

8 Leading Artists Create Flags Accompanied by Sound-Based Works in 'unFlagging' Series at Ballroom Marfa

October 26, 2020



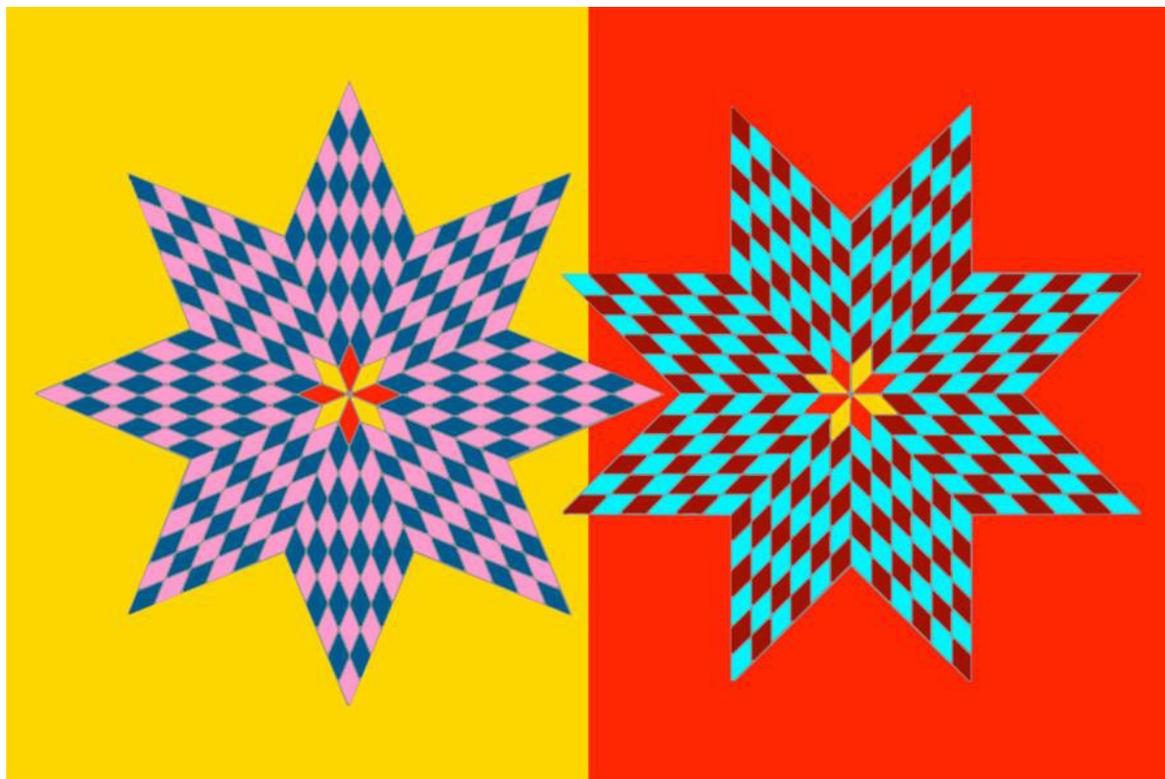
Installation view, Byron Kim, *Sky Blue Flag*, 2015. Courtesy the artist and Ballroom Marfa. Photo by Mackenzie Goodman.

This fall, Ballroom Marfa presents an outdoor exhibition from October 2, 2020 through January 21, 2021 that features new commissions from eight noted artists. Each artist has created a flag accompanied by a sound-based work that will be on view individually for two weeks, rotating through each artist in the series from October to January, in Marfa, Texas. Artists include: Lisa Alvarado, Pia Camil, Jeffrey Gibson, Byron Kim, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Hank Willis Thomas, Naama Tsabar, and Cecilia Vicuña.

The exhibition unFlagging reconsiders flags and their symbolic meaning in our collective consciousness and country, today. Flags communicate beliefs and values in the public landscape. They are inherently

performative—they declare, demarcate, and signal. As citizens, we learn to raise them, lower them, fold them, sing to them, and respect them.

The customary use of flags as vehicles to uphold and perform established principles can be challenged. The recent ruling to remove and reexamine Mississippi's state flag, which displays confederate iconography, for example, reveals not only the power and importance of these symbolic objects, but a shift in consciousness. In this time of social transformation, we invite artists to rethink the immutability and nature of flags. How is meaning constructed, produced, and perpetuated? Can we invent new ways to make symbols and meanings?



Jeffrey Gibson, Rendering of, *one becomes the other*, 2020. Courtesy the artist.

Animated by the wind, rain, and light of West Texas, these artists' flags reflect change and challenge constancy. Visual elements of design, color, and shape are all considered in each flag to create a multiplicity of readings.

Additionally, the accompanying sound works are not a singular song sung in allegiance; rather, each artist creates a sonic environment that further activates Ballroom's courtyard to engage with their particular flag. There is a shared experience around sound, reminding us of the multitude of voices that create space for public discourse.

Schedule of Flags

October 2–15: Cecilia Vicuña
October 16–29: Byron Kim
October 30–November 12:
Hank Willis Thomas
November 13–26: Pia Camil
November 27–December 10:
Jeffrey Gibson
December 11–24: Lisa Alvarado

December 25–January 7: Naama Tsabar
January 8–21: Kameelah Janan Rasheed

While Ballroom's indoor gallery spaces remain temporarily closed, audiences can engage with unFlagging from a safe distance, outdoors.

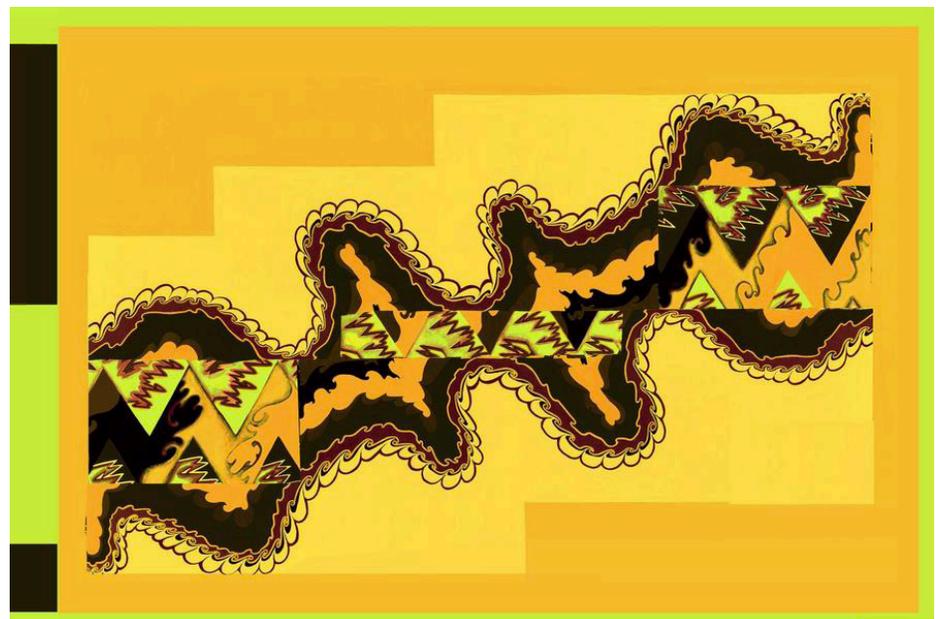
This exhibition is organized by Laura Copelin, curator-at-large, Sarah Melendez, programs director, and Daisy Nam, curator.

Founded in 2003 by Virginia Lebermann and Fairfax Dorn, Ballroom Marfa is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and a dynamic, contemporary cultural arts space housed in a converted dancehall that dates to 1927. Ballroom Marfa's mission is to serve international, national, regional, and local arts communities and support the work of both emerging and recognized artists working across all media: visual arts, film, music, and performance.

↑ THIS SIDE UP ↑

LIFE

HANDLE WITH CARE



Hank Willis Thomas,
Rendering of,
Life, Handle with Care, 2020.
Courtesy the artist.
Installation view, Cecilia Vicuña,
Ver Dad, 1974/2020.
Courtesy the artist and Ballroom Marfa.
Photo by Mackenzie Goodman.
Lisa Alvarado, *Thalweg Flag*, 2020.
Courtesy the artist.