

ART REVIEW

A quiet, dissonant oasis

Local artist Melissa Leandro creates an intricate, intimate textile world at Andrew Rafacz.

by **Shira Friedman-Parks**

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Melissa Leandro, *See Me (Verme)*, 2025

Credit: Courtesy Andrew Rafacz

iewing Melissa Leandro’s “Auto Alejamiento” is like stepping into a dissonant oasis. Her third solo exhibition at Andrew Rafacz, the show weaves detachment through layered textile landscapes. Pieces combine woven

V cloth, hand and machine stitching, yarn, embroidery, couching, and foil to create textured scenes of flowers, grasses, and waters. From a technical standpoint alone, the work is striking: using only textiles, Leandro conveys scribbling, dripping, glowing, and decomposing. Bright threads pour down from flowers' centers and out the sides of gray leaves. Yarn delineates air trails, then falls before reaching the canvas's end. It's all so elaborately burnt out.



Leandro's third solo exhibition at Andrew Rafacz weaves detachment through layered textile landscapes.
Courtesy Andrew Rafacz

The room—garden is completed by two inverted, functional art benches that face the most colorful of the works—*Let Me Stay Here (Déjame Quedarme Aquí)* and *See Me (Verme)*, leaving darker pieces such as the diptych *Blemished (Manchada) / Rip to Pieces (Romper en Pedazos)* looming on the periphery of the bench-sitter. And yet, sitting long enough to become acquainted with these bright landscapes reveals their unease: plants stuck in the second dimension while identical counterparts break through; broken floral pieces messily threading into one another; forms that reach beyond the canvas but do not make it far. Regardless of the color palette, there is no winning here.

Nonetheless, while immersive in its (titular) self-estrangement, the exhibition is not overstimulating. The space is still a warm and quiet respite, particularly during your typical Chicago winter-spring snowy-rainy day. It's a welcome opportunity to sit and soak in Leandro's intricate, intimate textile world.

“Auto Alejamiento”

Through 4/12: Tue–Fri 10 AM–5 PM, Sat 11 AM–5 PM, Andrew Rafacz, 1749 W. Chicago,
andrewrafacz.com/exhibitions/18489-2

