

FUERZA

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH 2026 EXHIBITION & ARTIST MARKET

ON VIEW

Tuesday, Sept 15 - Friday, Sept 18 | 11am - 5pm

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Aby Cortes

Bryan Castillo

Dama Mora

Dulce Jarillo

Gloria Manzanares Romero

Jonathan Michael Castillo

Liliana Guzmán

Ricardo Andres

Simone Cabral Vilaca

Tatum Hernandez

CLOSING RECEPTION

Friday, September 18 | 5-9:30pm

FAR Center for Contemporary Arts

505 W 4th St, Bloomington IN

Special Thanks to Bloomington Arts Commission Project Grant!



About the Exhibition

The *Fuerza* exhibition was inspired by the 2026 National Hispanic Heritage Month Theme: *Unidos, Somos Mas / Together We Are More*.

Though they are united by their roots, each artist explores a unique perspective of home, culture, identity and belonging through their work. The exhibition invites us to gather as many, in celebration and support of Hispanic Heritage, both as a concept and a beautifully complex life experience that our friends, family and community members live every day. Each time we stop to take notice, to get to know, to learn from and to celebrate with Hispanic and Latine individuals in our community, we not only add to a collective strength, we are gifted with a richness that we might otherwise miss.

Fuerza will be on view at the FAR Center for Contemporary Arts from Tuesday, September 15th to Friday, September 18th daily from 11am to 5pm. There will be a Closing Reception and Artist Market on Friday, September 18th from 5 to 9:30pm.

About Hispanic Heritage Month

From September 15 to October 15, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the heritage, history, traditions, and cultural diversity of Hispanic Americans whose heritage is rooted in Spain and 19 countries and territories: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. This heritage month is celebrated mid-September to mid-October to highlight the independence of several countries.

Aby Cortes



@aby_cortes_creative

Statement

My work reflects my experiences as a Mexican woman growing up in the US. I love the use of bold colors and repurposing materials for my work.

Bio

Aby Cortes is a multi-media artist based in Indianapolis, IN. She was born to immigrant parents in Los Angeles, CA, who later moved to the rural Midwest when Aby was 10 years old. Her family's move and the resulting cultural experiences helped to shape her artistic perspective. Early on, she was inspired by her educators and learned that art can exist in all spaces. Aby's artistic focus and drive is rooted in storytelling. She enjoys creating pieces that convey her own life experiences, while still being accessible to others.

Bryan Castillo

Statement

As a proud chicano my work shows my experiences growing in a bordertown, with each piece dealing with themes of the overall chicano spirit, hard work, strong family ties, and faith.

Bio

Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, Bryan Castillo is an aspiring self-taught Chicano artist from the southwest, mainly working with oil and acrylic paint mediums, their work is deeply rooted in the culture and stories of the borderlands. His early life was spent being surrounded by the beauty of the Chihuahuan desert and much of his work tries to capture that. Each piece brings a sense of faith, family, and identity while also exploring darker themes of generational trauma through the use of colors and imagery.



@Odd_Castle

Dama Mora



@dama_mora_art
damamoraart.com

Statement

This painting reflects my experience as a Hispanic artist living in Bloomington, Indiana. It was inspired by my experience with Indiana's thunderstorms and tornadoes and the motions of adapting to a new home. By sharing this piece, I hope to connect with others and add my voice to the shared experiences that remind us we're stronger together.

Bio

Dama Mora is a Puerto Rican artist whose work explores the human figure through bold color and expressive form. Influenced by Fauvism, Cubism, and Expressionism, she creates acrylic paintings that examine emotion, identity, and the human experience. She earned a Master degree in Art Education from the University of Arizona.

Dulce Jarillo



Instagram icon @lecheylirios

Statement

As an individual whose parents immigrated from Mexico, there is often the question of how can we connect with our roots. It's hard to do, especially in the midwest where we often lack the resources to speak our native languages and are isolated from others. But somehow, we still stand together. We find each other. I kept thinking about it. How is it that I connect to my roots? What around me makes me feel like I still carry a piece of Mexico with me, being so far away? Then I stopped and smelled something. I smelled the spices in the kitchen, the food being made. In our culture, food is the way we show love. It's an honor to provide a meal for someone, to craft it with our own hands. This is a practice that was passed down from my parents to my sister and I.

In my work, I am focusing on my sister who is making a traditional sweet bread called a concha. My sister bakes weekly and shares her baked goods with her coworkers, many who are immigrants themselves. It's a way for them to feel at home and welcomed by all the other Mexicans/ Mexican-Americans in the community. And baking isn't a chore, it's an act of love and community. Every piece of bread my sister kneads is full of love and resilience of those before us, who kept their traditions alive in a new place. The fact that we can continue to share these traditions with others keeps our culture alive. It allows us to be together and to remember who we are, where we come from.

Bio

Dulce Jarillo is a self taught artist based in Bloomington, Indiana whose practice includes photography and drawing. Over the last year, she has been actively learning analog photography. Embracing the slow nature of film photography, Jarillo uses this medium to document her life and reflect on what it means to be a Mexican-American woman in the midwest.

Gloria Manzanares Romero



Instagram icon @gloria_manza
gloriamanzanares.com

Statement

Belonging is at the heart of my paintings — belonging to a group, to a society, to one another. I paint the body in relation: figures caught in moments of closeness and care, set within scenes that carry a quiet nostalgia for my native country alongside the everyday textures of caregiving. Unidos, somos más is, in many ways, the question my work has always been asking. These paintings hold both the tenderness and the weight of togetherness — the ways we depend on and answer to each other. To be part of a “we” is about the need or the wish of being more than oneself, and that is what I try to make visible on the canvas.

Bio

Gloria Manzanares Romero is a painter and educator whose work explores belonging, the body in relation, and the ethics of representation. Her paintings unfold as dreamlike, atmospheric scenes, carrying a quiet nostalgia for her native Spain alongside the everyday textures of caregiving. Gloria received a BA from Universidad Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid and completed her Meisterschülerin (MFA) at the Düsseldorf Academy of Arts. She lives in Bloomington with her partner and two children, where she also teaches art and Spanish.

Jonathan Michael Castillo



Statement

My project *Immigrant Owned* is a celebration of the contributions of immigrants to the country economically and culturally. America has always been a place of promise and potential. People from all over the world for generations have immigrated to this country for a fresh start and a better future for their children. Small businesses and an entrepreneurial spirit have long been part of the integral fabric of thriving American communities. Working at a small business or starting one, is a very common entry point into the American economy and jobs market for immigrants who are new to the United States. It's easy to take for granted the local hair salon, convenience store, laundromat, or hardware store in your neighborhood, many of

which are owned or operated by immigrants. My interest is in building relationships that explore the roots of immigrant business, the local and specific spaces that give character to any neighborhood. These places are where people carve out space for themselves, their families, and new immigrants on their own terms. Through portraiture and photographs of interior spaces, my work renders an essential and often overlooked part of the American economy. Many people think that immigrants come to the United States to “take”, but the reality is they contribute to our economy by creating jobs and paying taxes. Immigrants take enterprising risks and are the embodiment of the American dream. My work is a reminder that immigrant owned businesses are as American as it gets.

Bio

Jonathan Michael Castillo is a photographer, visual artist, and educator whose practice spans photography, video, installation, and handmade paper to examine immigration, labor, debt, and the systems of government that shape everyday life. He is a 2026 Guggenheim Fellow in Photography and the 2026 Joyce Foundation Artadia Awardee. He was the 2019-2021 recipient of the Diane Dammeyer Fellowship in Photographic Arts and Social Issues. Jonathan was included in the 2021 Hyde Park Art Center's Ground Floor Biennial in Chicago and was a finalist for the WMA Commission in Hong Kong. His work has been featured with *The New Yorker*, *Wired*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *CBS: Los Angeles*. He has been interviewed on the BBC's "World Update" and Los Angeles public radio stations KPCC and KCRW. Jonathan was commissioned to create a large-scale permanent installation of his work at O'Hare International Airport as part of the Terminal 5 expansion project. In 2023 he was commissioned to make work for the city of Chicago's Citywide Plan in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Planning and Development. Work from that project was installed at Midway International Airport, City Hall and the Chicago Cultural Center. Exhibitions include *Opening Passages* at the Chicago Cultural Center and *A Lion for Every House* at the Art Institute of Chicago. His work is held in the collections of the Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, the DePaul Art Museum, and the Illinois State Museum, among others. His monographs include *Car Culture* (Skylark Editions, 2022) and *Flags, Food & Faith* (City of Chicago, 2025). Castillo holds a BFA from CSULB and an MFA from Columbia College Chicago.

📷 @joncastillophoto | jonmichaelpphoto.com

Liliana Guzmán



@lilinessy

lilianaguzman.co

Statement

The work that I would be sharing are new pieces from my series *Next to Myself*. At the heart of my art practice and this series in particular is redefining and representing Latinx female self-expression in contemporary art. I hope to uplift the perspectives and stories of Latina/x women and communities through sharing my own experiences with my bicultural upbringing as a Colombian American woman in the midwest; a testament that Latina/x voices do belong and are meant to be heard not only in the contemporary art world but in our communities.

Bio

Liliana Guzmán (b. 1993) is a Colombian-American visual artist known for activating the connection between topics of the body, touch, memory and the hidden landscapes of the self through the combination of painting, drawing and photography. She was selected as the Rhonda Wilson Award recipient through Klompching Gallery in New York City, New York and participated in the group exhibition FRESH 2023. She has presented three new artworks at The Photography Show presented by The Association of International Photography Art Dealers with Candela Gallery in New York City. Most recently Liliana has shared her series *Next to Myself* at the International Artists Fair in Kyoto 2026 in Kyoto, Japan.

Ricardo Andres

Statement

These works fit the theme through the blending of dance and artwork. A commonality of Latin cultures is dance and these pieces explore the relationship between figures dancing together and one dancing alone. Regardless of the audience's heritage, these works aim to create the warm, familiar feeling of freedom that is found through dance.

Bio

Ricardo Andres is a self-taught Puerto Rican born artist who's works are bright, colorful scenes, mostly displaying landscapes and movement. His art takes inspiration from impressionist painters, cartoonists, pop artists, children's books, and music. The pastel colored Caribbean environment he grew up in has largely influenced his color palettes. Most of his works are created in his at-home art studio or with his travel set out in nature. A common theme found in his pieces is the beauty in the simplicity as he creates to capture the emotions of a scene rather than photorealism.



@ricardo.avf

Simone Cabral Vilaca



📷 @bysoul_hands
bysoulhands.net

Statement

Collective Bloom reflects the idea that we are stronger together by showing how individual fragments can become something greater when united. Made from reclaimed denim and textiles, each hand-shaped element contributes to a larger sculptural form that could not exist on its own. The work celebrates connection, collaboration, and transformation, suggesting that beauty and strength emerge through collective action, shared histories, and the coming together of many parts into one.

Bio

My work begins with a simple question:
 What if we looked again?

I create contemporary jewelry from overlooked materials, transforming them through hand-cutting, folding, and modular construction into sculptural forms that challenge expectations.

I am interested in the moment when perception shifts, when what was once dismissed becomes something admired. That transformation is not only physical; it is emotional and cultural. Each piece invites curiosity, starts conversations, and encourages us to reconsider where beauty and value truly exist. For me, jewelry is more than adornment. It is a way of reframing peoples perceptions.

Tatum Hernandez

Statement

Opuntia, commonly known as the prickly pear cactus, is considered a sacred plant in Mexican culture. The nopal appears on the Mexican flag, commemorating the Aztecs' founding of Tenochtitlán after discovering an eagle perched on a cactus in a harsh landscape. Every part of the cactus is used for consumption, earning it the nickname la planta de vida ("the plant of life"). Its pads and fruit are rich in vitamins and minerals, while its juices have long been valued for their healing properties. Beyond its practical uses, the nopal symbolizes resilience, thriving in dry climates where many other plants cannot survive.

This wall hanging is made from clay, with each piece shaped to resemble a nopal pad. On the back of every piece are handprints from members of my family. While creating this work, I reflected on my family's history and my grandparents' journey from Mexico to the United States. They found stable jobs in the steel mills, working hard to build a better future for the generations that followed. Their perseverance and sacrifices laid the foundation for my family today. The handprints represent each family member's role in preserving our traditions, celebrating our heritage, and reminding me that our culture continues to grow and endure through every generation.

Bio

Tatum Hernandez is distinguished by her ceramic work, encapsulating glaze colors and underglaze surface designs. She explores themes such as universal emotions and experiences. She is particularly focused on the chaotic threads within one's brain. However, instead of trying to make sense of or organize these threads, she welcomes the chaos into her work. She creates sculptural forms and vessels that celebrate the landscapes, traditions, and visual language that have shaped her identity. The layers of color act as a declarative statement, embracing the multiple layers of human life and emotion. Tatum is influenced by the attribute of differentiating form through touch and human impact.



📷 tatuminthestudio

Salsoteca



La Salsoteca is a powerhouse of salsa and other Afro-Latin dance musics, led by pianist and composer Sergio Ospina Romero, and based in Bloomington, Indiana. The name of La Salsoteca plays around with two possible meanings, derived from the combination of “salsa” with either “biblioteca” or “discoteca” in Spanish. So, it might well be “the library of salsa” or “salsa’s night club.” In either case, the talent and virtuosity of full rhythm, brass, and singing sections of The Salsotecans (the musicians) always bring an explosion of joy to all The Salsotecómanos (the fans and the dancers), especially when it comes to the style of “salsa brava,” La Salsoteca’s specialty!

📷 @salsotecala

Pili’s Party Taco



Pili’s Party Taco is a food truck that sells a variety of Mexican street food, including tacos, burritos, quesadillas and more! In 2017, the food truck opened in Bloomington, IN and began serving authentic Mexican food with recipes from Puebla, Mexico, where owner and founder of Pili is from.

📷 @pilipartytaco | piliparty.com

Midnight Mariposa Bakery



Our name, *Midnight Mariposa*, is an homage to the beauty that is the art of baking. When my wife and I got married in 2022, we needed a name that reflected her Colombian culture, a nod to my black heritage, our mutual appreciation for nature, and my tendency to put a night owl’s creativity to use after long days at work. (Muchas gracias to a great friend who put the words together so beautifully!)

📷 midnightmariposabakery | midnightmariposabakery.com