

form & concept

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rosemary Meza-DesPlas

My Hair Story: from Brunette to Gray

June 28 - August 31, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, June 28, 5-7 PM



Time Will Do The Talking (Detail), hand-sewn human hair on stretched watercolor canvas

(Santa Fe, NM) New-Mexico based, Latina artist confronts sexism and explores the multidimensional female experience with artworks made from her hair collected over the course of two decades.

(June 2024) For the last 22 years, New Mexico-based artist Rosemary Meza-DesPlas has diligently collected, preserved, and created provocative art with her hair, culminating in what is today the most complete intersectional feminist exploration of gender inequality, political agency, and cultural misconceptions through corporeal ephemera that exists. The exhibition opens with a reception at form & concept on Friday, June 28, 5-7 PM.

A multi-decade, interdisciplinary endeavor, Rosemary Meza-DesPlas' retrospective, *My Hair Story: from Brunette to Gray*, presents an extensive survey of the artist's ongoing hair drawing practice that investigates the cultural significance and symbolism of the thin strands of hardened protein that sprout from our heads. While other artists have experimented with the use of hair in their artworks, notably Kiki Smith, Mona Hatoum, Krystyna Piotrowska, and Isabelle Plat, **Meza-DesPlas is the first to use hair in a sustained exploration of Latina identity.** Meza-DesPlas begins this exploration with works that focus on and challenge the historical depiction of women in Western art. From this starting point, **Meza-DesPlas embarks on a scrupulous examination of social norms and cultural pressures that influence the experiences of women of color.**

Informed by personal experience and decades of scholarship, **this retrospective covers everything from marriage & feminine intimacy to the sexualization of Latina bodies and the relationship between sex, violence, and women in popular media,** presenting viewers with one of the most articulate contemporary expositions of the conflicting but often coexistent tropes ascribed to women.

"Meza-DesPlas' works are refreshingly defiant," says Spencer Linford, communications director at form & concept. "They do not pander to polite sensibilities. They are frank, raw, and unapologetically human. Meza-DesPlas' subjects are not the idealized figures of art history. They are figures that bear the physical and psychological scars of being bound to a fetishized and idealized body. **They are real, real as the hair they are made from.**"

Meza-DesPlas' studio practice flows from the women's craft movement of the 1970s, which focused on destigmatizing and validating the domestic labor women perform. In medium, technical approach, and ethos, *My Hair Story* picks up where the movement left off, spotlighting invisible realities and **bringing the uncomfortable experiences of living as a woman in a patriarchal society into sharp focus.**

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For press, image, or video inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@formandconcept.center.

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Biography

Rosemary Meza-DesPlas is a multidisciplinary Latina artist who incorporates fiber art, drawing, installation, painting, performance art, and video into her studio practice that explores socio-cultural issues, gender-based burdens, political agency, and ethnic stereotypes through an intersectional feminist lens.

The human figure takes center stage in Meza-DesPlas' work. Amplifying the voices of women, her artwork reflects the female experience within a patriarchal society. The tenacity of her eight aunts in the face of personal tragedies and adversities was an early inspiration. Their narratives contributed to her embrace of feminist ideology. Thematic continuity links Meza-DesPlas' visual artwork with her academic writing and poetry, which provides a foundation for her performance artwork.

In 2022, she was honored with a Latinx Artist Fellowship by the Mellon Foundation and the Ford Foundation. She was awarded a Fulcrum Fund grant in 2022 to create and stage a new performance artwork titled *Miss Nalgas USA 2022*. Meza-DesPlas is featured in the 2024 book *Aquí&Allá, Conversations with Creators from México and the USA*; this two volume set, funded by the Mexican Government's 'Fomento a Proyectos y Coinversiones Culturales' grant, contains interviews with 20 internationally recognized artists. Her work has been exhibited at Museum of Sonoma County, 516 ARTS, New Mexico Museum of Art, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Spartanburg Art Museum, Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, and Koehnline Museum of Art. She holds a BFA from the University of North Texas and an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art.

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