

RAFA ESPARZA BRINGS TIERRA. SANGRE. ORO. TO MARFA

By Ángel Cervantes - July 24, 2017



Ballroom Marfa is pleased to announce Tierra. Sangre. Oro., an exhibition envisioned by artist Rafa Esparza. The program will include new installation, performance, and sculptural work from Esparza alongside collaborations and contributions from artists Carmen Argote, Nao Bustamante, Beatriz Cortez, Timo Fahler, Eamon Ore-Giron, and Star Montana.

Esparza's work manifests primarily through performance and sculpture, in a territory where the two mediums combine and hybridize. The artist uses adobe brick-building as a process-centered

site for personal, cultural, ecological, and political investigation.

In residence in Marfa from June through August, Esparza will produce new work and conceive of a site-specific installation that is particular to the landscape and cultural context of the Big Bend region and northern Mexico, where adobe building is prevalent.

For this project, Esparza will transform Ballroom's architecture using the adobe bricks that are central to his work. While making these interventions, the

artist will explore, in his words, “the visibility of Brown people in Marfa.” Esparza will work with his father, who taught the artist how to make adobe, as well as with people from his community and local adobe craftsmen to produce bricks and install the project.

Esparza’s adobe architecture provides the ground for presentations by the artists he has invited to join him in Marfa as he “expands the idea of a Brown laboratory.” New and existing work will be presented amidst structural additions to Ballroom’s facade, galleries, and courtyard, creating spaces for the artist’s “laboratories for dialoguing, thinking, working and making together with my peers.”

Esparza addresses and excavates the history of colonialism; labor and economic value scales; queer culture and masculinity; as well as personal and familial legacy. He sets traditional materials, inherited processes, and ephemeral choreographies up against institutional structures and the historical narratives of Western sculpture, land art, and performance. The exhibition is a continuation of Ballroom Marfa’s mission to commission internationally-relevant artworks and performances that respond to and engage with our community and environment.

Tierra. Sangre. Oro. is organized by Ballroom Marfa’s curator and interim director, Laura Copelin.

Rafa Esparza is a multidisciplinary artist who was born, raised, and is currently living in Los Angeles. Esparza has performed in a variety of spaces including AIDS Project Los Angeles, Highways Performance Space, REDCAT, Human Resources, SOMArts, Vincent Price Museum, LACE and various public sites throughout Los Angeles. He is a recipient of an Emerging Artist 2014 California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Arts, a 2014 Art Matters grantee, and a 2015 recipient of a Rema

Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant. Esparza was recently part of the 2016 Made in L.A. Biennial at the Hammer Museum and the 2017 Whitney Biennial.

Tierra. Sangre. Oro.

Rafa Esparza with Carmen Argote, Nao Bustamante, Beatriz Cortez, Timo Fahler, Eamon Ore-Giron, and Star Montana

August 25, 2017 – March 18, 2018

Opening Reception

Friday, August 25

6-9pm at Ballroom Marfa

Link: [Rafa Esparza brings “Tierra. Sangre. Oro” to Marfa](#)