting over old buildings and surfaces with new vibrant hues, is mirrored in her artistic approach. Moreover, her process of layering, erasing, and reconstructing parallels the way memories are formed and reformed over time. Each painting is an amalgamation of personal history, cultural references, and abstract forms, creating a new and more truthful representation of reality.

Shadow Haggler thus forms a sustained meditation on memory, identity, and the subconscious. She often grapples with the concept of the shadow, both in Carl Jung's psychoanalytic sense and as a metaphor for a disembodied feeling. Her paintings reflect this duality, with forms that seem to float between the tangible and the intangible. Birds, animal-human hybrids, and abstract shapes form and dissolve throughout her canvases, creating a dreamlike landscape that invites viewers to explore their own subconscious drives and dreams.











THE DOG HAD ATE THE HAND

2023
JOSH PAZDA HIRAM BUTLER GALLERY
HOUSTON, TX, US

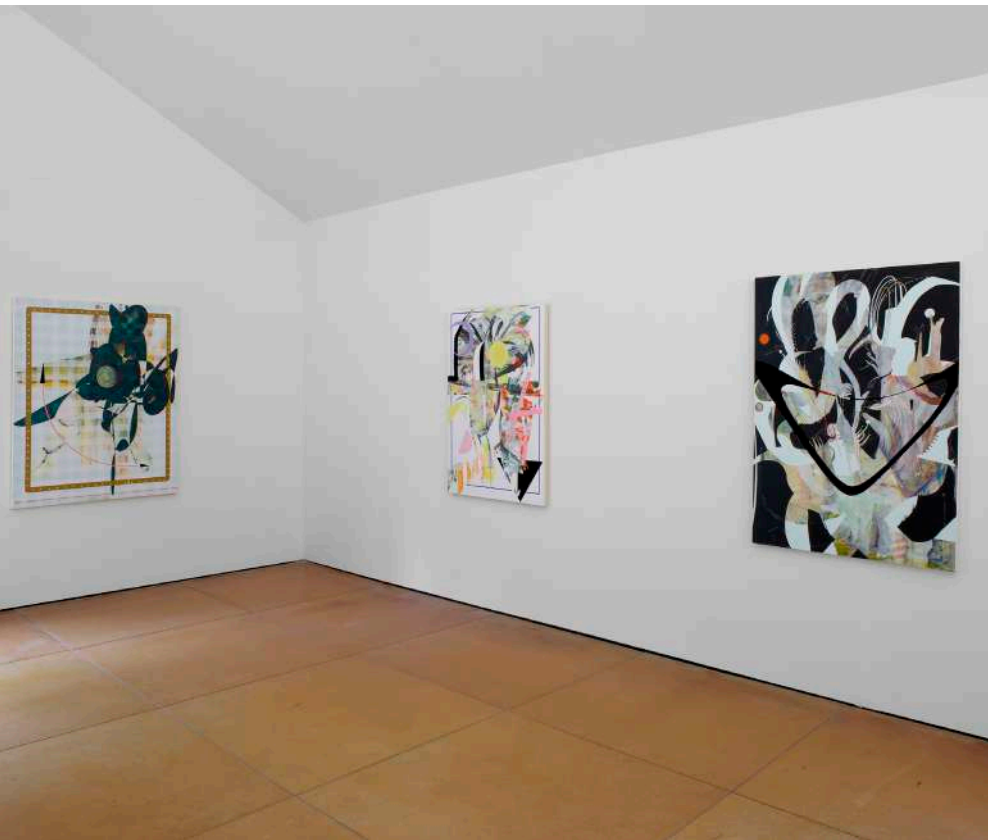
ANA VILLAGOMEZ
 The Dog Had Ate the Hand

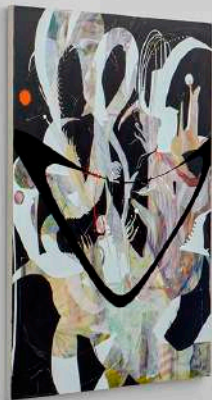
1 April - 27 May 2023

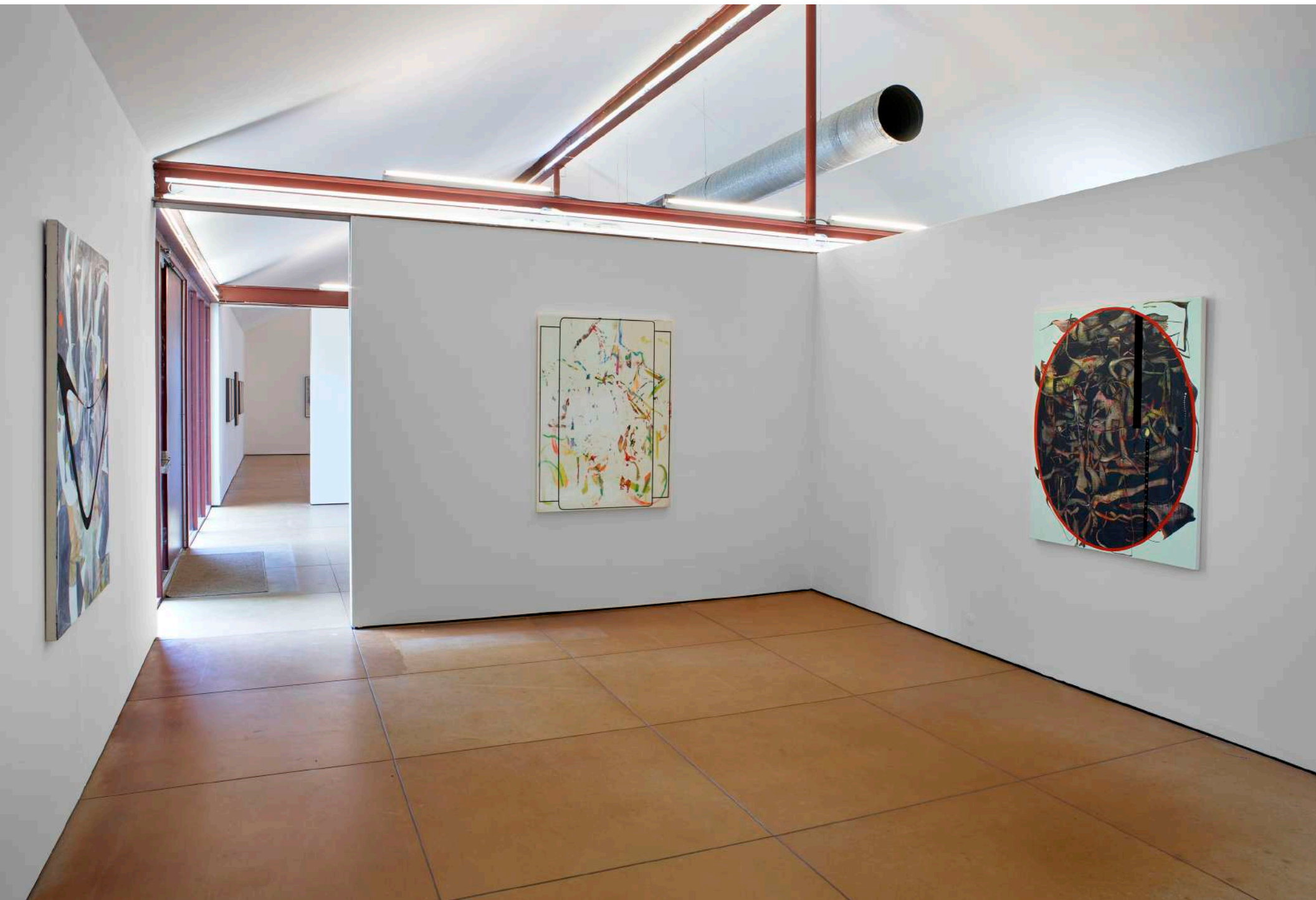
Opening reception:
 Saturday 1 April

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

All images courtesy of Josh Pazda Hiram Butler Gallery and the artist.









JOLIE LAIDE

2023
HARPER'S APARTMENT
NEW YORK, NY, US

Harper's is pleased to announce *Jolie Laide*, a group exhibition featuring new works by three female artists: Mercedes Llanos, Bea Scaccia, and Ana Villagomez. *Jolie Laide* opens Wednesday, November 8, with a reception attended by the artists.

The term *jolie laide* derives from the French expression used to describe women who are unconventionally attractive. This tension between what is appealing and what is unsavory resides at the pith of the exhibition. Llanos, Scaccia, and Villagomez wane in and out of figuration and abstraction to chart the poetics of the beautiful and the monstrous. With distinctive visual expressions, each artist invites the viewer to consider the interior reflections and social paradigms that inform this thorny yet wonderous intersection. The work in *Jolie Laide* inspires meditation on these aesthetic and ideological locales: the featured artists invite viewers to contemplate questions of gender and mythology as they allude to the things we revere and fear.

For Mexican-American artist Ana Villagomez, the landscapes we inhabit—both physically and psychologically—are laden with imagery that is at once grotesque and

desirous. Villagomez's collagist approach to abstraction involves excavating the labyrinthine inner workings of her cerebral world. The resultant works conjure silhouettes of imagined creatures set within mystical scenes that call forth the sometimes troubling terrain of folklore and dreams. In *Minor Devils*, for example, a dark web of interlocking branches and abstruse figures is confined within an oval shape, staged against a neutral gray backdrop. Immersed in the shadows of the hypnotic night, the scene floats across the canvas like an open corridor presenting one's fortune. Villagomez's pastiche of references and moods feels present here: the circuitous marks speckled with chalky green and red hues recall supernatural fairytale illustrations, rife with figuration reminiscent of birds, twigs, and foliage.

Across her captivating paintings, Bea Scaccia also juxtaposes motifs that haunt and entice. The Italian artist creates otherworldly scenes wherein dense coils of hair adorned with sumptuous pearls, belts, brilliantly colored nails, and other accessories stand in for the feminine figure. Absent of skin and facial features, female forms instead occupy the bodies of anonymous creatures much like those obscure feminine characters prevalent in the opuses of surrealist artists by the

likes of Leonor Fini, whose work in fashion and fine art has influenced Scaccia. Scaccia gestures towards this legacy of twentieth-century surrealism throughout. In works like *A setting of sensual dignity and Is it a dirty secret or moonlight in her hair?*, neverending tresses curl into fingers that grip luminous chalices and lampshades. With bountiful gems spilling out from the braided locks, the decadent and bizarre scenes are reminiscent of those in French surrealist filmmaker Jean Cocteau's 1946 classic, *The Beauty and the Beast*.

Like Scaccia and Villagomez, Mercedes Llanos takes a circuitous route toward figuration. The artist renders distorted human bodies across gender spectrums in states of motion as they camouflage against pools of rich pigmentation. The source material for these works often derives from Llanos's dreams; her hand performs as a guide, translating her subconscious imagination to tangible mark-making on the canvas. She traditionally renders nude bodies in a sketchy, porous manner, echoing the fleeting nature of the dreamscape. The artist carves fluid contours that help shape pliant body parts as they fold into one another and sometimes meet in erotic embrace. Such is the case in *Origen*. Here, an amalgam of pastel tones resemble flesh, while rippling striations slice through the canvas like wounds. The application of the paint is at once gentle and jarring—shadows of auburn and chestnut present sudden contrast in the enigmatic work.

Ultimately, *Jolie Laide* celebrates its visual and ideological contradictions throughout. Across their divergent approaches to storytelling, the artists chart the proximity between visibility and obscurity, luminance and darkness, and beauty and horror. In locating these aesthetic meeting grounds, the artists each erect new geographies that circumvent passive consumption, and instead invite viewers to consider the dynamic and at times perplexing relationship between individual reality and external perception.





An abstract collage background featuring a mix of black, white, blue, purple, and red elements. It includes various shapes like triangles, circles, and lines, some with textured, painterly fills. A prominent red line weaves through the composition, connecting several circular elements. The overall style is modern and graphic.

SELECTED PRESS

SELECTED PRESS

GLASSTIRE

JULY 2024

BY VALENTIN DIACONOV

BURNAWAY

MAY 2023

BY VALENTIN DIACONOV

TWO COATS OF PAINT

OCTOBER 2022

BY BONNIE MORANO

JULY 2024

Ana Villagomez' Wormhole Paintings

By Valentin Diaconov

Raised in Houston's Second Ward, Hunter College alumna Ana Villagomez opens her first solo show in New York with a showcase of all the detours her well-defined method allows the artist to make. There are personal memories of her community's dexterity and inventiveness, renovation, and repair around the family home and the street. But hers are not the paintings that evoke (domestic) labor; if anything, they transcend it.



"Most Distant Visible Part of the Sea," 2024, acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 74 x 96 inches

No two paintings among the ten are alike, and every one of them captures the gaze in ways that are very rare for recent abstraction. One reason for this effect is that Villagomez doesn't use brushes much, layering Flashe and acrylic until the overall effect is of an unfinished restoration-slash-paint job in a palazzo. Trying to reconstruct the order of the layers, you are pulled deeper and deeper into a game of "Whose will is this?" Who is the artist responsible for the red mountain against a rusty brown background in *Subterranean Tremors*? And the black glossy squiggles on top of that layer, why do they feel prehistoric in their hard-edged finality? Who painted the white border around both layers? Someone who wanted to contain the energy of the triangle and the squiggles? Or someone who was defeated in their calls to order? This coexistence of vectors gives her work a character of a physically solid object, devoid of individual expression, that lets you recognize the person behind the canvas by the painterly gestures. Any given Villagomez painting contains a multitude of individual agencies while preserving coherence through a complex rhythm of shapes and colors. All the while — and this is the artist's biggest secret — they don't look or feel unfinished. It's as if there is a certain level of complexity that holds the work together just by being sufficiently architectonic. A crumpled pile of designer clothes can be more scenic than a person wearing them. Similar to this, the inspired chaos of contours and grids in a Villagomez painting suddenly appears more meaningful than any straightforward depiction of structural or narrative logic.

In contrast to her first solo show at the Houston gallery Josh Pazda Hiram Butler a year ago, Villagomez works on a bigger scale. An increase in size leads to the paintings hinting at more subject matter, even if they still do not coalesce into a story. It is almost too easy to discern a distressed ship in *Most Distant Visible Part of the Sea*, populated by three Picasso-esque figures facing left. Cartoon animals seem to be written into other paintings, even if we're constantly aware that the effect is random. For the artist herself, the larger the works are, the more personal and environmental at the same time: "I get to walk over them and use bigger tools that have sentimental value."

With so many themes and variations going on at once, Villagomez feels the need to recover a personal connection to the work. Sometimes a thin red line slaloms through the layers, alternately string-like or geometrical. The line ties the paintings back to the artist: "My dad was a member of the Rosicrucian Order in the nineties and would always talk to me about the tethers, strings, and chords that we keep in order to attach our physical body to our astral one. I see painting as one of the few things I can do that makes me feel "in my body," and when I started adding these red strings as a way of addressing my ties to it." For the viewer, the line represents a ball of string that leads Theseus out of the labyrinth, giving direction through the temporal layers of the paintings and animating the eyeballs.



"Moonshake," 2024, acrylic on linen, 72 x 66 inches

This movement never subsides, and in one particular work gets streamlined in a novel way. Armed with a mantra of "embrace your restless energy," Ana Villagomez painted her show's outlier, *Moonshake*, with electric blues and lightning yellows. The title comes from a track off of Can's *Future Days*, an unsurpassed masterpiece of five open minds jamming together until the grooves they fall into are inimitable. "I understand Moonshake the least, but, funnily enough, I feel that it understands me best," says the artist, and that's what this viewer also senses. This painting instructs us in the ways that her other pieces work. The forms are similar, as they, in fact, reappear in a different painting. But their unsteady communion creates a sensation of newness and a jolt of zigzagging dance that is rarely as explicit in other Villagomez paintings. *Moonshake*, moreover, dispenses with melancholy that is always brooding under layers of glossy paint.



"Lake In My Brain," 2024, acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 72 x 66 inches

Now and then before a Villagomez painting, you're touched by the chaotic, tactile darkness of swooshing color that resemble underpainting but sometimes are not even the first of many layers. These parts have the evocative energy of a partially destroyed fresco in an Italian chapel bombed by well-meaning allies in 1944. It's an effect of patina that lets you project gaseous shapes and volumes into what remains, invariably, open-ended. Other gestures that imply logic and narrative are just as deceptive. *Lake in My Brain* has the inviting structure of a science illustration, with the red line forming a rectangle that looks like an inset with zoomed-in details of a larger square painting underneath. But instead of a call-back or a simplification, we are faced with another fragmented outline, organic and messy as a blurry snapshot of a jungle. Everything is on the move, all that is solid grows out in wild parabolas, and the restoration is never finished.

Ana Villagomez: *Shadow Haggler* is on view at Nino Mier Gallery, New York, through August 9, 2024.

BURNAMAY

MAY 2023

The Dog Had Ate the Hand by Ana Villagomez at Josh Pazda Hiram Butler, Houston

By Valentin Diaconov



Ana Villagomez, Heart Sifter (Brain Sitter), 2023, Acrylic and graphite on canvas, 56 x 40 in (142.2 x 101.6 cm).

Can flatness live through our century? Much of postwar abstraction benefited from a relationship with the Real that was based on the precondition of a truly flat surface. This surface was distinguished from a coat of paint on a given wall by a philosophical investment in one man's vision, his heroic perseverance in the face of kitsch and Social Realism, his genius, his name. Some of today's most effective abstractions recognize this abundance of visual clues and try to work around it by suggesting that non-figurative painting "allows you to rethink yourself in relationship to other people" (Doug Ashford) or "can relate back to signification of the world" (Howardena Pindell). Ana Villagomez chooses another path. She makes pieces that effortlessly integrate clues and give the viewer pointers to as many visual architectures as possible.

Naming the show after a short story by her brother, Juan Fernando Villagómez, the artist proposes an unstable connection of image to narrative. Unlike the story's clear-cut event sequence that addresses the hustle of Mexican-Americans in Houston, the paintings are neither Realist nor literal in any way. The grotesque title phrase sets in motion visions of absurd violence and the artist professes attention to Emily Dickinson's poems and Juan Rulfo's short stories, yet, there is no overarching narrative. There is no violence in the paintings either. Instead, they reward a gaze that gently sheds the skins the artist has designed for each piece (some of the edges indeed resemble an initial stage of onion peeling). The compositions follow a certain logic. Most of them feature an outline of a frame that fails to contain the shapes within, and a sphere, the natural focal point that

sometimes resembles a planet lost in deep space or an animal's attentive eye. The frames imbue the work with iconicity, inviting us to treat what is within them as recorded apparitions.

The paint presents as other textures in order to perform as scotch tape or velvet. Then, suddenly, it comes alive and curls around another shape in a manner of a string of yarn. Heart Sifter (Brain Sitter) (2023) is the show's most energetic piece. Apart from an animated string, the forms suggest a plethora of creatures, half-real, half-remembered, half-erased, in a state of mutual blending. The central shape of In My Garden (A fibrous star) (2023) could be a vector graphic that spun out of control, but in the middle of it sits a sphere that contains all the painting's colors, like the universe before the Big Bang. This interplay between the symbolic and the seemingly random is beautifully done and remains the paintings' strongest feature.

Having grown up in Second Ward, Houston's Mexican American district, in a family of building contractors, Villagomez is fascinated by the community's "joy in constantly repurposing things" and the layers of paint on the neighborhood's walls that contain "a century of past lives." The painter's method of unearthing through overlays makes the work glow with suggestive references. The layers of the past are most visible in Xibalba (2023), the darkest painting that combines black and rusty shapes that reminds one of Hieronymus Bosch's hellish visions. Accordingly, Xibalba is Mayan hell. It's tonal opposite, Brotherly Resemblance (2023), sports a three-part frame that looks like mirrors on a dressing table. The shapes, painted in the colors of a kid's bedroom, are fleeting, as if erased. The titular brother might be Willem de Kooning, whose late works became all line while he was possibly suffering from Alzheimer's, or Robert Rauschenberg, that famous busybody with an eraser at the ready.

These veterans of the American canon are thrice removed, however, from the structural concerns of other paintings. The closest analogy for the shapes, if not the method, would be Wifredo Lam and Roberto Matta, with their interplay of formal invention against a very real depth, of the Cuban landscape in Lam's case, and of outer



Ana Villagomez, In My Garden (A fibrous star), 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 58 x 48 in (147.3 x 121.9 cm).

space in Matta's. When so much of contemporary abstraction is still preoccupied by the enigma of flatness or the battlefield of turbo-charged expression, Villagomez opts for careful reveals of the pre-figurative, deep in the clefts of the personal and artistic past.

The Dog Had Ate the Hand, an exhibition by Ana Villagomez, is on view at Josh Pazda Hiram Butler in Houston, TX through May 27.



Ana Villagomez, Xibalba, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 52 x 42 in (132.1 x 106.7 cm).

TWO COATS OF PAINT

OCTOBER 2022

Abstraction by the numbers MFA POV

By Bonnie Morano



Ana Villagomez, *Tender Spectres*, 2022

I'm a numbers person. Some say that's atypical for an artist. But before I began my MFA in painting at Hunter College, I was in the financial world creating Excel spreadsheets. For the Northeast edition of New American Paintings, the springboard publication for emerging artists, 38 out of the 40 artists selected were representational painters. There were two abstract artists in the group – one painter and one artist who crocheted textiles. They accounted for 5% of the total group. I decided to cross reference this stat with the current MFA student directory at Hunter, 113 artists strong. Of that cohort, 53 chose a concentration in painting when they were accepted. The split between representation and abstraction was almost even. Why then was the New American Paintings finalist selection so skewed towards representation?

Because that's what the art world wants. Should the MFA program's abstract painters make a Faustian bargain, switching to representation to hedge their bets on commercial success? Or do we, as artists, expect ourselves to be above the numbers? We spend hours in the studio, months preparing for thesis, years completing the MFA degree, and thousands of dollars on tuition, materials, and eventually studio space. The recent meme "Drugs are expensive. Consider art! It's much more expensive" captures the financial dilemma. If 95% of the painters that the art market apparently demands are representational, isn't it the fool who does not paint people, places, or things?

The lion's share of Hunter's most successful recent graduates – including Anthony Cudahy, Emily Furr, Jenna Gribbon, Dani Orchard, Danielle Roberts, Sarah Slaphey, and Lily Wong – are representational painters.

But Ana Villagomez, also a recent graduate, sees the issue as a false binary. "I think a lot of painters other than myself are interested in letting go of the categorical ways of approaching painting," she says. Students, of course, may change their concentrations. Recent grad Jeremy Lawson started out as a minimalist sculptor and currently has a show up of highly gestural, expressionistic oil paintings. His work gives me hope that recognition for abstract art is returning. He comments: "I love all kinds of work but abstraction is the most difficult, mysterious activity available to us, outside of love maybe; it's wild."

I plan to ride out the trend and continue with abstract painting. It is only through abstraction that I feel completely autonomous, and artists are supposed to be in the freedom business. I've heard abstraction is making a comeback in Northern Italy, perhaps a bellwether region. The art world is dynamic, and could soon become saturated with representational painting and poised for a shift towards abstract work. Reminded of why I left my financial desk job to begin with, I find myself erasing all the calculations from my head, and think only this: I believe in myself, and in abstraction, 100%.

An abstract, high-contrast background featuring a large, bright yellow zigzag line on the left side. The rest of the image is composed of dark blue, light blue, and white geometric shapes, including a large red circle on the right. The overall style is modern and graphic.

CURRICULUM VITAE

ANA VILLAGOMEZ

b. 1991, Houston, TX, US
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US

EDUCATION

2021 MFA Hunter College, New York, NY
2013 BFA University of Houston, Houston, TX US

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025 *Sweet Subterraneans*, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, BE
2024 *Shadow Haggler*, Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US
2023 *The Dog Had Ate the Hand*, Pazda Butler, Houston, TX US
2015 *Foreverware*, Farewell Books, Austin, TX, US
2012 *Something about Making Time Watch Walls*, Project Row Houses, Houston, TX, US

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025 *aligned*, Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US
XXS, curated by Wendy White, Britz + County, Palm Beach, FL, US
2024 *The Garden of Forking Paths*, Deli Gallery, New York, NY, US
2023 *Jolie Laide*, Harper's Apartment, New York, NY, US
Historias/ Histories, Christies, New York, NY, US
Up All Night, Fredericks & Freiser, New York, NY, US
Entrelazadas, (two-person exhibition with Stephanie Guerrero) Martha's Contemporary, Austin, TX, US
Rituals and the Subconscious, Mostajo Projects, New York, NY, US
2022 *The Subject of Extra Scrutiny*, 205 Hudson Gallery, New York, NY, US
¡Pásele, Pásele!, MAD54 x Galeria 1204, curated by Lorena Ramos and Aida Valdez, New York, NY, US
Texan Artists: Martha's Contemporary x Rusha & Co., Rusha & Co., Los Angeles, CA, US
Sunrise/ Sunset, SUNNY NY, New York, NY, US
Last Call!, Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal, QC, CA
2021 *IT LIVES*, 205 Hudson Gallery, New York, NY, US
Shining in the Low Tide, Unclebrother, curated by Danielle Cardoso Shaeffer and Danny Baez, Hancock, NY, US
2020 *Deep End, Maia's Pool*, curated by Carrie Cook and Cameron Cameron, Los Angeles, CA, US

Leyline of Anticipation, Puppy American, Bronx, NY, US

2019 *Knock on Wood*, Hunter College, New York, NY, US

2016 *Calling the Corners*, Wedge Space, Houston, TX, US

2014 Mark Flood Resents: Irrational Women, Mark Flood Resents, New York, NY Rumpus Room with Sterling Allen, Mira Dancy, Mike Kelley & Michael Smith, and Jonathan Ryan Storm, David Shelton Gallery, Houston, TX, US

2013 A Nice Place to Visit, Box 13 ArtSpace, Houston, TX, US
Joanna Presents: Ana Villagomez, Dylan Roberts, Miguel Martinez, The Joanna, Houston, TX, US
Daytime Television, Gallery Homeland, Houston, TX, US

GRANTS, AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2023 Mostajo Projects Residency

2018 Ruth Stanton Scholar, Hunter MFA Program, 2018 - 2021

2013 Clare Hart DeGolyer Memorial Fund Award, Dallas Museum of Art; Dallas, TX, US

2012 Summer Studios, Project Row Houses, Houston, TX, US

PRESS

2024 Diaconov, Valentin. "Ana Villagomez' Wormhole Paintings" Glasstire, July 9 ; 2024, <https://glasstire.com/2024/07/09/ana-villagomez-wormhole-paintings/>

2023 Diaconov, Valentin. "The Dog Had Ate the Hand by Ana Villagomez at Josh Pazda Hiram Butler, Houston" Burnaway, May 10, 2023, <https://burnaway.org/daily/the-dog-had-ate-the-hand-by-ana-villagomez-at-josh-pazda-hiram-butler-houston/>

2022 Morano, Bonnie. "Abstraction by the numbers" Two Coats of Paint, October 4, 2022.

TEACHING

2024 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Hunter College, New York, NY

2023 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Hunter College, New York, NY



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