

Artist statement
Estefania Velez Rodriguez

Estefania Velez Rodriguez (b. 1985, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico) is an artist who lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. As a bilingual artist, she employs the symbolic language of painting as a bridge between cultures, histories, and spaces. Her work explores the relationship between abstraction and non-representation, investigating simplification, symbolism, and painting as a language with inherently ambiguous structural limitations. Her landscapes meander and distort physical space, unfolding like intentionally disorienting mazes. Through chemical reactions within the painted surface, Estefania experiments with raw pigments, spray materials, oil mediums, and acrylic polymers. Her visual language ruptures pictorial space, inviting viewers into fleeting experiences of place, time, and emotional presence.

Estefania abstracts landscapes rooted in the Caribbean. Within her oil painting practice, she hand-mills most of her paints to preserve the purity and saturation of color. Her process shifts between urgent, gestural mark-making and controlled, hard-edged opaque forms. The resulting abstractions are constructed through pattern, repetition, simplified forms, restrained palettes, and the accumulation of volumetric texture using dry materials. In her smaller, texture-forward acrylic works, she combines contemporary synthetic pigment dispersions with metallic glitters, flexible alkali-swelling acrylic emulsions, and dry aggregates such as chalk, sand, and polycarbonates. These material combinations evoke porous rock formations, connecting the geological foundations of the natural world with the structures of human architecture and the perceptual experience of painting.

Estefanía received her MFA in Painting from Brooklyn College in 2017. She is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Pratt Institute and an Adjunct Professor at Rutgers University–Newark and Montclair State University. Selected exhibitions include Praxis Gallery (New York), Marc Straus

Gallery (New York), Underdonk (New York), Fordham University (New York), Below Grand (New York), Soil Gallery (Seattle), University of Arkansas, Auxiliary Projects (New York), Cunsthaus (Tampa), Vermont Studio Center, and Art Fair Miami. Her work has been featured in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Two Coats of Paint*, *Artnet*, Centro Puerto Rico, and *Revista Marvin* (Mexico City). She has participated in residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Goldey House, Hidrante (Puerto Rico), and Ucross (Wyoming). Her work has also been featured in interviews on the *Sound & Vision*, *Interlocutor Interviews*, *Art As Form*, and *Tom Ray Artist Podcast*. She completed a public mural commissioned through the New York Arts and Cultural Grant in partnership with Norte Maar (2022) and was a recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) Artist Fellowship in 2020.