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**EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO PRESENTS**

***CANDIDA ALVAREZ: CIRCLE, POINT, HOOP***

**On View April 24 – August 3, 2025**



**L:** Candida Alvarez, *Soy (I Am) Boricua*, 1989. Acrylic and oil on wood panels, 68 x 46 in. Collection of the artist. Photo: Tom Van Eynde. **R:** *Estoy Bien*, 2017. Latex, ink, acrylic and enamel on PVC mesh with aluminum, 77 x 135 x 26 in. Collection of El Museo del Barrio, New York. Gift of the Acquisitions Committee with the additional support of Bob Clark, Martin Nesbitt & Anita Blanchard, and Mark & Allyson Rose. Photograph by Martin Seck/Courtesy of El Museo del Barrio, New York.

**NEW YORK, NY, January 22, 2025** — El Museo del Barrio is proud to present *Candida Alvarez: Circle, Point, Hoop*, the first large-scale museum survey of the renowned artist Candida Alvarez (b. 1955, Brooklyn, New York). Curated by Rodrigo Moura, Chief Curator; Zuna Maza, Assistant Curator; with Alexia Arrizurieta, Curatorial Assistant, this timely exhibition explores five decades of the Brooklyn-born Puerto Rican artist's dynamic practice. Alvarez continues to innovate across diverse mediums, including painting, collage, drawing, embroidery, installation, printmaking, sculpture, and video. The show features rarely seen works, offering a comprehensive view of her influential career.

Alvarez's engagement with painting, drawing, and collage as the central disciplines of her practice has uniquely advanced a non-hierarchical dialogue between abstraction and figuration. Her works thoughtfully interweave formal exploration, personal narrative, and conceptual strategies. Emerging in the New York art scene of the late 1970s, she initially focused on

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figurative works that directly reflected her experiences as a female Puerto Rican artist in a predominantly white, male-dominated art world. By the 1990s, Alvarez began incorporating conceptual approaches, drawing on games, language, and other representational systems, while simultaneously experimenting with materials and forms.

"Although Candida Alvarez's work has been deeply influential, it has yet to receive the full visibility and recognition it deserves," says Patrick Charpenel, Executive Director of El Museo del Barrio. "We are thrilled to spotlight her remarkable career in *Circle, Point, Hoop*, bringing her powerful contributions to a wider audience and honoring her place within our community and the art world at large."

Even though Alvarez has exhibited her work across the U.S. and internationally since the 1980s, *Circle, Point, Hoop* marks the artist's first museum survey, offering audiences a fuller picture of her practice in all its depth and complexity. Organized into sections, the exhibition highlights how key formal and conceptual themes have emerged from specific bodies of work and pivotal moments in her career. Within these sections, medium, form, and subject elaborate a dynamic exchange between representation and abstraction, text and image, identity and place.

"Although it follows a loosely chronological order, the show departs from a traditional retrospective format by bringing pieces from different moments in dialog to celebrate Alvarez's artistic freedom and significant impact on the arts," explains Rodrigo Moura.

References to family, dance, music, and the artist's lived experiences are often fused with art historical commentary and witty formal experiments. The exhibition's title, which is drawn from a 1996 work, evokes the recurrent theme of circles in her work and the symbolic and literary interplay that shapes Alvarez's multidisciplinary practice.

"Alvarez has played a part in El Museo's history—as part of the curatorial department and as an artist," shares Zuna Maza. "It is an honor to continue our relationship and celebrate her dynamic and influential artistic practice."

In the late 1970s, Alvarez was part of the curatorial department at El Museo, where she helped organize exhibitions like *Confrontación: ambiente y espacio* (*Confrontation: Environment and Space*, 1977), a groundbreaking collaboratively organized group show which she also participated in. Most recently, her painting *Estoy Bien (I'm Fine)* (2017) inspired the title of El Museo's inaugural triennial, *ESTAMOS BIEN – La Trienal 20/21*.

*Candida Alvarez: Circle, Point, Hoop* will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue, featuring newly commissioned essays by Shiben Banerji, Terry R. Myers, Susanna V. Temkin, and Adriana Zavala that shed light on Alvarez's artistic journey. Alongside these essays and a plate section, the publication will be supplemented by archival materials, such as photographs and ephemera, providing an in-depth view of her life and career. With this publication, El Museo aims to bring Alvarez's legacy to a wider audience, offering valuable insights for art enthusiasts, artists, and researchers alike.

## SPONSORS

*Candida Alvarez: Circle, Point, Hoop* is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and Terra Foundation for American Art. Additional support is provided by Larry & Marilyn Fields, Martin Nesbitt & Anita Blanchard, and Mark & Allyson Rose.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Candida Alvarez (b. 1955, Brooklyn, NY) is an artist and educator whose artistic career spans five decades. Regarded as one of her generation's most innovative and experimental painters, Alvarez's formally rigorous abstract and figurative works weave in personal and cultural memory, art historical references, wordplay, and everyday life. Alvarez received a BFA from Fordham University, Lincoln Center (1977), and an MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale School of Art (1997). She has participated in residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (1981), Studio Museum in Harlem (1985), Pilchuck Glass School (1998), and LUMA Foundation (2023), among others. Recent awards include the Trellis Art Fund Award (2024), the Latinx Artist Fellowship Award (2022), and American Academy of Arts and Letters Award (2022).

Selected solo shows include (Title forthcoming), Richard Gray Gallery, New York (April 2025); *Candida Alvarez. Stretching, Nesting, Reaching, Feeling*, Monira Foundation at Mana Contemporary, Chicago (2024); *Multihyphenate*, Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago (2023); *Palimpsest*, GAVLAK Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, Palm Beach, FL; and *Candida Alvarez: Here*, Chicago Cultural Center (2017). She has been included in group presentations including *Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s—Today*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2022-2023); *no existe un mundo poshuracán: Puerto Rican Art in the Wake of Hurricane María*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2022-2023), and *ESTAMOS BIEN – La Trienal 20/21*, El Museo del Barrio (2021), among others. Her work is in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; El Museo del Barrio; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA; and the Whitney Museum, among others.

Alvarez taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for 25 years, where she now is Professor Emerit. Currently, she is the Alex Katz Chair in Painting at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York. She lives and works between Brooklyn, Chicago, and Baroda, MI. Alvarez is represented by Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

## ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

El Museo del Barrio is the nation's leading Latinx and Latin American cultural institution. The Museum welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of these communities through its extensive Permanent Collection, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events. The Museum is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street in New York City.

The Museum is open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 11:00am – 5:00pm. Pay what you wish. To connect with El Museo via social media, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#). For more information, please visit [www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org).

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