

Korn Gallery  
Dorothy Young Center for the Arts  
Drew University  
Madison, NJ 07940

For Immediate Release

## Gabriela Salazar: *Whether Break or Shape*



Gabriela Salazar, *Leaves (We Move Together (September))*, 2023. Photo credit: Jeanette May

Exhibition: April 1-19, 2024  
Free Admission

Artist Reception: Tuesday, April 16th, 4-6pm

The Korn Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition, *Whether Break or Shape*, by artist-in-residence Gabriela Salazar, on view April 1st through April 19th, 2024. The Gallery is located in the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts at Drew University and is open Tuesday through Friday 12:00-4pm, and by appointment. The exhibition, curated by Jason Karolak, includes large-scale paper castings which incorporate natural and gathered materials, and sculpted wall railings made from paper pulp and fired clay.

About the artist:

Gabriela Salazar was born in New York City to architects from Puerto Rico. She has had solo exhibitions at NURTUREart; The Bronx River Arts Center; The Lighthouse Works, Fishers Island; Efrain Lopez Gallery, Chicago; The River Valley Arts Collective at the Al Held Foundation, New York, and with the Climate Museum, in Washington Square Park, NYC. Her work has been included in group shows at the Whitney Museum, Socrates Sculpture Park, the Queens Museum, El Museo del Barrio, The Drawing Center, Candice Madey Gallery, David Nolan Gallery, Someday Gallery, Storm King Art Center, and the Whitney Museum. Salazar's work has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *hyperallergic*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*. Residencies include Workspace (LMCC); Yaddo, MacDowell, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Abrons Arts Center, "Open Sessions" at The Drawing Center, and the Socrates Emerging Artist Fellowship. In 2023 she was named a NYFA/NYSCA Fellow in Craft/Sculpture from The New York Foundation of the Arts. She holds an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design, a BA from Yale University, and lives, works, and teaches in NYC.

#### About the residency and exhibition:

The exhibition *Whether Break or Shape* developed out of Gabriela Salazar's residency (March 4 - April 19, 2024) at Drew's Dorothy Young Center for the Arts, during which she collaborated with students and faculty, conducted research, and produced new site-specific work in the Korn Gallery.

The exhibition is centered around an installation of large-scale paper castings, called *Leaves*, made by laying down prepared sheets of water-soluble paper over leaves, branches, food scraps, Salazar's architect parents' drawing stencils, rusty nails, screws, hinges and brackets, and her daughter's building toys. Salazar then wets the paper until it returns to pulp. As the pulp redries, it becomes a cast of the field of matter, and absorbs the pigments of the plants and objects it covers. The paper works both hang on the wall and cut across the gallery space, and appear to be forming into (or is it breaking apart from?) a fragmented circular form. The *Leaves* invite "frontal" viewing positions, as if we are looking at the graphic and pictorial relationships within a drawing or a painting. But they also carefully occupy dimensional space, suspended into a kind of mobile-like formation, inviting us to notice the architecture, windows, and our own positions within the gallery. Along the walls of the space run pieces of handrails, sculpted from a water-soluble paper pulp with fired clay brackets, part of an ongoing series Salazar calls *Supports*. Some of these appear functional, while other fragments look to be broken, sagging or in disrepair. The imperfect handrail sculptures have the feel of uncanny personality and move the eye along the perimeter of the space with a sense of lyrical line.

Salazar states, "*Whether Break or Shape* comes from wondering about our response to change, crisis, grief, obstacle, difficulty, new circumstances. *Whether* plays on weather, a break in the weather, a new form of weather, a broken weather, a shape of the future gathering in the clouds and heat. It's partly from a distance—looking back, was that a rupture? Or a reincarnation?... Facing climate change, what about our structures needs to be discarded—or entirely reinvented—and can we muster the imagination and will to get there?"

This project extends Salazar's ongoing meditation on our environmental state(s) and her rigorous investigation into natural materials, drawing and sculptural processes, and the compression of personal and human information. She draws specific inspiration from Drew's historic Rose Window (currently hanging in the library), and the patched stone walls and old growth trees on campus. In the gallery, some elements float in delicate suspension, while others succumb to gravity or damage, inviting us to consider (and feel) notions of strength and vulnerability.

For more information please email Visual Arts Coordinator Jason Karolak at [jkarolak@drew.edu](mailto:jkarolak@drew.edu)  
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