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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KARLA GARCÍA  
*Grass Flower*  
7.19.25 - 9.20.25

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Grass Flower*, an exhibition of ceramic sculpture by Karla García—the artist’s first presentation at the gallery.

In her own words:

My artistic practice is grounded in clay, a medium through which I explore the intersection of the land and the symbolic realm of myth. I sculpt forms based on the desert flora of the Texas-Mexico borderlands, where I grew up, in various states of bloom and decay. Barrel cacti and clusters of wild grasses, the pinched and coiled primary characters of *Grass Flower*, are resilient creatures that can thrive in particularly harsh conditions—and have done so for millions of years.

I’m exploring what it means to be a Mexican woman, sister, daughter, and mother, especially in today’s uncertain and volatile political climate. My work is a reflection of how I feel as I move through time and space, how I have changed over the course of my life, and how I aspire to bring my roots—my cultural, literary, and metaphysical heritages—into my every present moment. I don’t always have the perfect words, but I know this is where the work comes from. Each of my sculptures is the result of a private conversation I’m having with the world, expanded into an imagined landscape shaped by folklore, intuition, memory, and the teachings of philosophy.

My work lingers in the in-between space—*nepantla*, as we say in Mexico, a word that speaks to thresholds, to the middle, to the space of tension and becoming. It’s a place of transformation, where boundaries blur and new forms emerge. The color palette

of *Grass Flower*, for example, was inspired by twilight—that dusky, fleeting moment between day and night, which, especially in the desert, is as mundane as it is enchanting as it is dangerous.

When I'm in the studio, surrounded by clay, terra sigillata, metal oxides, soda ash, books, and a dusty floor, I often think about how things exist beyond us. Frameworks from modern and contemporary philosophy, like Kant's thing-in-itself and Graham Harman's object-oriented ontology, describe objects—plants, stones, sculptures—as having their own independent existences and interacting with each other in complex ways not always accessible to human understanding. But this way of thinking is not new. In Mesoamerican cosmologies, the land itself is alive. Plants, landscapes, and natural forces are conscious, sacred beings with their own rhythms and will. My sculptures are not just representations of nature—they *are* nature.

Some of the clay I used to make the work in this show was recycled from a previous group of unfired cactus sculptures I installed and photographed in the Chihuahuan Desert on either side of the Rio Grande. I brought most of those sculptures home, but some of my clay daughters I left—to become desert. The ones I kept I ground to dust, mixed into fresh clay, sculpted anew, and rebirthed with fire in the kiln. Despite their new forms, the ceramics in *Grass Flower* remember their time in the borderlands as clearly as I do—as well as much more from long ago I will never know. They are directly connected to the deserts of my past. Equally so to the rest of the cosmos.

The title of this exhibition comes from the Nahua deity Malīnalxōchitl, whose name is a neologism of ancient words for *grass* and *flower*. She is a sorceress, the goddess of desert animals, wild grasses, and the wilderness, who, in my view, is deeply misunderstood. Malīnalxōchitl was exiled for her powers of creation and transformation, but all she ever intended was to heal those she loves and destroy that which threatens her family.

Another recent touchstone is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, whom I first learned about as a child in Catholic school. She was a bold, Mexican nun who wrote poetry, studied science, and dared to speak up in the 17th century, an era when women were not encouraged to think as ravenously as she did.

Sor Juana's poem "Primero Sueño [First Dream]" describes the spiritual and intellectual journey of a woman—herself—in a patriarchal society, and is structured around allusions to classical mythology. She explores her soul's desire to grasp the totality of existence, across both material and incorporeal realms—and reckons with the impossibility of such omniscience, with the boundaries of human thought and imagination. The poem resonates

powerfully with me, with where my work comes from, the dreams and empathies and unanswerable questions that drive my practice. What does it feel like to live three centuries as a cactus? Or even longer, as a ceramic facsimile of a succulent? What might these non-human objects perceive as time passes and the world changes around them? Will the earth and air and rain whisper different secrets to them in the future than they did in the old times? How can I tune my own ears and fingertips to receive similar messages on adjacent frequencies?

When I came across the writings of Neil de Grasse Tyson, I saw parallels between his understanding of contemporary physics and Sor Juana's gift for tracing connections across the seemingly opposing realms of myth and science. "We are all connected," he says. "To each other, biologically. To the earth, chemically. To the rest of the universe, atomically." Malīnalxōchitl, Sor Juana, de Grasse Tyson—the worlds they conjure feel close to those I inhabit with my work.

I offer my own poem with clay-dusted hands and deep respect, in a humble gesture to honor women, land, knowledge, and the stories carried from one generation to the next:

*Grass Flower*  
by Karla García

Grass Flower awaits in the desert  
Where my heart, body, and mind, remember  
the echoes of time and space,  
the solace of the earth,  
the flowers and the moonlight  
that highlight the blades of grass

As the moonlight is shining  
my hands touch the earth  
knowing that I will never waver in solitude  
and form shapes  
recalling the desert at night.

Transforming through fire  
The alchemical shifts of earth to rock  
Calling the moon to see me  
To lead me, I set my feet firm on the ground  
Going forward with the grass under every step.

Karla García, born in 1977 in Ciudad Juárez, lives and works in Dallas. She has produced solo projects for a binational installation at both the Chamizal National Memorial Cultural Center (El Paso) and Museo de Arqueología e Historia de El Chamizal (Ciudad Juárez), Nasher Sculpture Center (Dallas) for the Nasher Windows series, and Old Jail Art Center (Albany, Texas).