



Teresa Margolles, *Portrait*, 2025, 750 photographs of individuals from the trans+ community from Mexico and the United Kingdom, 14 x 11 in (35.6 x 27.9 cm) each, (detail).

48 WALKER ST | OCT 10 – NOV 1, 2025

Teresa Margolles

Portrait

James Cohan is pleased to present *Portrait*, an exhibition of new work by Teresa Margolles, on view from October 10 through November 1, 2025, at the gallery's 48 Walker Street location. This is Margolles' third solo exhibition with James Cohan. The gallery will host an opening reception with the artist on Friday, October 10, from 6-8 PM.

Teresa Margolles' *Portrait* is a monumental photographic installation that confronts the viewer with the intimate and lasting presence of individuals from the trans+ community in Mexico and the United Kingdom. Comprised of 750 photographs, *Portrait* captures a profound act of preservation, honoring the individuality and lived experiences of each participant. Margolles casts her subjects' faces in plaster to create *improntas*, imprints or masks. These casts are photographed at 1:1 scale, immortalizing every detail from makeup and facial hair to the subtle textures of skin. The result is a poignant and visually compelling tribute to the enduring identities of those whose existence remains under threat.

Created with the participants of the artist's Fourth Plinth commission *Mil Veces un Instante* (*A Thousand Times in an Instant*) in Trafalgar Square, London, *Portrait* uses a minimalist, grid-like format reminiscent of Margolles' earlier works to create a serial rhythm that both unifies and differentiates the many faces. The structure echoes the language of architecture and order, yet within this, each face interrupts the possibility of repetition. This

visual tension between sameness and specificity, anonymity and self, drives the emotional force of the installation. The grid does not flatten the identities it holds; instead it frames them in a space where they can be seen clearly, powerfully, side by side, not as statistics or symbols, but as people. In Margolles' words, "*Every face has a story attached.*" *Portrait* serves as a memorial to Karla La Borrada, a singer who was one of the artist's dear friends. In December 2015, Karla was murdered in Juárez, Mexico, and her murder remains unsolved today. A fixture of the trans community in Juárez, Karla's death was a devastating loss.

While casting the *improntas*, Margolles created a suite of Polaroid photographs that serve as both physical artifacts and visual testaments to the profound exchanges she had with her sitters. Each session unfolded as a space for testimony beginning with Margolles speaking of her friend Karla, to whom the project is dedicated, and opening a space for the participant's own story to emerge. The Polaroids, intentionally manipulated by the artist to reveal glitches, multiplications and distortions, hold aura not only as singular physical objects but as vessels that capture the full presence, life, and spirit of each individual.

In the front gallery, the installation *Cuerpos*, 2015-2025, presents delicate remnants of threads used to sew up bodies after their autopsies. Each of the threads stitched together between two gallery walls is a gesture of remembrance representing a particular person who has had their life taken. This act carries the weight of grief, thoughtfully marking the absence of lives lost and the ongoing threat faced by those pushed to the margins of society. The intervention is not spectacle but testimony, a refusal to turn tragedy into a digestible image, and a means of asserting autonomy when visibility can become a form of exposure. Together, the individual threads form a boundary or barrier whose material composition commands attention and invokes accountability.

Teresa Margolles (b. 1963, Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico) has exhibited internationally for more than twenty-five years. She will present an extensive mid-career survey at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico in November 2025. Her work has previously been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at Mattatoio, Rome (2022); MUAC, Mexico City (2021); Es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca, Spain (2020); MAMBO, Bogotá, Colombia (2019); Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago de Chile (2019); Kunsthalle Krems, Austria (2019); BPS22, Charleroi, Belgium (2019); and Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2018), among others. Margolles has received numerous awards, including the Artes Mundi Prize and the Prince Claus Award for Culture and Development in 2012.

In addition to recently featuring in the 16th Cuenca Biennial (2023), the 11th Bienal de Lanzarote (2022), the 22nd Sydney Biennale (2020), and Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016), Margolles has participated in multiple editions of the Venice Biennale, including representing Mexico at the 53rd edition (2009), and exhibiting her work at the 58th (2019), where she received a Special Jury Mention, and the 60th edition (2024), curated by Adriano Pedrosa. Her most ambitious public project to date, *Mil Veces un Instante (A Thousand Times in an Instant)*, is currently on view at the Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square in London, through the end of the year.

Her work is held in numerous institutions worldwide, including Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Torino, Italy; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Colección Fundación ARCO, Madrid, Spain; Colección Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Colección Isabel y Agustín Coppel, Culiacán, Mexico; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland; FRAC Lorraine, Metz, France; Gund Gallery at Kenyon College, Gambier, OH; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland; MACBA, Barcelona, Spain; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; MoMA, New York, NY; MUAC, Mexico City, Mexico; Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico; Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico; Museion Museo d'arte moderna e contemporanea, Bolzano, Italy; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany; Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Poland; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK; Phoenix Art Museum, AZ; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ; Rollins Museum of Art, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL; Tate Modern, London, UK; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal, Canada; and Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France, among others.

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