

## **Artist Statement**

*Aquí Descansamos* began as a living cemetery composed of floral sculptures, mirroring the shapes of common grave-markers. This alternate form of memorial contrasts the somber, grey-stone visuals of conventional cemeteries with color, growth, decomposition, and renewal, offering a space to celebrate life's vibrancy while acknowledging its temporary and ever-changing nature. Here the series expands to incorporate burial vessels including caskets, urns, and shrouds, all similarly crafted from organic and ephemeral materials such as moss, soap, seaweed, beeswax, and sand among others.

No matter how we choose to honor the dead, we will all face loss one day and find ourselves seeking comfort in ritual and memorialization. In reminding us of our universal experience of grief as human beings, *Aquí Descansamos* honors the dead while providing space to imagine a future where we rest alongside them. How we choose to memorialize our loved ones, and wish to be memorialized ourselves, is entirely up to us.

## **Artist Bio**

Brianna L. Hernández (b. 1991) is a Chicana artist, curator, educator, and death doula guided by socially-engaged values. In developing as an artist, Brianna credits her late mother, Sylvia D. Hernández, as her most significant mentor. Brianna's studio practice focuses on end-of-life care, grieving processes, and mourning rituals based on lived experience, cultural research, and collaborations with peers. In addition to formal artworks, she offers workshops for viewers to self-educate on grief and end-of-life planning through the safety of the creative process. As a curator, Brianna works with artists to make socially-charged topics publicly accessible in order to create opportunities for education and empathy. She also collaborates with community health researchers to incorporate the arts into public health projects through curatorial consulting. Brianna proudly serves as Director of Curation and Board Secretary at Ma's House & BIPOC Art Studio on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation, and as Assistant Curator at the Parrish Art Museum.