

BARBARA FELIX

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*THE GLORIOUS WAY SHE MOVES*



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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NOVEMBER 22, 2025 - JANUARY 15, 2026

AUSTIN, TEXAS

THE SPAN OF MY HIPS: BARBARA  
FELIX AND THE CREATIVE  
POWER OF FEMALE MOVEMENT

*It's in the reach of my arms  
The span of my hips,  
The stride of my step,  
The curl of my lips.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.*

—Maya Angelou, *Phenomenal Woman*

From the late 1970s through the 1990s, it was not uncommon to witness the recitation of the late poet Maya Angelou's famous poem, *Phenomenal Woman*. More than that, *Phenomenal Woman* embodied the spirit of female empowerment, becoming a kind of Black and brown woman's anthem within a moment where women were finally beginning to gain agency over their bodies.

My favorite stanza from this radiating piece was the proclamation "...its the span of my hips, The stride of my step..."; The audience would erupt with applause. It is something about the way that a woman moves, especially one that is allowed—young and old—to be fully present within themselves and move in the way she pleases. It is a sight to see and a spirit to behold.

The fact that Angelou, like so many other Black women writers, encouraged broader expressions of Black female empowerment sent signals and waves across the nation celebrating the power of female movement.

These words ring within my mind as the perfect way to understand the confidence and animated activities that inform multimedia artist Barbara Felix's series, *The Glorious Way She Moves*, which similarly encourages women to not be afraid to move their bodies. We, like Felix's muses, are inspired to move to empower others and to move for our own liberation and freedom.



*Glorious Tajah, 2025,*

Fabric paints and iridescent pigments on synthetic voile and organza, 58 x 70"

Black feminists and womanists have long seen the connections between dance, movement and power, understanding that when we give women the agency over their bodies—to move in ways that inspire—we create opportunities for social and cultural transformation.

The muses in Barbara Felix's series are everyday women that she knows and admires who became her inspiration. Depicting multiple generations from younger women to those elder, Felix honors these women who are positively impacting their communities. Rarely are women of great influence portrayed in a state of motion. Quite the contrast, women are often told that to make an impact one must shrink, disappear, and be less present.

Even the physical technique of professional dancers is sometimes limited by rigid rules about body image and physical ability. Felix, on the other hand, centers the dance and activities

of everyday women, allowing the women in her world to express the kinds of gestures that are meaningful to them. Resisting the impulse to require her sitters to perform uniform acts, Felix allowed each woman to move on their own terms.

This new series marks a powerful shift in Felix's art practice, transitioning from the use of Yupo paper to fabric and from two-dimensional drawings to fiber paintings that become installations. Felix builds each work in the series with multiple layers of cloth creating three dimensional paths that allow the visitor to move from woman to woman. Each painting is informed by Felix's extensive documentarian practice including multimedia recordings and interviews with each sitter, allowing them to share the different cultural nuances that inform each motion. For some of Felix's women, movement is rooted in their cultural heritage and for others, it is a way to take up



*Glorious Jennifer*, 2025,  
Fabric, acrylic, and iridescent paints on blended and  
synthetic voile, 83 x 58"

Cover Panel:  
*The Glorious Way She Moves* (installation view), 2025



*The Glorious Way She Moves* (installation view), 2025

space, to resist control, and to move in ways that could bring about transformation.

These powerful figures, drawn on layers of sheer, lightweight and breathable fabric, become almost metaphysical. The portraits outline their beauty and the many individual movements that inform their lives. The translucency of each painting is meant to create an immersive experience, guiding the viewer to fully take in the spirit and scale of each work. This approach to installation allows us to fully get to know each woman, reading their expressive motion, and imagining the music that must have been playing. Felix allowed each woman to identify their own melody and their own fashion and style; she

then accented their stories with bold colors, the flow of their garments, giving us a brief window into their worlds. Some of Felix's women are larger than life and channel the spirit of their ancestors while others bring voice to social and cultural issues or showcase different skills and emotions.

The paintings tell of the lives of women who are seeking to transform the world. Felix gives each woman a voice, a platform, and a space to fulfill. They not only inform us of the women whose lives are on view but of the world of the artist and the kinds of movements that can bring transformation. At a time when women's rights to their bodies have been under attack, Felix's work reminds us of the importance of pushing

back. In many ways that is exactly what these women are doing. Moving away from the oppressive lines that try to define us, they celebrate the collective power of women as an act of resistance.

Lauren Cross, Ph.D. is the Gail-Oxford Associate Curator of American Decorative Arts at The Huntington in California

# Barbara Felix CV

## EDUCATION

- 1991 BFA, Graphic Communication, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- 2013 Certificate, Drawing, Painting, & Printmaking, Southwest School of Art, San Antonio, TX

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *The Glorious Way She Moves*, Mercury Project Contemporary Gallery, San Antonio, TX
- 2023 *The Glorious Way She Moves*, Spellerberg Projects, Lockhart, TX  
*The Glorious Way She Moves*, Sala Diaz, San Antonio, TX
- 2021 *The Glorious Way She Moves—Black Venus*, Carver Community Cultural Center, San Antonio, TX
- 2016 *Bailando con Mi Misma (Dancing with My Self)*, Debra Benditz Studio Gallery, San Antonio, TX

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *SAALM Invitational*, San Antonio Art League & Museum, San Antonio, TX  
*Las Mujeres de Atzlan—Persistent and Resilient*, Centro Cultural Atzlan Gallery, San Antonio, TX, curated by Kathleen Baker Pittman  
*Al Otro Lado del Espejo Exhibition*, Museo de Arte de Querétaro, Mexico, curated by Lyle and Kathy Sosa
- 2023 *We The People Billboard Exhibition*, Billboard Creative, Los Angeles, CA  
*San Antonio Airport Exhibition*, Doc Space Gallery, San Antonio, TX, curated by Bill Fitzgibbons
- 2022 *Texas Artists Exhibition 2019*, Beeville Art Museum, Beeville, TX  
*City of Service*, City of San Antonio Cultural Commons Gallery, San Antonio, TX, curated by Sebastian Guajardo  
*Nosotras: Perceptions of Identity*, Centro Cultural Atzlan Gallery, San Antonio, TX, curated by Rita Contreras  
*[Re]Imagine Visual Arts Juried Show*, University of Texas, Round Rock Arts Juried Exhibition, Round Rock Campus
- 2021 *Projection/Projektion*, World Heritage Festival, Blue Star Contemporary in partnership with Darmstädter Sezession (das), Mission Marquee, San Antonio & Atelier Siegele, Darmstadt, Germany
- 2019 *Liminality of Self: Reflections of Color & Identity, Re/De-Valuing Colorism—Intersections of Color & Currency Exhibition*, Southwest School of Art, San Antonio, TX, curated by Aissatou Sidime-Blanton
- 2018 *Black & Brown Futures*, University of Texas at San Antonio, curated by Dr. Scott A. Sherer  
*St. Anthony's Lost & Found (Tricentennial Exhibitions)*, Culture Commons Gallery, San Antonio, TX, curated by Sebastian Guajardo  
*I Too, Sing San Antonio (Tricentennial Exhibitions)*, St. Philip's College, San Antonio, TX, curated by Scott Sherer, Ph.D.
- 2017 *New Year, New Art: Emerging Artists from the Southwest School of Art*, Nave Museum, Victoria, TX  
*La Entrada del Espejo—The Mirrors Entrance*, Carver Cultural Center, San Antonio, TX  
*Honoring Women*, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth, TX

- 2016 *United We Are One*, City of San Antonio Culture Commons Gallery, San Antonio, TX
- 2015 *Print Austin*, Little Pink Monster Gallery, Austin, TX
- 2013 *Certificate Program Exhibition*, Southwest School of Art, San Antonio, TX

## SELECTED PRESS

- 2025 Deck-Portillo, Katherine. "I Feel Better When I'm Dancing", Viva Arte Magazine, March 7, 2025.  
Ivy, Gianna. "*The Glorious Way She Moves*' Honors Women Through Dance and Story", The Austin Chronicle, December 1, 2025.
- 2024 KLRN TV, PBS. "Episode 4 | The Art", The Other Side of the Mirror (Al Otro Lado Del Espejo), November 7, 2024.  
Centro Cultural Aztlan. "Una Plática with Barbara Felix", May 3, 2024.



*Glorious Glory*, 2025  
Watercolor on Yupo with glitter and pearlescent and iridescent pigments, 96 x 60"



*The Glorious Way She Moves (installation view), 2025*

## WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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*Photographs by Bobby Scheidemann*

This project is supported in part by the City of Austin's Elevate Grant Program, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the Still Water Foundation.

Women & Their Work is a visual and performing arts organization located in Austin that serves as a catalyst for new ideas in contemporary art. Since 1978, Women & Their Work has created significant opportunities for artists and audiences to experience contemporary art through ambitious exhibitions, commissions of new work, performances and programs that inspire audiences of all ages. We have actively developed the careers of more than 2,000 women artists, presenting 350 visual art exhibitions, 170 music, dance and theater events, 31 spoken word and literary performances, 16 film festivals and 954 programs & education workshops with the goal of ensuring that women artists are represented in all forms of art. Women & Their Work helps meet an important need in Texas providing exhibition and performance opportunities and helping to attract critical attention to the work produced here; it is the only organization of its kind in the region and one of the few organizations in the United States that dedicates itself to the work of women artists.

Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *ArtForum*, and on *National Public Radio* and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 2020, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art acquired the archive of Women & Their Work ensuring that our entire history of the work of women artists and our website will be preserved in perpetuity. In 2024, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York acquired all 160 catalogs [digital and physical] produced by Women & Their Work to date. These publications, as well as all future catalogs, will be housed at their Thomas J. Watson Library, one of the largest art research libraries in the world.



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