



*everything left
was carried*

Rebecca Padilla



VICKI
MYHREN
GALLERY

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everything left was carried

Rebecca Padilla

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This body of work is an exploration of what it means to carry—grief, memory, matter—in the wake of ecological collapse, dislocation, and the generational inheritance of these ruptures. What endures when landscapes are fractured and built environments crumble? Everything left—rust, sediment, seed, sorrow—remains to be carried onward.

Through sculpture, installation, and material assemblage, these works trace the ways bodies, both human and more-than-human, become vessels of memory and meaning. Seed pods, concrete, salt, and other residues of disrupted geographies speak not as relics, but as avenues for relationships with the places in which we dwell. They bear witness to an often slow violence of environmental loss, the aftermath of extractive practices, and the persistence of care in the midst of it.

Here, acts of holding and carrying are not passive, but serve as methods of resistance, of remaining in relation with what is fractured or overlooked. These works craft a narrative of attention and attunement in order to cultivate tenderness amidst collapse. Carrying and holding become a form of survival, an insistence on connection, and a quiet proposition for repair.

Works by title

1 *each relation and its particular texture*

2025

Paper, mixed media drawing

These three drawings offer abstract meditations and mappings of various sites in Colorado. With cut-outs that cast shifting shadows, they suggest what cannot be contained—absence, memory, and the unseen forces shaping landscapes. Rather than charting direction, these pieces trace impressions, capture residue of dislocation, and outline what has been lost.

2 *cradle*

2025

Puerto Rican maguey fiber, milkweed seed pods

Spanning wall to wall, this hand-tied hammock, woven from maguey fiber and cradling dried milkweed pods, becomes both vessel and spine. Considering the colonial appropriation of the hammock from Indigenous Caribbean cultures, this piece holds tension between rest and displacement. Milkweed, essential to monarch butterfly migration, becomes a symbol of ecological grief and resilience. Influenced by Donna Haraway's string figures, this installation creates a suspended space to ask: how do we hold what overwhelms us? What must pass through? What might root, quietly, in the space between mourning and movement?

3 ***grid/pipe/vein***

2025

Handmade paper, natural dyes, soil, recycled rusted steel

Formed by casting the negative spaces of found shipping pallets, this paper sculptural installation reveals the hidden architecture of movement and accumulation. These forms evoke rusted pipes, vertebrae, sediment, or decaying infrastructure—blurring boundaries between body and machine, ruin and root. Colored in tones of flesh, rust, and mineral, they reflect landscapes marked by extraction and erosion. Once standardized vessels of global trade, the pallets become mothers/molds to create these fragile, speculative remnants.

4 ***field notes: fragments***

2025

Found objects, copper, steel

This installation gathers fragments (broken pavement, chipped curb, survey-marked stone) collected during daily walks between home and studio. Each object is a trace of larger systems: infrastructure, planning, interruption, and labor. Together, they form an archive of place and practice and a meditation on attunement. What do we notice? What do we discard? Arranged relationally and without hierarchy, these materials invite viewers to reconsider value within the everyday landscapes we move through. This is not just a collection, but a field of relations—a record of presence, movement, and the overlooked.

5 *of collapse and containment*

2025

Concrete, salt, water

This piece explores the entangled legacies of salt and concrete; materials shaped by extraction, erosion, and empire. Concrete slabs, echoing urban sidewalks, collect salt, dust, water, and debris. Salt, corrosive and crystalline, slowly undoes concrete's illusion of permanence, mirroring the ways landscapes resist imposed systems.

This temporal monument asks:

- How do we inhabit a present in which the seemingly permanent is already decaying?
- How is collapse not only an end but a beginning?
- What histories do materials carry and who bears their weight?

6 ***bag/belly/box/bundle***

2025

Welded steel, wool, basket reed

These large-scale sculptural baskets draw from Ursula K. Le Guin's *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, which reimagines human history not as one of conquest but as containment, where vessels gather, nurture, and sustain. Here, the basket is both body and vessel, a form shaped by cycles of holding and release. These works challenge traditional sculptural monumentality, which often privileges permanence and hardness. Instead, they offer softness, intimacy, and porous strength. Rooted in the ancient practice of basket weaving passed down primarily through the hands of women, the act of making containers becomes a gesture of endurance.

7 ***lawn-care***

2025

Thread, Plexi glass, discarded lawn fragments, soil

Hanging from the ceiling, thread and Plexi glass hold discarded pieces of golf course turf—genetically engineered, manicured, and then cast off. These remnants speak to contradictions of control and abandonment in curated landscapes. Dislocated from their intended site, the grass becomes artifact, prompting us to question how we design places to control landscapes and what happens when it no longer serves us?

8 *flood*

2025

Video projection

This video, filmed in Houston, TX after Hurricane Beryl, focuses on a single erosion-control wattle—soft, porous, and absorbing floodwater. Projected with rhythmic blackouts that isolate water, object, or whole scene, this work considers how we perceive and segment disaster. Nothing in the landscape functions alone. The wattle becomes a body under strain: a human-made gesture of care, meant to slow but not stop devastation. This is not a spectacle, but a meditation on entanglement. How do we mark and soften the edges of catastrophe without pretending we can contain it?

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Artist Bio

Rebecca Padilla is an interdisciplinary artist and educator living and working in Phoenix, Arizona. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Oklahoma and a Master of Fine Art at Arizona State University. After moving to the United States at age 10, she has lived a transient life and is influenced by the many places she has loved. Her work explores themes of transience, place, and attunement through site-responsive projects and a wide variety of materials and sculptural processes. She grounds her practice in the words of anthropologist Tim Ingold - "The forms of objects are not imposed from above, but grow from the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment...-we work from within the world, not upon it." Ultimately, she strives to make work that deepens our understanding and care of the landscapes in which we dwell.

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