

CALA ALLIANCE

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CALA Alliance Announces 2024 Artists-in-Residence

Phoenix, Arizona // August 21, 2023—CALA Alliance (Celebración Artística de las Américas) announced today the three artists who will participate in the organization's signature artist residency program for the 2024 season.

The upcoming residency season features artists from across the United States and Puerto Rico, working in dynamic mediums. Mariana Ramos Ortiz (San Juan, Puerto Rico), Estephania González (Phoenix, Arizona), and José Villalobos (San Antonio, Texas) will each be in residence for a three-month period where they will develop a rigorous body of work that expands upon their current practice.

In January 2024, **Mariana Ramos Ortiz** will begin her residency. Ramos Ortiz is an interdisciplinary artist from Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. Their work considers the structural and temporal qualities of sand as they pertain to themes of occupation, resistance, decay, and protection in the context of Puerto Rico's ongoing colonial realities.

In 2015, they began their studies at the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras. They were displaced by Hurricane María in 2017 and moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where they received a full scholarship to attend Brown University for a year. They received a BA from the University of Puerto Rico in 2019 and an MFA in Printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2021.

They have attended residencies at MASS MoCA, Kala Art Institute, Wassaic Project, Brown University, el depósito, among others. Ramos Ortiz is currently a recipient of the 2022 NALAC Fund for the Arts. They live and work in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Ramos Ortiz was selected as CALA Alliance's Exchange Resident through a competitive open call process. Alongside CALA Alliance Executive Director & Curator, additional panelists included Brittany Corrales, Curator, ASU Art Museum, and Elena Kelsten Gonzalez, Assistant Curator, MoMA PS1.

Beginning in Summer 2024, Phoenix-based **Estephania González** will start her residency. González, an Arizona-based multimedia artist with Midwest roots, intricately weaves concepts of spacetime, cosmology, and identity using video, animation, installation, and performance. Central to her work is the exploration of identity politics and its fusion with the physical and psychological borderlands. This core concept propels González's creation of innovative narratives, reflecting the contemporary human condition from her perspective as a Latinx woman in the United States. Drawing inspiration from physics theories and Mexican cosmologies, she blends these influences with personal identity, illuminating connections between the macro and microcosms.

González's artistic ventures have extended across diverse locales, including Mexico, Iowa, Arizona, and Chile, where she has presented performance artworks. Her work has been on view at the UNI Gallery of Art, Step Gallery, and Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. Holding an MFA in Intermedia Art from Arizona State University, she also possesses a dual bachelor's degree: a BFA in Studio Art and a BA in Art History from the University of Northern Iowa. González's artistic journey has been enriched by her residency experiences, notably at Guapamacataro in Michoacan, Mexico, and La Wayaka Current in the Atacama Desert, Chile.

González was selected as CALA Alliance's Regional Resident through a competitive open call process. Alongside CALA Alliance Executive Director & Curator, additional panelists included Ninabah Winton, Windgate Curatorial Fellow, ASU Art Museum and Christian Ramirez, Assistant Curator, Phoenix Art Museum.

Ending the year, in October 2024, **José Villalobos** will begin his residency. Villalobos grew up on the US/Mexico border in El Paso, TX, and was raised in a traditional and religiously (Evangelical) conservative family. Villalobos's work reconciles the identity challenges in his life, caught in between traditional Mexican customs and American mores, as well as growing up with religious ideals that conflict and condemn being gay. Villalobos confronts the derogatory terms and attitudes that he continues to withstand today. The root of Villalobos's work lies in the performativity of his identity. His accouterments are proud connections to his heritage but are also reminders of the hate and homophobia that he has had to endure. Villalobos manipulates material through the context of self-identity as he examines gender roles within family culture. He demonstrates that dismantling traditional modes of masculine identity centers an interstitial space where materiality softens virility. Villalobos protests the toxicity of machismo using objects, specifically within the norteño culture, that carry a history by deconstructing and altering them. Although new forms are created, he demonstrates the battle between the acceptance of being a *maricón* and assimilating to the cultural expectations.

Villalobos received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Award and Residency and is also a recipient of the Tanne Foundation Award. His work has been recognized both nationally and internationally in exhibitions such as *Trans America/n: Gender, Identity, Appearance Today* at the

McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, TX; Texas Biennial, San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX; Mutable Land, NARS Foundation, New York, NY; YLA 22 "Ahora! (YLA 22) Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin, TX; TransBorder Biennial at the El Paso Museum of Art, TX, and El Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, Desert Rider at the Phoenix Art Museum and at the Denver Art Museum. He is currently amongst the artists of the traveling exhibition *Xican a.o.x Body* currently on display at The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture of the Riverside Art Museum.

Villalobos was selected as CALA Alliance's National Resident by CALA Alliance Executive Director & Curator.

About the CALA Alliance Residency Program

CALA Alliance's residency program is one of the only programs that fosters Latinx artistic talent in the United States, providing artists with unparalleled resources that enable them to realize innovative, ambitious new work.

CALA Alliance organizes three residencies per year. Each residency cycle includes one regional, Arizona-based Latinx artist found through a yearly open call, one national Latinx by invitation only, and one exchange artist found through a yearly open call. During their residency period, artists-in-residence are prompted to develop original, research-driven, innovative work. While in residence, artists are also encouraged to share and develop their ideas with the local community and are invited to be part of public programs and community engagements.

About CALA Alliance

CALA Alliance (Celebración Artística de las Américas) is a Latinx arts organization based in Phoenix. We collaborate with artists and arts organizations to nurture artistic talent, focusing on artists from the Latin American diaspora. CALA Alliance advances its mission through innovative artist residencies, artist commissions, community workshops, and public programming that position the Metro Phoenix region as a fruitful site that acknowledges and contributes to the promotion of Latinx art throughout the United States.

CALA Alliance envisions a cultural landscape that values the creative and artistic contributions of Latinxs in the United States, understanding that these histories are integral to the cultural fabric of this country. We are dedicated to inspiring and educating Arizonans about the richness of artistic talent in our local community and across the nation.

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