



CHICAGO

**Diana Guerrero-Maciá:
"SLOW BLOSSOMING"
at Carrie Secrist Gallery**

Veteran textile artist Diana Guerrero-Maciá's abstracted, hard-edged works are as much about the geometry of quilting as they are about the aesthetics of Constructivism. In "SLOW BLOSSOMING," Guerrero-Maciá creates a gallery-wide installation of unstretched tapestries, functional objects and even a pair of custom drum kits. Some of the Chicago-based artist's large-scale, grommeted wall pieces are hung with their bottom edge grazing the floor, while others are installed almost touching the ceiling. This simple departure from the typical, eye-level hanging of painting reinforces these works' affinity with banners and signage, prompting the viewer to look for the content within Guerrero-Maciá's formalism. However, none of that content is blatant or didactic, and Guerrero-Maciá's subtle messages range from social issues to art historical critique. In a pair of pieces, *Snowthing at Night* and *Snowthing, The Other Unicorn* (both 2015), a simply stylized snowman occupies the center of each composition. While bits of bold, primary colors are peppered throughout these pieces (and many others on display here), the prevailing palette is neutral, with many works nodding toward the monochrome. With this reference to a specific era of Modernism, we can see by contrast how the medium of textile can be almost radical. Guerrero-Maciá's hand-sewn process is warm, domestic and undeniably gendered. Her material, along with the kitsch hearts, rainbows, targets and stars floating amongst the rectilinear forms of her banners, flies in the face of the cool, macho heroism of Minimalism.

The social issues of Guerrero-Maciá's works are not so much gleaned from the signs and symbols of her artworks as they are felt through the overall environment she has created in the gallery. This exhibition is intended as a contemporary take on the notion of the salon—a haven of aesthetics, dialogue and camaraderie. In "SLOW BLOSSOMING," Guerrero-Maciá diverts some emphasis from her own messages within her pieces, shifting the focus to the important social activity we are a part of within the space and amongst the art. With artist-designed seating and call-and-response percussion performances scheduled throughout the exhibition's duration, visitors are encouraged to linger, perhaps even longer than they normally might. "SLOW BLOSSOMING" opened two days after Election Day 2016. As many of us attended the reception laden with fear and anxiety about the outcome, the gathering of our artistic community of liberals and outsiders suddenly felt much more important than it did in October.

—ROBIN DLUZEN

"SNOWTHING AT NIGHT," 2015

Diana Guerrero-Maciá

WOOL, COTTON, BELGIAN LINEN, DYE, ARMY BLANKETS, AND BLEACH ON COMMANDO CLOTH, 72" X 108"

PHOTO: COURTESY CARRIE SECRIST GALLERY