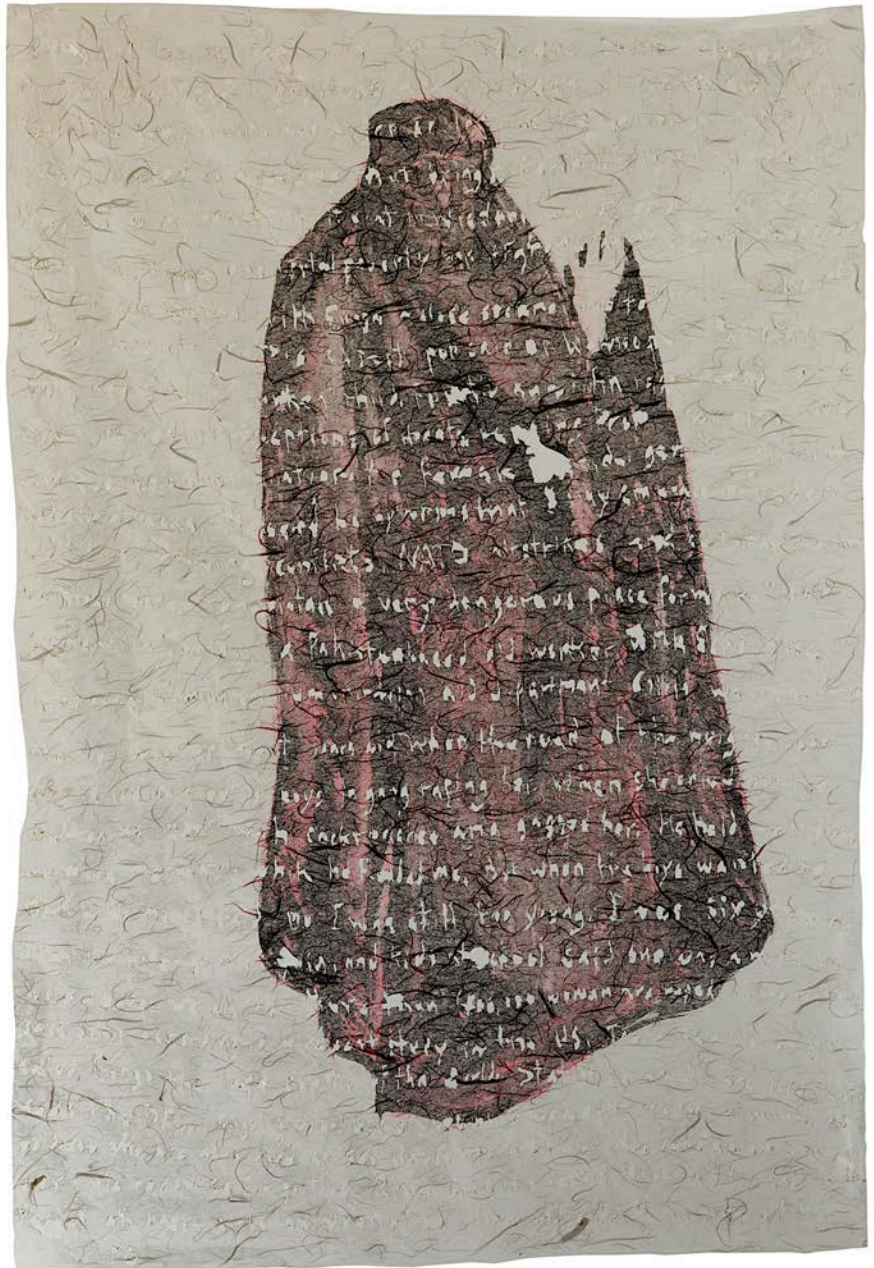


# TATIANA GARMENDIA

Summer 2012

“Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined. Perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation that we know today, violence against women devastates lives, fractures communities, and stalls development.”

– The Violence Against Women Prevalence Data: Surveys by Country, 2011



## Two Grants Fund the Veils of Ignorance Giving Voice to the Courage of Survivors

Summer is not only the time to enjoy the sunshine and hike, canoe, and camp, for teaching artists like myself it is also a time to renew the studio practice. Long days translate to uninterrupted time in the studio, while time in nature makes room for necessary contemplation. And so, as the academic year drew to a close, I geared myself towards a bountiful studio season. And fruitful it has been!

A Seattle Arts Commission CityArtists Projects Grant and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant have provided the funds that I needed to begin *The Veils of Ignorance* project, an installation that will give voice to the courage of survivors.

## When the personal is the universal art finds its most powerful subject

When my nuclear family was punished by the Cuban government and sent to a camp for political dissidents, I witnessed acts of unspeakable violence.

Most of my memories of that time remain blocked, but one such act has ever remained with me. At the age of six, I was forced to watch as Marilyn, an eight-year old girl, was gang raped, had her mouth and panties stuffed with cockroaches, and threatened with death if she ever told. Marilyn never spoke again. Not one word.

I first conceived of *The Veils of Ignorance* installation upon coming across a quote by a Muslim feminist, "All women everywhere wear the burqa." I remembered what I've never forgotten. I remembered Marilyn, veiled in silence by her victimization, emptied of her voice, and immediately understood this to mean that the burqa is but an outward symbol of a much more prevalent reality of oppression, one that is global and not just regional.

In *The Veils of Ignorance* installation, monumental female figures will be clothed in burqas, not as symbols of victimization, but of courage and survival. My story and the stories of numerous victims of abuse will join statistical data describing the frequency of violence against women to become a chant of courage, a chant of protest.

It's slow work. Five days a week I'm in the studio burning the testimonies and statistical data on the silk Unryu garments. The work demands I be hyper-aware of every mark— a moment of drifting and the whole thing can ignite. Fierce focus is a necessary process on another level. For many victims, especially younger ones, the sharp edges of events are fuzzy, as if they were hastily smudged. A ritualistic approach to the burning of the narrative feels like a kind of *Tikkun Olam*. Through this project I aim to restore attention to a subject we are all aware of but can't somehow grasp.

What I've learned so far, as I've listened to survivors share their stories, is that courage is greater than malice, and hope far stronger than pain.

**Look for announcements in your mailbox this winter.** The finished project will debut at the M. Rosetta Hunter Art Gallery in Capitol Hill, Seattle in January 2013.

There are two  
ways of  
spreading light...  
To be the candle,  
or the mirror that  
reflects it."

-Edith Wharton

"Blessed are my lips that speak the  
truth, blessed are my arms that can  
still embrace in love and forgiveness."

-Survivor of rape



# Portraits at the Ethnic Heritage Gallery

## Look for Epics at the Affordable Art Fair

In brighter news, several oils from the Exodus installation are included in **Portraits** at the **Ethnic Heritage Gallery, in the Seattle Municipal Tower**. The show features the work of eight Seattle-area artists of Central American, South American, and Caribbean heritage: Alfredo Arreguin, Blanca Santander, Fulgenzio Lazo, Gloria Ruiz, Jose Orantes, Rene Julio, Tomas Oliva, and myself.

The show opened July 16th and runs through October 15th, 2012. The opening receptions were quite lively and included a special presentation by Cuban author Jorge Enrique Gonzalez-Pacheco and live music by Enrique Wetzel and Laura Oviedo.

**Trigger**, a Status Hat publication and online journal, featured selections from the **Lamentations** drawings in Sumi ink on handmade Okawara paper this past February.

At the beginning of June I was surprised to receive a hardback copy of **Convergence: The Art Collection of the National Academy of Sciences**. The book is a limited edition but will be available as an online version for free very soon. There are fourteen essays with a variety of perspectives on cross-disciplinary discourse between art and science...and of course, one of my paintings!

**“As artists we internalize feelings, expressions, intellectual messages, color, beauty, and emotions from daily life. These inevitably find expression in how we frame identity, even likeness.”**

**-Portraits curator, Blanca Santander**

Now I'm checking my mailbox everyday waiting for the new issue of **Crosscurrents**, published by the Washington Community College Humanities Association. The issue will feature one of my gouache on Lokta paper drawings, **Lamentation 10 (Burning Times)** in its pages. Any day now!

Ever since Benito closed shop and moved **Monarch Contemporary** to California, I've been looking for an art dealer with the integrity and grace I grew accustomed to. Enter **Patricia Cameron** in the South Lake Union district. And just in time too! Finally, an international art fair will once again grace the Northwest. Look for several of my **Epic drawings** from 2011 hanging at the Patricia Cameron booth, as well as at the gallery. Don't forget to save the date for the first annual **Affordable Art Fair Seattle at Seattle Center, November 8-11, 2012.**

Left- Detail of Lamentation 10 (Burning Times)

Right- Detail of The Pioneers (Los Pioneros) from the Exodus

