

# Ballroom Marfa launches podcast interview series, an outdoor exhibition, and 'Kite Symphony'

September 24, 2020



Lisa Alvarado. Rendering of *Thalweg Flag*, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Ballroom Marfa.

While its doors may still be closed to visitors, the West Texas arts organization Ballroom Marfa makes its pandemic pivot for the fall multi-pronged.

Beginning October 2 and continuing through January 21, 2021, the outside exhibition “unFlagging” reconsiders flags and their symbolic meaning in our collective consciousness and in our nation today.

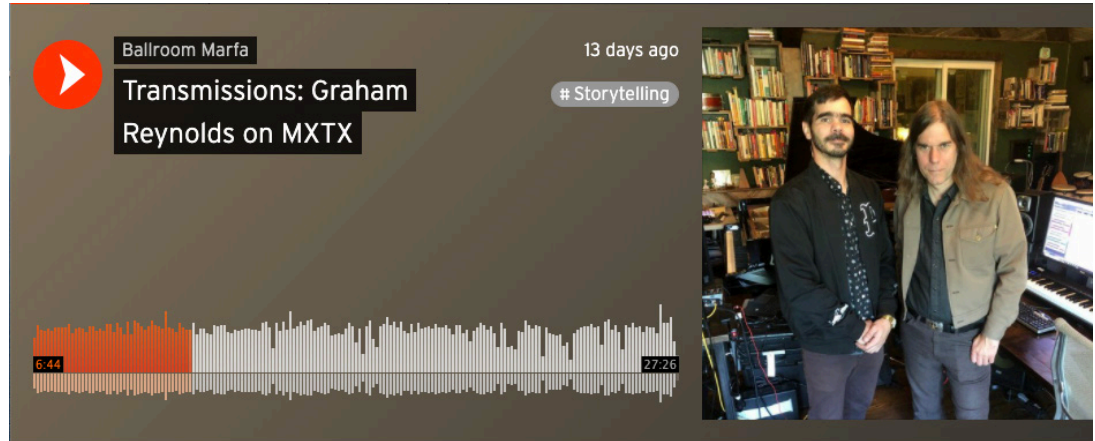
“unFlagging” features new commissions from eight artists each of whom has created a flag accompanied by a sound-based work. Each flag will be on view individually for two weeks, rotating through each artist in the series. Staged in Ballroom Marfa’s courtyard, the flags will be

animated by the wind, rain, and light of West Texas, reflecting change and challenge constantly.

The roster of notable artists is: Lisa Alvarado, Pia Camil, Jeffrey Gibson, Byron Kim, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Hank Willis Thomas, Naama Tsabar, and Cecilia Vicuña.

You can find the schedule of the courtyard flag installations at [ballroommarfa.org/program/unflagging/#section-1](https://ballroommarfa.org/program/unflagging/#section-1)

Another pandemic programming initiative is “Transmissions,” a new interview series. Diana Nyugen, former news director at Marfa Public Radio and current producer of podcast The



Daily at the New York Times, interviews Ballroom artists from past and present about their work in Marfa.

Among the interviewees is Austin-based composer Graham Reynolds who talks about his longstanding relationship with Ballroom Marfa and West Texas through “The Marfa Triptych – Three Portraits of West Texas.”

Reynolds also talks about his latest project with Ballroom, MXTX. A collaborative initiative, MXTX engages 40 DJ/producers and composers from both sides of the Rio Grande. The project will culminate in an open-source audio sample library, album, and live performance, evolving into an open concept designed for sustained resonance and ongoing cross-border dialogue.

Finally, “Kite Symphony” is a collaboration between musician Roberto Carlos Lange, also known as Helado Negro, and visual artist Kristi Sword.

Using sound and video field recordings, the artists captured sounds the wind generated through interacting with kites, hand-made instruments from native materials, and other sound objects. The resulting non-linear, impressionistic style film and live score bring shape to the ephemeral forces that define the West Texas landscape.

Lange and Sword started their project in March just as the coronavirus pandemic began to spread. What was originally a three-week trip turned into a three-month residency. So they used the time to expand their vision of the project with “Kite Symphony: Four Variations,” a recording of four musical improvisations based on Swords’ graphic notations of the field recordings.

Lange used Swords’ visual ‘scores’ in socially-distant improvisation sessions with electro-acoustic composer Rob Mazurek and violist Jeanann Dara, and the new compositions were recorded at Marfa Recording Company.

Lange describes the ‘Four Variations’ as a collection of impressionistic sound pieces and invites listeners to open their ears to the sky, the sound of cacti, and the feeling of the wind on their skin.

The album is available on Ballroom Marfa’s Bandcamp channel: [ballroommarfa.bandcamp.com/album/kite-symphony-four-variations](https://ballroommarfa.bandcamp.com/album/kite-symphony-four-variations)

