

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

**Esteban Cabeza de Baca &
Heidi Howard**
Pistil Forms

July 25 — August 15, 2026
Opening Reception: Saturday, July 25, 4–7 pm
Free and open to the public | Artists in attendance

This summer, David B. Smith Gallery is thrilled to announce *Pistil Forms*, a pop-up exhibition by New York-based artists Esteban Cabeza de Baca and Heidi Howard. The exhibition will feature new works, to be mounted throughout the Main Gallery and Project Room. On the heels of an artistic pilgrimage to New Mexico, *Pistil Forms* underscores each artist's ongoing dialogue with the American Southwest.

New Mexico's desert landscapes hold special meaning for Howard and Cabeza de Baca, influencing their individual practices in different ways. Similar to Agnes Martin and Georgia O'Keeffe, two other artists who drew inspiration from the arts community in New York City and the landscapes and colors of the Southwest, Howard and Cabeza de Baca have an affinity for the timeless qualities of form found through a life spent with paint.

Heidi Howard's practice, alive with floral imagery and dynamic portraiture, occupies a space of visual levity while delving into themes of the body, interpersonal connection, and the potential for beauty in decay. Nimble in their use of color and fluidity, with a sense of ease and grace, Howard's works offer respite to world-weary viewers.

With generational ties to New Mexico, Esteban Cabeza de Baca's paintings come into focus in the expansiveness of the Southwest. Considering questions around territorialization embedded into place, his works draw paradoxical concepts of land ownership and the long arm of history. Landscapes important to the artist, including Taos, Aspen, and New Mexico, will be included in the exhibition.

Returning to important places, in *Pistil Forms*, Heidi Howard and Esteban Cabeza de Baca consider the past while looking to the future. For both artists, the legacy of the Southwest offers visual and conceptual touchpoints, creating expansive new discourses touching on ecofeminism, territorialization, and artistic connections across time and space.



Esteban Cabeza de Baca, *Taos Lightning*, 2025, Taos soil and acrylic on canvas, 48 x 84 in. (121.9 x 213.4 cm)



Heidi Howard, *Dying Lilies*, 2025, acrylic on canvas, 63 x 59 in. (160 x 149.9 cm)

About Esteban Cabeza de Baca

Esteban Cabeza de Baca is a painter who lives and works between Queens, New York, and the Southwestern United States. Cabeza de Baca employs a broad range of painterly techniques, entwining layers of graffiti, landscape, and pre-Columbian pictographs in ways that confound Cartesian single-point perspective. His work is currently on view at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum in *Let Us Gather in a Flourishing Way*, at the Hammer Museum in *Several Eternities in a Day: Form in the Age of Living Materials*, and in the upcoming exhibition *Colorado Currents* at the MCA Denver. Cabeza de Baca recently unveiled *Ancestral Dreams*, a MoMA PS1 Plaza Mural on view through Spring 2027.

His work has also been exhibited at venues such as MoCA Tucson (2023), The Drawing Center (2019), the Royal Palace Amsterdam (2018), the Yale University School of Sacred Music (2017), and the Leroy Neiman Art Center (2014, 2015), among others. Cabeza de Baca has received numerous grants and awards, including a Civitella Ranieri Visual Art Fellowship (2024), a NYFA Painting Fellowship (2021), a Henk en Victoria de Heus Fellowship (2018), a Stokroos Foundation Grant (2017), a Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program Award (2014), a Stern Fellowship (2013), and a Robert Gamblin Painting Grant (2013). His work is included in the collections of Harvard University (Cambridge, MA); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (San Diego, CA); Phoenix Art Museum (Phoenix, AZ); and Williams College Museum of Art (Williamstown, MA). Esteban holds a MFA from Columbia University and a BFA from The Cooper Union.

About Heidi Howard

Heidi Howard is an American artist born, raised, and currently based in Queens, New York. Howard paints portraits, whenever possible, with the sitter in the room. Their process and style changes with each sitter, reflecting images, energies, tastes, and smells that emerge over the course of the painting. Since 2018 Howard's practice has expanded to site-specific wall paintings, in- and outdoor sculptures, and collaborative works that examine humans' relationship to their environments.

Howard has exhibited at many prestigious venues including Wave Hill Garden and Cultural Center, Gaa Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, the Queens Museum, W139, The Hunterdon Museum of Art, and James Cohan Gallery. Howard has been awarded artist residencies including the Terra Summer Residency, Rauschenberg Residency, Carrizozo AIR, and Palazzo Monti. Their work has been discussed in *Vogue Magazine*, *The Paris Review*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*, amongst other publications. *Colors make us do vibrant deeds!*, Howard's first monograph launched in September 2024 in conjunction with an eponymous solo exhibition at the The LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies at Columbia University.

Heidi Howard has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Leroy Neiman Center for Print Studies at Columbia University (2024, New York), One River School (2020, Englewood, NJ), Gaa Gallery (2019, Provincetown, MA), Nancy Margolis Gallery (2017, 2015, New York) and Con Artist Gallery (2011, New York). In addition, Howard has featured in group exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum (2025, Amsterdam), Dunkunsthalle (2024, New York), Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Center (2023, New York), Simone Subal Gallery (2021, New York), Queens Museum (2018–20, New York).

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

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