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## Adela Goldbard at Gallery 400

3 minutes



**Adela Goldbard, *The Last Judgment*, 2019.** Installation view, Gallery 400, Chicago. Photo: Kiam Marcelo Junio.

### Chicago

[Gallery 400](#)

**University of Illinois at Chicago 400 South Peoria Street**

## August 27–October 19, 2019

Adela Goldbard's *The Last Judgment*, 2019, suggests the stage set for a dystopian, Chicana retelling of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. Crowded throughout the gallery are reproductions of landmarks of life in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood: the iconic Gateway Arch, modeled on the entrances to the Mexican hometowns of many of the area's immigrant residents; the brick facades of apartment buildings; the unglamorous signage for Little Village Discount Mall; a *paletas* (ice pops) cart; a toxic smokestack; an ICE SUV with flashing lights and effigies of skeletal agents—one with a familiar mop of blond hair. The Tultepec-based ARTSUMEX Collective fabricated these papier-mâché-covered reed and cardboard figures using traditional firework construction techniques from central and southern Mexico. The sculptures speak to the interlocking crises facing Little Village's residents—pollution, gentrification, and an ever-more repressive US immigration policy—identified by Goldbard over several months of collaboration with local students and community organizations.

On November 2, it will all burn. The papier-mâché forms will be moved to La Villita Park in Little Village and then systematically immolated during a fireworks and explosion-laden pyrotechnic performance. Updating *El juicio final* (The Final Judgment), the first Western play ever performed in newly conquered sixteenth-century Mexico, Goldbard has recast the play's lead character Lucía as a Little Village migrant from Michoacán. In the installation at Gallery 400, an audio track punctuated by the sounds of violence dramatizes Lucía's walk through the

neighborhood as she recollects her traumatic past. If, for the Church, the play's dramatization of Hell's inferno aimed to terrify indigenous people into conversion and obedience, Goldbard's explosive revision will offer the possibility of collective catharsis in the face of extraordinary external pressures.

— [Daniel Quiles](#)