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Sofie Ramos turns worlds to whimsy with her installations, love of trash

California creative brings household objects to BMoCA to create surreal and colorful scenes



A video still from "Year of the Flood" by Sofie Ramos. This is the last weekend to catch Ramos' works at BMoCA, which are up through Sunday. (Sofie Ramos/ Courtesy photo)

By **KALENE MCCORT** | Boulder Daily Camera
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When you see your unfolded laundry piled up on an unmade bed — or perhaps tucked away in a corner of your room — you probably don't automatically notice the artistic beauty in the haphazard randomness of textured cloth and colors.



Artist Sofie Ramos hangs out in one of her installations made from repurposed household objects. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

Artist [Sofie Ramos](#) would likely view the heap of clothes in a slightly different way.

Ramos — who is based in San Francisco and Los Angeles — epitomizes the adage of “one person’s trash is another person’s treasure” with her colorful creations that speak to both the bounty and the burden.

Items that would otherwise end up in a landfill make their way into her vibrant installations, that are unapologetically maximalist, bright and strangely charming.



“Sock Landscape” by Sofie Ramos. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

In “Year of the Flood,” a stop-motion video that is displayed at [her latest contribution at BMoCA](#), nostalgia oozes from a stack of objects that commands attention. Viewers can see the evolution and build of her creation that features a Disney’s “Pocahontas” pillowcase, a backpack, heart-shaped balloons, cotton-ball rain clouds, an umbrella and so much more.

A small bookcase is piled high with blankets, vintage suitcases and a full duffel bag adorned with shiny gift-wrap bows. Although a thick coat of blue paint generously covers much of the mismatched items, other pops of color stand out in the sea of indigo.

At one point in the video, a red ladder — adorned with a pink boxing glove — springs up from the bulky heap. The sight of this manages to echo a theme of resilience, a keep on keepin’ on visual metaphor.



A detail from “Year of the Flood,” a stop-motion video showing an installation by Sofie Ramos. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

Ramos has repurposed the materials found in this stop-motion video for a fresh installation at BMoCA.

“I packed all the objects up from that and shipped them over here to make a new version,” Ramos said. “I never make the same installation twice, but it is all the same objects and still uses the underwater theme. It’s much different in their space than it was in my studio.”

Brilliantly blending the familiar with a dreamlike aesthetic, Ramos is an architect of play, whimsy and fantasy.

Barbells, suitcases, working clocks and bed frames have shown up in her Lisa Frank-esque palette offerings.

These are the surreal spaces sure to coax out your inner child. Her use of pool noodles and trampolines may just transport onlookers to carefree days of youth.



"Fortress," by Sofie Ramos, is an installation that was part of a group show this year at CCA PLAYSPACE Gallery in San Francisco. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

At times, her inviting and offbeat slices of life are reminiscent of an elevated version of a DIY fort a child would construct by slinging blankets over a chair or two, with some taking on the look of a bouncy castle.

There's a palpable freedom in her immersive vignettes that manage to elicit cheer and a celebratory essence.

The way pieces are juxtaposed against each other often defies gravity. It isn't uncommon to see a chair on its side propping up a hodgepodge of stuff that looks as though one slight touch could result in it all tumbling down.

Ramos has set up installations in gardens and galleries throughout the country, bringing joy to unexpected spaces.

In her [Instagram profile](#), Ramos has the phrase 'like life but brighter.' And brightness is exactly what radiates from these jovial offerings. It's like interior design gone rogue.



"Forcing It," an installation by Sofie Ramos, is seen at Guerrero Gallery in San Francisco in 2020. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

We caught up with the California creative to find out more about her intriguing creations, what she hopes viewing them ignites in onlookers and more.

Kalene McCort: What sparked your interest in this sort of installation work? Have you always been a collector, drawn to stuff?

Sofie Ramos: I love trash, and I want to save and reuse everything, always have. I have been able to do this through these paintings in space that use objects/garbage as a way to make marks and create new, more vivid and intense worlds.

KM: Your pieces are so layered. Do you often hit up yard sales and thrift stores to find your materials?

SR: I prefer when people give me their old things, but I love a good thrift store.



"Opposite Day," by Sofie Ramos, is seen in 2010 in Berkeley, Calif. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

KM: What are you hoping viewers take away from your work?

SR: I hope people are inspired to both make things themselves and salvage their own old objects. I also don't mind when viewers come away questioning where the art ends and what qualifies as art.

KM: Before starting, do you have an idea of what shape you want to construct or do your installations evolve organically as you pile up pieces?

SR: I prefer to improvise and incorporate each specific space into a new site-specific piece. Check out my stop-motion video in the show — ["Year of the Flood"](#) — to see my process and the evolution of a space over time.



“Sock Pile” by Sofie Ramos. (Sofie Ramos/Courtesy photo)

KM: What can attendees of your Aug. 25 Zoom talk expect?

SR: I’ll show you what I’m working on now and my new studio, as well as an illustrated history of my art practice and how it has evolved into what it is.

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