

## ARTIST STATEMENT

As a multi-media/performance and installation artist who works closely on the fragility of history and identity, I present works that refer to an immigrant experience through the lens of my own experience as a Puerto Rican woman, who is perpetually between here and there, who is with a language and without, and who is in a place and simultaneously out.

Using humble, ephemeral processes, ready-mades and materials that layer and hide digitally manipulated imagery, I test the fixed notion of identity and its ability to polarize one as the Other. To this end, I regularly introduce the form of the Pepper's Ghost hologram in my work. Originally developed in 1860s and used for creating illusions, known as "ghosts" in theatrical performances and theme parks, it is a two-way glass mirror positioned at a 45 degree angle. The Pepper's Ghost screen acts as both a mirror and reflecting medium, simultaneously producing reality and illusion. In *Caridad* (3/2009), for example, there are three elements—a model dingy, a two way-mirror and a video performance projected of myself, chroma keyed out of the background and rowing perpetually in place. Uncanny, ephemeral and amusing by nature, this construction of vision is a tenuous one since the illusion quickly falls apart if the viewer steps to either side, revealing the simple mechanics of the work. Yet, this miniature world, persists. The viewer witnesses a situation where no resolution is achieved nor stabilized, a place where the American Dream of naturalization is left unfulfilled.

Presented singularly or in multiple, live or recorded, I embody the formation of the feminine identity in response to migration and in response to encoding in the American experience. I consciously bring forth my own personal history yet also extend beyond the autobiography to the metaphor for the female experience. In my work, I walk the streets, work the hotels, make mixed tapes, and leave the country by any means necessary. In *My English is Not So Good Looking* (2/2010), I perform all of the characters and choreography for the last 50 seconds of 'America' from *West Side Story*. In this moment as the body reflected in miniature upon a transparent screen, I am every girl who wanted to sing and dance in *West Side Story* and every one who chose not to hear the misrepresentation of Puerto Rican urban culture. Through self reflection and reflection of the self, the viewer comes to understand that identity, even gender, is not only an intrinsic quality but also a performance.

Reflecting on a larger global narrative, my work remixes popular culture and unmasking histories of the colonization. In a new installation, *24K (24 Quilates)* alludes to gold's power to reflect. Projected upon a gold chain, I tight rope walk across an impossible path in *Cuerda Floja* (2012). Reflected upon large gold earrings in *Pendiente* (2012), I dangle within an impossibility, coyly blowing kisses to my viewer. Both literally and figuratively, this work reflects upon the global currency that dictates value, currency and wealth. These are the dictates that set the ships to sail in our collective history, that continues to string humanity along in a desire to achieve material success and that hangs the unfortunate for the crime of wanting more.