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Meet an Artist Monday: Carmen Argote



Carmen Argote's *Exprimidos* is composed of wooden tortilla presses on which the artist has placed sponges dyed with a mixture of avocado and iron. Argote used the presses to squeeze the sponges, resulting in the staining of raw silk fabric placed underneath. Installation view at Ballon Rouge Collective, 2018.

[Carmen Argote](#) works across disciplines of sculpture, installation, performance, painting and all the in-betweens, to explore idea about architecture, the body, and the intersection of personal and shared histories. Poetically and substantially merging allegorical and aspirational structures with real, inhabited architecture, Argote generates sculptural incidents from experience and residency. In this way, immigration, cultural symbolism, and the assertively hand-rendered manifest as large-scale yet intimate spatial activations. A 2019 [Artadia Awardee](#), she sends greetings from Guadalajara, where she is working on an exhibition opening this month.

L.A. WEEKLY: *What is your short answer to people who ask what your work is about?*

CARMEN ARGOTE: I make work about how the spaces around us make us feel, construct our notions about who we are and how we see others. Spaces are psychological and they have a direct relationship with our body. I make art about my body and how it processes the spaces I inhabit.

LAWEEKLY

What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?

I don't know.

Why do you live and work in L.A., and not elsewhere?

I really enjoy living and working in Los Angeles, especially having grown up here. It's full of all the events of my life and it never ceases to open itself up to more. I love the freeways and the sunsets and the sound of the train. The art community in Los Angeles is motivating and warm, and it feels like artists converse through their work with each other, which is why I love being part of the conversation here.



Carmen Argote with *Sistemas Caprichosos*

Courtesy of the artist

When is/was your current/most recent/next show?

I've been doing back-to-back residencies, shows, etc. since last year. It's been intensely great and I enjoy pushing my creative limits. My show in Guadalajara at PAOS opens this April, and I guess the next solo show will be in Istanbul with a curatorial collective

called [Ballon Rouge](#).

I love working with my galleries [Commonwealth and Council](#), Los Angeles and [Instituto de Vision](#), Bogotá, and we are always doing something, too, either directly or indirectly.

What artist living or dead would you most like to show with?

I would love to have a show with Blinky Palermo, with Marissa Mertz, with Bruce Conner, with Mike Kelley, with Louise Bourgeois ... but really ... with any artist who is experimenting and living their practice in an authentic way.

Do you listen to music while you work? If so what?

I really enjoy the sound of just things going on around me, so I work without music most of the time. When I do listen, I have my go music list: lots of Bowie, Joy Division, Perez Prado, Elvis Crespo, Blondie and Prince.

LAWEEKLY