

# PAULA CASTILLO

ARTIST



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## REFERENCES

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## PROFILE

Castillo, born in 1961, received an MFA from the University of New Mexico in 3D Studio, focusing on Contemporary Theory, Ecology, and Art in the Social Sphere in 2013 when she was 52. Her material expertise includes recycled biotic materials and metals, cast concrete, acrylic, and digital art. She has received grants from UNESCO, SITE Santa Fe, and Los Alamos National Labs to develop cutting-edge contemporary art encapsulating critical place-making. Castillo's work is in various national collections, including the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts. Publications such as Hyperallergic, Washington Post, and the New York Times have reviewed her work.

## SELECT EXHIBITIONS

**REVERSE THE CURSE** 2023  
SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico

Using hybrid filmmaking and grassroots transformative performance, Reverse the Curse captures a democratic rendering of a New Mexican curandera derived remedio to imagine the Rio Grande River beyond a human resource as a subject deserving of rights. Curated by Lucy Lippard and Brandee Caoba.

**CLEMENTINA** 2022  
Kouri + Corrao Gallery Santa Fe, New Mexico

This body of work is Castillo's creative responses to fragile protrusions and remnants of New Mexico and reflect on intersectional experiences with language, power, identity, the natural and built environment, and their subsequent diasporas and erosions. Curated by Justin Kouri.

**PIGGYBACK** 2022  
University of New Mexico, Valencia Campus

"Piggyback" is a community memoir and an ode to how the small and humble origins of our first places carry all spectral life movements. Castillo developed the work in this exhibit upon returning to her home community in Valencia County, NM, to care for elderly family. Curated by Sarah Heyward, MFA, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico. Reviewed by HyperAllergic.

**THAT MOUNTAIN OVER THERE** 2019  
Gallery Fritz, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Castillo returned to her family home in Belén, New Mexico, in the summer of 2017 to care for her elderly mother. After her death, she stayed to care for father and uncle and helped them run a small sand and gravel quarry located south of Belén on the east side of the Rio Grande river. This body of work was produced during this two-year sojourn. These sculptures and installations continue her previous explorations of systems with a specific focus on a re-examination of origin. Curated by George Brugnone. Reviewed by HyperAllergic.

**HEAVY METAL** 2018  
National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.

This exhibition showcased 20 contemporary international artists working with metal to examine the predominantly masculine narrative that surrounds metalworking and demonstrate that contemporary women artists carry on a vibrant legacy in the field. Curated by Virginia Treanor.

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## SELECT PUBLIC ART AWARDS

### JULE COLLINS MUSEUM OF FINE ART / 2024

Auburn University, Auburn Alabama

Award to design, fabricate and install permanent public sculpture to honor 100 years of women's contributions to Auburn University. Curated by Cynthia Malinick, director and chief curator for Auburn University's Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art

### DENVER ART MUSEUM CAMPUS / 2022-2024

City of Denver Public Art Program

Award to design, fabricate and install three permanent monumental public sculptures referencing Denver's deep Mestizaje narrative. for the Denver Art Museum and Denver Central Public Library Campus. Commission led by Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum

### TINY HOME VILLAGE / 2021

Bernalillo County Public Art Program, New Mexico

Finalist award to design site-specific public work with participatory art programming for a transitional housing pilot program.

### MARSH CREEK ROAD & TRAWICK ROAD PUBLIC ART PROJECT/ 2020

Raleigh Arts

Award to design site-specific work that more fully elaborated the ethos of a "Complete Street" to support mobility for all users in Raleigh NC.

### IN PRAISE OF A DIFFICULT WORLD/ 2020

New Mexico Arts in Public Places

Finalist award to design a public memorial for Victims of Gun Violence in New Mexico, that per capita, has the highest number of victims of gun violence in the US. This design, for the Steve Schiff District Attorney Building, examines how violence has been historically negotiated in public spaces. My ideas also honored the work that NM mothers, whose children have been killed by gun violence, have done to create changes in gun laws through existing political and social structures.

### CUESTA DEL SOL/ 2019

National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Award to design, fabricate, and install a permanent, site-specific public work to honor the progenitors of the National Hispanic Cultural Center. This piece has become a critical community identity marker for contemporary New Mexico and has received accolades for its innovative use of metal. Curated by Tey Marianna Nunn.

### THE BLUE FLOWER/ 2013

UNESCO, Seolbong International Sculpture Park, Icheon, Korea

Award to design, fabricate, and install a permanent public sculpture commemorating New Mexico and Korean victims of the Korean War. The Chicano/Mexican practice of handmade tissue paper flowers for gravesites inspired this design.

### ROVER OF THE UNDERWOODS/ 2013

Institute of BioDiversity University of Wyoming

Award to design a permanent sculpture that honored the Institute's commitment to biodiversity. My idea referenced a range of concepts from the bumble bee's unique brood comb to human's historical urge to focus on charismatic species at the risk of ignoring species whose habits are more mysterious to humans. This work also embraced best practices for water displacement.

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## SELECT RESEARCH AWARDS

### SANTA FE ART INSTITUTE / 2023

Changing Climate Residency

Residency and grant to conduct primary and secondary research in both literal and symbolic aspects of the Rio Grande to leverage art to contribute to policy change regarding the health of the Rio Grande River.

### DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS RESIDENCY RESEARCH GRANT / 2021-2022

Denver, Colorado

Residency and grant to conduct primary and secondary research on curanderismo to highlight the relationship between corn and humans.

### SANTA FE ART INSTITUTE/2018

Equal Justic Residency

Residency and grant to conduct primary and secondary research in both literal and symbolic aspects of arroyos in Rio Arriba County to experiment with ideas related to assets and access for residents of this region in

### LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABS/2017

Research Grant

Grant for hydrology and materials science research to aid in the design phase for a land art intervention using modeling software to test 3-D art objects for their capacity to deal with runoff rates and volume of stormwater.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abatemarco, Michael. "Inner city ecosystems: 'Urban Ecologies.'" *The New Mexican* (Santa Fe, NM), 2021.

Bennett, Megan. "A Connection Across Borders." *Albuquerque Journal* (Albuquerque, NM), 2019.

Clarke, Jessica Colley. "Art Exhibitions to See in 2018." *New York Times* (New York, NY), 2018.

Conklin, Emily. "An Exhibition for the #MeToo Era Opens in D.C." *Surface*, 2018.

Dingfelder, Sadie. "In 'Heavy Metal,' female sculptors take on traditionally masculine materials." *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), 2018.

Gomez, Adrian. "Art of the State." *Albuquerque Journal* (Albuquerque, NM), 2020.

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Guzmán, Alicia Inez. "Woman of Steel." *New Mexico Magazine*, 2019.

Heing, Bridey. "How Female Sculptors Are Pushing the Bounds of Metal as a Medium." *Hyperallergic*, 2018.