

Slow Blossoming

Diana Guerrero-Maciá

In The Studio with Diana Guerrero-Maciá

We waited for the crocuses to come and then one morning we stepped outside, and there they were. The cherry blossoms bloomed; the tulip trees flowered and we smiled. It's snowing today but the sun is shining. This year spring was a reluctant creature tamed by a perfect snow. Like most Monday mornings, I'm here sitting on a bench in the shade thinking a slow drag.

Nothing that happens this slowly can be cool.

I mean it's as slow as a day is, and I've seen the modern goddess of the hunt staring, standing in her backyard for a whole year. The patterns she finds trapped in the sky are created and wooden. She rearranges the shapes, watches the colours disappear. Every line beckons a crossing, she drew them anyway. The field at once is a window, then a doorway, or a fence and a chart, marking the distance and time, distributing the day across something larger.

There are sights aligned between the eyes of some common woodland creatures. An aimed gaze sets the deer, the rabbit, and the raccoon all in silent rotation like the end of a record quietly spinning. They are targets transformed into something soft and they stare back at her, which is you in that moment, and everything else suspended is caught and held like a big tangled heart stitched into the night. They say the sun is a billion miles away and here we are now staring into the sky watching it burn up a long time ago.

That's hot. It's as slow as a year or a word.

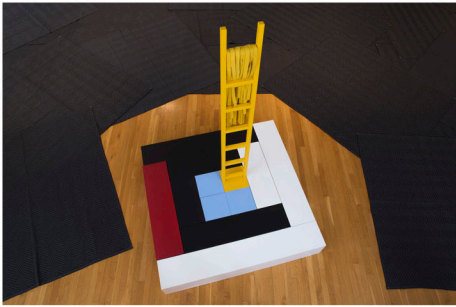
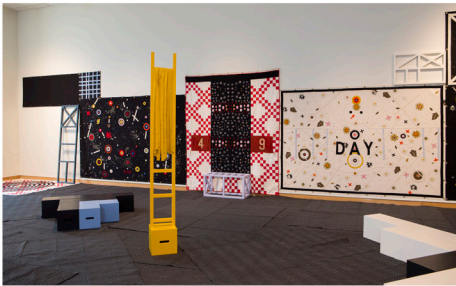
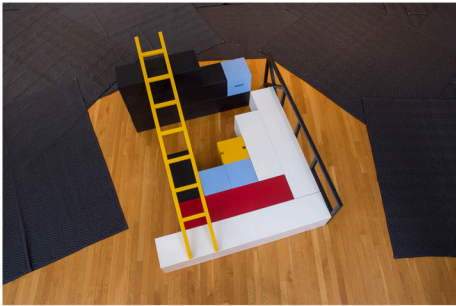
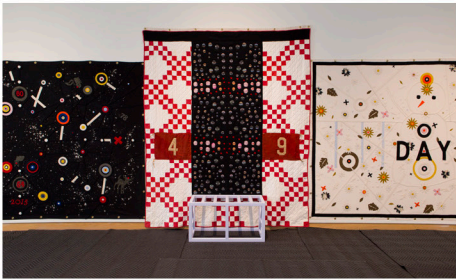
It's cool like the moon slipping from behind a cloud to shine down through a Cuban stained glass window. In the perfectly balanced night, gender is a snow-subject that never melts but fades slowly into a spectral black. Our carrot-horned construction wakes up in the day as an echo of what it could be years from now, gesturing its effects into the future. Arms raised in protest, an appeal that could be heard as a simple numbering of flakes as they fall like years. Oh Sweet Monday!

What's falling? A chorus of eyes blink in sync, in rhythm, wink when you think they might be dead. There are a lot of circles populating Diana's canvases, slowly floating down the surfaces or symmetrically marking out space. They could be chakras or snowflakes, targets, laser points, epicentres of some latent eruption, rotating vinyl, or slowly blossoming flowers now bloomed and spinning so fast that the once particular edges of their petals are rendered a flat pure buzz of sound. But of course they're all only hearts and they're hotly staring back at you—anticipating your response. Symmetry in the structure belies a randomness in the field—vertical arrangements open up to horizontal contingencies. How will you move?

Pattern does not forfeit urgency. The decorative has work to do.

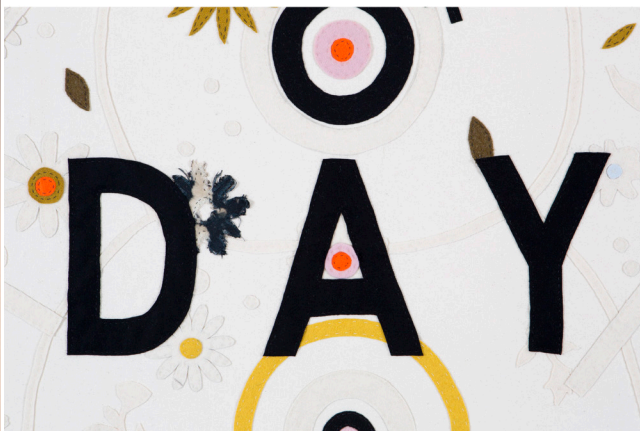
The varied speeds and temperatures of desire, labour, struggle, and joy present in this work craft an intimacy that could originate nowhere else but in a sacred ditch between disciplines, monumentally framed by women in the 1920's, and 30's and now those over 40 and in 50 years from now when maybe all lover's will be free...the math is easy but the work is slow.

—Hunter Foster



Slow Blossoming, 2016, Installation views
Hand stitched textiles; wool, cotton, Belgian linen, MX dyes, bleach, & digitally printed linen on canvas, commando cloth, & damaged quilts, Sculptures; Poplar & lacquer paint





Slow Blossoming (Minding the Gap)

Where Medieval meets Modern, the gendering of materials and making collapse.

Referencing both pictorial symbolic elements of Flemish Mille-Fleur tapestries and the structural forms of Modernist art & design, I support how handcrafts' revolutionary past continues to have a radical future. This installation is my attempt to reframe how the material making & displays of textiles, painting, and design can illuminate the inequalities of gender still present today. All the world, is all of us.

I expect the bleach (the job of the sun) to slowly punch holes in the night-sky

Here the sculptures echo the decimal-based forms of Cuisenaire Rods, a modern tool to teach children basic math and fittingly, a reference to the iconic American quilt patterns of Log Cabin & Basic Patch. The rational objects support and contrast to the psychedelic textiles. Embedded in the hand-stitched textiles are Signs — pointing to, in no particular order — Numerical Statistics of

current Gender Pay-Gap discrepancies, Sentient Creatures, All-Seeing Eyes, Symbols of Dissent & Assent, Embedded Woodland Animals, The Hunt, Amusements, Alchemic Star Charts, and Signifiers of the Self.

Each sign is a year - How long must we wait?

In observation of this spectacle, is a chorus, faces cut from Belgian portrait linen — the linen that held-up ten-thousand painted faces — spectrally dyed a light-absorbing black. Come red, come yellow, come blue {the Dutch would like this.} This is a triad after-all, a third space we must build.

A Greek Chorus — a collective voice, reveals what it sees

—Diana Guerrero-Maciá



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Exhibition Dates
April 23 – June 26, 2016
Art League Gallery

Public Reception
Friday May 6, 2016
5:00 – 9:00 pm
Artist Talk at 6:30 pm

Special Thanks to those who assisted the artist in making this exhibition possible including Hunter Foster, Christie Carlson, Caroline Kuhlman, Savannah Jubic, Paul Kafalenos, Neil Verplank & Jonathan Glick. Institutional support provided by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Additional thanks to Joseph & Phineas Adamik for their team support.

In memory of Fernando Villalón Guerrero

Photography; Clare Britt
Design; Ben Kiel



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Diana Guerrero-Maciá (b. 1966) maintains a studio-based practice collapsing the disciplines of textiles, painting, and design. She makes hand-mechanically crafted works that challenge categorization and material meaning. Her work conceptually converses with color, pattern, and iconography as well as concepts in modernist & medieval art. As a child of Cuban émigré parents who long understood the need to balance the decorative with the utilitarian, she acknowledges multiple frameworks while making.

Her interdisciplinary craft-thinking work has been featured in numerous solo and group shows including exhibitions at Elmhurst Art Museum, Three Walls; Chicago, ArtPace; San Antonio, Museum of Contemporary Art; Chicago, Sonoma Valley Museum of Art, The Bronx Museum of Art, Denver's Center for Contemporary Art, The Pera Museum of Art; Istanbul, Tony Wight Gallery, and Carrie Secrist Gallery.

Guerrero-Maciá studied at Skowhegan School of Art and Penland School of Craft. She holds an MFA in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art where she was a Phillip Morris Foundation Fellow, and BFA in Studio Art and Art History from Villanova University. She is the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant, MacDowell Colony Fellowships, Artadia Award Finalist, and conference leader at the Haystack Mountain School of Craft. Her public commissions include, The Public Art Fund, NYC and McCormick Place Convention Center. Her work is collected in multiple public and private collections.

She is Associate Professor at the School of the Art Institute Chicago in the Fiber & Material Studies Department. She is represented by Traywick Contemporary (Berkeley). She lives in Chicago with her husband and son who both like riding bicycles with her.