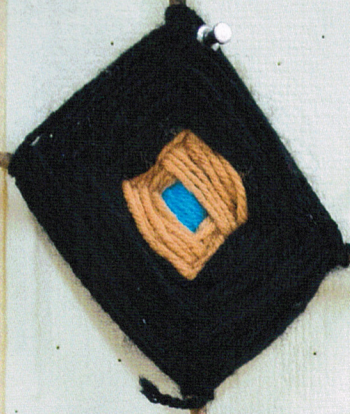
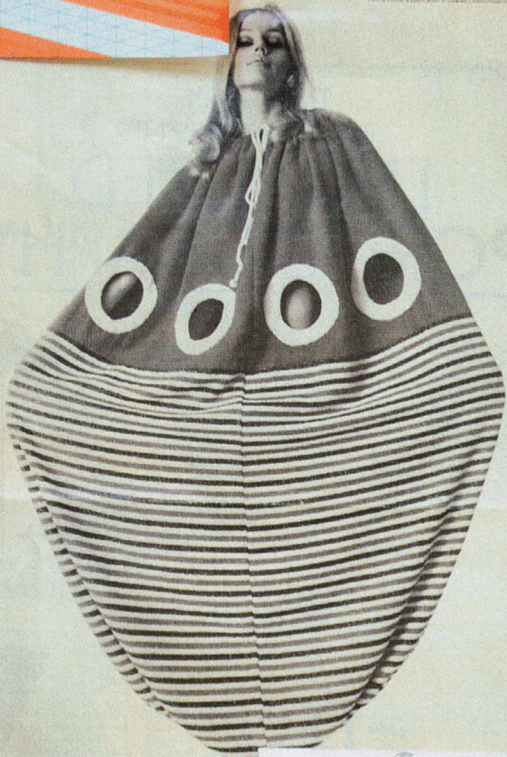




rainbow bridge



Sartorial
mono.
classic

the devil's daughter
is getting
married

INVISIBLE
RAINBOWS

mother's

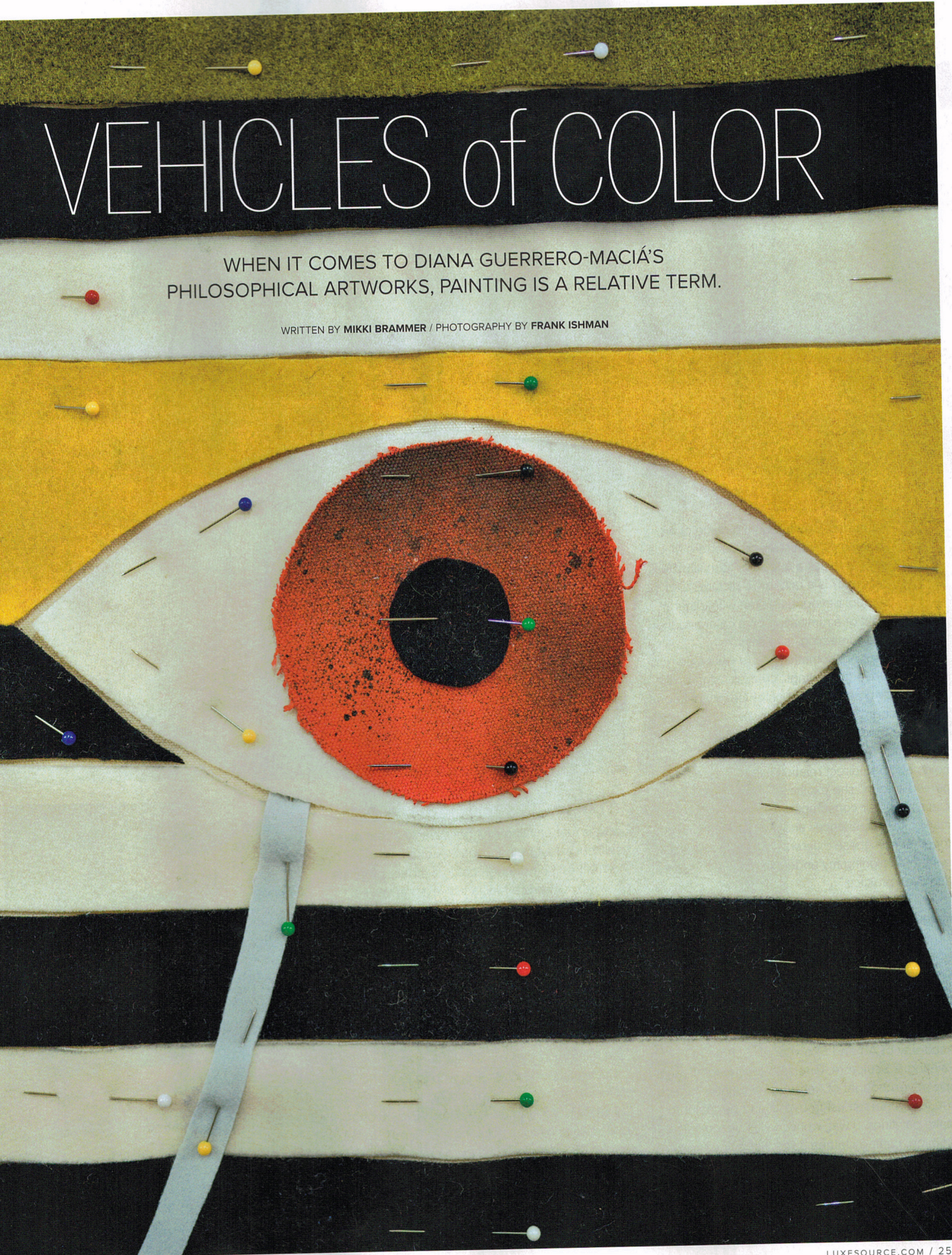
LA CUBA-VANA

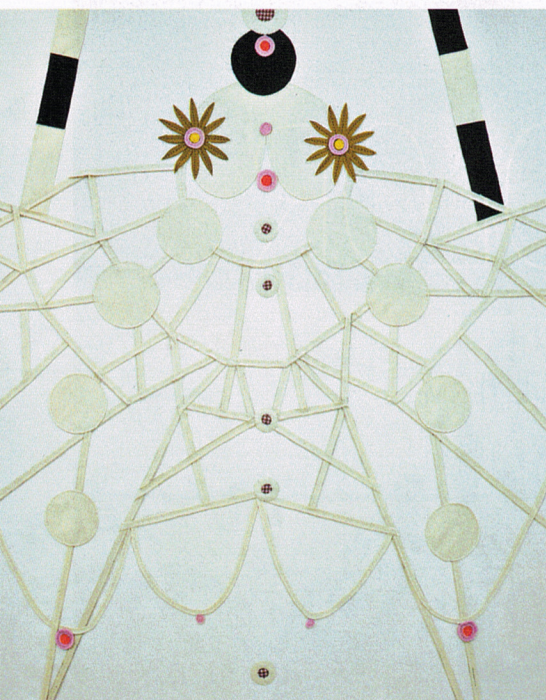


VEHICLES of COLOR

WHEN IT COMES TO DIANA GUERRERO-MACIÁ'S
PHILOSOPHICAL ARTWORKS, PAINTING IS A RELATIVE TERM.

WRITTEN BY MIKKI BRAMMER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK ISHMAN





The easiest way to begin a piece of art, mixed-media artist Diana Guerrero-Maciá says, is to ask a question. “Can slowness blossom? Is a rainbow a picture? Can a symbol devour us? I start with either a poetic thought or a rumination on a color and then expand it into something,” she says.

Those resulting “somethings” are what Guerrero-Maciá calls hybrid paintings, created using textile collage. Her childhood love of the beauty of Robert Rauschenberg’s collage works sparked her first foray into the medium, but, as an adult, it’s the psychology behind it that fascinates her. “Collage holds a strong direct relationship to the world a person lives in,” she explains. “Gathering materials can reveal our consumption—it talks about the market, the experiences and access. Putting things together from these different sources is a complex system of aligning my understandings of histories and lived practice.”

Her hybrid paintings often comprise used materials—a U.S. Army blanket, a woman’s coat—as well as leather, silk, vinyl, wool, corduroy and wood, brought together via myriad techniques including quilting, sewing and chine-collé. Certain works also feature functional objects, such as a set of seating inspired by a child’s color wheel.

Though she studied painting at Cranbrook Academy of Art and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Guerrero-Maciá admits that she never thought of herself as a painter. In fact, she found herself using everything but paint to make paintings. “I was working with deconstructed clothing, cutting clothes apart, flattening them, and piecing them back together by hand, as a way to sort of expand the materiality of painting,” she says. “That practice led me to thinking about painting being a verb and looking for materials that I could construct a picture with.” The point, she

adds, is that painting isn’t necessarily about paint itself, but about being a vehicle for color.

Whether it be through color, symbols, graphics or words, Guerrero-Maciá purveys narratives that often reference historical or cultural periods. From medieval millefleur tapestries to modernist sculptures and cowboy culture, she seeks to find a through line between old and new. “I’m interested in millefleur tapestries because they have a vast interlocking interpretation of history,” she explains. “They use these networks of symbols and are often simplified. So I’m kind of curious about how I can reinterpret that in a 21st-century idea.”

Currently, Guerrero-Maciá, who is an associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, is working on a new series of hybrid textile paintings for a solo show at Carrie Secrist Gallery. “People come up to me and confide in me, saying, ‘Oh, your work is beautiful, but it’s really smart.’ They say the word ‘beautiful’ like it’s bad,” she laughs. “But I think my work shares the joy of color, form and material. I certainly hope it translates to people in that way.”



Diana Guerrero-Maciá's Logan Square studio is filled with bright materials, such as hand-dyed deconstructed clothing (opposite, bottom) and works in progress, including *The Let Down* (opposite, left) and *Born in The Sixties* (opposite, right). On the table are working drawings for a solo show at Carrie Secrist Gallery.

