

## Katie Ruiz



### Recommended by Karen Wilkin

Katie Ruiz's work defies easy description. Her paintings are sometimes stripped to abstract, resonant essentials. Sometimes they suggest ambiguous narratives that we can't quite grasp. Is a hovering bear being caught on a blanket by people standing in surf or is he being tossed into the air, like the figure in Francisco Goya's painting of 18<sup>th</sup> century Madrilenos at a fair? Creatures and people appear in different relationships, at different scales, alone and together. A memory of textiles, specifically the brilliant stripes of serapes, haunts these pictures, enlivening animate and inanimate elements alike. Those associations with fabric are made explicit by vivid works in which painted abstractions explode into clusters of tassels or swirls of cord. Feminist discussions of women's traditional roles as makers come to mind, along with the rich heritage of Latin American folk art, and more.

*Karen Wilkin, Fall 2020*

### Bio

Katie Ruiz is a Xicana artist who resides in San Diego, CA. She was raised in Los Angeles and Northern Arizona. Ruiz has a strong connection with nature and often uses natural objects like rocks, shells, leaves and sticks in her weavings and sculptures. A figure painter known for her blanket series, she often portrays couples standing or lying under colorful Mexican blankets. Geometric patterns and bright colors are reiterated throughout her work. Her travels to 22 countries have influenced her work, especially the patterns that are primarily derived from Latin American textiles. She was raised with her single mother and younger sister and draws much strength from the strong female figures in her life. Relationships play a strong role in Ruiz's paintings. Couples are often depicted together or with natural forces such as water, winter, or pathways pulling the couple together or further apart.

Ruiz has a BFA from Northern Arizona University and an MFA from The New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting & Sculpture in NYC. She is on the faculty of the San Diego Community College District and Athenaeum School of Arts and at times a visiting teacher for the New York Studio School. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the Mac Connor Scholarship and the Hohenberg Travel Scholarship.

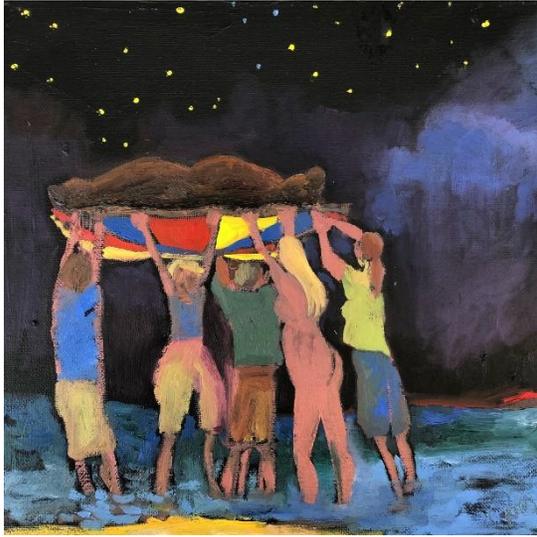
## **Artist Statement**

After years of training as a figure painter, I began abstracting the human form by throwing colorful Mexican blankets over them. The blankets led me to Mexico to learn to weave and the weavings left me with a lot of beautiful skeins of yarn and sticks to hang the weavings on. I started to love the materials more than the final product and began a playful search of attaching these materials, like the weavings I had brought home from Mexico, the condoms in my travel bag, or the fake hair braids from my makeup and hair jobs.

The paintings in this show are a reaction to transcendental painting while following the Moon cycle and my flow states. Although abstract, all the work has a very feminine and figurative feel, with fleshy colors and rounded shapes. The other world-like paintings are based on the textile patterns of animals and birds from the Otomi.



*Katie Ruiz. Otomi Skies. Oil on Canvas 10" x 8"*



*Katie Ruiz. Saving Bear (left) Oil on Canvas 12'' x 12''; Mid-air Bear, Oil on Canvas, 18'' x 12''*



*Katie Ruiz. Back to the Source, Into the Ether. Oil on Canvas 18''x 24''*



Katie Ruiz (left to right), *Nopales Serp.* Oil on Canvas 7"x 5"; *Birth of Orange Moon*, Oil on Canvas, 7"x 5"; *Shift*, Oil on Canvas with Pompom, 17"x 12"; *Portal One*, Oil on Canvas, 7"x 5.



Katie Ruiz. *Entanglement* (left). Mixed Media 40"x 20"; *Home* (right) Mixed Fiber Media on Frame, 30" x 24"