

# TERESA MARGOLLES

## ¿CÓMO SALIMOS?

### HOW DO WE GET OUT?



Teresa Margolles. *Inclusión* y *La entrega (The Remittance)* (2017). Foto: Arthur Mora para MARCO.

- MARCO presents the first survey exhibition on the American continent dedicated to the Mexican artist's work, featuring 23 works from 18 projects spanning 2003 to the present. It will be open from Friday, November 14, through Sunday, May 3, 2026.
- The exhibition engages with the sociopolitical context of northern Mexico, where migrants arrive seeking to cross the border into the United States.
- The exhibition includes three new commissions created by Margolles for MARCO. During the exhibition, activations of the works *El enjoyado* (2008) and *La promesa* (2012) will take place.

The Monterrey Museum of Contemporary Art presents the exhibition *¿Cómo salimos? (How To Get Out?)*, first survey in the Americas of the career of Teresa Margolles, one of the most influential contemporary Mexican artists on the international scene.

Curated by Taiyana Pimentel, the exhibition brings together 23 works from 18 projects spanning from 2003 to the present that address the socio-political issues related to northern Mexico, which appear in much of Margolles's work. It also includes projects from other parts of Latin America.

Throughout her career, Margolles (Sinaloa, 1963) has explored the systemic violence and impunity that prevail in Latin America—particularly in northern Mexico—using conceptual strategies informed by her former profession as a forensic doctor.

“The pain and emptiness left by human loss in society are at the core of Margolles's discourse. Since her early days as a forensic scientist, she has been gradually outlining the emotional collapse caused by violent deaths and forced disappearances, from the individual to the collective level,” explains Pimentel, who has collaborated with the artist for several decades.

Born in Sinaloa, Mexico, in 1963, Margolles began her career in the early 1990s as a member of the collective SEMEFO (an acronym for the Mexican Forensic Service), which explored issues surrounding death through performance art. In her individual practice, Teresa Margolles's work focuses on a society that suffers losses as a consequence of violence and is in mourning as it loses its place of origin due to migration.

The exhibition connects with the migratory context of northern Mexico, especially Nuevo León, a state that receives thousands of migrants waiting to cross the border into the United States. In some of her works, Margolles addresses the migration crisis, such as *La entrega* (2017), a record of the action carried out with Venezuelan porters who were transporting goods across the Simón Bolívar International Bridge in 2017.

The decontextualized objects in her work are not only evidence of violent acts but, as the artist describes them, “witnesses.” Collecting them involves gathering what surrounds the violated body—from bodily fluids such as blood to anything that came into contact with it, including water, fabrics, objects, or fragments like debris or glass. At the same time, photography serves as documentation, as in the work *Pistas de baile* (2016), a series of images in which sex workers pose on the site where the nightclub they once worked in used to stand. The photographs were taken in an area near the historic center, which was once known for its bars and nightclubs, which were demolished following a government policy implemented in 2010.

The border region—especially Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua—has become one of the principal sites where Margolles has produced much of her work. Her process is intimate: she engages with local communities through organizations and cultural agents in the region, ensuring that her work is not a representation created from an external or detached perspective. In the project *Tenemos un hilo en común (We Have a Thread in Common, 2011–2015)*, Margolles employs traditional craftsmanship to reveal the violence hidden behind the beauty of handmade objects. For this project, the artist invited women artisans from different countries (Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama) to embroider fabrics impregnated with fluids from victims of femicide. As they embroidered, the women talked, shared testimonies, and bore witness to the events that occurred.

Of the three commissions Margolles has created for MARCO, one is a sound installation titled *Sin título (Untitled, 2025)*, composed of 32 glass panels removed from commercial premises in urban areas affected by abandonment and violence in cities such as Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Culiacán, and Monterrey. Each glass panel vibrates at a

different frequency, emulating the distinct sound of the train that crosses the country northward and over the border. Although the work has been presented previously, the version at MARCO will be expanded. With 32 vibrating glass panels, the installation becomes a kind of symphony, echoing the sounds of the trains on which migrants travel.



Installation view *Sin título (Untitled)* (2025), Teresa Margolles' new commission. Photo: Arthur Mora for MARCO.

Another unprecedented project on display is *La ilusión (The Illusion)*, 2025, which involves installing the sign from the old cinema located across from the Alameda de Monterrey. This area now functions as an informal marketplace. The former Cine Monterrey building, an Art Deco structure built in 1947, ceased operating as a cinema between 2006 and 2009, during the period of insecurity caused by the war on drug trafficking. The cinema sign, characterized by its Oriental-style typography, will be installed inside MARCO during the exhibition. The intention is to highlight public spaces— including heritage sites such as this cinema— that have been affected by violence, as well as to call attention to how their original functions have been abandoned due to other factors, such as shifting dynamics in the surrounding area.

The exhibition will also feature works from different periods, such as *El enjoyado* (2009), a set of 12 pieces of 18-karat gold jewelry whose “diamonds” are actually fragments of glass extracted from bodies killed during a settling of scores in Culiacán, Sinaloa. This city has become a strategic center for organized crime. The jewelry will be presented through a performance in which the performer will wear the pieces while moving through the museum.

On the other hand, *La huella* (2019) is an installation composed of plaster casts that record the faces of Haitian migrants in Chile. It serves as a precursor to *Mil veces un instante*, created for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, making Margolles the first Latin American artist commissioned for this distinguished public space in London.

The exhibition is significant not only because it is the first survey of Margolles's practice on the continent, but also because it examines her interdisciplinary approach. Over her 20-year career, she has focused on questioning systemic violence against citizens and minorities who suffer from impunity not only in Mexico, but throughout Latin America.

**The exhibition is produced by MARCO and funded by the Fiscal Incentive for Investment Projects in Visual Arts Production (EFIARTES), with resources provided by FEMSA. It is also supported by the Isabel and Agustín Coppel Collection (CIAC).** Each year, MARCO receives support from Arca Continental, Cemex, Cydsa, Femsa, Frisa, and Xignux, as well as Arte Expuesto, VivaAerobus and V Media Group.

#### PERFORMANCES AND ACTIVATIONS

- *La promesa*: Tuesday to Friday from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. | Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 to 1:00 pm.
- *El enjoyado*: Tuesday to Friday from 12:00 pm.

Included with admission ticket | No prior registration required.

#### MUSEUM HOURS AND ADMISSION FEES

- Open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Extended hours on Wednesdays until 8:00 p.m.
- Free admission on Wednesdays and Sundays.
- General admission: 100 pesos. Discounted admission: 70 pesos (teachers, students, seniors, INAPAM members, and children under 15). Free admission every day for children under 5.

#### EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Title: *Teresa Margolles ¿Cómo salimos? (How To Get Out?)* | **On display**: From Friday, November 14, 2025 - to Sunday, May 3, 2026 | **Museography**: MARCO | **Curator**: Taiyana Pimentel | **Number of works**: 23 artworks from 18 projects, from 2003 to 2025 | **Galleries**: 6 to 11, Second Floor | **Techniques**: Installation, embroidery on blood-soaked fabric, performance, intervention, sound art, photography, sculpture, and jewelry.