Harvey Castro

Nicaragua, 1974 · based in Oakland and Mexico City

Documentary photographer and multidisciplinary artist

Photography · cyanotype and dye sublimation on fabric · installation · experimental film · artist books

INSTITUTIONAL PACKET

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SHORT BIO

Harvey Castro (Nicaragua, 1974) is a documentary photographer and multidisciplinary artist based in Oakland and Mexico City. He turned to photography in 2018 after twenty years in supply chain and software operations. His work follows communities living with the aftermath of disaster, displacement and neglect: in Puerto Rico after Hurricane María, in Guatemala after Hurricanes Eta and Iota, in Oakland, and in Mexico, where he has documented Día de Muertos since 2015 and where, between 2022 and 2025, he made a book on the streets of Mexico City. He extends photography into cyanotype and dye sublimation on fabric, installation, experimental film and handmade books. He received CENTER's Multimedia Storytelling Award (2023) for *Los Olvidados* and The Jim Dietz Award at the Eddie Adams Workshop (2024); as part of that award, he returned to the workshop in 2025 on the Black Team. He held a California Creative Corps Fellowship (2023–2024) for *Reclaiming Home* in Vallejo. He serves on the advisory board of the East Bay Photo Collective in Oakland.

LONG BIO

Harvey Castro (Nicaragua, 1974) is a documentary photographer and multidisciplinary artist based in Oakland and Mexico City. Before photography became his profession in 2018, he spent twenty years in supply chain and software operations.

His long-term project *Los Olvidados* (The Forgotten) began in Puerto Rico in June 2018, nine months after Hurricane María, and continued in Guatemala in 2021, after Hurricanes Eta and Iota. In the Bay Area he documented the 2020 protests in Oakland and, with the residents of Vallejo, made *Reclaiming Home* as a 2023 California Creative Corps Fellow.

In October 2015 he started documenting Día de Muertos in San Miguel de Allende. He has returned to it since in Guadalajara (2016), Mixquic (2017, 2026), Oaxaca (2019, 2022) and Mexico City (2023). A residency at Casa Lu (2022) turned the work toward objects and rooms: cyanotypes on fabric, dye sublimation, a FEMA tarp for a ceiling. He has had solo exhibitions at Koik Contemporary, Mexico City (*Esa Sombra Eres Tú*, 2023), and the Museo Morelense de Arte Contemporáneo Juan Soriano, Cuernavaca (*Cuerpo Substancia Extendida*, 2023), both curated by Juci Reis, and has shown at SF Camerawork and the Harvey Milk Photo Center in San Francisco.

He received CENTER's Multimedia Storytelling Award (2023) for *Los Olvidados* and The Jim Dietz Award at the Eddie Adams Workshop (2024); as part of that award, he returned to the workshop in 2025 on the Black Team. In July 2025 he presented *Los Olvidados* at Galería Metropolitana. His photobook *Ojos que ven, corazón que siente*, made in Mexico City between 2022 and 2025, is an artist's edition of 50 (2026). He founded and directs studio369.ai, which grew from a realization: sustaining a career in photography and art takes the same rigor as managing a supply chain. Its four tools keep the record of a practice in one place: the thinking behind each series, every roll from the receipt to the scan, cyanotypes and prints, books and where each one came from, and cameras and kit. ari, the intelligence in studio369.ai, reads the work from the artist's own material and explains every reading. In his notebook he wrote: "the practice = the manifestation of the philosophy."

ARTIST STATEMENT

After arriving in the San Francisco Bay Area, I learned quickly what it meant to be an "other." English came in about six months, and I became the default translator at home.

My work focuses on the relationship between climate change, migration and identity, and at what happens to people after the news moves on. The name of the series I have worked on since 2018, *Los Olvidados*, means The Forgotten. When I enter these communities, the cruise ships are already docking in San Juan and the tour buses are already driving to Antigua. Life has gone on. In Puerto Rico and Guatemala I document what happens when infrastructure fractures and systems fail; in my experience, infrastructure is the weakest link, and it keeps assistance from reaching people after a disaster. In Mexico City I photographed the marches, and the faces of the disappeared pasted on the city's walls.

Photography is my starting point and one of the mediums I use. Since 2022, in Studio369, I translate the documentary encounter into material form through four systems: dye sublimation, cyanotype, structural installation and experimental film. Materials such as cochinilla and coffee connect the work to histories of exploitation and resilience in the communities I document.

RAID orders that passage: Resilience, Adaptation, Impermanence, Detachment. These are not symbolic categories but material behaviors governing how memory persists in physical form. RAID does not attempt to preserve moments unchanged; it recognizes that survival requires transformation. Memory becomes material, material becomes object, and object becomes carrier.

I am still translating, except now I use a visual language.

SELECTED IMAGES



01 Lluvia de sangre · cyanotype, grana cochinilla, hanging textiles · E4 · 2021 · *Esa Sombra Eres Tú*, KOIK Contemporary, Mexico City, 2023



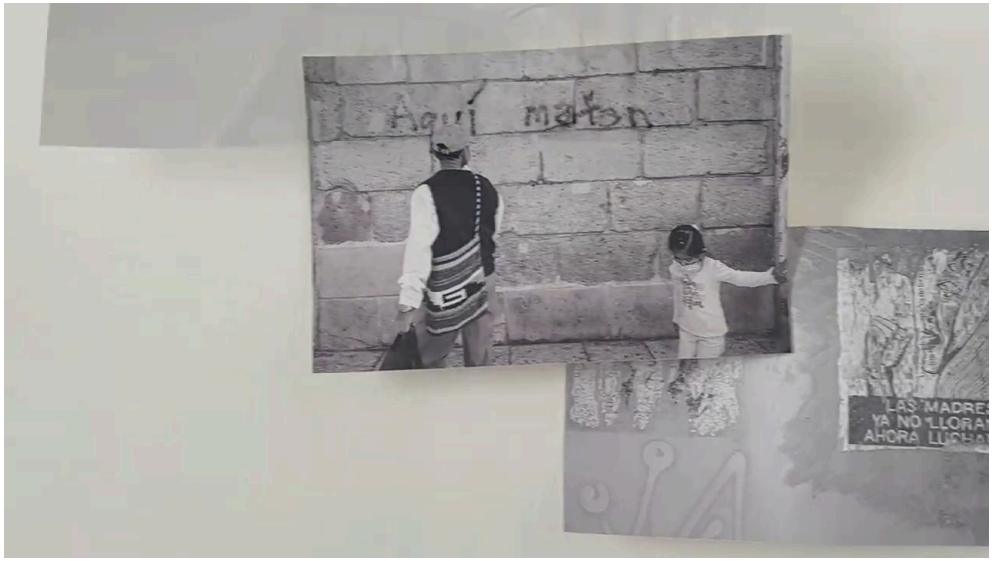
02 Sublime · sublimation on polyester with the FEMA blue tarp · E2 · 2018



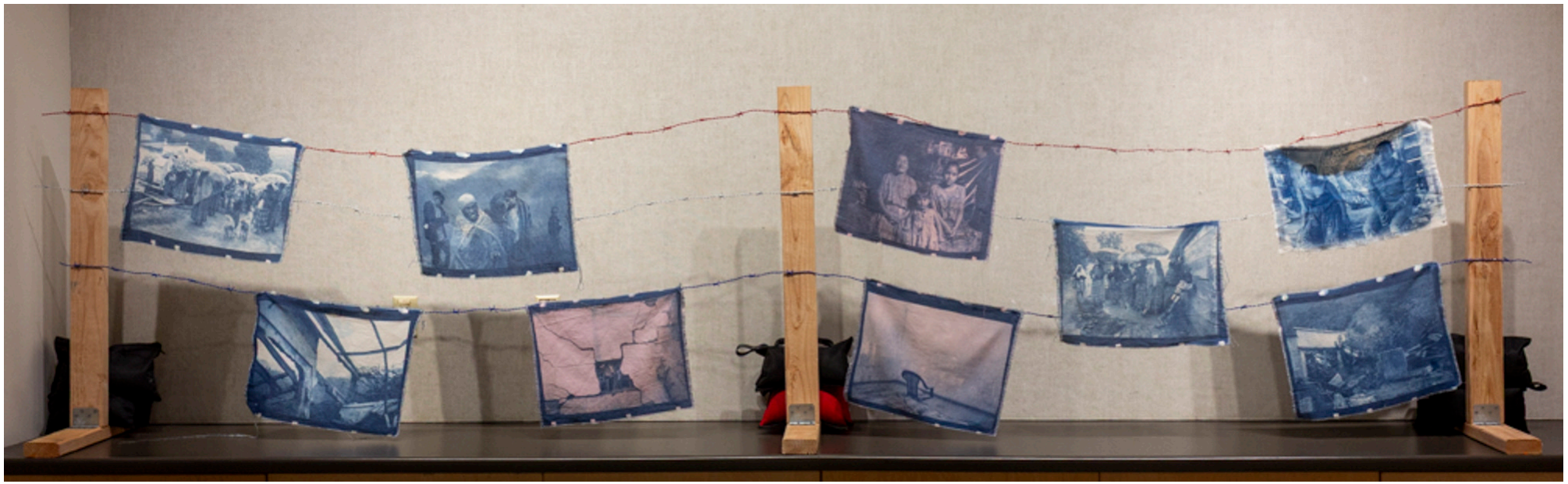
03 Monte Nettles · Cole Grey · portraits in Oakland · sublimation on polyester · installed at MMACJS, Cuernavaca · Photo: Harvey Castro



04 Para acá también vive gente · KOIK Contemporary, 2023



05 Lo que dicen esas paredes · install view · E1 · 2022 — 2023 · cyanotype, herbal tone



06 Sueño Americano · cyanotypes on cotton · strung on red, white & blue barbed wire · three 2×4 fence stands · an echo of climate migrants pursuing the American Dream · Exhibition photography: Melissa Keesor



07 Two sublimations on polyester · two distinct images · solid matte ground tacked to wall · sheer semi-transparent cloth hanging from ceiling · spatial double exposure · Exhibition photography: Melissa Keesor



08 Installation view · twelve cyanotypes on cotton · mounted on black backing · hung from steel rod · Casa Lu · Photo: Harvey Castro



09 Smoke Offering · Queja, Guatemala · thermal dye on cotton lace · *Quantum Memory*



10 El Gran Jaguar · Tikal, Guatemala · cyanotype on amate, herbal tone · *Cyanotype Works*

Studio369 operates across four material systems for translating documentary encounters into permanent form. Each system is a complete forensic practice — with its own constraint logic, substrate knowledge, and documentation protocol.

No aesthetic choice is made without a structural logic. The substrate is chosen for function, not decoration. The toning method is chosen for what it reveals. The installation approach is chosen for how it implicates the viewer. Every process leaves a record. The work documents how systems produce material conditions, how power moves through infrastructure, how communities adapt under constraint.

02 — FOUR OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR MATERIAL TRANSLATION

The four systems — Sublimation, Cyanotype, Structural Installation, Experimental Short Films — are not chosen for aesthetic effect. Each emerged from specific operational needs. Each solves a different constraint problem in the documentary encounter-to-object translation pipeline.

M1 · POLYESTER · HEAT

Dye *Sublimation*.

Thermal dye sublimation embeds dyes directly into *100% polyester*. The image becomes structurally inseparable from the substrate — not laid on the cloth, but bonded into the polymer at a molecular level under heat and pressure. Quantum Memory is the sole exception, sublimated onto cotton lace and doilies.

Installations can deploy two distinct polyester substrates simultaneously, each carrying a *different image* — a solid matte ground fixed to the wall and a sheer semi-transparent cloth suspended from the ceiling in front of it. The sheer front cloth allows the ground image to read through it, and the viewer sees both images at once: a spatial double exposure, the same register achieved photographically in the darkroom, achieved here through physical layering in the room.

M2 · COTTON · SUN

Cyanotype.

Cyanotype is a 19th-century photographic process. Photosensitive chemistry coated onto the substrate, printed in sunlight, fixed in water. The image becomes a permanent stain in the fiber. Toning extends the process into the geography and history of the work itself.

In Guatemala, the toning uses *grana cochinilla*, cochineal dye from insects native to Oaxaca and Guatemala. Cochinilla was extracted by colonial powers from the very communities Castro documents. Bringing the dye back is a form of visual restitution.

In Puerto Rico, the prints are toned with coffee, a crop tied to the island's agricultural history and the labor of the same communities documented. The cloth carries both the image and the context it came from.

M3 · SPATIAL · TENSION

Structural *Installation*.

Structural installations extend material translation into spatial form. Images migrate into physical structures where tension, gravity, suspension, and environment act on the work over time — the room itself becomes part of the artifact.

In *Para acá también vive gente*, an actual FEMA tarp lines the gallery ceiling — not as metaphor but as material fact. Under the Caribbean sun, the blue plastic cast a constant hue across every interior it covered: every meal, every night's sleep, every waking hour of two hurricane seasons of "temporary" shelter. The installation reinstates that light. The viewer stands inside the color survivors lived in.

M4 · TIME · SOUND

Experimental *Short Films*.

Experimental shorts in which moving images are collaged with stills, then layered with historical audio. The documentary encounter unfolds in time — the cyanotype, the field recording, the archival voice all migrate into a single moving artifact, exhibited alongside the textile and structural works.

In *Do Not Come* (AV01), audio is treated as the textiles are — layered and transparent. The echoed voices of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump (a literal audio echo effect) are woven against a newscast about the Queja landslide, an indigenous leader at a protest in Guatemala City, and a migrant deported with his family from McAllen, Texas, interviewed at the El Ceibo border crossing in Guatemala. Voices overlap and bleed through each other the way distinct images bleed through transparent cloth.

Fabric, tension, exposure, and time act *directly* on the work.

Lo que dicen esas paredes (E1)

SUBSTRATE Cyanotype on bristol, paper, and reclaimed paste-up fragments. Some works are torn and re-stitched along the original tear; others are left as found. Additional works printed on adhesive-backed polyester were applied directly to the gallery walls and floor, replicating the wheat-pasted surfaces of the source imagery.

PROCESS Cyanotype chemistry coated on a Mexico City rooftop, printed in direct sun, washed in a bucket, hung to dry. Selected pieces are toned in *herbal baths* — green tea, black tea — to bring warmth back into the blue.

FORMAT Unique works. Some pieces remain installed on found surfaces; others are framed for transport.

Para acá también vive gente (E3)

This room simulates a space inspired by the *FEMA-tarp-roofed* houses that remained in Puerto Rico after Hurricane María. The blue plastic tarp became roof, wall, and shroud for thousands of families through two hurricane seasons of "temporary" shelter. Under the Caribbean sun, the blue plastic cast a constant hue across every interior it covered — the defining visual condition of daily life for survivors. The installation reinstates that light. The viewer stands inside the color those families lived in.

Inside the simulated room hangs Reynaldo — a portrait from the Los Olvidados series. The cyanotypes were printed and washed on the same Mexico City rooftop where the rest of the exhibition was made, then toned with coffee — a crop tied to the island's agricultural history and the labor of the same communities documented. The cloth carries both the image and the context it came from.

An image toned with coffee, hung inside a gallery whose ceiling is lined with an actual FEMA tarp — the same material, the same light. The work does not represent the condition; it reinstates it. Source material from the Los Olvidados · Puerto Rico ↗ documentary chapter.

PAPER BEFORE *CLOTH*.

Before each large cyanotype is printed on cotton under direct sunlight, the studio makes a smaller test print on paper under a UV light. The tests carry handwritten notes — date, exposure, wash — and resolve the chemistry before it migrates to cloth. These are studio artifacts, not editioned works.

Lluvia de sangre (E4)

SUBSTRATE Cotton textile, coated in cyanotype chemistry and printed in direct sunlight. The cloths are hung in procession rather than framed — to be read like flags, like shrouds, like the cloth itself moving. Selected works were also printed on vellum — translucent sheets hung in layers, catching and diffusing the red room light to create depth through transparency and overlapping shadow.

PROCESS Source images photographed in Queja after Hurricane Eta, in the Maya highlands during the months of recovery. Cyanotype on cotton, toned with *grana cochinilla* — cochineal dye from insects native to Oaxaca and Guatemala. Cochinilla was extracted by colonial powers from the very communities Castro documents. Bringing the dye back into the print is a form of visual restitution.

FORMAT Unique works — the procession remains as installed, the individual cloths can travel as discrete pieces. Documentation video accompanies the work as *AV01 · Do Not Come*.

PROVENANCE Source material from *Los Olvidados*, 2018 — ongoing. Room shown in *Esa Sombra Eres Tú*, KOIK Contemporary, Mexico City, 2023.

INSTALLATION SPECS

Cuerpo Substancia Extendida

CURATORSHIP	Juci Reis
COLLABORATION	Flotar / Harmonipan
VENUE	Museo Morelense de Arte Contemporáneo (MMACJS) · Cuernavaca, México
DATES	16 September — 11 October 2023

Echoes of Resilience

CURATORSHIP	Ann Trinca · Melissa Keesor, Director of Harvey Milk Photo Center
VENUE	Harvey Milk Photo Center · San Francisco
DATES	2 May — 7 June 2025
EXHIBITION PHOTOGRAPHY	Melissa Keesor

Two sublimations on polyester · two distinct images · solid matte ground tacked to wall · sheer semi-transparent cloth hanging from ceiling · spatial double exposure

Side view · two-layer installation · matte ground tacked to wall · sheer front cloth hanging from ceiling

Los Olvidados

SUBSTRATE Cotton textile, coated in cyanotype chemistry and printed in direct sun on a Mexico City rooftop during a residency at *Casa Lu*. The cotton holds the chemistry without losing the cloth's own weight — the panels can be hung, folded, or remounted as installation conditions require.

SOURCE Source images photographed in Queja, Guatemala, and the surrounding Maya highlands, 2021–2022. The community had recently survived the landslide triggered by Hurricane *Eta*; the work was made in the months and years after, as a way of holding the encounter in cyanotype rather than in the photograph alone. The documentary chapter lives on harveycastro.co · Los Olvidados, Guatemala ↗.

FORMAT Twelve cyanotype panels on cotton, presented mounted onto black backing fabric and hung from a steel rod. Individual panels may also be exhibited as discrete works. The composite installation is unique; each panel is also one of one (1:1).

PROVENANCE Made during a residency at *Casa Lu*, Mexico City, in dialogue with the broader *Los Olvidados* project (2018 — ongoing). Selected panels appear within *Esa Sombra Eres Tú* (KOIK Contemporary, CDMX, 2023) and *Echoes of Resilience* (Harvey Milk Photo Center, San Francisco, 2025).

Quantum Memory

SUBSTRATE Hand-selected vintage cotton doilies and reclaimed lace, each carrying an existing history of *anonymous domestic labor* and intergenerational transmission.

PROCESS Thermal dye sublimation. Unlike surface printing, the heat and pressure gasify the ink, allowing it to bond with the fibers at a *molecular level*, becoming part of the physical structure.

FORMAT Each work is unique. The edges are left raw or pinned, emphasizing the work as a *material fragment* rather than a contained window.

PROJECT INITIATED 2023 — ongoing

MEDIUM dye sublimation on a vintage cotton doily · unique · unframed

FORMAT Unique works

ARCHIVE Studio369 registry

Cyanotype Works

SUBSTRATE Paper, watercolor paper, amate (Mexican bark paper), bristol, 100% cotton fabric, and occasionally found textile or printed ephemera. The choice of ground is part of the work: amate carries the resin and tooth of the bark; bristol and watercolor paper hold the chemistry sharply; cotton fabric allows the cyanotype to keep moving with the cloth.

PROCESS Coated in cyanotype chemistry, printed in direct sun, washed in water. Selected works are toned in *herbal baths* — green tea, black tea, coffee — to shift the cyanotype's native Prussian blue toward warmer browns, grays, and amber. Some works are hand-stitched into the field after washing.

FORMAT All cyanotypes are *one-of-one* (1:1) unique works — no editions. Each is sized to the encounter; available framed or unframed, with documentation of substrate, exposure, and toning state. *Available for acquisition.*

CURATORIAL TEXT

Esa Sombra Eres Tú

> "La muestra Esa sombra eres tú, una colección de imágenes manifestadas por el artista Harvey Castro (Nicaragua, 1974), está compuesta por instalaciones sensoriales que aluden a una "experiencia o fenómeno transitorio – tiempo / espacio" y están configuradas como un juego metalingüístico:
>
> yo, sombra;
> tú, sombra
> y espacio, sombra."
>
> — Juci Reis, curaduría y texto

PAST VENUES

His work has been exhibited internationally and presented in institutional and exhibition contexts, including the *Museo Morelense de Arte Contemporáneo Juan Soriano* (Cuernavaca, México), KOIK Contemporary (Mexico City), the Harvey Milk Photo Center (San Francisco), and the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum (Vallejo, California). These installations position documentary images within physical space, allowing viewers to encounter them as structural and environmental conditions rather than isolated visual records.

TALKS

2025 · *El Café de la Metropolitana*, Galería Metropolitana (UAM), Mexico City: *Los Olvidados*.

2023 · Artist presentation and open studio, Koik Contemporary, Mexico City.

2022 · Artist presentation and open studio, Casa Lu, Mexico City.

2021 · *Los Olvidados / The Forgotten*, webinar, Harvey Milk Photo Center, San Francisco.

FILMS

AV01 · EXPERIMENTAL SHORT · 2022

Do Not Come

Communities in the Maya highlands reshaped by Hurricane Eta — the downpours, the landslide at Queja, the months of ceremony and recovery that followed. Field stills, moving footage, archival audio. The film made for this room.

AV02 · EXPERIMENTAL SHORT · 2022

Los Olvidados — *Puerto Rico*.

The FEMA-tarp-roofed houses that remained after Hurricane María — Don Ángel González and after. Field stills, moving footage, archival audio. The film made for this room.

AV03 · EXPERIMENTAL SHORT · 2022 · CADENCE VIDEO POETRY FESTIVAL 2023

La Pared / The Wall.

A collaboration with Zapotec poet *Irma Pineda* and translator *Wendy Call*. The film carries Pineda's poem *La Pared* in three voices: Pineda narrates in Zapotec and Spanish; Call narrates her English translation, from *In the Belly of Night and Other Poems*. Structural political-social violence in México and Guatemala alongside acts of cultural resistance — the danzantes. The film made for this room.

AV04 · EXPERIMENTAL SHORT · 2023

Singularidad

Water surfaces from India and Oakland — debris, sediment, decay — collapsed into a single material condition. Two geographies, one polluted shore. Continuous loop · Espacio T1 · the body as the carrier of distance erased.

TECHNICAL NEEDS

HANGING	From the ceiling and on walls.
LIGHT	No direct sunlight.
INSTALLATION	By the artist, or by the venue with written instructions. Two days.
HANDLING	Gloves.
SPACE	Room to walk around the pieces.
FILMS	A screen or projector, sound, and a darkened room.
SHIPPING	Folded and rolled.

SELECTED CV

SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2025 · *Echoes of Resilience: Reclaiming History*, two-person with Izzi Valencia, Harvey Milk Photo Center, San Francisco. Curated by Ann Trinca and Melissa Keesor.

2024 · *Reclaiming Home – Vallejo*, Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum, Vallejo, California, September 13 – November 23.

2023 · *Cuerpo Substancia Extendida*, Museo Morelense de Arte Contemporáneo Juan Soriano (MMACJS), Cuernavaca. Curated by Juci Reis.

2023 · *Esa Sombra Eres Tú*, Koik Contemporary, Mexico City. Curated by Juci Reis.

2023 · *Los Olvidados, Guatemala*, All About Photo (online).

2021 · *Los Olvidados – Puerto Rico* / *The Forgotten*, Harvey Milk Photo Center, San Francisco (online exhibition and webinar).

2018 · *Between Life and Death*, Ch'in Kana Gallery, San Francisco.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS, FAIRS AND SCREENINGS

2026 · *Entre Habitaciones*, Koik Contemporary at ABC Art Baja, San José del Cabo.

2023 · *FORECAST 2023*, SF Camerawork, Fort Mason, San Francisco.

2023 · Cadence Video Poetry Festival, Northwest Film Forum, Seattle: *Cue' Yoo* / *La pared* / *The Wall* (2022), with Irma Pineda and Wendy Call, US premiere.

2023 · *Frames Within Frames*, Praxis Gallery, Minneapolis.

2023 · Material Art Fair, Mexico City: artist book in cyanotype on fabric with FEMA tarp.

2022 · *Liminal*, Casa Lu, Mexico City.

2022 · *Black, White & All the Grays Between*, Rhode Island Center for Photographic Arts.

2022 · *Picturing Resistance*, Art Intersection, Gilbert, Arizona. Juror Ken Light.

2020 · *Project 2020*, Los Angeles Center of Photography (online).

AWARDS AND HONOURS

2024 · The Jim Dietz Award, Eddie Adams Workshop XXXVII. The award included returning to the workshop in 2025 on the Black Team.

2023 · CENTER Multimedia Storytelling Award, for *Los Olvidados*. Juror Sandra M. Stevenson, The Washington Post.

2023 · Review Santa Fe, selected, *Los Olvidados*.

2023 · New York Center for Photographic Arts, Juror's Selection. Juror Crista Dix.

2022 · Rhode Island Center for Photographic Arts, Juror's Print Award. Juror Eric Kunsman.

2022 · ReFocus Black & White Photo Contest, Honorable Mention, Photojournalism (professional), *Los Olvidados Guatemala*.

2020–21 · PennIUR Civic Engagement Photo Contest, third runner-up.

RESIDENCIES, FELLOWSHIPS AND WORKSHOPS

2025 · Eddie Adams Workshop, Black Team (as part of the Jim Dietz Award).

2024 · Eddie Adams Workshop XXXVII, participant.

2023 – 2024 · California Creative Corps Fellowship (California Arts Council, through Yerba Buena Center for the Arts).

2023 · Koik Contemporary, artist in residence, Mexico City.

2022 · Casa Lu, residency, Mexico City.

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

2026 · "Morning Rituals," essay and photographs, *Dodho Magazine*, February 3.

2026 · "The Broken Trace: A Collaborative Redirection," essay, harveycastro.co, February.

2024 · "Reclaiming Home: Photographer Harvey Castro shines a light on Vallejo," Sarah Rodriguez, *Vallejo Times-Herald*, October 11.

2024 · "Review Santa Fe: Harvey Castro: Los Olvidados," Daniel George, *Lenscratch*, January 12.

2023 · CENTER Multimedia Storytelling Award feature, Kassandra Eller, *Lenscratch*, June 4.

2023 · "Red Tide," *Edge of Humanity Magazine*, March 25.

2023 · *Los Olvidados, Guatemala*, Q&A, *All About Photo*, February 1; reposted by *Private Photo Review*, February 3.

2020–2022 · Four photo stories in *The Oaklandside*.

CONTACT

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High-resolution files on request.