

Complex Characters: The Soft Sculptures of Maria A. GuzmÃ¡n Capron

Description



Maria A. GuzmÃ¡n Capron. Source: Platform Art

The soft sculptures of Maria A. GuzmÃ¡n Capron depict larger-than-life curvy, vibrant characters whose joyful effervescence reflects the rich complexity of Capronâ??s multicultural identity, which spans Europe, South America and the United States. She says, â??I need a variety of sources, because that is the only way I will approximate the complexity of a self and its contextual relationships, which in my specific case includes having South American parents (Columbian and Peruvian); being born and living in Italy as a child; living in Colombia as a teenager; and now living in America for 25 years.â?•



Sigueme (follow me), 2021

Capron was born in Milan, Italy, in 1981 to Peruvian and Colombian parents, but the family later relocated, spending time in Colombia and Texas. From here Capron trained as a painter at the University of Houston School of Art, graduating in 2004, followed some years later by an MFA from California College of the Arts, completed in 2015. While she initially set out to become a painter, during her undergraduate degree Capron developed a deep passion for fabrics and clothing, as she explains, â??I have always loved clothing and the fabrics that make it, but it was during my undergraduate degree that I started incorporating these materials into my work. I started going to thrift stores. I fell in love with the variety of colour, pattern, and texture I found there, and I wanted to bring that into my work.â?•



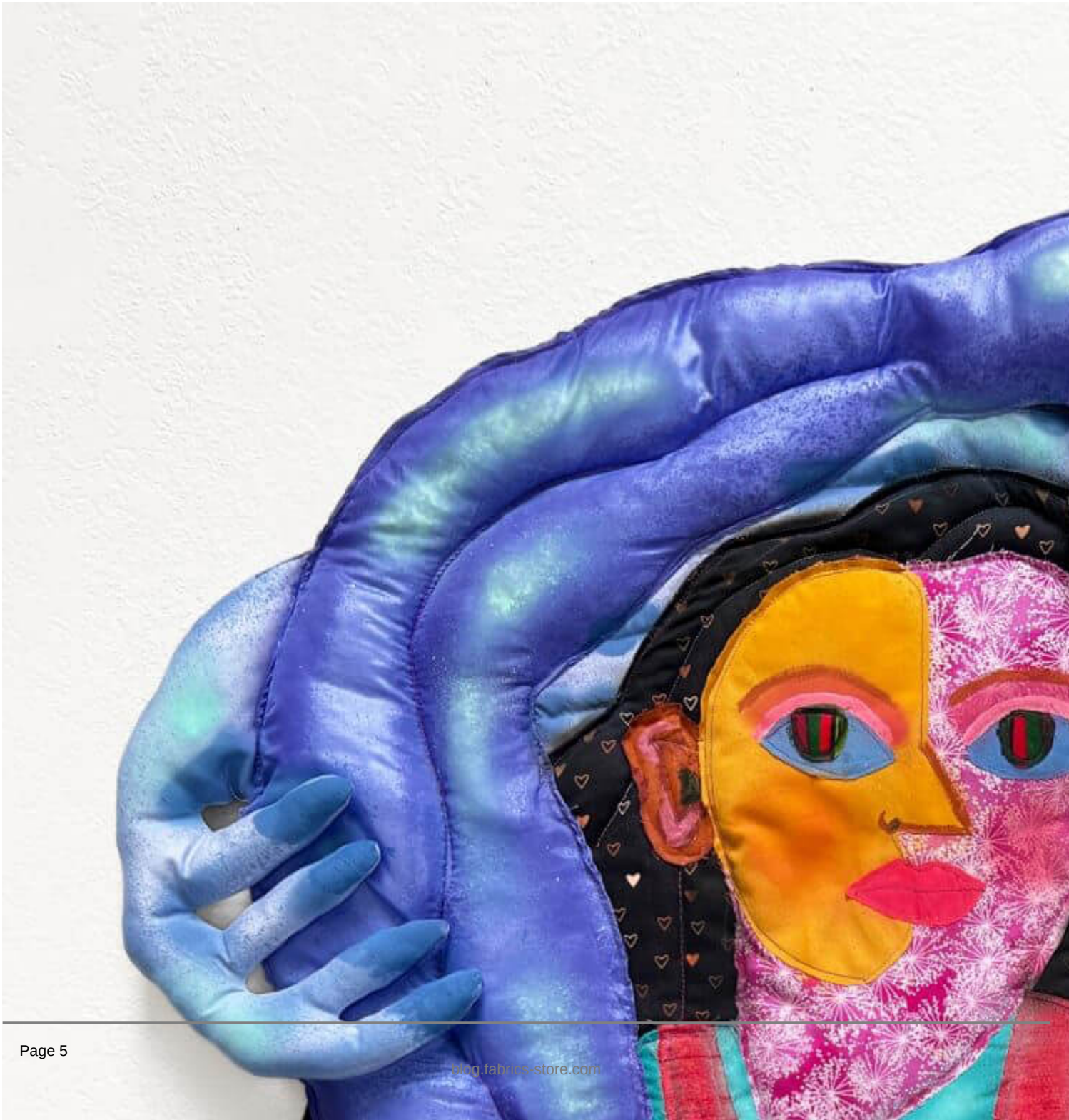
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Ahora nunca y para siepre (right now never and for ever), 2023



Ahora nunca y para siepre (right now never and for ever) detail, 2023

Over the years, bringing together second-hand, upcycled textiles into vibrant, colourful, and eclectic arrangements has become a fitting metaphor for the complexities of individual identities in our global, pluralistic world (including her own), as Capron explains, â??I look for fabrics that encompass a varied vocabulary, and I have very diverse sources as a result. I see this process as representative of many immigrantsâ?? experiences.â?•



Maria A. GuzmÃ¡n Capron, Iris, 2022.

Before learning how to sew, Capron produced her earliest, undergraduate fabric artworks by using cardboard and glue, but she soon realised it made more sense to stitch together her creations. â??Early on I did learn to use a very basic sewing machine,â?• she explains, â??â?¦ and I made soft sculptures, wearable masks, installations, costume for performance.â?• She has been steadily honing her sewing skills ever since.



Maria A. GuzmÃ¡n Capron, La Santa y Su Pecado, 2023. Photo: Ed Mumford. C
Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles.

Re-entering study in California in 2015 was just the platform Capron needed to expand her work. â??It was in graduate school in San Francisco, with the space and time to focus on my art practice, that my current process really clicked into place,â?• she recalls, adding, â??I started to quilt and reintroduced paint and figurative elements into my practice. This formed the basis of my current work.â?•


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More recently, Capron has begun to refer to her soft sculptures as â??hot aliens,â?• a playful nickname lifted from her identity card calling her an â??alienâ?? following her first move to the United States. Rejecting the limiting nature of the term â??alienâ??, she has come instead to embrace her diverse culture through the process of making art, noting, â??As a person from many places and cultures, I am not less.â?• She describes the â??hot alienâ?• as an outrageous, seductive, complicated character who can take you on a wild ride, and encourage you to see the world in a new, more inclusive way. In some sculptures she embraces the typically curvaceous forms associated with Latina women, while other works are more complex and nuanced. Capron says, â??The characters I portray are muscular, masculine, and feminine; they are tender, sexy, and flirtatious; they can stretch and bend their bodies without limits; and in all that they celebrate, I find myself and create a place in which I can be all of it and more.â?•

CATEGORY

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2. TEXTILES IN HISTORY & ART
3. WOMEN IN ART

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