



For Immediate Release

EXHIBITION: *Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings*

ON VIEW: June 1, 2019 – January 13, 2020

LOCATION: LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, 501 North Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

LINDA VALLEJO: BROWN BELONGINGS CAPTURES THE LATINX CULTURAL ZEITGEIST WITH ITS EXAMINATION OF COLOR, CLASS AND BELONGING

Museum Visitors and Media Captivated by LA Plaza's Landmark Exhibition, on View Through January 13, 2020

LOS ANGELES, CA - (October 11, 2019) – Four months since the opening of *Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings*, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes's landmark exhibition of new and recent work from the Los Angeles-based, Chicana artist, the collection has inspired dialogue regarding Latinx representation in U.S. society and sparked revelatory commentary from museum visitors. It has enjoyed significant media attention and critical acclaim, with laudatory reviews and insightful profiles on the artist published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Artillery Magazine* and *Art and Cake*, among others.

The exhibition, comprised of 125 paintings, drawings, and sculptures selected from several of Vallejo's recent series and subseries of artworks, including *Make 'Em All Mexican*, *The Brown Oscars*, *The Brown Dot Project*, *Datos Sagrados*, *Memories of Mexico*, and *Cultural Enigma*, is LA Plaza's first solo exhibition staged simultaneously in all of its temporary exhibition galleries. On view through January 13, 2020, the exhibition examines how color and class, as expressed through images and data, affect our perception and experience of culture. It also asks how embracing brownness can allow us to creatively question, deflect, and resist stereotypes of and assumptions about Latinx people.

LA Plaza has welcomed more than 33,500 visitors since the exhibition opening on June 1. Individual guests, families, students, and groups, some led by the artist herself, have traversed through the two galleries, carefully examining the precise geometric drawings and thought-provoking sculptures and paintings, and inspecting the text which gives context to the various interpretations of brownness inherent in each of the pieces.

"I love the *Datos Sagrados* and *Brown Dot* series," commented one visitor via a visitor survey. "It was so refreshing and necessary to see statistics that are often used to marginalize people of color reframed in an artistic way that center the experience and expression of a Latinx woman of color." Commented another: "The *Brown Belongings* exhibit reminded me how brownness and whiteness exist in a visual and cultural gradient, constantly mixing, fighting, and converging to shape every person's unique experience."

Visitors are encouraged to write their thoughts on what "brown" means to them in a comment box located on the second floor outside the gallery. Wrote one visitor: "'Brown' means resilience, pride, strength, and courage. It means chasing your dreams and making them a reality." Wrote another: "[Brown is the] color of comfort and warmth, the color of long days in the hard sun, the color of warm earth between your toes. Hot *Abuelita* chocolate in your cup. Spice, rich, warmth."

A small room on the first floor gallery provides an interactive space where museum guests are given the opportunity to explore different cultural identities by creating a cultural portrait, drawing and coloring

on outlined figures, including the “La Mona” and “Liberty, Libertad”. The figures, repurposed images of the Mona Lisa and the Statue of Liberty, respectively, are colorfully rendered and emblazoned with powerful words like “Unite, persist, believe,” with a visitor proclaiming in heavy brown crayon, “The world is of mixed shades. It is made beautiful and whole by diversity. You can’t oppose it, but welcome it.”

Reporters and reviewers have caught notice of the exhibition, with more than 50 international, general market and Latino media outlets covering the show, totaling more than 250 million media impressions. An Agence Presse France video tweeted in June 2019, detailing the *Make ‘Em All Mexican* series that is part of exhibition, has received more than 121,000 views.

Art and Cakes’ David Rubin notes, “With daily media coverage of current controversies over the citizenship question on the 2020 Census, Latin American migrant children living in inhumane concentration camps, and the tenuousness of the future of DACA, Vallejo’s research project couldn’t be any timelier. Her findings, which are presented in the form of more than 125 paintings, drawings, and sculptures, should elicit more questions than answers, which is exactly the artist’s stated intention.”

“Statistics about Latinx participation in labor, religion, family, homelessness and education take the form of abstract compositions or representational depictions of objects and people, turning dry numbers into items of aesthetic contemplation,” writes Matt Stromberg in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Asserts Chon A. Noriega, Director and Professor at UCLA’s Chicano Studies Research Center in the CSRC’s newsletter: “These historical gestures situate her work in the context of two crossings: that of the Moors crossing the Strait of Gibraltar to the Iberian Peninsula, and that of Mexicans crossing the US border during the Mexican Revolution and the rise of U.S. agribusiness, which required a massive labor force. These histories, woven together, are all about place and belonging. Brown belongings.”

“I am very happy with the response that *Brown Belongings* is receiving,” says Linda Vallejo. “Several public tours have drawn residents from diverse regional and national communities and we’ve had great press coverage. The audience is very interested in engaging in a meaningful conversation about the politics of color, class, and culture!”

LA Plaza has organized a series of free public programs in connection with the exhibition, with an appreciate audience already enjoying a presentation by Vallejo on the techniques she used to transform found objects and unfinished material into works of art and a subsequent roundtable featuring the writers of the exhibition’s companion publication – Karen Mary Davalos, Michelle L. Lopez, and William Moreno, moderated by Pilar Tompkins Rivas, Director of the Vincent Price Art Museum – who shared their insights on her art.

Remaining programs taking place at LA Plaza are:

Spotlight Tour - Linda Vallejo: *Brown Belongings*

Thursday, October 17 | 2:30pm

A guided tour of the exhibition led by Linda Vallejo

Spectacular Brownness

Thursday, October 17 | 7pm

Linda Vallejo’s colleagues in the Chicanx art world share stories inspired by culture, identity, and community activism. Artist guests will include David Botello, Barbara Carrasco, and John Valadez. Moderated by Betty Avila, Executive Director, Self Help Graphics and Art, Inc.

The Art of Data

Thursday, November 14 | 7pm

Dr. David Hayes-Bautista, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at the UCLA School of Medicine, challenges narratives about diversity, race, and health by rigorous use of quantitative data sets. Utilizing similar data, Linda Vallejo creates thought-provoking art that questions stereotypes and empowers Latinx communities. These two visionaries will exchange ideas about the past, present, and future of the Latinx community.

Private group tours can be arranged by LA Plaza's Curatorial Department. Please call Ximena Martin, Senior Curator, Programs and Education, at 213-542-6226 to schedule.

ABOUT LINDA VALLEJO: During her more than forty-year career, Vallejo has worked across a variety of media—including screen printing, painting, drawing, and sculpture—and has been featured in numerous exhibitions and publications. Her work is held in the permanent collections of the East Los Angeles College Vincent Price Museum, Los Angeles; the National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago; the Carnegie Art Museum, Oxnard, CA; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the University of California, Santa Barbara California Multicultural and Ethnic Archives; and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

ABOUT LA PLAZA: Opened in 2011, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes is a Los Angeles County museum and Smithsonian Institute affiliate that celebrates the past and inspires the future by sharing the untold stories about the history, art and culture of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and all Latinos in the founding and continuing evolution of Southern California through compelling and culturally enriching exhibitions, educational initiatives, and public programs. Located near the site where Los Angeles was founded in 1781, LA Plaza's 2.2-acre campus includes two historic and renovated buildings (the Vickrey-Brunswick Building and Plaza House) surrounded by 30,000 square feet of public space that includes an outdoor stage and edible teaching garden.

LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, 501 North Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Hours: M, W, & Th, 12-5 pm, Fri-Sun 12-6 pm

Admission: FREE

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Editor's note: High res Images available by request

Note to reporters & editors:

"LA" in "LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes" is part of the official name and should be capitalized

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