

8 **Joanna Keane Lopez**  
 MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST  
 and ADOBERA based in  
 ALBUQUERQUE, NM and CA.

"In Socorro, New Mexico, you can see old adobe homes built by my great-great grandparents. Then, as time went on, assimilation started happening, and new materials like cinder block were coming in, and people were moving out of small towns, and you can see a move away from land-based practices such as adobe. And then farther down, you can see frames and stucco. And even farther, there are trailers. Vernacular architecture comes out of necessity and what's available, so those original adobe homes were built from the dirt. But then in the 40s and 50s, as the Spanish language was being pushed out, people were moving out of mud homes as they were seen as being for the poor. So there was a big push to use new materials. And I've been fascinated about why it's not as common anymore for people to build adobe homes. I've been trying to understand the complexity of that relationship. What I've come to understand is that there's a direct relationship to the reciprocity of the home and the family or community maintaining that home. When families

5 **Daisy Quezada**  
 MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST  
 based in SANTA FE, NM.

"The Rio Grande has been a source of life. It has been a way of nurturing. It has been the water that's used in many areas, but it's also a dumping ground. It has a lot of pesticides in it, and that's going through your skin and becoming a part of your body and that's affecting how you exist in the day to day. So it's a huge issue. People are using that water. There isn't advocacy or education about what's happening, and they're using that water to irrigate. And then this water, after being used to irrigate, is creating the food that you're consuming, and you're ingesting all of that. This very much ties in with what Jonathan Loretto and Roxanne Swentzell call 'environmental racism' because it's associated with a specific class, a specific community. That's why he protested wayside dumping. But people who've lived in these spaces, people who've long resided there, understand and see these shifts that are taking place around the geography they live in. They see fishes that are no longer there, animals that are no longer there, ones that are being lost because of the actions that we, humans, are taking, actions that are very much inconsiderate."

1 **Arlene Mejorado**  
 MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST  
 based in LOS ANGELES, CA  
 and MEXICO.

"The work I did in Guadalajara came from a place that has had an impact and a hold on me. This place is my grandmother's home, particularly her patio. Growing up, you'd hear so much about this place. I mean, I lived with my grandmother, so it was through being with her, being in proximity to her. She was always like a second mother, and I'd always hear her on the phone talking about this house. And since it's a place I've only experienced a couple of times in my childhood, it became mythical to me and continues to live on for me in conversations that I overhear, each constructing the only known place of origin for me—a place I feel connected to. And I was thinking about diaspora and not having a sense of belonging, but I also know there's a place that exists where I belong, a place no one can take away from me. And even though I'm never there and I don't know it, it's where I come from."

"I have an early memory about traveling through Mexico with my grandma and going to a ranch where she was born and stepping into its kitchen. I remember seeing another woman on her knees, patching up an adobe kitchen wall

break up or move away from small towns—or there's a lot of drama—a relationship to land, and land as a building block of home, isn't as common."

"I like to think of adobe as a language. A lot of the materials and techniques borrow from so many different cultures, including the Spanish, North African, and Middle Eastern. It's from Indigenous people who were here before the Spanish. It's a big mix of those who work with earth. . . . It's like a language borrowing different words and phrases. And I feel that's what this architecture is — a vernacular architecture."

9 **Miguel Mendias**  
 ARTIST and ADOBE BUILDER  
 based in MARFA, TX.

"When I started learning adobe, the first thing I realized was like, 'Oh yeah, these were made in Alpine, or those were made in Presidio, and these were made in Marfa.' They have very distinct color differentiations. And as I started working on this ancestral house, literally using the dirt from my yard, I realized that the color paint that I had picked for my room was like the color mark of it. It looks different from Presidio. It looks different even than Alpine. I think Alpine tends to be more reddish than Presidio, and Marfa has this very specific reddish-purplish brown dirt.

"I see Indigenous and BIPOC futures as intersecting and supporting one another. Again, it's like thinking about the Rio Grande. It's not one individual river. It's a river that connects all of these people together who have different ways of existing, thinking, and being a part of nature. And what I hope is that we become more aware of one another and that we are supportive of one another and that we listen to one another and that spaces are created for us to be seen and recognized and acknowledged. And there are actions. People are making some noise. They're rattling some cages. And they're being heard at a local level, but they need to be acknowledged at a national level and even an international level."

6 **Camille Hoffman**  
 MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST  
 based in BROOKLYN, NY  
 and SANTA FE, NM.

"I'm attempting to research my own history, which in many ways is discombobulated as a result of colonial legacy. So even when uncovering what my Filipino Indigenous past represents and uncovering the meanings and traditions around land

with just her hands, and my grandma saying, "Look, that's what we used to do." So adobe is the origin of not just that house but the whole neighborhood, the city. Adobe was the foundation, and from the photographs I've been making, you can actually read how adobe transitions to a mixed concrete, a type of brick, and then eventually a more standard red brick or cinder block. There is topography on the walls that show a timeline of how things were built onto themselves."

2 **William Camargo**  
 PHOTOGRAPHER and  
 ACTIVIST based in  
 ANAHEIM, CA.

"The history and canon of photography are very imperialist and colonial. So I do have inner conversations with myself about using such a tool that has helped propel imperialism and colonialism in many parts of the country and very much also in Southern California. I think hopefully these images and documents that I'm creating are creating counternarratives and counter-archives."

And so I literally had a paint sample out, and I was comparing it to the wall of my great grandfather's house. I've been interested in earth buildings because I understand that it's something that comes from my own family history."

9 **Sandro Canovas**  
 ADOBERO and ACTIVIST  
 based in MARFA, TX.

"Presidio County, in Texas, is the only place in the world where energy efficient building materials are taxed, even though these materials are usually given tax credits. For example, in places like Australia, if you recycle the dirt that comes out of the land where you're building a foundation, reusing all this dirt for some other building purpose, you get tax credits. In Presidio County, they do the opposite. They punish you for owning adobe. So what happened was that, back in 2017, the appraisal district found out that adobes were being sold for a lot of money. For instance, in Marfa, world famous because of the art organizations there, these constructions are being sold for a lot of money because of their beauty and character. I think that the taxation bracket is 57 percent more than our regular homes."

acknowledgment and its interconnection with day-to-day life—these things I feel very deep within my body—are, at the same time, contending with what's actually available to me, given the societal conditioning of the present moment. If I'm living in the middle of a city and wanting to connect with water, I immediately think of a landscape that's tropical, this romanticized depiction of the beach, where my ancestors lived for thousands of years. How does it become, or how can it become, something that's mine? And there's an element that's totally tongue-in-cheek. But at the same time, there's also a very sincere effort to salvage the pieces of what belongs to me and what belongs to my ancestors."

"Love to me is rooted in empathy and compassion and is being able to feel and to put yourself, to the best of your ability, in the shoes of another, to create spaces where those subjective experiences can come together and find commonality. And also if someone we love needs something, love is being able to provide it within a space of reciprocal support and care. Reciprocity has to play out not only in human relationships but also in human-and-land relationships, in animal-and-human relationships. Animals already know this. And we, humans, have a lot of catching up to do, you know?"

3 **Jose Villalobos**  
 MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST  
 based in EL PASO and  
 SAN ANTONIO, TX.

"A lot of my connection to dirt is from growing up in Ciudad Juárez. My family was never from money. And I remember the way their houses looked. There were cement floors and dirt floors. So I connected to this personally but also visually. A lot of my visual research was looking into the braceros, seeing the terrain they were crossing, seeing what the lands, what the border, looked like. So I started to connect to this a lot and think about this a lot. And for this specific exhibition art piece, I wanted to talk about the story of one particular bracero who was gay and had a very interesting story. Because we don't get to hear that, you know? Queer history has been very concentrated on whiteness."

## Glossary

### adobe:

A Spanish word whose origins are from the Arabic *al-tuba*, "the brick," which came from the Coptic *tobe*, and from the Egyptian *dbt*, meaning "brick." Sun-dried brick is used to build earthen structures, commonly in arid regions throughout the U.S. Southwest. About a third of the world's population—approximately three billion people on six continents—live in buildings constructed of earth or adobe.

### adobera/o:

A community-recognized adobe builder, oftentimes a master elder who maintains the construction and cultural preservation of adobe buildings.

### rammed earth:

The process of gathering site-specific soils and clays to build human-made layered earthen structures.

### compressed earth block (CEB):

Eighteenth-century architect François Cointeraux developed the first modern CEB mechanical press to construct faster, larger rammed earth bricks. CEB's contemporary industrial use is seen as controversial by community adobe-builders and environmentalists because it minimizes the cultural integrity of adoberos' ancestral work and requires more embodied energy and carbon-dioxide outputs. CEB is a faster way of constructing earthen structures, but its embodied ecological energy and impact is more significant and ecologically costly than adobe buildings.

### zoquete:

(Nahuatl: zoqitli) mud

10 **Carlos Jaramillo**  
 PHOTOGRAPHER based in  
 LOS ANGELES, CA.

"I got asked to photograph a story on people dying as they crossed the border due to the rising heat of climate change. I think people have always talked about the rising heat causing deaths, but a recent article came out that proved scientifically that it's really happening. To do the story, I talked to the people and explained that my parents are both immigrants. I'd say, I'm not here for me, I'm here for you guys. I'm here to tell your story. I'm not going to stop you or slow you down. We ended up hiking eight miles in 110 degree weather. It was completely worth it because it felt really personal to me because of my own parents' history of crossing the border. I felt like I needed to do it right."

7 **Christine Howard Sandoval**  
 MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST  
 based in BAKERSFIELD, CA  
 and VANCOUVER, CANADA.

"I started thinking about the possibility and the practice of having a back-and-forth conversation with the past through my own work and through the material itself. The material actually holds objects that hold seeds. It holds bits of bone. It holds fingerprints. It holds traces of our ancestors bodies and labor. It holds echoes of sound and time. And all of that is being encapsulated, encapsulated in this form of the brick. And the bricks are literally melting back into the ground because that's what they do. They're always meant to go back to the ground. And that's another thing that I love about them. I think they're the truest monument because they are literally not meant to last. I think if Indigenous people had a monument, it would be made of the earth and would be made to go back to the earth."

4 **Reyes Padilla**  
 ARTIST based in  
 ALBUQUERQUE and  
 SANTA FE, NM.

"A lot of doubt comes from growing up in Santa Fe and feeling like an outsider in my own city. Santa Fe's so catered to tourists and not necessarily the locals. So materials for 'Synful Nortenos' were important because I wanted to showcase things that felt like childhood, things that felt precious and unique to growing up, like playing in arroyos and finding mica. When I learned how to create art with mica, I created with the intention of reflecting on childhood. I'm in Albuquerque now, and even though it's not too far from Santa Fe, it feels way different. It's pretty therapeutic to work with materials from where I grew up."

## Mud Kin is an ongoing curatorial land-based mapping project.

Interviews by Tracy Fenix

### TEAM CREDITS

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1. Arlene Mejorado
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### GLOSSARY CREDITS

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