

Linda Vallejo
Artist Statement

“*Madre Celestial* was produced as a part of a series entitled *Los Cielos/The Heavens*. This portfolio of work (1996-2000) integrated my understanding and experience of nature, and recollection and healing through nature by illustrating celestial figures floating in surrealistic skiescapes. It is my firm belief that woman is the symbol of the earth and that each woman can learn aspects of loyalty, integrity, honor, generosity, and courage directly from the earth. *Madre Celestial* depicts the female form superimposed on a brilliant sky to open dialogue about a metamorphic relationship with nature. The figure reveals a balanced and harmonious countenance of a woman poised with nature.”

Dr. Edith Tonelli wrote in *ArtScene* (October 1991): “It did not take me long to realize that although this is an artist whose ties are to a very different heritage and community than mine, she is addressing very common human problems. I was soon to realize that the artist sees her work this way as well, informed by her Native American heritage and experience, but with hope that it reverberates for anyone who has suffered in life and persevered. Vallejo believes that human strength is the result of a connection with nature and an internalizing of natural power. Her experience with indigenous people and her understanding of a personal relationship to the land and natural forms has healed her time and again and has the potential, she believes, to be a teacher to anybody.”

In 2000 Sybil Venegas wrote: “*Los Cielos/The Heavens* is a reflection of Linda’s love of indigenous spiritual community and her personal healing through ceremony and nature. While this has been at the center of her work for the past twenty years, *Los Cielos* takes us inside the indigenous spirit of the Americas. Evocative of ceremony and the feelings one experiences upon making ceremony with community and the ancestors, these paintings have a primal impact on the viewers. In *Los Cielos*, the heavens are anthropomorphized into a female aspect of the creator; a benevolent Grandmother watching over us. These paintings are beautiful prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving.”

In 2000, Armando Duron stated, “Linda’s art is among the most indigenous-based of any of the Chicano artists of Los Angeles. Her art works over the past twenty-five years evoke the spirit of a Meso-American shaman chronicling the story of her people’s creation and journey through transcendent time and space, especially its women.”

In 2010, Betty Ann Brown, stated: “Like Ana Mendieta, Vallejo has created work rooted in the connection between nature and the female body. And like Mendieta, Vallejo has turned to the ancient world for precedents. Both artists seem to sense that ancient cultures were more in tune with the power of nature than our contemporary world. For Mendieta, ancient cultures possessed “an inner knowledge, a closeness with natural resources” that endowed them with a certain “authenticity.” But whereas Mendieta’s female silhouettes recall Neolithic goddesses from Egypt and Europe, Vallejo’s female images are recognizably Mexican in origin. They often have eyes drawn from Mixtec manuscripts and poses echoing Aztec stone sculpture or Zapotec ceramic urns.”