

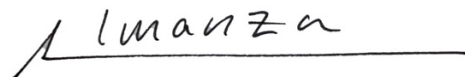
ARTIST STATEMENT

ORLANDO ALMANZA

Gente de Rio, 2024

This series is inspired by two important communities in my life, and examines how time is not always linear, how memories from the past often overlap with present experiences, and provide insight into future moments. The first community is my hometown of Amancio, where I grew up in the Cuban countryside. The second is Calle Amargura (bitterness street) in Havana, where I found community with my neighbors and friends in the city as an adult.

In both of these communities, I was surrounded by family and friends who were struggling with systematic and historical issues that were well outside of their control. This is a series about those moments of rest, when we find the time to put the stress and pain aside, and be in the present moment together, surrounded by nature and those who we love. In these moments we find beauty and pride in our bodies, our adornments (gold chains, painted nails, and cowboy hats) and reconnecting to the river, which represents the cycle of life, connects us to our ancestors and those who are yet to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Orlando Almanza". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.