

Irene Carvajal creates art objects and art activations which in turn begin a dialogue about immigration, labor, globalized economies, and memory. Carvajal begins this exploration from her own trans-national, hybrid identity using social practice and collaborations to integrate and expand on the individual and collective impact of the intersection between these themes. Through the study and use of mass-produced objects she threads narratives and parallels between the many individuals around the world who make and use these objects. Mass produced goods become cultural and socio-political objects with which to study the Anthropocene, humankind's geological epoch here on earth, and our own place within it.

Carvajal is highly influenced by Anne Hamilton and her use of metaphors through materiality. Hamilton's multilayered and complex social projects, in particular *The Event of a Thread*, where she combines the importance of the symbolism of fabric, made of multiple individual threads woven together, as similar to communities and individuals. Hamilton's works generously offers space and time for reflection and pause. Another profound influence for Carvajal is Guillermo Gomez-Peña with his complex poetry, his use of Spanglish as intellectual and academic language, his defiance of "what is" and his outspoken, irreverent, loud, and hypnotic offerings of "what could be" as seen in his *Radical Art*, *Radical Communities* and *Radical Dreams* performances. The great narrative wealth of Columbian artist Oscar Muñoz is another influence for Carvajal. Muñoz's relationship with illusion, truth and reality and his poetic use of process and materiality is something Carvajal strives for in her works. In particular in his work titled *Narcissi in Progress* reveals and enlists the process of screen printing to illustrate the impermanence of self by screen printing on water and then letting the water evaporate.

Irene enters the art world through the study of printmaking. Contemporary printmaking can no longer be relegated solely to the creation of multiples. It has been freed from this narrow definition to become a language of many possibilities - a learning, explorative and essentially infinite iterative process.

Contemporary printmaking along with Carvajal's interest in teaching and activism leads her to explore Art Activation. This process, which also goes by the name of Social Practice, is a form of art-focused interaction between the audience, social systems, and the artist or artwork. Carvajal's installations consist of printed or cast objects, sound, movement, repurposed mass produced objects and public actions. The interaction between these elements serve to start dialogues between notions of globalized labor, immigration, and identity.

In 2023 Google invited Carvajal to create a series of art activations entitled *sTILE* for the inauguration of the new Google Campus in Mountain View, California, launched on October 14, 2023. Carvajal created a 4 ft x 17 ft printed mural consisting of 195 screen printed stencils – the same number as countries in the world. Carvajal selected a subset of countries, researched traditional patterns from each of these nations, and created a screen printing stencil for each. The countries selected represent some of the wealthiest, some of the poorest as well as the nationalities most represented in the San Francisco Bay Area. The subset of countries was chosen to consider how wealth and knowledge is shared, communicated, and distributed around the world and how we participate in the global economy.

The public plays a particularly important role in the creation of Google's sTILE mural. Participants select a stencil, intervene the image with ink and then print it onto the mural whichever way they chose. In these interventions each stencil becomes a unique monotype, an individual image. The relationship between global issues and each individual was illustrated by the individual contributors. On its completion, the mural will be installed in Google's The Huddle space.

Carvajal's projects and ideas often require collaborators and assistants, especially when the project is an art activation. Musicians, photographers, printmakers, sound artists, and performance artists have worked and assisted Carvajal in the completion of several works of art. Carvajal is also a founding member of the art collective we da pepo. Since 2020 this group of artists has been on visualizing the experience of being trans-national within the United States. She has also collaborated with Future Farmers, an artist collective that engages geologists, ceramicists, sound artists, and printmakers in a series of explorations and actions focused on the soil.