

Paperwork from the Soul

Marthe Aponte

Lorraine Bubar

Bianca Levan

Leigh Salgado

October 15 – November 12, 2022

Opening Reception, Saturday, October 15th, 5 - 8pm

LAUNCH Gallery is proud to present ***Paperwork from the Soul***, a collection of four female paper artists whose work derives from a deeply personal meditative process inspired by material, history and life experiences. **Marthe Aponte, Lorraine Bubar, Bianca Levan** and **Leigh Salgado** use sharp blades, awls and paint to construct and deconstruct paper to share ideas and honor their creative spirit.

Marthe Aponte is a self-taught artist living at the edge of the Mojave Desert. She draws inspiration from her life in France, Venezuela, and California, influenced by African and Australian aboriginal artistic traditions as well as the flora and fauna. Her current practice focuses on “picoté”, an art form defined by delicate patterns and textures produced by piercing tiny holes in paper with needles and awls.

I enjoy creating contemporary designs inspired by nature, the human body and geometry imbued with a touch of surrealism. I discovered this art form a while ago. It reminded me of my mother's embroideries, my mother-in-law's crochet and my aunt's sewing. I feel I am part of this lineage of women as I work in my studio in complete silence piercing holes with my awl. The physical proximity of punching holes in paper and sewing sequins and beads for countless hours to make complex compositions raises awareness about the meaning of small gestures that could be considered insignificant but act as a reminder of our personal connection with time and the sacred.

Lorraine Bubar's painterly papercuts, created from layers of colored papers, reflect the heritage of papercutting found around the world and capture the diverse ecosystems where she has traveled.

My interest in papercutting developed out of a love of traveling the world, hiking in its mountains, and a desire to honor its diverse cultures through an art form that crosses the boundaries of culture, fine arts, and craft. I became interested in papercutting when I realized that numerous cultures around the world, ranging from Eastern Europe and China to Mexico, utilize papercutting. They are created working with the simplest of materials and tools, to celebrate holidays and to mark life events. My papercutting connects me to this extensive cultural heritage. Cutting with an x-acto knife, I am creating images composed of layers of paper and layers of meaning.

For **Bianca Levan**, the process of papercutting is a method of emotional processing. The journey to create a piece is a journey through a psychological landscape. My cuttings generally originate from an idea I am exploring, an internal debate, or an observation about lived experiences. Since the body carries emotional experiences,

both past and present, I am able to connect the feelings to thoughts through the physicality of papercutting.

With each artwork, I begin by crafting a scene that is imbued with internal dialogue or debate I'm experiencing. These representations evolve and transform - sometimes taking the shapes of landscapes where naturalistic elements clash or harmonize with manufactured structures. At other times they take more literal human forms questioning or exploring their place in the composition. Every time, I use a blade to cut and extract pieces from paper. What results is a papercut imbued with the imperfections that arise from a precise tool in imprecise human hands.

Leigh Salgado's art starts with a precise, labor-intensive (yet organic) process of cutting paper by hand. She considers herself a painter and applies acrylic paint on cut-paper surfaces for vibrancy, painterly dimension, and texture. Her work is dedicated to the ornate and elaborate and expresses feminine divinity.

Themes of desire, eroticism, even being "girly" are what comprise my subject matter. Viewers are simultaneously looking at interpretations of the body, lingerie, netting, lace, clothing patterns, often in a sea of floral motifs and woven abstractions. My art revels in "frilliness" specifically to challenge the diminishments and trivializations that are sometimes associated with "girly" things. My process is proudly reminiscent of "women's work" such as sewing, knitting, quilting, and crocheting, but the result is most definitely fine art, despite that being historically privileged as "men's work." Ultimately, the work can be seen beyond gender and stand as an appreciation and respect for the labor that goes into all of human creation.

Artist info:

Marthe Aponte is a self-taught artist living at the edge of the Mojave Desert. She draws inspiration from my life in France, Venezuela, and California, influenced by African and Australian aboriginal people's artistic traditions as well as the flora and fauna. Her current practice focuses on "picoté", an art form defined by delicate patterns and textures produced by piercing tiny holes in paper with a punching tool. It reminded her of her mother's embroideries, her mother-in-law's crochet and her aunt's sewing. She feels a part of this lineage of women as she works in her studio in complete silence piercing holes with her awl. Marte was awarded the Beryl Amspoker Memorial Award for Outstanding Female Artists during the Museum of Art and History's 2015 Annual Juried Exhibition, *Cedarfest*. Her work is in public and private collections across the United States and in Asia. She is a member of Southern California Women's Caucus for Art, Ecoart and Kipaipai Alumni 2017

Lorraine Bubar's painterly papercuts, created from layers of colored papers, reflect the heritage of papercutting found around the world and capture the diverse ecosystems where she has traveled. Bubar studied animation at UCLA. and Yale, worked for many years in the animation industry, taught animation at Santa Monica College, and showed her films at many animation festivals. At that time, Bubar was also exhibiting her watercolour paintings, was the featured artist for a calendar published by LACMA, and

illustrated a children's book, *Lullaby*, by Debbie Friedman. Her love for drawing and painting lead her to get a Masters in Art Education and a Teaching Credential at CSULA and then teach studio arts to middle and high school students. Her love of hiking and beautiful places has lead her to Artist-in-Residencies at Denali, Zion, Petrified Forest, Lassen Volcanic, and Capitol Reef National Parks. Bubar's paper pieces have been exhibited in galleries locally and in Germany, Lithuania, Tasmania, China, and Japan.

San Francisco based artist **Bianca Levan** has been exploring the concept of journeys and time since 2012. She is fascinated with the process by which contemplation, emotion, and choice weave a path in time. Bianca is a self-taught artist following curiosity and desire for expression. Her hand-cut work embraces imperfections left by the knife blade and the inherent constraints of black paper and negative space. She was raised in Moorpark, California, surrounded by agricultural farmlands, orange groves, and the Santa Susana Mountains that have been deeply embedded in her memory, and graduated from University of California, Davis, where her studies of Biology and English Literature inform both her detailed and narrative ways of seeing. She has served as a board member for the Guild of American Papercutters and a lead with the Kids & Art Foundation.

Leigh Salgado is a nationally exhibiting artist based in Los Angeles. Her undergraduate studies were in Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Arts at UCLA and her continuing studies were at the Santa Monica College of Design, Art & Architecture. Her signature style – hand-cut paper transformed into painting – was first executed in 1996. Harkening back to the Mexican medium of papel picado, it has led to numerous solo shows: Launch Gallery, MOAH (the Museum of Art & History, Lancaster, CA), LAX airport Tom Bradley International Terminal, and Patricia Correia Gallery at Bergamot Station.