Luchita Hurtado
August 4, 2021–March 13, 2022

Commissioned for the BAMPFA Art Wall, this site-specific mural by Luchita Hurtado (1920–2020), the artist’s first large-scale site-specific work, references the range of her series that merge landscape and language with ecological concerns. The mural celebrates Hurtado’s extremely personal and expansive vision while emphasizing her lifelong commitment to environmentalism.

The diaristic quality of Hurtado’s work connects the personal to the universal and the political, making a poignant understanding of her work.

Not driven by external validation, she created continuously, with great focus in private, usually when family members had gone to bed for the evening; it was only after her drawings and paintings were found alongside those of her late husband Lee Mullican (1919–1998) that her talent was celebrated in major exhibitions in the US and abroad. The arc of Hurtado’s career and her late emergence into the spotlight follow a pattern that has become familiar in recent years as institutions have begun to write women artists of color—including women artist of color into the history of art.

The works created during the years that followed explore themes underpin the design for I Live Here. Hurtado’s I Am paintings and drawings, started in the late 1960s, depict the protrusion of the artist’s breasts, stomach, and feet from her vantage point. Just as we now locate Hurtado within the arc of art history, we attempt to situate her to her own name outside of her family was an empowering act of self-identification that prompted her use of text in the paintings she made during the last ten years, her bold lines and hand-drawn block lettering became the backbone of written statements and tableaux that boldly address the precarious state of our world. “I have a responsibility to my world, this is my home, this is where you live. You are what you feel, what you hear, what you know.”

Hurtado’s life within her own subjectivity and the natural world, respectively. However, in both the series and I Live Here, the figure—whether her own body or the “corpus” layer that forms the bedrock of the landscape—and as a whole, constitutes one fleeting part of a much larger whole.

Although her practice was largely private, Hurtado was a founding member of the Los Angeles Council of Women Artists. When she introduced herself as Luchita Muñiclan during a 1971 meeting organized by Joyce Kozloff, her friend June Wayne called out “Luchita what?” prompting Hurtado to restate her name as Luchita Hurtado. Claiming her own name outside of her family was an empowering act of self-identification that prompted her use of text in the paintings she made during the last ten years, her bold lines and hand-drawn block lettering became the backbone of written statements and tableaux that boldly address the precarious state of our world. “I have a responsibility to my world, this is my home, this is where you live.”

In New York and we understand that where the waving, imperfect quality of her hand-drawn lines denotes the fragility of human life amid the current ecological crisis. It also underscores the role humanity plays in the destruction of the earth. In the last ten years, her bold lines and hand-drawn block lettering became the backbone of written statements and tableaux that boldly address the precarious state of our world. “I have a responsibility to my world,” she asserted. Here, Hurtado’s mural makes the mundane an urgent message that in effect becomes a type of protest sign.

Claire Frost
CURATORIAL ASSISTANT

1. Andrea Bowers, “The Paucity of Luchita Hurtado’s I Live Here, 2021,” in the artic is shown and all digital images are the property of the artist. For further infor mation on the exhibition, please visit the website.
2. Marie Heilich, “Timeline,” in the artic is shown and all digital images are the property of the artist. For further infor mation on the exhibition, please visit the website.
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