



"Columbus artist's homecoming show brings 70 works, live music, nature-inspired art to CMA"

By Chrissy Morton

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Clare Rojas (American b. 1976), 'The Glowing Night Shade', 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Jessica Silverman and Andrew Kreps Gallery.

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WSYX) — A Columbus-born artist is bringing more than 70 works of painting, sculpture, works on paper and performance back to her hometown for a museum exhibition.

The Columbus Museum of Art will present *Clare Rojas: Returning* from Sept. 18 through Feb. 7, 2027, marking Rojas' first hometown show. Curated by Anna Katherine Brodbeck, deputy director for curatorial affairs, the exhibition spans fifteen years of Rojas' cross-disciplinary work and considers her recent return to Ohio after years spent in Northern California.

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Clare Rojas (American b. 1976), 'The Gossips', 2025. Oil on linen. Museum Purchase, Derby Fund.

Rojas has built a practice that bridges abstraction, folk imagery, feminism, ecology, spirituality, music and storytelling. *Returning* explores homecoming as both a personal and metaphorical journey, with themes of memory, selfhood and renewal seen throughout her art.

Brodbeck said the show offers visitors a chance to experience Rojas' work through the lens of the place where she first developed as an artist. "I am honored to work on Clare Rojas' first exhibition in her hometown, which explores the rich resonances of coming home to not only a place but to oneself," said Brodbeck. "We look forward to sharing an exhibition that allows audiences to move through her work in an intuitive and personal way."

The exhibition is arranged non-chronologically, unfolding through thematic groupings instead of a traditional retrospective. Audiences will encounter motifs from nature like birds, moons, suns, tides, flowers and landscapes. These symbols reflect the internal states of both the artist and those viewing her work, raising ideas of kinship with the natural world and the cycles of destruction and growth.

Drawing on her Peruvian heritage, Rojas' imagery references both universal and ancestral forms. The collection moves from abstract themes of origin to narrative works rooted in portraiture and landscape. Rojas often depicts figures alone, with partners or within families, exploring daily life's intimacy and drama. As the show progresses, landscape and animals take the spotlight, bringing themes of wisdom, refuge, conflict and destruction. The final works evoke homecoming through scenes of domestic life, Midwestern landscapes and migratory birds.

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Clare Rojas (American b. 1976), 'Just Take It All', 2024. Oil on linen. Courtesy of the artist, Jessica Silverman and Andrew Kreps Gallery.

The museum says Rojas' return to Ohio connected her current and earlier lives. She planted California poppies and grew close to local crows, drawing inspiration from both the heartland's flat horizon and California's coastal skies. Birds as recurring symbols of departure and arrival appear throughout the show.

For the exhibition opening, Rojas will perform as Peggy Honeywell, marking her first public musical performance in over a decade. Though she continued to write songs and poetry in recent years, this event will reconnect her visual and musical storytelling for museum audiences. Brooke A. Minto, executive director and CEO of the Columbus Museum of Art, said, "This exhibition recognizes the larger significance of an artist who has continually expanded the boundaries of narrative abstraction and feminist image-making. We see *Returning* as a defining opportunity to bring one of Columbus's important artistic voices into fuller view and to consider how her work speaks to both intimate and widely shared experiences."

Clare Rojas: Returning is supported by the Charles Kleibacker Endowed Fund for Excellence, the Scantland Family, Girlfriend Fund and Everything But The House.

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