



Jacqueline Negreros

El Cariño Nunca Olvida

Rockport Center for the Arts | July 28 - Sept 17



Artist Statement

El Carino Nunca Olvida presents a body of work inspired by my parents' cooking as a symbol of adaptation, resilience, and affirmation. It weaves together a personal history to redefine multiple visualities of identity through food. No one taught my parents how to adapt their recipes; they dared to experiment to hold tightly to their sazón. The skills they honed would enable them to preserve flavors that nurture our roots.

These works manifest observations of my parent's preparation of *barbacoa de chivo al vapor* in Houston, a memory of Chicago, and my recollections of Zacapala. The significance of the dish is reflected in its ingredients but more importantly in the preparation of the meal and how it has evolved over time – adapting to new circumstances yet retaining its essence and authenticity. These works incorporate traditional art components and materials gathered to elevate and share food otherwise unseen or forgotten beyond the context of home.

I depend on my body's ability to react to the work I am creating, assessing, and re-assessing – very much like a chef sampling food during preparation to assess its qualities and to fine-tune recipes. One of the most important things I value in my work is the presence of the hand. I move between natural and artificial materials to create works that reflect living between two worlds, upon things that go unseen, to make the invisible visible, and the impressions we leave behind.

As the oldest daughter and first-generation American, I am choosing the role of illustrating and archiving our history through these different meals, true to the essence of what I know to be us. The works are created through a tactile sensibility of touch, response, and contemplativeness in relation to the foods that informs our familial identity and my individual sense of self.



Pozole Rojo
(Red Pozole)
22 x 22
Screenprint

Unframed \$200



Pozole Verde
(Green Pozole)
22 x 22
Screenprint

Unframed \$200



Pozole de Oro
(Gold Pozole)
22 x 22
Screenprint

Unframed \$200

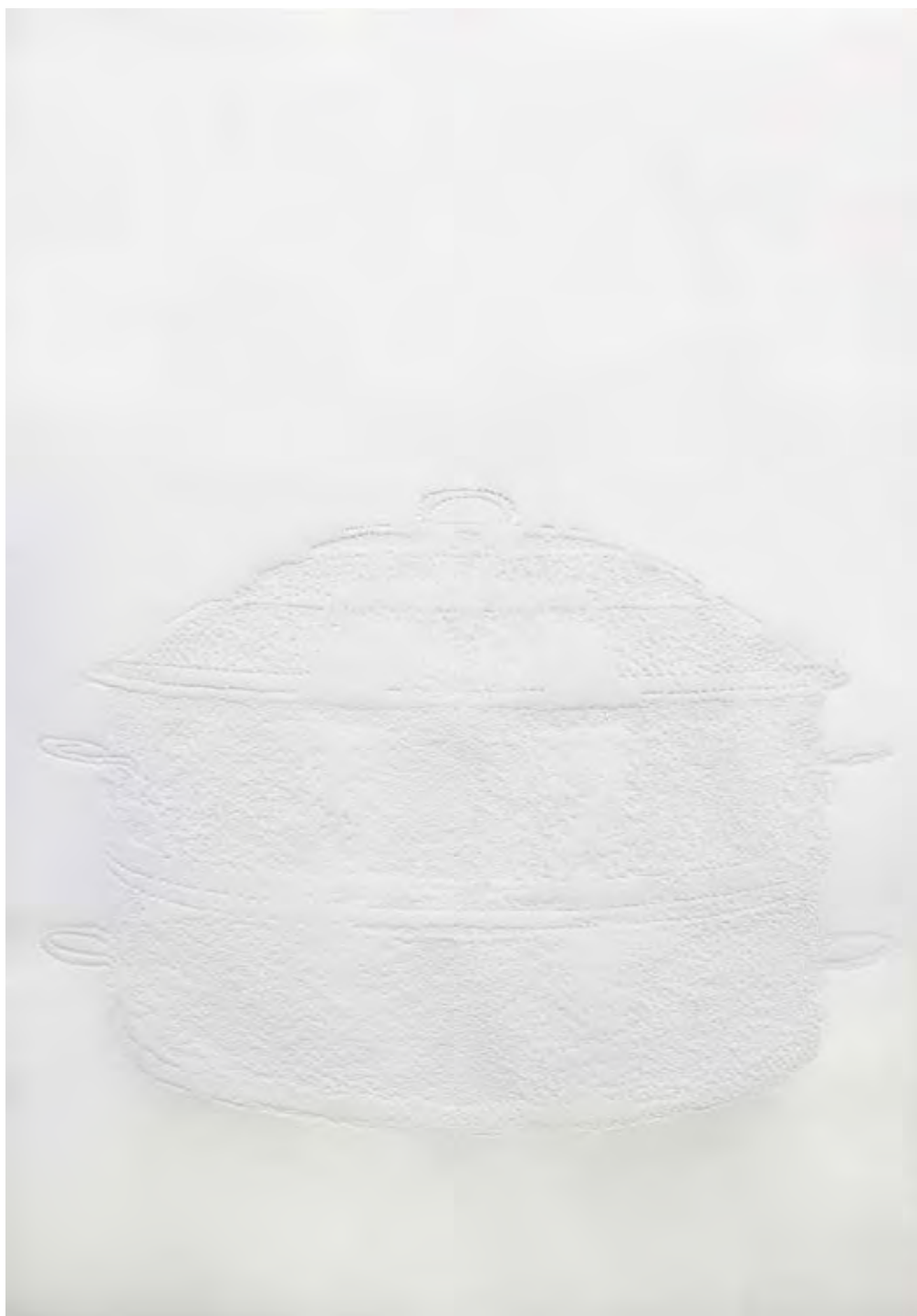
El Arroz

These works seek to convey pathways of memory and time. Made from rice embossed into white cotton rag paper with an etching press, the stark images depict tools critical to preparing *barbacoa de chivo al vapor*, the unsung heroes of our kitchen: la tamalera, a three-tiered pot my father uses to steam la barbacoa, el molcajete y tejolote my mother uses to prepare salsa, and el tronco de arbol on which the chivo is traditionally chopped into pieces for cooking barbacoa in the village.

I chose short-grain for embossing because of its roundness – each used like a pixel to form the full image. Preliminary photo references were processed using a bitmap to separate the values then they were printed to scale and laid on the press. I placed a grain of rice over the dark areas of the image and spaced them accordingly. This was not a mindless activity; I had to be present and pay attention to the position of my body. If I moved carelessly or let out a puff of air, the rice would shift, and I would have to start again. This act became meditative and introspective. It became a space to reflect on my connections to family. How many grains of rice has my family collectively eaten? How many memories do we collectively share?

Once the grains were arranged to fill the composition a damp sheet of cotton rag paper was carefully placed over. The paper is so large that a second person needed to help. Then the cushion felt was rolled over the paper and the pressure was adjusted to create tight contact between the rice, paper, blankets, press bed, and drum. As the handle cranked and the bed advanced, there was a loud crunch as the rice broke apart under the pressure. When the felt was peeled back it revealed paper stretched and molded around the grains in the shape of the source image. The sheet was then flipped over, and the grains were released from the indentations by running fingers over them. Each work is a monotype as there is only one impression that could be made from each matrix. The subtleties in each monotype are unique just like the iterations of each meal that I have eaten with my family.

These works require direct light to fully express the forms raised from the paper. The images disappear as one navigates the rest of the exhibition space. The ghostly impressions of the embossed rice signify these memories, *La Olla* for Dad, *El Molcajete* for Mom, *El Tronco* for la familia en Mexico.



La Olla
(The Pot)
30 x 42

Rice Blind Embossment, Monotype

Unframed \$1,200



El Molcajete
(Mortar & Pestal)
30 x 42
Rice Blind Embossment, Monotype

Unframed \$1,200

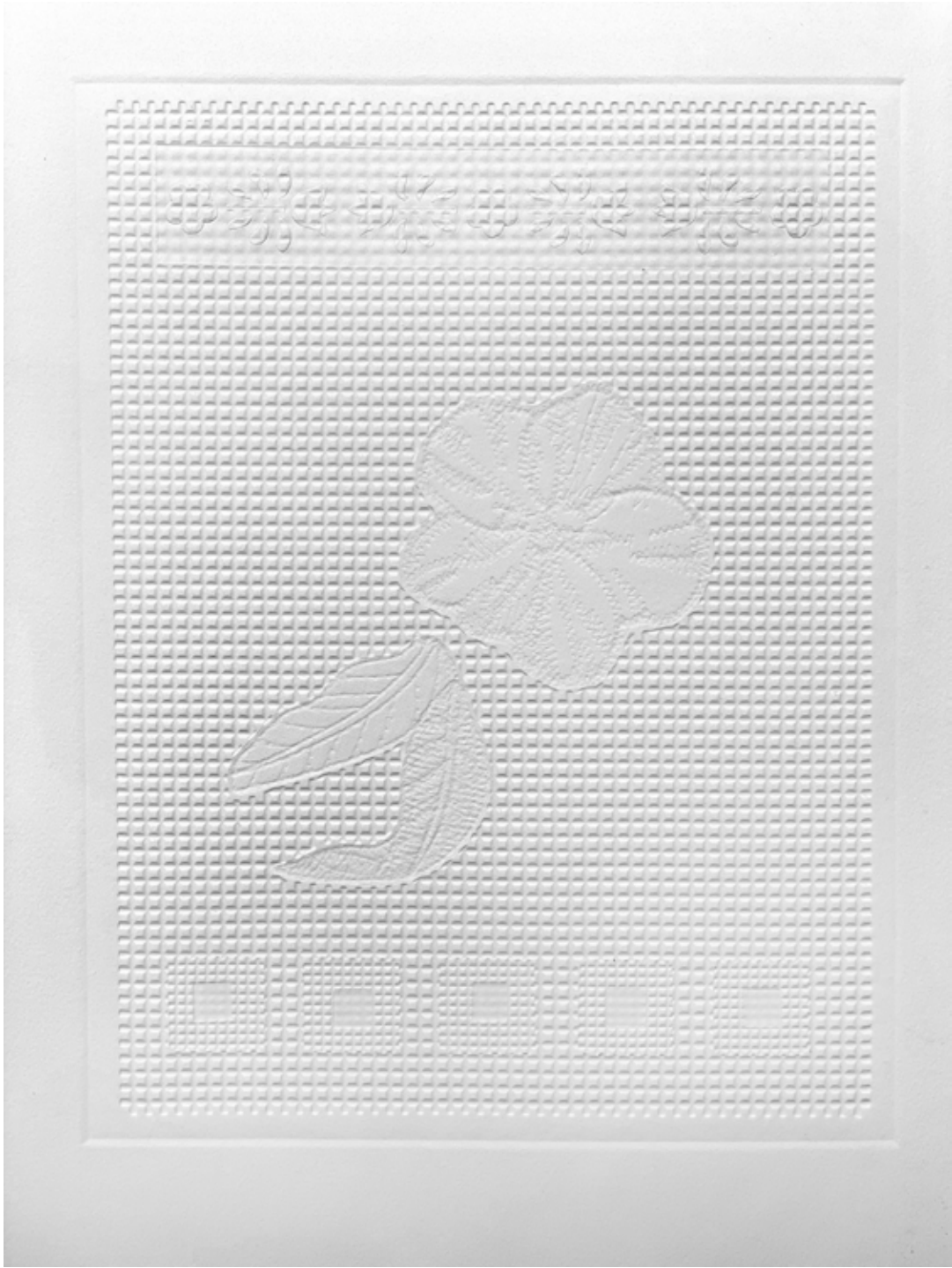


El Tronco
(The Tree Trunk)
30 x 42
Rice Blind Embossment, Monotype

Unframed \$1,200

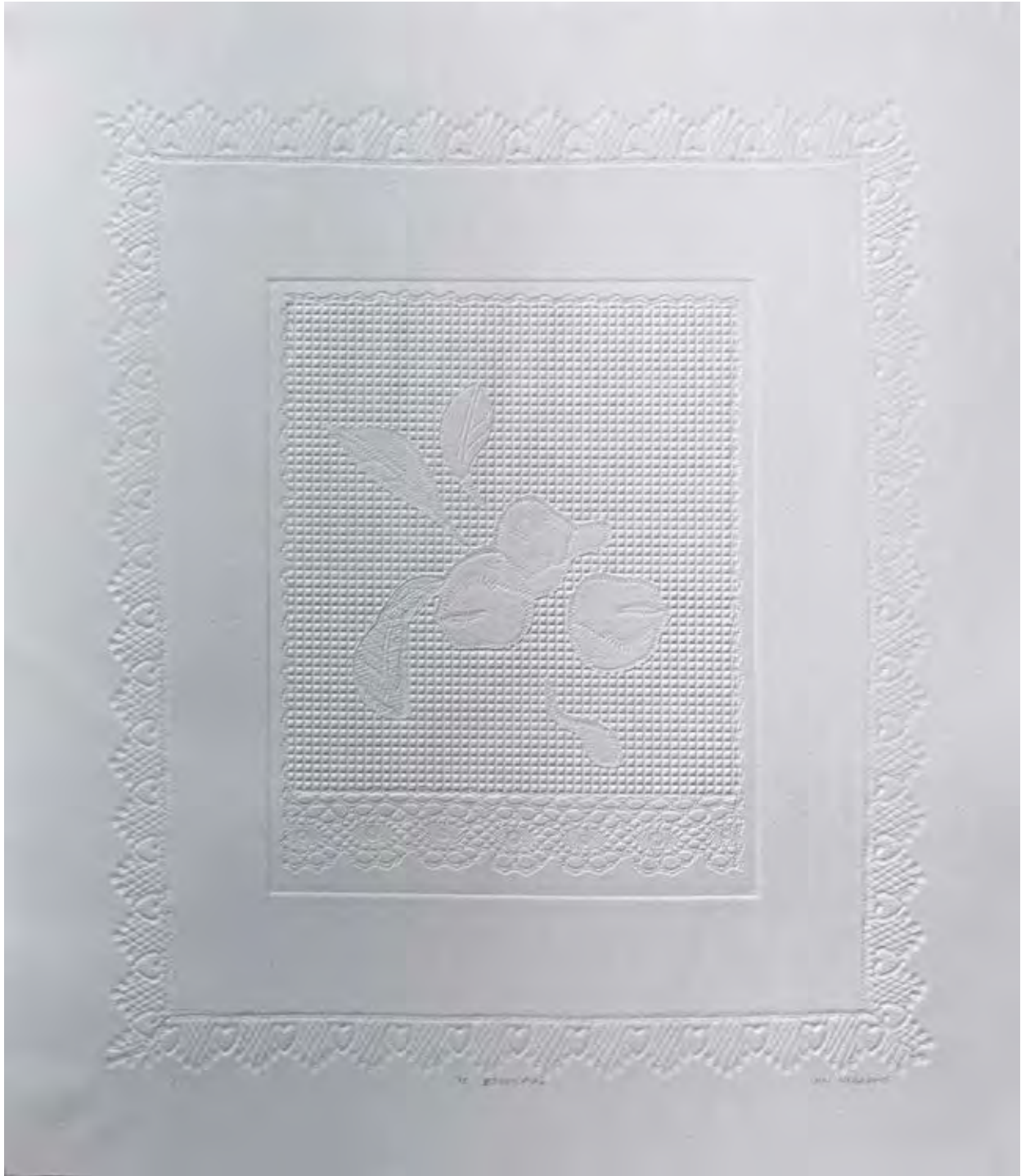
Las Servilletas

In addition to cooking, I learned to embroider from my mother. She likes embroidered plants and animals from the natural world. I loved getting lost in the box of hilos and the way she broke the surface each time the needle poked through la tela, and yet it was always whole. We had a fat stack of servilletas adorned with bright colors used to keep the tortillas warm. These forms impressed into the paper reflect the textiles of my past. I utilize a combination of fabrics, plastic, and thread to create a textured printing plate. Through the process of blind embossing, this collection of ephemera is pressed into the paper to create raised or recessed relief images and designs in the paper by using an etching press.



Hasta Que Te Conocí
(Until I Met You)
17 x 20
Blind Embossment

Unframed \$200



Te Esperaré
(I Will Wait for You)
17 x 20
Blind Embossment

Unframed \$200

Guaje Veils

Lo que tú siembras bien en tierra fértil, tú lo vas a cosechar en un futuro is three, 8-foot hanging veils comprised of guaje seed pods sewn together with silk thread. I started this piece after gathering them in my neighborhood in Corpus Christi and near the Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi campus. Never in my wildest dreams did I believe I would encounter guajes growing wildly here. In Houston we either found them at the farmers market off Airline or my parents planted them. I only heard about these plants growing wildly along the river in Zacapala from their stories. But that is the beauty of finally looking with open eyes at the bounty that is before all of us. Once they were discovered, I saw them everywhere.

Using materials that are unseen, overlooked, or left behind is a creative extension of what I witnessed at home. My mom always finds a new purpose for everything. My connection to food waste is strange, particularly the leftover guaje seedpods. We only valued the nourishment from the seeds within, but the pods themselves hold so much possibility. All these seed pods look the same at a glance but upon closer inspection they are each unique. I discovered they dried into a wide range of hues depending on the season – during the fall, a light brown color; the temperature drop in the winter imparted a deep tone, the color of wet earth.

The placement of the veils in the gallery acts as a border between the conscious and unconscious. One half shows the guaje as it appears outside – dry, muted. The illumination of light on the other half is like magic and reveals their complexity: the ellipsoid shape of the seed, the vein structure of the pod, and the seam that held them together. The veils also represent my feelings dealing with otherness. Depending on who you ask, guajes are either a food crop, providing nourishment, or an invasive weed that reproduces exponentially. This threshold is a membrane for a fluid exchange between different states of identity.



Lo Que Tú Siembras Bien en Tierra Fértil, Tú Lo Vas a Cosechar en un Furturo
(What You Sow Well on Fertile Land, You Will Reap in the Future)

Each Veil is 6' x 8'

Guaje Seed Pods and Silk Thread

Unframed \$800 each

La Pancita

La Pancita is a soft sculpture that signifies matriarchal bonds and the importance of ritual. My mother nurtured her connection to home by maintaining the preparation ritual for la pancita. I watched her prepare food everyday but the experience watching her handle offal was otherworldly. It reflected a way of life in Zacapala that I only caught glimpses of during winter visits. I was fascinated with how she so lovingly cleaned the stomach lining and intestines, the delicate movement of her hands as she finely minced the herbs, dipping her clean hand into the pool of blood to break up the coágulos, unafraid.

Comprised of a wide range of cloth and foam materials, *La Pancita* was constructed around a sturdy armature of aluminum strips and foam pipe insulation meant for plumbing. I thrifted most from clothing in the Goodwill clearance bins off Ayers Street in Corpus Christi; it was important they were similar in tone and texture to the lining of a stomach. I pulled hosiery from Value Village in Houston. The large mass of foam was gifted to me by my best childhood friend, Sarah Ta. The first set of t-shirts used to tie the foam were from my siblings and cousins. The decorative fabrics came from a box retailer.

The dark mass of *La Pancita* appears to sway and move, twisting and folding into itself. The shadows it casts stretch along the surface of the wall; a contradiction to the yielding forms that disappear into one another. Neutral colors grace the surface, bits of pink burst forth from the seams. Layers of fabric are suspended on top of one another; semi-sheer forms gasp for a pocket of air, tendrils dangle from pendulous forms, and stitched panels overlay to create countless ripples. Each bundle of material successively hugs one another, unable to resist any urge to be apart, they yield to maternal love.



La Pancita (Stomach)
Variable Dimensions

Mixed Media: Aluminum, Foam Pipe Insulation, Nylon Stockings, Leggings, Tights, T-Shirts, Thrifted Fabrics, Poly-fil Foam, Plastic Bags, Convoluter Foam

NFS

How to Acquire Art from the Catalog

To purchase work in the catalog please call Rockport Center for the Arts at (361) 729-5519, or stop by the Gallery during normal business hours (Tue-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-4). The Gallery is located at 204 S. Austin St. in Rockport, Texas.

Payment method options include cash, checks and major credit cards.

Prices listed are before taxes. During check-out, taxes will be added at the local tax rate of 8.25%.

To view the work in person Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM, and Sunday noon - 4 PM. To view the art outside of this time please call 361-729-5519 or email elena@rockportartcenter.com to make arrangements.

To have work shipped please make arrangements with the art handler of your choice. Shipping expenses are the responsibility of the buyer. Below are three companies we are familiar with who should be able to manage your art shipping needs. We strongly encourage you to insure your purchase.

- Ship & Crate, Attn: Chad Miller, 361-461-2416, chad@shipandcrate.com
- Postal Annex, Attn: Gayle Thomas, 361-992-9323, pa12004@postalannex.com
- UPS Store #6986, Attn: Zamir, 361-356-1032, store6986@theupsstore.com

For additional information or questions please call Elena Rodriguez at (361) 729-5519, or email elena@rockportartcenter.com.