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Unfinished Republic: America at 250

**Sonya Clark, Kyle Hackett, Joyce J. Scott, Paul Rucker,
Elizabeth Talford Scott, Louise Fishman, Soledad Salamé**

On view at Goya Contemporary Gallery

May 20 – July 3, 2026

Reception: May 29, 2026, 6:00-8:00 pm

Curator: Amy Raehse

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“We hold these truths to be self-evident...”—but do we? What, in fact, are our truths as a nation?

At 250 years, the American experiment remains profoundly unresolved. *Unfinished Republic* brings together Sonya Clark, Kyle Hackett, Joyce J Scott, Paul Rucker, Elizabeth Talford Scott, Louise Fishman, and Soledad Salame to examine a nation still struggling to define itself—morally, historically, environmentally, and politically. The project of America is incomplete not only because its founding promises remains unrealized, but because its most troubling histories have been repeatedly reshaped, minimized, or erased.

This exhibition resists erasure. At a moment when efforts have escalated to suppress or sanitize narratives of enslavement, systemic violence, and dissent across cultural and educational institutions, these artists insist on confronting the full complexity of the nation and its narratives. Their work rejects the comfort of omission, addressing histories of bondage, lynching, sexual violence, misogyny, racism, hate and terror—not as distant events, but as forces that continue to shape American life. At the same time, it attends to beauty, to the plight—and profound contributions—of immigrants, and to those who have helped to build this complicated nation.

In many ways, the United States is built on fracture—contradiction, invention, violence, ambition, forced labor, and myth. These conditions are not incidental; they are structural, continuing to shift beneath our feet. The artists in *Unfinished Republic* probe our entanglements: with land shaped by extraction and environmental neglect; with military service and the inheritance of war; with education amid a growing distrust of intellectual life and a long history of unequal access to knowledge; and with national symbols—flags, monuments, emblems—that may project unity while concealing deep division, or, as in the case of the Confederate flag, operate as enduring symbols of hate. At the same time, many of these artists also attend to the textures of daily life—tenuous, beautiful, and worth protecting. The exhibition invites a critical examination of cohesion, allegiance, freedom, and liberty, asking what it might take to move this unfinished experiment toward something more just.

Echoing Langston Hughes’ assertion that America has yet to become itself, the exhibition foregrounds the gap between national ideals and lived realities. “Liberty Denied” resonates throughout—in bodies denied autonomy, in histories rewritten or silenced, and in landscapes marked by both visible and obscured violence.

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Yet Unfinished Republic is not only an indictment; it is an act of witness. Through material, gesture, and form, these artists create space for difficult truths to surface—unsettling, necessary, and at times unexpectedly beautiful. They ask what it means to reckon honestly with the past and whether a more just future can still be imagined.

A Digital book will be available this June. For press inquiries, images, extensive artist bios, CV's, individual artwork didactics, or additional information, please contact the exhibition's curator: Amy Eva Raehse, Partner & Executive Director at Goya Contemporary Gallery: P-410-366-2001 / amy@goyacontemporary.com

Goya Contemporary is free and open to the public.
Hours of operation: Tue – Fri, 10am – 6pm / Saturday, noon-4pm & by appointment.

About Goya Contemporary: Goya Contemporary Gallery promotes the art and culture of our time by presenting ideas through exhibitions, curatorial practice, catalogues, print publishing, artist representation, and collection development. The gallery builds private & public collections, simplifies acquisitions, and facilitates auction activity. Goya Contemporary has earned international acclaim for thought-provoking exhibitions, innovative programming, and unique collaborations with artists. Known as one of the most prestigious and long running galleries in the mid-Atlantic, Goya is dedicated to scholarly programming and promoting the work of mid-career artists both internationally and locally, and is the **only gallery in the state of Maryland** to be inducted into the **Art Dealers Association of America**—a prestigious repository of the nation's top galleries—elected for high standards of scholarship, stewardship, knowledge and ethics in the field of art and the representation of artists.



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