

Stay

Victoria Gonzales

Curated by **Chris Wicker**



February 13 – May 15, 2025

Hosted by
Moncrief Cancer Institute
in partnership with
**Texas Christian University
School of Art**

Curatorial Statement

Chris Wicker

In *Stay*, artist Victoria Gonzales creates a warm and habitable space within her skillfully crafted compositions, all of which were made for this exhibition at Moncrief Cancer Institute. Excerpts from Gonzales' memories living in Boerne and current life in Fort Worth influence the work in *Stay*. She uses fractured imagery of afternoon walks, gathering eggs in chicken coops, and shared familial activities, such as baking, to emphasize the power that memory holds. Figures displayed in outlines, nature rendered in thick chunks of color, and chickens depicted as simple shapes are representations of how a memory can be recalled; they are frozen in time and reconstructed from past experience. Even though these memories come back to Gonzales in fragments, there is still an inviting quality about them when portrayed in paint. The invitation, extended to whomever comes into contact with these visual motifs, then asks for further consideration.

While detailing the complexity of recalling a memory through her own experiences, Gonzales asks others to consider their own recollections. The washes of paint then begin to resemble large swathes of time. Bright, recurring squiggles act as the moments that are tough to recall. Figures depicted in the work take on the identity of those who hold significant space within our own personal histories. This transformative power of Gonzales' work modifies perception, and is amplified through her use of materials.

Expansive dimensions featuring converging horizons insist that you stay within her work. Gonzales does this through her choice of materials and the selective pushing and pulling of her subject matter; portions of the foreground are featured prominently while other elements are placed at different points in space. Washes of paint illustrating skylines, portions of the natural landscape, and recurring squiggles define a dimensionality that is built upon by Gonzales' use of thread and layering of paint. With this process, her compositions invite you to be a part of the world she has created.

Strands of thread outline the intricacies of leaves and detail the structural components of houses, seamlessly incorporating themselves within the structure of the canvas. Coupled with the caked-on layers of paint scattered throughout her compositions, these vibrant strands cement the physicality that these paintings inherently display. These moments of materiality create a sense of tangibility in the work. The thread, layers of paint, and pastels act as the threshold that invites the viewer to cross into Gonzales' infinite designs.

Stay weaves materiality and memory together to create endless and evocative compositions. The breadth demonstrated in each painting invites audiences to remain with the work and explore the abstracted spaces. *Stay* creates enticing, and tangible dimensions through layers of paint and thread while crafting a realm that emphasizes the significance of memory and recollection.

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Here, Gonzales wrestles with the past, present, and future, reflecting, recollecting and reimagining specific places and moments. Although we live our lives on a chronological timeline—yesterday turning into today, today turning into tomorrow—that is far from how we tend to remember.

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A Kaleidoscope of Memories: the Landscapes of Victoria Gonzales

By Emma S. Ahmad

Inside Victoria Gonzales' semi-abstract dreamscapes, it is unclear when one moment starts and another begins.

You may see pieces of an interior space, perhaps a bedroom or living room, morph into a shoreline landscape, which may then transform into the exterior of a house or a warm sunset. Gonzales collages fragmented memories and everyday moments into intimate and often nostalgic compositions. And because these memories are so grounded in place—most often the Texas Hill Country where she grew up and the North Texas region where she resides currently—I like to consider her, first and foremost, a landscape artist.

But this is not your traditional landscape; this is a landscape of the mind, nonlinear and jumbled. Here, Gonzales wrestles with the past, present, and future, reflecting, recollecting and reimagining specific places and moments. Although we live our lives on a chronological timeline—yesterday turning into today, today turning into tomorrow—that is far from how we tend to remember.

The three largest artworks in the exhibition, titled ***Women and their Labor #1, #2, and #3***, beckon viewers into an immersive space where timelines overlap. The subject matter within all three canvases is consistent: the daily ritual that is Gonzales and her family gathering eggs within their chicken coop. But the moments span years, montaging the memories together, capturing the passage of time as it persists.



February (Fort Worth), 2024
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
24 x 30"

Such is also the case in ***February (Fort Worth)***, which combines similar scenes along the Trinity Trails in Fort Worth from February 2024 and 2023. Gonzales would often take afternoon walks along the trail, using it as a time to connect and reflect. Considering her relationship to the landscape and the ways in which she interacts with it is an essential element in her practice.

"When I created these pieces, it felt like a literal layering of timelines," says Gonzales.

Her smaller canvases tend to capture specific objects, moments, or details. ***Winter Barbecue*** records a snapshot of a large smoking grill outside of her parent's home in Boerne where her father was barbecuing. ***Goats in Motion*** depicts four recent additions to the Gonzales household, a motley group of goats, in front of a serene amber sky with an egg yolk sun setting on the horizon. These are small glimpses that exist within the larger memory library of her mind.

Throughout Gonzales' work, each individual memory attains a larger narrative through repeated and interconnected motifs, proving that they do not exist in isolation to each other. One recurring symbol is the pecan.

"My grandma lived in a little town in South Texas and had so many pecan trees on her property. When we were kids, she would send us out there with buckets to collect them all," Gonzales tells me.

"Now, at my boyfriend's house, he also has a pecan tree in his backyard that he never really noticed. But we have started collecting them together. And there's also a pecan tree that hangs over the patio of the new apartment I just moved into. I love how these symbols continue to follow me." In ***Pecans for Luis***, the branch of a pecan tree is in focus against a hazy backdrop of periwinkle, eggplant, and magenta.

However, in ***From the Pecan Tree***, the nut takes on a new form as it garnishes a bundt cake atop a layer of icing. Pecan husks and leaves float around amidst brightly colored confetti-like shapes. I consider the literal and symbolic alchemy of the subjects in Gonzales' work: how the chicken eggs being collected in ***Women and their Labor*** and the pecans gathered from the tree outside of her boyfriend's house have come together to create the dessert. Or, more figuratively, how the pecan serves as an emblem (or ingredient) for family and togetherness.

“I like to think of the pecan as a good omen,” says Gonzales.

Throughout her landscapes, there are splotches of colors or long brushstrokes that seem to be snaking their way throughout the canvas. It is these abstracted shapes that imbue each artwork with a specific energy and impart a dreamlike element into her work. In ***Summer Peaches***, organic ribbons of soft pink, orange, and blue lightly dance around the fruit tree branch. The backdrop is a blend of soothing pastels, evoking a calming aura. However, in ***Peppers from my Grandma***, shorter, abrupt lines divide the small canvas into geometric sections, spurring a more chaotic energy. Gonzales’ visual language of intentionally selected color fields and gestural strokes communicate both the physical and emotive movement within each piece.

If you haven’t yet, I urge you to inch in closer. Within a single canvas, there are layers upon layers of materials. Gonzales starts off with a chalky pastel sketch of the entire composition; you may see these quick, minimal drawings in some areas of the canvas which she has deliberately left exposed, like in the top right corner of ***Women and their Labor #3***. Next comes the paint, each wash adding further dimension and emotion. Some paint layers are thicker, building on each other until sections are clumpy and jutting out of the canvas. I often have to restrain myself from running a curious palm over the canvas.

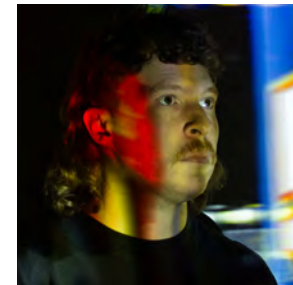
But one element that is nearly invisible until you are maybe a foot away from the canvas are the thin lines of thread that zigzag their way across the surface. Using her sewing machine as a drawing tool, Gonzales embellishes her canvas with dainty fiber linework. You can also find scraps of fabric and bits of yarn collaged onto the surface.

“I like including a fragment from the real world, as opposed to something that I’m painting the illusion of,” explains Gonzales.

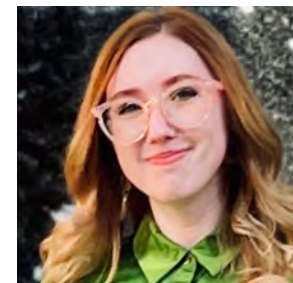
Gonzales’ artwork invites us to contemplate our own recollective memories and consider the commonplace landscapes that shape our everyday lives. Within her dreamy landscapes, the memories meld into each other and timelines become tangled, creating a kaleidoscope of moments past, present, and future.



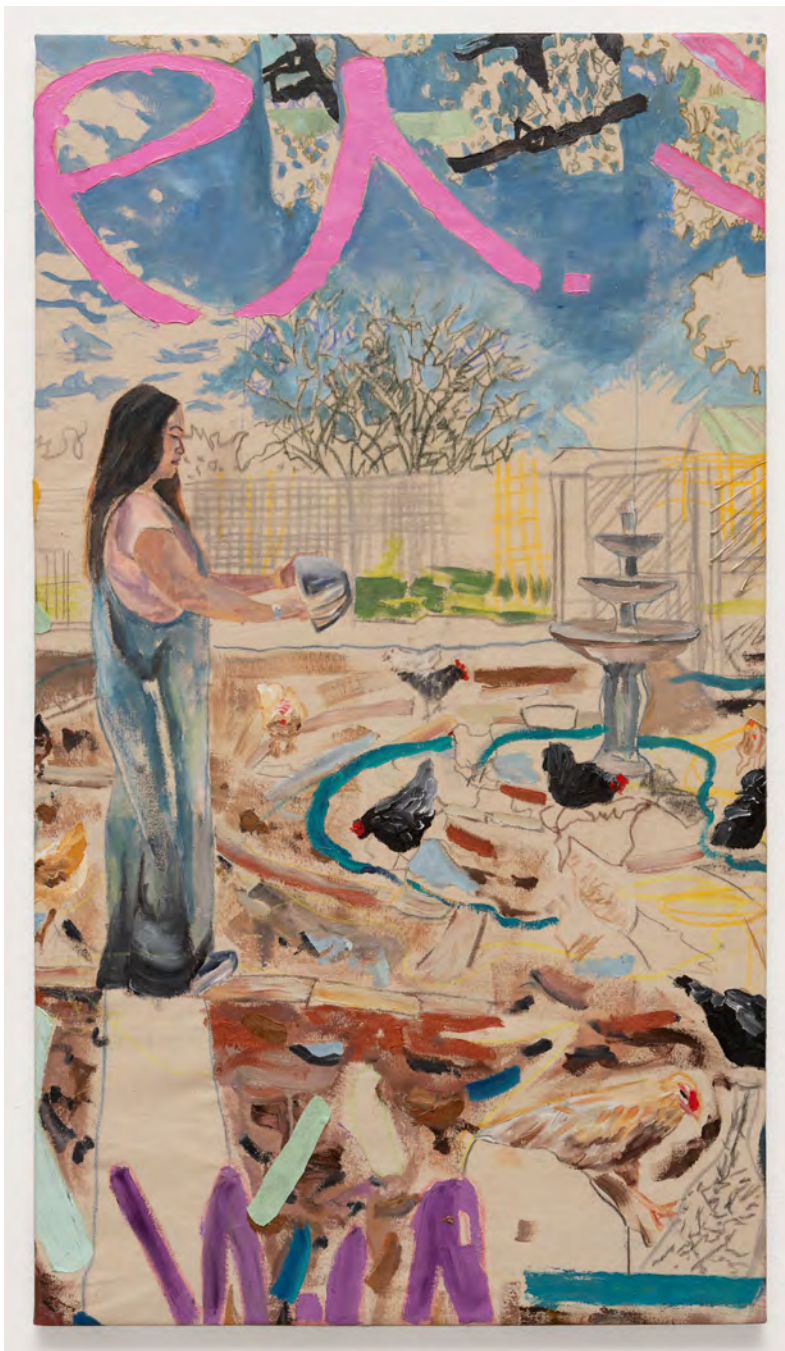
Victoria Gonzales is a Fort Worth-based artist from San Antonio. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Baylor University in 2019 and her Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting from the University of North Texas in 2022. Victoria has exhibited throughout Texas including solo shows at Pencil on Paper Gallery in 2023 and Arts Fort Worth in 2022. She has also presented exhibitions at the New Media Contemporary in Dallas, 500x Gallery, Art Room, Greater Denton Arts Council, and the Center for Contemporary Arts. In 2020, she was awarded first place in the Texas National Competition and Exhibition. In 2024, Victoria exhibited at William Campbell Gallery’s 50th Anniversary Celebration and the Dallas Art Fair. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at Tarrant County College Northwest and is represented by William Campbell Gallery.



Chris Wicker is a New Media artist from Texarkana, Texas. Chris received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Stephen F. Austin State University in 2018 and his Master of Fine Arts from Texas Christian University in 2021. Chris has had solo exhibitions at Blind Alley in Fort Worth, Common Space in Bartlett, Texas, and in the New Media Gallery at the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts in Lubbock. His work has also been included in multiple group exhibitions at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Creative Exchange Gallery in Ruston, Louisiana, and in the ***Château Château*** exhibition in Dallas. Internationally, Chris has been a part of exhibitions in Hiroshima, at the Khodynka Gallery in Moscow, Russia, and in The One Minutes Foundation showing of The Fields of Algorithms in The Netherlands. Currently practicing in Houston, Chris maintains his role as the Exhibitions Manager for FotoFest.



Emma S. Ahmad is an arts writer and editor living in Dallas, TX. She is a regular contributor to regional magazines and publications like Glasstire and the Southwest Contemporary. By day she works at the Nasher Sculpture Center and by night, you can find her penning voraciously by candlelight when she’s not busy catering to the every whim of her two cats.



Women and their Labor #1, 2024
 Acrylic, pastels, and fibers on canvas
 36 x 64"



Women and their Labor #2, 2024
 Acrylic, pastels, and fibers on canvas
 36 x 64"



Women and their Labor #3, 2024
Acrylic, pastels, and fibers on canvas
36 x 64"



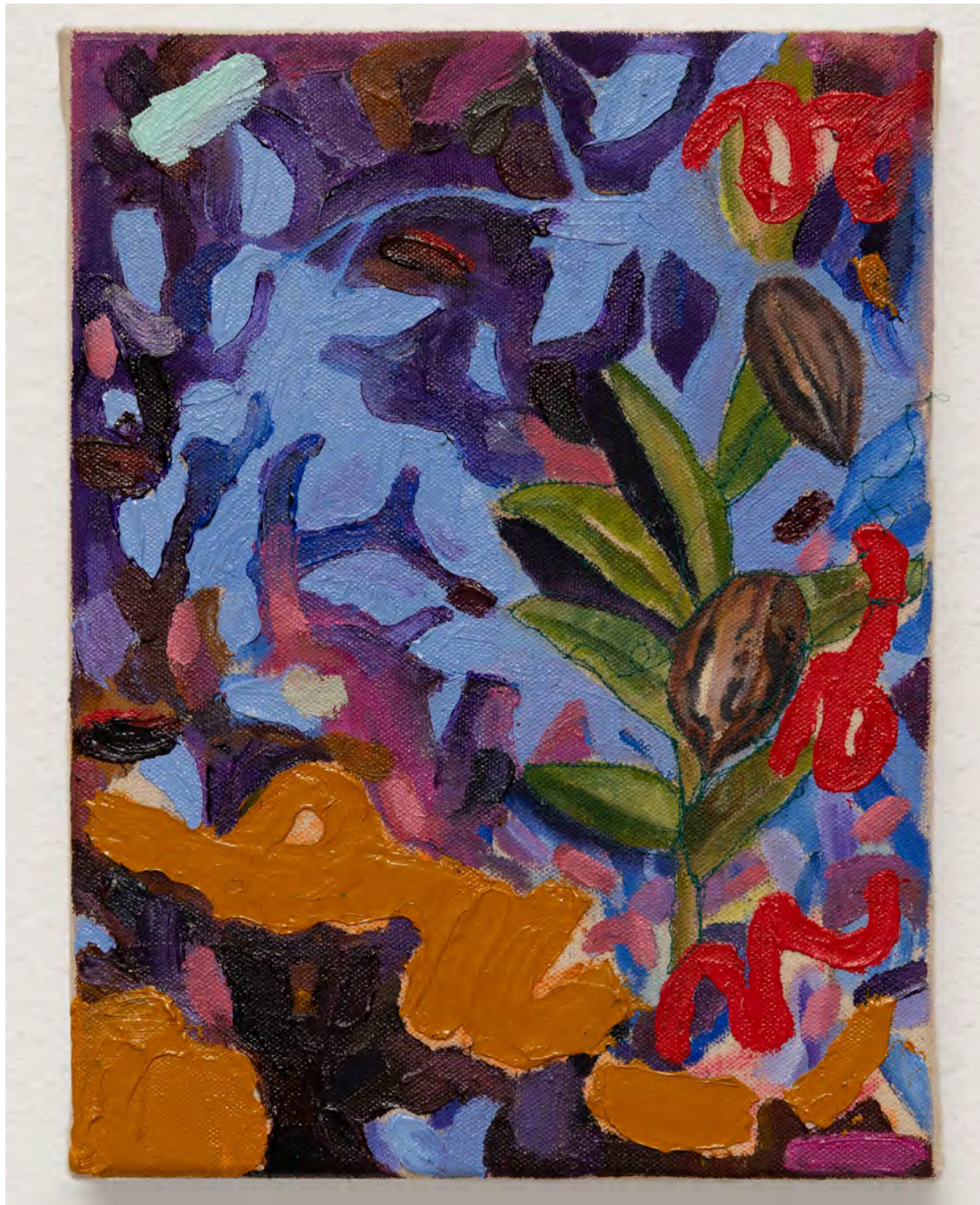
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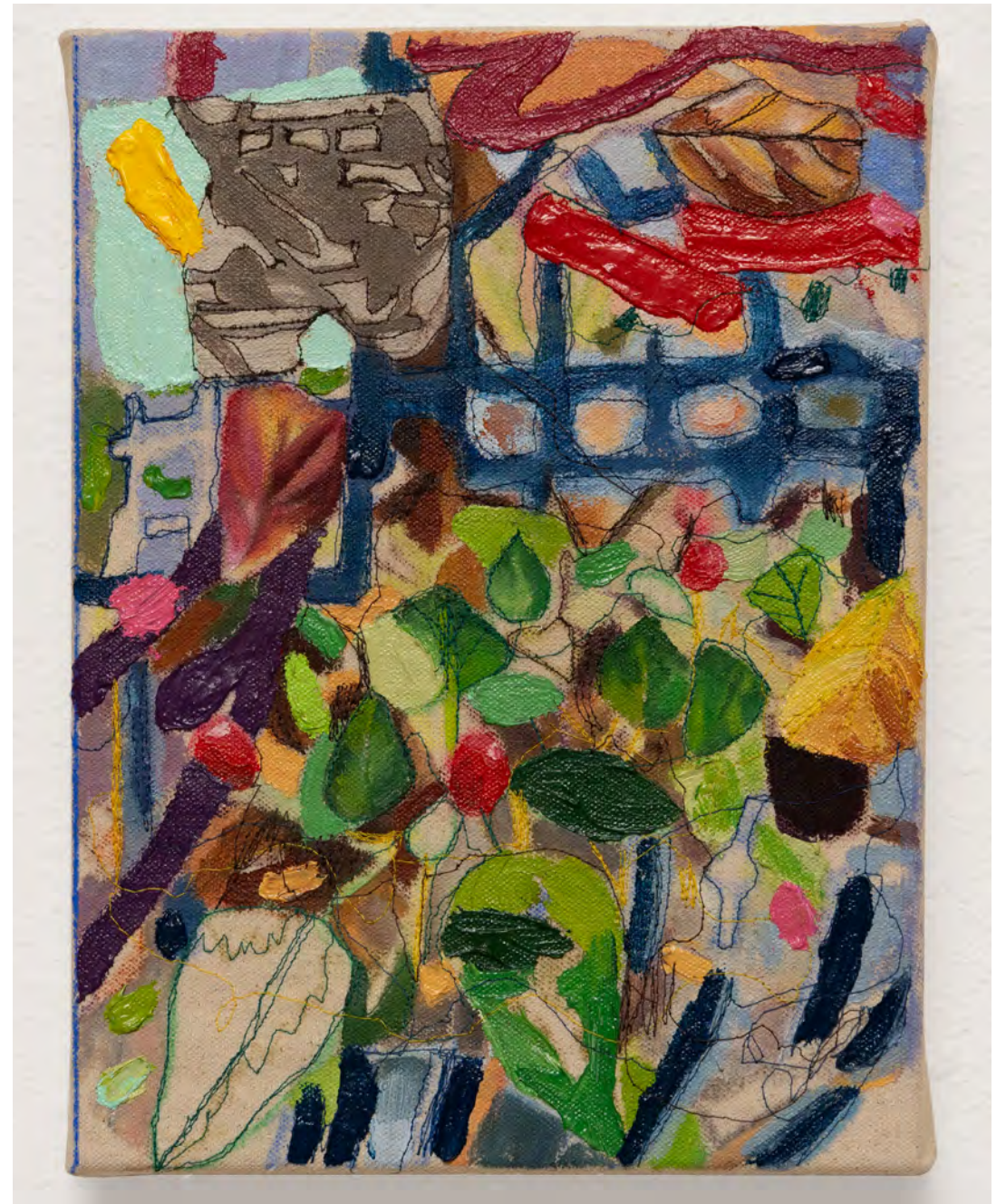
Searching for Fireflies, 2024
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
24 x 30"



Goats in Motion, 2024
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
9 x 12"



Pecans for Luis, 2025
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
9 x 12"



Peppers from my Grandma, 2024
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
9 x 12"



Summer Peaches, 2025
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
9 x 12"



Winter Barbecue, 2025
Acrylic, pastels, and thread on canvas
9 x 12"

Moncrief Cancer Institute Art Gallery

