



MINI VISIT – MARIA FRAGOSO

Posted on **February 22, 2019** by **Inertia Studio Visits**

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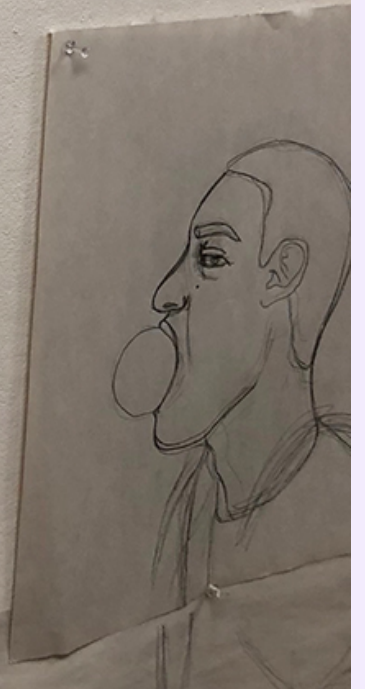
MARIA FRAGOSO

Baltimore, MD. February, 2019



WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

I grew up just outside Mexico City. I was very lucky because my parents would take me every week to the city to look in museums. That was very, very nice. Mexico City is huge—that was a difficulty for me coming to Baltimore, that huge difference. Here things reduce themselves to the groups you go out with and where you go. But, I feel like in Mexico City, there's an infinite amount of things to do and places to go to. After two years of living in Baltimore I realized I had to stop having with one foot in Baltimore and the other one at home, it wasn't allowing me to be fully present where I was. After almost four years of going back and forth I love both cities for their individual characters.



AT WHAT POINT DURING YOURSCHOOLING AT MICA DID YOU FEEL LIKE YOU WERE REALLY DEVELOPING A STYLE OR KNEW WHAT TYPE OF PAINTINGS YOU WANTED TO MAKE?



I never painted before coming to MICA, so that was a big thing for me. And I feel like all freshman year I was working within assignments and doing good homework, but I didn't have my own style. Then I took Painting I with Mary Anne Arntzen and she was great. At the beginning I was just learning and working within the assignments, and then with the final we were able to do whatever we wanted. I think I made a painting that means nothing to me right now, but still I feel like I was collecting the things I cared about and what I liked in other peoples' work. I was trying to figure out how I wanted to achieve that, so every painting after it was more of understanding my aesthetic and what I wanted to talk about; what narratives I wanted to have, what themes. So I feel that every painting was a step forward in developing my own style. Right now I'm starting to understand how paint works—the materiality of it. I think before it was me wanting to share scenes of people interacting more than exploring the paint itself like now. It was pretty much about collecting things I care about, what I like—objects, photos, writing things down. And then when I start a painting, I go back in to those notes or even mental notes, and kind of build the environment that fits to the narrative or feeling I'm working with. But, I feel like there's always been an underlying style that I worked with and I think it has to do with the art that I grew up seeing. Even when people talk about my work they talk about focus and how everything kind of has the same focus instead of having places that are more blurred. Everything has kind of the same attention to detail. I think that comes from what I was interested in when looking at art. For example, in Mexico, murals are popular and they have a certain way of handling composition of pairs and how they deal with space. They

kind of don't put a lot of attention into life, but rather create sculpture shapes. It's kind of like Italian frescos and how they compress space and depth into one area. So that's all in the back of my mind. After Painting I was when I started to understand it all better and explore.



YOUR WORK SEEMS TO SHOW A LOT OF PARTNERSHIPS, PAIRS, AND FAMILY STYLE RELATIONSHIPS. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THIS?



I think it is pretty much about relationships, it's very much about love, but love in different meanings. Love as in motherhood, families, partnerships, friendships—that's what I'm trying to explore, how these characters are relating to each other. For example, the sense of touch is very important to me, as well as what is conveyed through that. Touch can mean different things and I try to have that ambiguity and tension of not being sure if it is loving or violent, if it is pleasure or pain. The pairs are there mostly because they relate to each other in moments of intimacy, but also because they do this psychological thing to have one person who looks like the other. It's confusing, but something I'm very interested in. There is a game of revealing and concealing. For example, in my big triptych there are

two boys that are drinking together and I always wondered if they were brothers—leaving that ambiguous is what I like. People can put their own interpretation on it; are they a couple? Are they family?





I THINK YOUR USE OF COLORS AND PATTERNS ARE REALLY INTERESTING, HOW DO YOU APPROACH THESE WHEN PLANNING YOUR WORK?

At the beginning when I'm doing the collecting part, I mostly have many of the colors and patterns planned out. I will sketch certain elements and then bring them together. I sketch many different compositions and explore different patterns and then go with that. I have a lot of photos of patterns I like, things that have a certain meaning to me.



They're usually photos I take when I go back home to Mexico for example at my grandparent's house. Then I bring that all together and go with that. When I have an idea of what something is going to look like, but I don't know the other parts, I kind of react to what's already there. For example, in one painting I knew I wanted a flower pattern and sunflowers, but then I had no idea what to do with the rest, but that idea of adding insects came while I was doing the painting. I'm excited about these patterns because I'm incorporating some of these elements into my newer paintings. Some paintings are more personal, for example, one has myself and my best friend so I wanted something that was very feminine. My friend actually had these beautiful patterns on her bedsheets, so I wanted to add that to this painting.







YOU GRADUATE FROM MICA THIS YEAR, WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO DO AFTERWARDS?

Residencies would be great. I went to one in Norfolk that was through the Yale summer program and it was probably one of the best experiences I've had. Residencies are the most dream-like circumstances for an artist; you're in a beautiful space and you have a studio that you can make your own for those few weeks, and then you just care about nothing but working. It was an amazing environment, you get to be very close with the other very talented and inspiring artists, working together, having many conversations and having the time to get to know them. I made very beautiful friendships. I appreciated the faculty and getting their feedback often, as well as the many artists that were visiting or giving lectures. So I would like to do residencies for a year and then go to grad school.



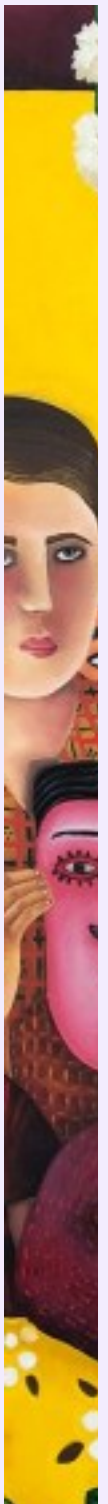
IS THERE ANYTHING COMING UP THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO PROMOTE?

In March I am having a three person show in Missouri, with my friends Parker Luse and Byron Otis at [the Bermuda Project](#), a space in Ferguson, MO run by Ryan Doyle. He has been having very incredible shows and presenting many artists that I love, so I'm very excited for this show. Also the MICA thesis show is May 17th and will be up during that weekend in one of the MICA buildings.



¡Pero que deseo tan absurdo!

A solo exhibition by María Fragoso
January 28 - February 22, 2019
Reception: February 1, 5 - 7 PM





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