



ABOUT NANCY FRIEDEMANN-SÁNCHEZ

Nancy Friedemann-Sánchez (b. 1961 in Bogotá, Colombia) is a Colombo-American, artist with an interdisciplinary practice. She grew up in Colombia as the child of a Colombian and a United States citizen and migrated to the US as an adult. Her art is about the curious and intense experience of having physically migrated, yet still having a piece of herself rooted in Colombia. She is creating an intersectional feminist visual novel that is a multifaceted project comprised of paintings, sculptures, objects, and mixed media that together—and in different voices—weave a synchronicity of dialogues, passages, and punctuations about hybridity and cultural ownership.

Friedemann-Sánchez received an MFA from New York University. She is the recipient of numerous awards and grants such as the Catherine Doctorow Prize for Contemporary Painting (2019), a Nebraska Arts Council Achievement Award (2016), a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (2009), a Visual Arts Grant from the National Association of Latino Art and Culture (2007), and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2001).

Friedemann-Sánchez's work has been exhibited at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City; the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, Nebraska; and was selected for inclusion in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, New York. Her work is found in the collections of numerous institutions including of El Museo del Barrio, New York City; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; El Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Panamá, Panamá City; and El Museo de Arte Moderno, Cali, Colombia, among many others.

Friedemann-Sánchez lives in Lincoln, Nebraska. Together with her husband, artist Charley Friedman, she runs FIENDISH PLOTS, an artist-run initiative and exhibition space that hosts interdisciplinary exhibitions, salons, and critiques.

RELATED EVENTS

All events during this exhibition will occur in person in the Halsey Institute galleries, subject to change. Events are free and open to the public, unless noted. Check halsey.cofc.edu for up-to-date information.

MEMBER PREVIEW DAY
Thursday, May 12, 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Free for all Halsey Institute Members

OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, May 13, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

**ARTIST TALK WITH
NANCY FRIEDEMANN-SÁNCHEZ**
Tuesday, May 17, 7:00 PM

SIT A SPELL CONVERSATION SERIES
Wednesday, May 25, 12:00 PM

**MEMBERSHIP MORNINGS
WITH COUNTER CULTURE COFFEE**
Friday, June 17, 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Free for all Halsey Institute Members

CURATOR-LED TOUR FOR MEMBERS
Thursday, July 14, 7:00 PM
Free for all Halsey Institute Members

LOCATION

The Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts
College of Charleston
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING

Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS

During exhibitions
Monday-Saturday, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Open until 7:00 PM on Thursdays
Free admission!

CONTACT

(843) 953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG

Learn more about the exhibition at halsey.cofc.edu/learn

MISSION

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

IMAGE CREDITS:

this side, left: *Gibara* [detail], 2019-2021. Ink on Tyvek, Spanish comb, mask. 80x40 inches
reverse side, left: *Castiza* [detail], 2017. Ink on Tyvek, Spanish comb, mask. 80x40 inches
reverse side, center: *Española* [detail], 2019-2021. Ink on Tyvek, Spanish comb, mask. 80x40 inches
reverse side, right panel (left): *Calpa Mulata*, 2019-2021. Ink on Tyvek, Spanish comb, mask. 80x40 inches
reverse side, right panel (right): *Morisca*, 2018-2019. Ink on Tyvek, Spanish comb, mask. 80x40 inches
cover panel: *Mestiza* [detail] 2018-2019. Ink on Tyvek, Spanish comb, mask. 80x40 inches
All works © Nancy Friedemann-Sánchez

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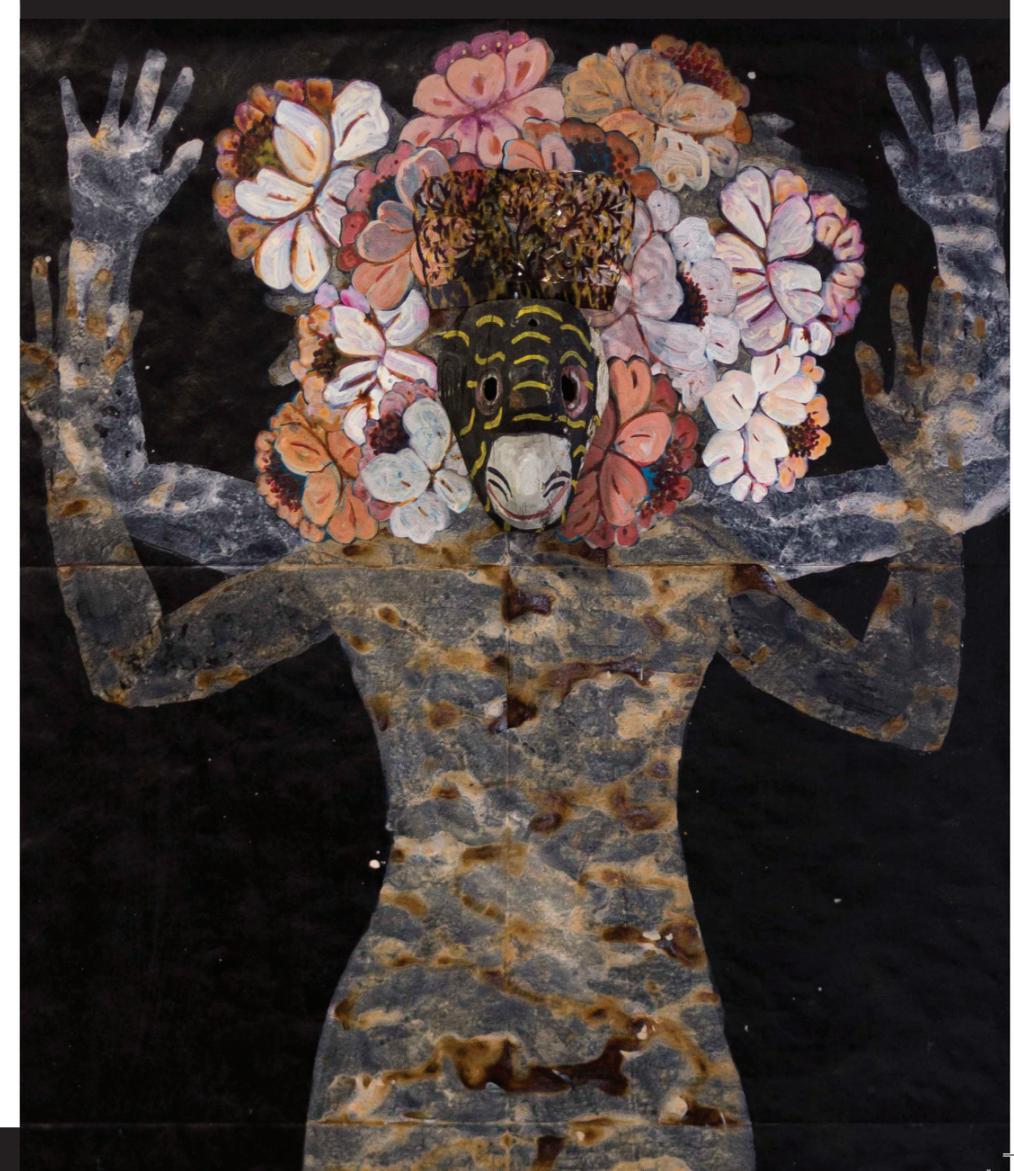
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NANCY FRIEDEMANN-SÁNCHEZ

PINTURAS DE CASTA and the CONSTRUCTION of AMERICAN IDENTITY

May 13 - July 16, 2022





Casta Paintings

Identity Constructed/Deconstructed

by Kaylee Lass

Nancy Friedemann-Sánchez tells stories of our shared global histories through her artwork. She explores our world through the material culture left from generations past—seeking portals between then and now in an effort to understand who we’ve become through who we’ve been. *Casta Paintings* is no exception to this keen interest of the ways in which people shape identities. Individuals build a sense of self with familial and collective experiences influenced by and in resistance to cultural identity. The power structures that shape cultural identity are inherently imbalanced, and thus often perpetuate stereotypes. In this series, Friedemann-Sánchez confronts a racist eighteenth-century genre of painting by Spanish colonizers that endeavored to taxonomize miscegenation and glorify a proximity to whiteness in Latin America.

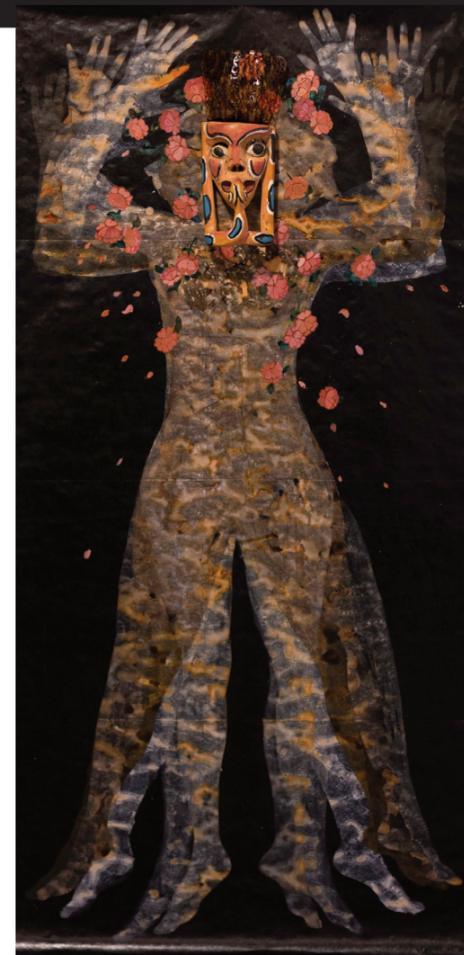
Though used for only a short period in history, the assumptions and terms defined by casta paintings still carry weight in the Americas. The chart-like layout utilized in the genre “identified” sixteen racially mixed families documented in New Spain. The subjects were presented as if they were objects in cabinets of curiosities created for an elite European audience. This fixed system of racial hierarchy determined social and economic class, signaled by the clothes they wore, their domestic environment, and the color of their skin.

Nancy Friedemann-Sánchez’s contemporary casta paintings take inspiration from this problematic genre to reflect on the legacy of colonialism that lingers in the racial and social discrimination and marginalization present in her home country of Colombia and here in the United States. The life-size ink tracings of Latina women take up

space—forcing you to acknowledge their presence and giving them a place of dignity. Layers of tracings indicate variations in skin tone. Their position is familiar to any air traveler to or within the United States; a stance imposed by TSA that the artist relates to being colonized, surveilled, and vulnerable. In that moment, your body is not your own as others scrutinize it as safe or unsafe, fit or unfit.

Each figure is paired with a mask and comb and adorned with painted florals. Friedemann-Sánchez began rescuing Latin American masks from second-hand sales online with a desire to recover pieces that should be in museums and give them a new place to speak. The artist selected masks for each work by considering contemporary meanings and her own interpretations of the labels defined by historic casta paintings, often contradicting the motives of colonizers. For example, the mask assigned for *Castiza*, 2017 (shown left) is a depiction of whiteness made in Mexico by someone who is not white, or the mask for *Española*, 2019-2021 (shown below), which depicts an indigenous person to counter the once common rejection of indigenous ancestry prevalent in Latin America. The masked figures are also wearing *peinetas*. These Spanish combs were worn for special occasions associated with a woman’s entrance into society. Together, the masks and combs indicate a woman’s agency and empowerment to define their own identity despite societal labels.

Painted flowers fall around the figures, representing a confluence of cultures and denial of the inevitable hybridity that resulted from colonization. Friedemann-Sánchez pulls iconographies from Spanish colonial floral paintings and Colombian *mopa mopa* or *barniz de Pasto*,



an indigenous lacquer technique used to decorate wooden objects. Spanish interest in barniz de Pasto was primed by the trade of Chinese lacquer, silk, and porcelain products from which Europeans lifted styles for chinoiserie, a Western design motif. The barniz de Pasto tradition lives on primarily in objects not unlike souvenirs. By elevating mopa mopa from a small object to a large scale in her paintings, she gives visibility to historical practices that are reduced as decorative and created anonymously.

Casta Paintings serves as the fifth chapter of Nancy Friedemann-Sánchez’s visual novel, *Mestiza Dos Veces*. The larger work sheds light and gives reason to cultural memory using paintings, sculptures, objects, and collages to interweave personal narratives that address larger narratives, always considering and deconstructing dominant ideologies. Each chapter is intended to be examined in a non-linear fashion, speaking to one another in different ways. The collective tells a story of hybridity as a result of migration and questions concepts of cultural ownership, focusing not on dualities but instead the liminal space between.

Kaylee Lass is Curatorial Associate and Operations Manager at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art.

