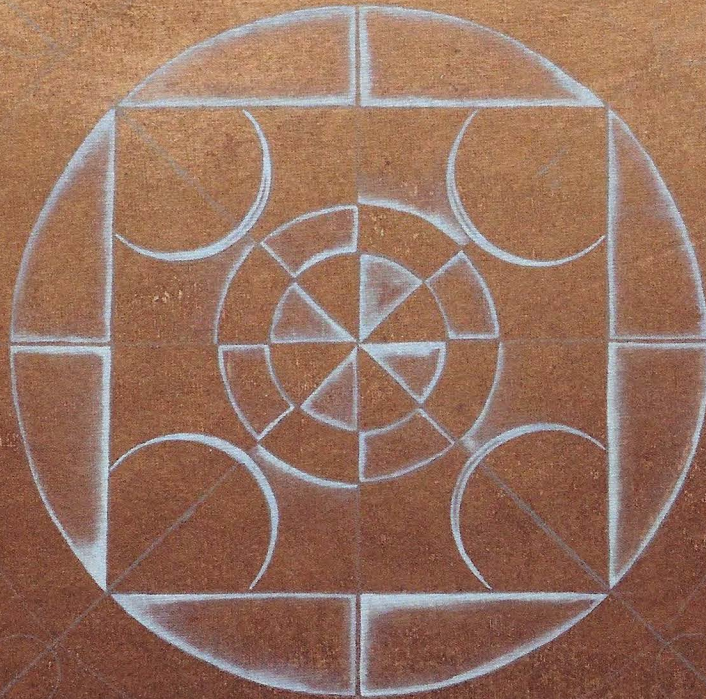


# ***Linda Vallejo***

 BROWN BELONGINGS 





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# *Linda Vallejo*

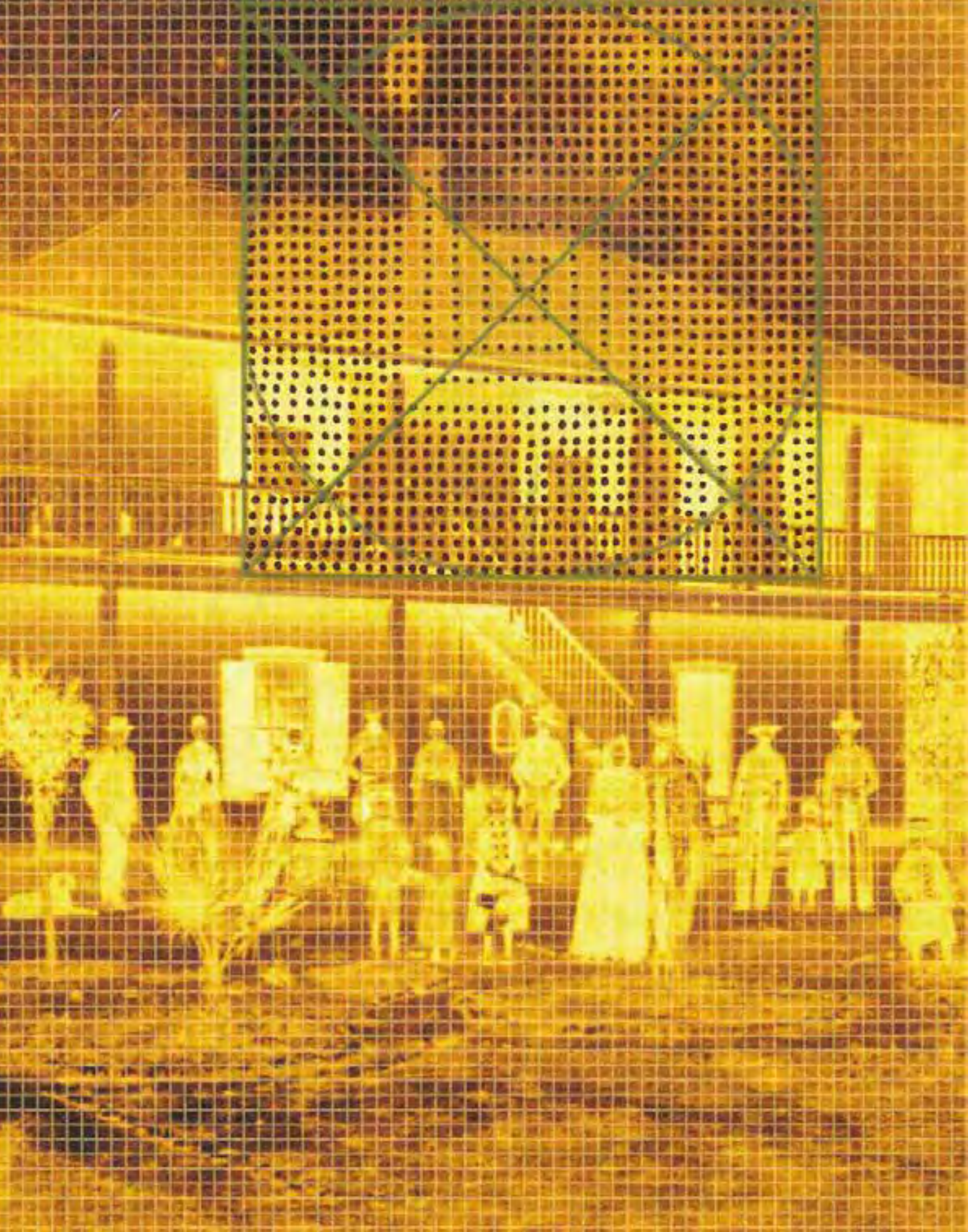
 BROWN BELONGINGS 

with contributions from

**KAREN MARY DAVALOS  
MICHELLE L. LOPEZ  
WILLIAM MORENO**

LA PLAZA DE CULTURA Y ARTES  
JUNE 1, 2019–JANUARY 13, 2020









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## ABOUT LA PLAZA DE CULTURA Y ARTES

LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes is a museum and cultural center created by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and open to the public since 2011. LA Plaza explores the role of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and all Latinx people in the Los Angeles of the past, present, and future. These stories come to life through a range of permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as educational and public programs.

The LA Plaza campus includes two renovated buildings that date back to the 1880s, a large outdoor performance space, and a historic walkway. The campus is located in the El Pueblo de Los Ángeles Historic Monument, the site where, in 1781, El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Ángeles was established.

Through its work, LA Plaza celebrates and cultivates an appreciation for the enduring and evolving history, art, and culture of Latinx people in Los Angeles.



# the possibilities and potential of brownness

## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

ERIN M. CURTIS, SENIOR CURATOR

MARIAH BERLANGA-SHEVCHUK, ASSOCIATE CURATOR

ESPERANZA SANCHEZ, ASSISTANT CURATOR

Around 2010—more than three decades into her career—Linda Vallejo began to investigate the vast and varied meanings of the color brown. In several recent series and subseries, including *Make 'Em All Mexican*, *The Brown Oscars*, *The Brown Dot Project*, and *Datos Sagrados*, the artist asks crucial questions about Latinx representation and identity: How do race and color define our status in the world? How do they affect our understanding and appreciation of culture? How do images and data shape our attitudes about color? Who owns culture and ideas, and what does it mean to claim or reappropriate culture? Approaching these difficult and often divisive subjects with humor, playfulness, and curiosity, Vallejo invites viewers into what she has called a “comfortable space” that evokes “stories about divisions based on the color of our skin.”<sup>1</sup>

For its first solo exhibition devoted to a woman artist, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes is showcasing Vallejo's groundbreaking art to encourage exploration of the possibilities and potential of brownness. *Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings* examines the ways in which race and identity—as expressed through popular imagery, statistical data, and cultural signifiers—affect our perception and experience of culture. At the same time, the exhibition asks how embracing brownness can allow Latinx people to question, deflect, and resist stereotypes and assumptions. The precarious political climate in which we conceived of this exhibition has added weight and urgency to these questions.

Data and imagery—two key sources through which we make sense of the world around us—often give the impression of being neutral, even though they are products of cultures that imbue them with meaning. By reframing imagery and data, Vallejo empowers us to consider and question the “facts” in dominant discourses, thereby fostering a heightened understanding of ourselves and our

communities. In keeping with LA Plaza's mission of celebrating and cultivating an appreciation for the enduring and evolving influence of Mexican, Mexican American, and Latinx culture, *Brown Belongings* presents the work of this important Chicana artist with the aim of addressing the lived experiences of Latinx individuals in the United States and creating dialogue about their past, present, and future.

The theme of the exhibition and catalog emerged from a long series of conversations among the curators and Vallejo at her home in Topanga, California. We discussed key aspects of the artist's creative process, such as her application of brown paint to found objects and unfinished materials as a way of claiming cultural capital not only for herself, but for all people of color. In this context, the works revealed themselves both as belongings and as a confirmation of belonging. They touch on themes of inclusion and exclusion, ownership and possession, appropriation and reclamation. The title—*Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings*—references the works themselves, opens discourse around their meaning, and allows audiences to draw their own conclusions about what it means to be brown and to belong.

The exhibition also features new works by the artist, including pieces from her recent *Cultural Enigma* series—abstract paintings that assess the viewer's rapport with cultural signifiers, and uniquely brown takes on portraits by US-based painters such as

**34.1% of US Cafeteria Workers Are Latina, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*

Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

David Hockney and Alice Neel—as well as *Brown Dot Project* pieces commissioned for this exhibition. After close consultation with the curatorial team, Vallejo created images of historic adobe buildings in Los Angeles, overlaid with statistics about the spatial distribution of Latinx communities in the city, home ownership and homelessness rates, and immigration. These works broaden *The Brown Dot Project* to include contemporary conversations about housing and migration patterns and connect them to the longer history of Mexicans in Los Angeles, attesting to the resilience of the city's long-standing Latinx communities in the face of ongoing housing displacement and discrimination. Many of these new artworks combine recent data with imagery of the early Mexican and Mexican American experience in Los Angeles, complementing the history discussed in LA Plaza's permanent exhibitions, *LA Starts Here!*, *Calle Principal: Mi México en Los Angeles*, and *The View from Here: Architecture as a Witness to History*.

For the curatorial team, it has been an honor to collaborate with Vallejo on this exhibition and catalog for the past two years. Our many visits to her home—during which we learned more about one another and exchanged views on art, curating, and culture over her home-cooked meals—made the work feel like a retreat as well as a learning experience. We've had the pleasure of watching new pieces develop in real time, allowing us deeper insight into Vallejo's

process as well as the connections between her early, spiritually focused paintings and her more recent explorations of brownness and identity. We are deeply grateful to Vallejo for sharing her time and talents with us.

We also thank the contributors to this catalog for pouring themselves into their writing. Each essay substantially broadened our understanding of Vallejo's art and influenced the exhibition text. Tania Inowlocki's careful editing and project management made this publication a reality, and we sincerely appreciate her hard work. Any remaining errors are our own. Designer Janine Vigus has brought her distinctive style to both the exhibition and catalog, and we can't thank her enough. Financial support was provided by AltaMed, Cástulo de la Rocha, and Zoila D. Escobar. We also thank the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Betty Avila and Jan P. Giuliani, Barry Balin and Karen R. Siltan, Benjamin Moore & Co., Ricardo and Marcia Castillo, Bob Drwila and Sharon Sekhon, Armando and Mary Durón, Adi and Randi Matushevitz, the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), the Puffin Foundation, Kene J. Rosa and Luis C. Jacinto, and Dr. Jose Luis Ruiz for their donations. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge our lenders and LA Plaza coworkers, without whom this project would not be possible.

We are delighted to present *Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings* as a collection of all things Linda: a sense of humor that beckons and disarms, razor-sharp insights about color and class, and encouragement to forge our own paths, know our cultures, and define our identities for ourselves.

## NOTES

1. Linda Vallejo, "Artist Statement," in this volume (see page xii).







FIGURE 1

**The Emperor's Guardian Angel, 2012**

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*

Acrylic, gold leaf, and silver leaf on repurposed  
plaster figure, 19 × 10 × 6 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

# artist statement

LINDA VALLEJO

*Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings* represents ten years of concentrated work on visualizing what it means to be a person of color in the United States. These works reflect what I call my “brown intellectual property”—the experiences, knowledge, and feelings I have gathered over more than four decades of study in Chicana and American indigenous communities.

## INFLUENCES AND INTERESTS

I trace the root of my passion about the politics of color and class back to the mid-1960s, when my father—an officer in the Air Force—was relocated from Sacramento, California, to Montgomery, Alabama. I attended high school in an era defined by segregation, the Selma marches, and the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It was then that I began to realize that skin color was a defining factor in how the world judges you and fixes your place in it.

At my high school, the first in Montgomery to integrate, tensions were palpable and violence felt imminent as one hundred black students joined two thousand white ones. I was happy to leave this difficult environment behind when my family moved to Madrid, Spain, where I completed high school.

During the next few years I searched for my personal artistic expression and place in the world. I engrossed myself in art and architecture; I wrote music, designed clothing, and painted; and I delighted in family visits to ancient Roman sites and Europe’s great museums. I was in pursuit of a language that could express universal equality, acceptance, and appreciation.

In 1969 I moved to Los Angeles to obtain a bachelor’s degree from Whittier College, just half an hour from East Los Angeles, where I had been born and where most of my family still lived. I returned to Madrid to study lithography but then went back to LA to earn a Master of Fine Arts in printmaking at California State

University, Long Beach. While in grad school, I secured a job teaching printmaking to elementary school students at the Barrio Mobile Art Studio, which was run by Self Help Graphics & Art, a Chicana community-based arts organization just a stone’s throw from my early childhood home.

I soon immersed myself in my own classical culture—Meso-america. I traveled in Mexico to visit the great ceremonial sites and became deeply involved in Chicana and Native American ceremonial circles, which informed my cultural perspective and, by extension, my art practice. My artworks focused on spirituality, nature, and the beauty of womanhood—universal themes shared by all peoples regardless of race, creed, or color. Together, my interest in indigenous mythology and symbols and my love of Western classics influenced my creative development; fusing them allowed me to define my art practice.

After creating several portfolios focused on spirituality and nature, and traveling a good deal more, I developed an interest in images created from repurposed objects. In particular, my eye was drawn to art exhibited in *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century*, which opened at the New Museum in New York in 2007. The show’s wildly untamed works, including ones that juxtaposed seemingly conflicting cultural imagery, described the present as an age of crumbling beliefs and broken icons. I was also captivated by Chinese artist Wang Qingsong’s photo montage *Romantique* (2003), a remake of Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* featuring Chinese models, and by the work of late Cuban artist Ana Mendieta, who combined seemingly incongruent media such as film, performance, sculpture, and photography to express a unified cultural and feminist vision.

Seeing these and many other works produced a shift in my creative process. I found myself ruminating, “What would artwork made of repurposed materials look like through my personal cultural lens?” I started collecting offbeat items—newspapers, figurines, postcards, photographs—and storing them in cubbyholes. My aim was to place them into the cauldron of my creative mind to see what would bubble up.

## MAKE ‘EM ALL MEXICAN

A period of introspection followed. I realized that while my Mexican great-grandparents had traveled to California with little but the



shirts on their backs, my children and I had been able to pursue our professional dreams. So why did the American Dream seem out of reach for so many Latinx people?

The crux of the matter, it seemed to me, was that visual representations of the American Dream did not include me, or my loved ones. I had never seen the golden images of Americana with familiar brown faces. Friendly faces, sure—but not familiar ones. The yearning for familiar faces sent me on a quest for images that I could call my own.

One day, while searching for materials to repurpose in a local antique mall, I spied a set of salt and pepper shakers shaped like two little pilgrims on their way to a Thanksgiving celebration. I said to myself, “I can paint them brown!” Before long, I blurted out, “I just wanna make ‘em all Mexican—like me!” I began painting directly on antique photographs, porcelain and plaster figurines, postcards, and magazine pages to create an America that looked brown like me.

Since then, I have produced hundreds of *Make ‘Em All Mexican* sculptures, handmade books, and paintings—among them an array of Greek and Roman gods, movie stars, cartoon characters, US presidents, and European royalty, all painted brown (Figures 1 and 2). These works coax viewers into a comfortable space, only to confront them with unfamiliar, and sometimes uncomfortable, scenarios. What would our world look like today if Hollywood had been built and governed by people of color? Or if illustrious historical kingdoms had been ruled by Mexican royalty?

By raising difficult questions about the relationship between color and class, these works elicit stories about divisions based on the color of our skin. For some viewers, the works are hyper-political or just downright hilarious; for others, they are portals to deeply seated memories and a range of emotions. Many viewers have responded by sharing personal experiences, including disturbing ones.

On seeing the dark-skinned George and Martha Washington clad in delicately hand-stitched clothing with little dashes of Mexican insignia, one viewer recalled emotionally that his mother, a maquiladora worker, would save cloth remnants to make dresses and shirts for her children. Another individual reflected in tears that her family had initially celebrated her as a “little princess” because of her light hair and skin, but that she felt their love “ebb away” as her hair and skin grew darker. One visitor acknowledged that the



**FIGURE 2**  
**Marielena la Fabulosa**, 2012  
 From *Make ‘Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
 8½ × 5 × 4½ inches  
 COLLECTION OF VICTORIA BELCO AND  
 WILLIAM GOODMAN

“light” members of his family did not speak to the “dark” ones. Viewer responses have reached beyond color-related considerations, encompassing women’s and LGBTQ rights, and the struggles of anyone who has ever felt like an outsider. In that sense, *Make ‘Em All Mexican* recognizes a shared sense of exclusion from power and access—while opening doors to a reimagined world of acceptance and equality.

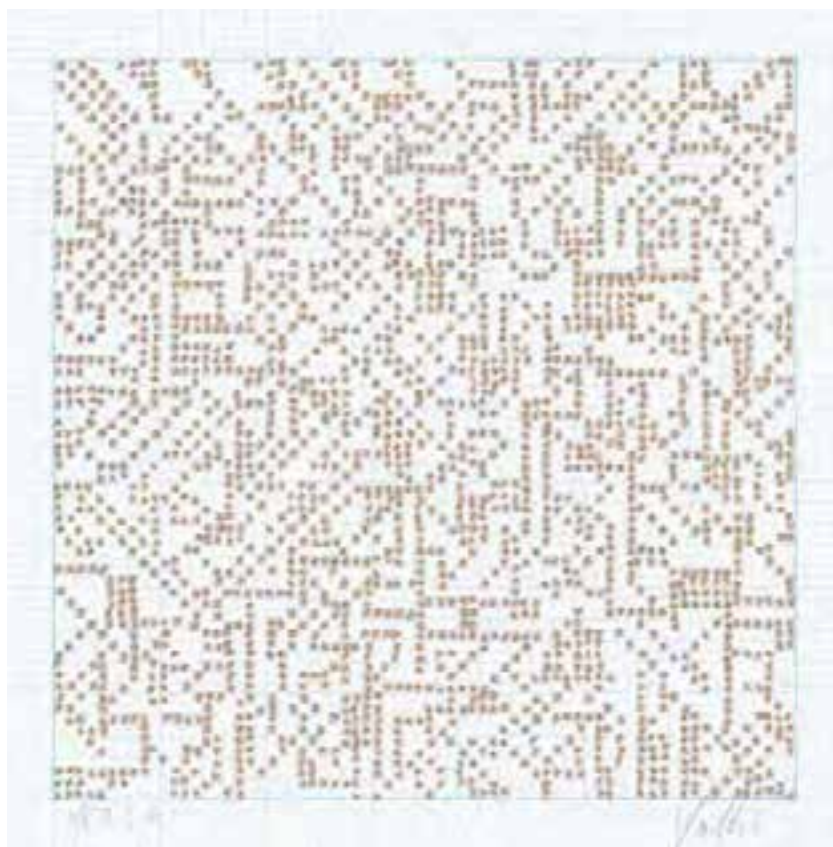
### THE BROWN DOT PROJECT

After creating *Make ‘Em All Mexican*—a series that is brazenly complex, gaudy, and over the top—I was still interested in “keepin’ it brown,” but I wanted to produce simpler images. I began this process by asking myself, “What would my brown image look like if I were a minimalist painter?” It would take four years of contemplation and experimentation before I could present my next portfolio of works.

I spent some time thinking about statistics, particularly with respect to census data. Latinx Angelenos had been talking about their growing population, and how this growth should be accompanied by increased prosperity and influence. Building on themes addressed in *Make ‘Em All Mexican*, my new series was to ask whether these growing numbers were actually changing our attitudes about color and class—and about our place in the American Dream.

The result was *The Brown Dot Project*, a set of what I call “data pictographs” on gridded vellum in which dots in shades of brown represent statistics. The works reflect various types of data, including the Latinx proportion of city and state populations, of professionals in health, education, and other sectors, and of the US gross national product. The project has proven time-consuming and mentally strenuous: I first count the number of boxes in an area of gridded vellum and then dot the relevant proportion to represent a data set. For example, based on data that Latinx Angelenos account for 48.3% of LA’s total population, I place 2,367 dots in an area containing 4,900 boxes—so as to cover 48.3% of the gridded area (Figure 3).

The brown dots appear in various patterns, a number of which resemble designs in indigenous weaving and ancient ceremonial sites. Others mirror computer-generated geometric shapes or are



**FIGURE 3**  
**Los Angeles 48.3%, 2015**  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 8½ × 8½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST







**FIGURE 4**  
**30% of the US Population Will Be Latino in 2050**, 2017  
 From *Datos Sagrados*  
 Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 22 × 22 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**FIGURE 5**  
**Symbols and Signs II**, 2019  
 From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
 Colored pencil and gouache on paper, 16¼ × 11¼ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

reminiscent of grid-oriented modern and contemporary works—such as those of Piet Mondrian, Chuck Close, Agnes Martin, and Charles Gaines.

In considering *The Brown Dot Project*, critic and curator Peter Frank suggested that I offer my art, “if not as a tool for change, then at least as an examination of the factors that necessitate such change, a passionate argument guided not only by reason, but by humor, craft, and beauty.”

### DATOS SAGRADOS

I continued to use data for my next series, *Datos Sagrados*. In contrast to *The Brown Dot Project*, however, these painted works on circular handmade paper are influenced by the golden ratio (Figure 4). They speak to the close relationship between mathematics, beauty, truth, and indigenous ceremony, in which mandalas are central to altar-making practices, *danza* choreography, and fundamental beliefs.

In describing *Datos Sagrados*, critic and curator Shana Nys Dambrot notes:

By taking a simple mathematical process that connects to her own experience, Vallejo has generated a rarefied language of mark-making that is only brown paint on paper, and yet comprises a wealth of holistic meaning from the deeply personal to the political, spiritual, philosophical, and psychological.

### CULTURAL ENIGMA

My most recent series of works, *Cultural Enigma*, broadens the focus to address not only the politics of color and class, but also what we refer to as culture. These works ask whether culture exists and, if so, why it is important in our lives, how we present ourselves culturally, and what symbols and signs we choose to signify our cultural presence, if any (Figure 5).

I call these abstract paintings, which reference a variety of historical and contemporary source materials, “cultural Rorschach tests.” Viewers are invited to identify what they see in the images to reveal their cultural knowledge and perspective. *Cultural Enigma* also includes figurative works on paper. The subjects are taken

from and in homage to important US and European twentieth-century portrait painters, such as David Hockney, Alice Neel, and Philip Pearlstein (Figure 6). These seated figures appear with few cultural insignia other than their brown skin.

### BROWN BELONGINGS

It has taken me forty years to develop an artistic practice that reflects my cultural experience of the world and my place in it. *Brown Belongings* presents the results: four “brown” portfolios—*Make ‘Em All Mexican*, *The Brown Dot Project*, *Datos Sagrados*, and *Cultural Enigma*—all produced between 2010 and 2019. These series embody decades of study and gathered knowledge of what it means to live as a Latinx, Chicanx, indigenous American. The title *Brown Belongings* touches on many significant points for me. For one, it highlights that the artworks are autobiographical, that they “belong” to me. Yet it also refers to my search for a place to “belong,” a quest that began when, as a child and young adult, I traveled and studied throughout Europe, Mexico, and the United States. It was when I returned to Los Angeles and became involved in the Chicanx and indigenous communities that I found my place—artistically, intellectually, and culturally.

The title further draws attention to the “belongings” I have collected on my journey—icons that represent the American cultural identity featured in *Make ‘Em All Mexican*. In painting these objects brown, I become like a small child who paints her dolls so that they can be like her, so that they can belong with and to each other.

Finally, the title also speaks to “longing” as a part of “*belonging*.” Put simply, I long to find a visual language that will open a dialogue about how we see ourselves, how others see us, and how we can find joy and understanding in both our differences and our similarities.

**FIGURE 6**  
**American Portrait IX**, 2019  
(after David Hockney, *Self-Portrait*, 1999)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST







**Latinos Make Up 30% of New Nissan Sales in  
the US (2014)** (detail), 2018

From *The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on gridded vellum, 72 × 28 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

*essays*





# spectacular brownness

IN THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY  
ART OF LINDA VALLEJO

KAREN MARY DAVALOS

Linda Vallejo has been thinking about the social and cultural meaning of the color brown for some time. In 2010, the artist began to reconceptualize notions associated with racial formation, pigmentation, and belonging in *Make 'Em All Mexican (MEAM)*, a provocative series in which she darkens skin, eyes, and hair in otherwise faithful replicas of familiar portraits and mass media representations of icons and celebrities. Within this series and beyond it, the artist's exploration of the color brown and its meaning has generated a range of imagery, styles, and media—from figurative works, geometric abstraction, pointillist designs, drawings, and two-dimensional, mixed-media images to repurposed objects, sculpture, and installation art.

In many ways, these works are a social engagement, enabling relational aesthetics as viewers respond to the oeuvre's provocations. Through *MEAM*, Vallejo deliberately seeks to elicit reflection and discussion. Having exhibited the series for nearly a decade, she has learned to anticipate visceral responses—snickers, heady laughter, even tears—and craves conversation with viewers. Her subsequent series, such as *The Brown Dot Project*, *Datos Sagrados*, and *Cultural Enigma*, are similarly dependent on the audience: they come to full expression when the viewer interprets, attaches meaning to, or asks questions about an image. In all of these series, it is Vallejo's use of the color brown that undergirds a collaborative, socially engaged practice.<sup>1</sup> Although she creates the works alone in her studio, they come into their full aesthetic flowering through audience response to her manipulation of the color brown.

At its core, *MEAM* recodes and rejects the quotidian visual gestures of white privilege, but the series is simultaneously a quest for inclusion and “an embrace of abjection as an aesthetic strategy,” one that destabilizes racial difference and “community” as coherent

and unmediated.<sup>2</sup> The series plays with the politics of respectability by incorporating the contemptible or unworthy (the abject) as a tactic to rethink assumptions about Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanx individuals.<sup>3</sup> Using a simple compositional strategy, Vallejo merely paints everyone Mexican, changing the color and sometimes the facial features of the repurposed images using brown and black gouache or oil. She defaces vintage photographs and advertisements, fine-art reproductions, collectable figurines, and mass-produced prints and statuettes by painting directly on them. She recasts white skin with brown paint and recolors blond hair and blue eyes using black or brown paint. Mona Lisa, Marilyn Monroe, and Fred Flintstone, among others, are painted brown. By disrupting viewers' perceptions of these images—and their historical and cultural associations—the series inevitably elicits emotional responses. Taken individually or as a whole, the repainted images challenge presumptions about race, beauty, belonging, and national identity, but they also pursue engagement with “negative affects—uncertainty, disgust, unbelonging,” as well as anxiety, contempt, and anger—to name a few responses that the series calls into existence in its critique of the social order.<sup>4</sup>

*The Brown Dot Project*, *Datos Sagrados*, and *Cultural Enigma* are series that function in the same context as *MEAM*. Each one extends Vallejo's exploration of the color brown and its meaning, and each maneuvers more closely toward social engagement, increasing the dynamic relation between artist and audience. This essay explores those movements as well as the vehicle—brown, a composite color made from a mixture of primary colors—that generates the engagement. Vallejo has purchased a variety of brown paints available on the market: burnt sienna, raw sienna, raw umber, burnt umber, yellow ochre, gold ochre, red ochre, sepia, and Vandyke brown. She has also combined these colors as a way of exploring the complexity and radiance of this complex and lustrous hue. For some viewers, these tones might call to mind *café con leche* (coffee with milk), a bar of milk chocolate, roasted coffee beans, iron-rich desert soil, nutmeg, or hazelnuts; others might associate them with the variations in skin color among their family members.

Vallejo's broad spectrum of brown supports the series' proposition that Mexicans come in a wide range of skin tones and that no single image encapsulates all Mexicans. In highlighting that

**FIGURE 7**  
**La Victoria, 2014**  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic and metal flake on repurposed  
composite figure, 40 ½ × 27 ½ × 27 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



evokes childhood memories of large, milk chocolate Easter bunnies displayed in department stores—tempting but inaccessible. It is as if Victory were inviting the viewer to taste her body: “Lick me.” This implied sexual transgression augments the abject response to brown. Viewers may despise it *and* covet it. It also exposes the racial sexual hierarchy produced by patriarchy, empire building, and colonialism, under which brown female bodies are reviled, desired, and raped.<sup>6</sup> In the *MEAM* series, however, Vallejo turns *La Victoria* into the agent of her own sexuality. The brown body announces and confronts the arousal it produces with an audacity that emerges from control over one’s own body and sexuality. This delicious brownness is empowering, conceptually disrupting contemporary white racial primacy, patriarchy, and heterosexism. Through this reappropriation, Vallejo plays with time. The sculpture imagines a counterfactual present, one that might have arisen if brown women had been able to leverage their sexual authority and social autonomy as of the second century BCE.

## COMPOSED BROWNESS

In the series that follow *MEAM*, the artist alters the conceptual project and the relationship to time, thereby heightening social engagement. If *MEAM* rests upon the destruction of the “old image to make the new image,” then *The Brown Dot Project* is its complement.<sup>7</sup> *MEAM* retouches the past to open up an alternate present—and, by extension, possible futures; in contrast, *The Brown Dot Project* interprets the present to open up avenues for imagining the future. Informed by recent statistics about Latinx residents in the United States, the works in the latter series include painstakingly made geometric designs and figures composed of single brown dots in selected squares of gridded vellum. Although the images resemble dot matrix or other technological compositions, Vallejo does not use computer-generated sketches. She works by hand. In each grid, the proportion of dotted squares corresponds to the percentage cited in the title of the work. In *Chicago 28.9%* (2015), for instance, 13,988 dots cover 28.9% of the 48,400 squares, representing Chicago’s Latinx population (Figure 8). The abstract forms in this series resemble patterns in Mesoamerican and Southwestern weaving, blending expectations about so-called tradition with contemporary enumerations.

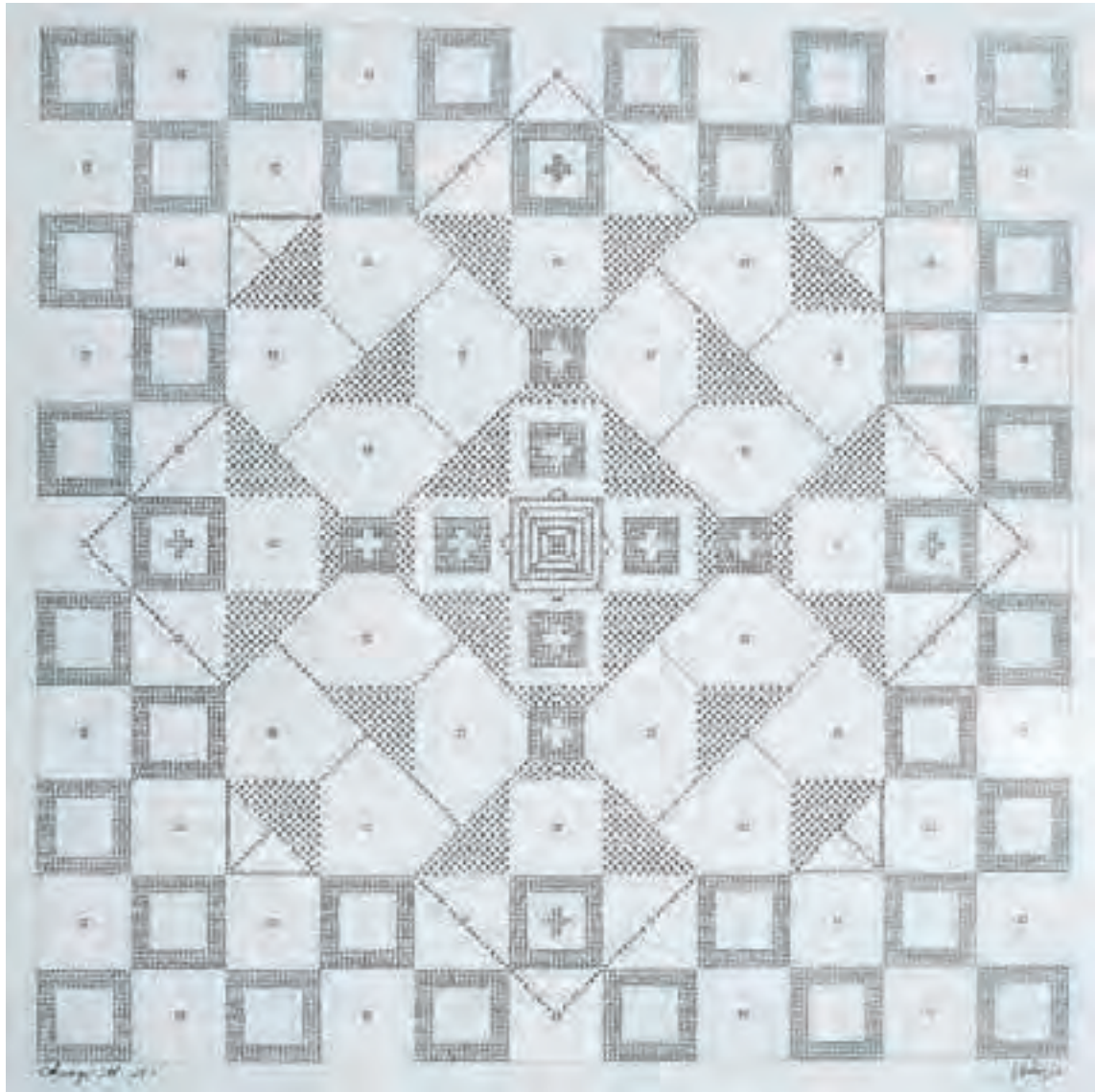
**FIGURE 8**  
**Chicago 28.9%, 2015**  
 From *The Brown Dot Project*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 24 × 24 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Mexican Americans are not homogeneous, it also points to the diversity that is expressed across Latinx populations. Further, Vallejo’s attention to the complexities of brown paint interrogates the ongoing fictions about various aspects of brown-skinned people collectively, such as their intellect (they are uneducated and slow), work ethic (they are either lazy welfare cheats or hard-working, depending on the economy’s need for labor), sex drive (the women are insatiable, the men domineering), belonging (they are foreign and undocumented), and their character (they are all the same). In the face of these fabrications—which feed the normative narratives about whiteness, authority, and power—*MEAM* functions as agent provocateur, especially in view of the Trump administration’s nativist and isolationist policies. These provocations extend across subsequent series and broaden the social dialogue with the viewer.

## TRANSFORMATIVE BROWNESS

While some viewers find *MEAM* unsettling, there is a certain transformative magic inherent in Vallejo’s repainting of women who represent the Western European tradition. For instance, *La Victoria* (2014),<sup>5</sup> created using the painting techniques and chromatic density popularized by lowrider artisans, conveys the sexual innuendo underlying much of the series (Figure 7). The marble sculpture from the second century BCE known as *Winged Victory of Samothrace* or *Nike of Samothrace* is central to Western notions of beauty, power, and femininity. It portrays action and triumph. In commemoration of a naval victory, Nike spreads her wings and faces the wind, her tunic flowing. The damaged sculpture may lack arms and a head, but the classical manner in which the body’s outline is revealed under transparent or wet clothing—even the figure’s belly button is clearly visible—produces a sensuous quality that is reinforced by the undulating marble and the theatrical position of the torso. Vallejo painted her forty-one-inch reproduction of the *Winged Victory* a luminous Chocolate Candy Brown. In its colored state, the sculpture calls attention to a history of Western representation that exoticizes and eroticizes non-white women.

Vallejo worked with a custom car painter to produce the mouth-watering milk chocolate color and gloss, a coat that makes the sculpture look good enough to eat. On its pedestal, the sculpture



As Vallejo points out, she feels as though she were “counting one Latino at a time, brown dot by brown dot.”<sup>8</sup> This physical labor and the titles of the works pronounce the empirical facts of Latinx experience. In this way, *The Brown Dot Project* illustrates the Latinx presence in the population, in the labor force, and among the poor, to name a few demographic contexts in which such objective realities are registered.

As noted, *MEAM* rewrites the past and thus imagines a different present, whereas *The Brown Dot Project* interprets the present to inspire thinking about the future. Each strategy leverages temporal conversations, and the differences between the series illuminate Vallejo’s ability to extend her conceptual project. In *MEAM*, for example, Vallejo recolors the *Father of Our Country* (2011) and re-dresses and repaints *Our Founders: George and Martha Washington* (2011) (Figures 9 and 10). Had the

Washingtons been of Mexican heritage, the United States may not have annexed the northern territories of Mexico in 1848, at the close of the Mexican War; Mexico might have won, or perhaps the two nations would have united as one. If so, we would not be clamoring for a wall at the southern border in the twenty-first century. By repainting the icons of European American domination, the artist evaporates US racial hierarchy and the structures and processes that support it: the history of African slavery, indigenous genocide, and the disenfranchisement of Mexicans and Mexican Americans.<sup>9</sup>

For *The Brown Dot Project*, Vallejo deepens the temporal strategy: she dives into the present to open up the future. As the artist notes in her statement on the series, “The Los Angeles Latino community is always talking about Latino numbers and how the population is growing by leaps and bounds. The consensus is that the growing numbers should equal growing prosperity and



influence.”<sup>10</sup> The series parses the data on the Latinx proportion of urban populations (in Chicago, Hollywood, Miami, New York, and San Francisco), among occupations (lawyers, doctors, architects, and construction workers), and among homeowners, as well as statistics on Latinx sexual and reproductive health (HIV status, teen pregnancy, and victims of sex trafficking) and education levels (high school diploma and associate’s and bachelor’s degree). By directing viewers to the facts on these issues, Vallejo stirs questions about the future. In one work, *US Latino High School Graduation Rates (1993 vs. 2013)* (2016), the top grid area features many more brown dots than the bottom one, implying stalled integration into US democracy (Figure 11). If education is the US pathway to opportunity, what does the future hold for Latinx individuals? Will they secure greater access to white-collar professions, political representation, and health care as their proportional representation in society grows?

One of the most potent provocations about the future emerges from the dozen works titled *LA 48.3%* (2015), which variously reconfigure the Latinx proportion of the total population of Los Angeles in 2015 (Figure 12). By probing the data twelve times, Vallejo suggests that LA’s Latinx population—which is on the cusp of becoming the demographic majority in Los Angeles—has at its disposal a panoply of launch pads from which to move into the future. Through this deliberate repetition, she implores viewers to focus on the facts, “brown dot by brown dot,” and asks: now what? At the same time, these works put the brakes on utopian fantasies. Rather than invest in the rhetoric of inclusion and multiculturalism, the series disrupts a romantic understanding of the present and therefore of what lies ahead. For example, Vallejo observes that *35% of US Latinos Voted for Trump* (2017)<sup>11</sup> and that Latinx youths are hampered by real material problems, as highlighted in *US Latino Children Living in Poverty 49%* (2014) (2016).

## INTROSPECTIVE BROWNNESS

While *Make ‘Em All Mexican* and *The Brown Dot Project* both bring into sharp focus our blind spots and assumptions about race and gender, and thus propose difficult conversations, *Datos Sagrados* uses balanced designs to inspire internal reflection about similar intersecting subjects. With this series, the artist pivots away from a



**FIGURE 9**

**Father of Our Country**, 2011

From *Make ‘Em All Mexican*

Acrylic and gold leaf on repurposed porcelain figure, 16 × 4½ × 4½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



FIGURE 10  
**Our Founders: George and Martha Washington, 2011**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic and handmade clothing on repurposed porcelain figures, 14 × 6 × 6 and 13½ × 6 × 6 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



FIGURE 11  
**US Latino High School Graduation Rates  
(1993 vs. 2013), 2016**  
From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**FIGURE 12**  
**LA 48.3%**, 2015  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 24 × 24 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**FIGURE 13**  
**52% of US Latinos Self-Identify as Mestizo, 2017**  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper,  
12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

provocative tone. Although the works in *Datos Sagrados* also illustrate the statistics cited in their titles, they draw the viewer into a more intimate space through their composition and material form.

*Datos Sagrados* comprises abstract geometric patterns painted on circular handmade paper. In each work, brown paint covers the proportion of the space that corresponds to the percentage in the title, such as *50% of US Latinos Self-Identify as White* (2017), *65% of US Latinos Are US Native-Born* (2017), and *52% of US Latinos Self-Identify as Mestizo* (2017) (Figure 13). Unlike the patterns in *The Brown Dot Project*, the organic shapes in this series feel spiritual. They draw the viewer close for measured study; they invite the eye to wander over designs, to recognize the symmetry, and to relish the aesthetic choices of the artist. Several images are similar to mandalas, some bear a resemblance to flowers, crystals, or shells, and others call to mind overlapping shapes in Venn diagrams. Overall, these designs are oddly familiar, like monochromatic kaleidoscopes—energetic and soothing at once. The rich brown hues inspire private dialogue. The series allows personal introspection to eclipse the incantations of an ostensibly coherent community, a strategy at odds with the discourse of Chicano politics.<sup>12</sup>

## TESTING BROWNNESS

Like *Datos Sagrados*, *Cultural Enigma* moves toward the spiritual through Vallejo's use of coloration. These two series radiate with the iridescent qualities of brown, and the works are luminous. In *Cultural Enigma*, however, the artist alters her approach by contrasting brown with blue to create a solarized glow. She produces this luminescence in two ways: by applying multiple layers of gouache that extend to the edge of the handmade paper, and by bringing out the contrast between the brown shades and the delicate blue lines that form the abstract patterns on the surface. The rich brown gradations generate a hypnotic quality that is reinforced by the simple designs. The compositions and the coloration function together to evoke the quality of filtered light or a brightly lit stained-glass window. The symbols, patterns, and designs that appear in light blue feel timeless, as though they were windows carved within an ancient stone temple. Vallejo has captured the quality of sunlight, which further advances her larger project. All the abovementioned series are intended to shed light

on our assumptions about color, race, and belonging; with *Cultural Enigma*, the artist literally produced the luminescent quality, as if to draw attention to her pedagogy.

The artist is not disclosing the source material for the abstract designs in *Cultural Enigma*. She does not wish to influence the viewers' responses to her "cultural Rorschach test." Vallejo's approach is indeed akin to that of psychologists who assess cognition, personalities, and emotional states based on their patients' perceptions of symmetrical inkblots; she, too, invites viewers to interpret designs and "free-associate." She asks, "What do you see? Does the image remind you of anything?"<sup>13</sup> By encouraging viewer participation in this simple task—a conversation around what is seen and why—the series transcends the limits of geometric abstraction. It depends on the viewer's participation for its full expression. In that sense, this conceptual art project also inhabits the realm of social engagement.

The *Cultural Enigma* series is not only reliant on participation, but also rooted in it, having arisen from conversations with people. Vallejo asked her friends, family, and colleagues to imagine a cultural symbol that they could wear on a hat. She posed this question to a variety of people, and while the investigation would not meet social science standards for rigor or sample size, the artist found that few could reply to her question. We are cultural enigmas to ourselves. These findings and the dialogue itself inspired *Cultural Enigma*. Just like the series' aims, its origins thus establish it squarely within socially engaged art.

In fact, Vallejo creates patterns that are nothing like the symmetrical inkblots of the Rorschach tests to which she alludes. Nor are the designs random shapes or symbols. Instead, they are familiar geometric combinations and their proportions are well known among proponents of sacred geometry, a theory that the universe was created intentionally, according to a geometric plan. The natural world abounds in similar patterns, such as the spiral of a nautilus or the hexagonal cells of a beehive. Vallejo may be inspired by sacred geometries, but the works exhibit a greater complexity. The spiral form in *Symbols and Signs VII* (2019), for instance, extends lines both to the right and to the left, as if the spiral were opening and closing, unfurling and furling (Figure 14). The vanishing blue lines also suggest the thread is fading and the



series were forcing viewers to consider the consequences of building walls, deporting adults who have made their lives in the United States, detaining children without their families, and increasingly enforcing obscure residency rules in order to deport legally integrated Latinx residents. What future will you create?

spiral dissolving. Some works in the series recall the kaleidoscopic designs of *Datos Sagrados*, and they inspire the same internal reflection. In many of the works, the luminous glow of the blue shapes creates a quality that is as dynamic as it is still, further underscoring Vallejo's observation that we are here, but that we are not aware of our culture. This paradox pushes against the aim of Chicano politics—inclusion, integration, and pronouncement—and thereby refocuses our possibilities.

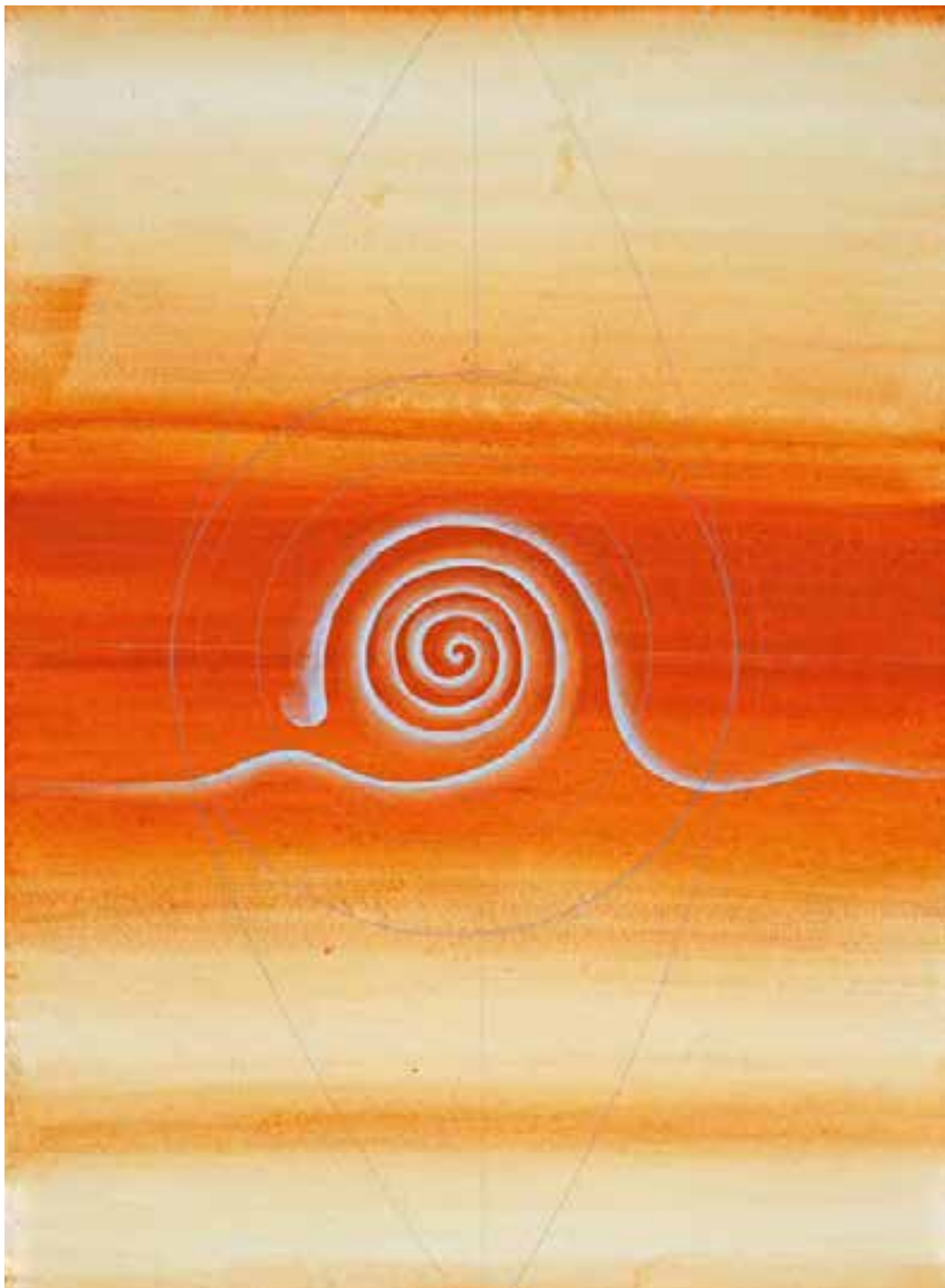
## CALL TO ACTION

Some might associate Vallejo's quest for a cultural symbol with "processes of cultural objectification wherein culture is linked and defined in relation to material objects, expressions, and traditions that can be contained, studied, or exhibited."<sup>14</sup> Far from essentializing or excluding, her focus on cultural objectification records awareness and propels conversation for the future. Similarly, *Cultural Enigma* and the earlier series deliberately go beyond a reliance on surface-level markers for culture. The artist appreciates the urgency of the moment and recognizes another paradox of Latinx visibility: we are everywhere, yet we remain politically and culturally invisible due to limited access to justice and political voice. She employs new cultural symbols as a personal pedagogy, one that points to the constructed nature of culture and its strategic application for political purposes.

Vallejo's attention to the outward expression of culture—the color of one's skin, eyes, and hair, or the color brown itself—enables internal and collective dialogue. By repainting well-known images in *MEAM*, she directly confronts the notion of race as normative, unmediated, biologically determined, and static. Her subsequent series turn to empirical information or material expressions of culture to inspire or demand conversation about assimilation, culture loss, and solidarity. Viewers are implicated in her use of contemporary statistics and her seemingly universal designs rendered in rich hues of brown, as found in *Datos Sagrados* and *Cultural Enigma*. By juxtaposing dynamic designs with references to misrecognition of brown people as abject or lamentable beings, these series support an internal dialogue. How do brown people survive exclusion and hate? What is the source of their beauty? What is the source of brown rejection? It is as if each

## NOTES

1. Pablo Helguera, *Education for Socially Engaged Art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook* (New York: Jorge Pinto Books, 2011). For Helguera, socially engaged art is an interdisciplinary arts practice that depends on the collaborative involvement of the artist-instigator and others; it emerges from the legacy of institutional critique, particularly of the art market, and the interrogation of "art for art's sake." Since Vallejo insists that her work be for sale, she modifies Helguera's notion of socially engaged art by demonstrating that art, social transformation, and commerce need not be mutually exclusive.
2. Leticia Alvarado, *Abject Performances: Aesthetic Strategies in Latino Cultural Production* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 10.
3. The term "Chicanx" is widely contested and negotiated. Some feminists wish to enunciate their female gender and find the term's gender-blindness troubling. Yet the gender-binary terms "Chicana/o" and "Chican@" can exclude intersex, transgender, and non-binary people. "Chicanx" and, correspondingly, "Latinx" are the best we have at the moment.
4. Alvarado, *Abject Performances*, 4.
5. *La Victoria* was previously entitled *Brown Winged Victory*.
6. María Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 744.
7. Linda Vallejo quoted in Karen Mary Davalos, "My Kind of Joke," in *Linda Vallejo: Make 'Em All Mexican*, ed. Tiffany Ana López, curator: Karen Mary Davalos (Los Angeles: Avenue 50 Studio, 2011), 1.
8. Linda Vallejo, "Artist Statement: *The Brown Dot Project*," Linda Vallejo, n.d., accessed September 23, 2018, <https://lindavallejo.com/artworks/paintings/the-brown-dot-project/>.
9. I propose that under Mexican rule, the fictive Mexico-US nation would not have favored slavery and Indian displacement and replacement. Mexico was not devoid of the institution of slavery, but it handled differently the notions of race, racial mixing, and emancipation, abolishing slavery four decades before the United States did so. Unlike the United States, Mexico opted for cultural erasure and appropriation of its indigenous peoples, but not territorial displacement.
10. Linda Vallejo, "Artist Statement: *The Brown Dot Project*," Linda Vallejo, n.d., accessed September 23, 2018, <https://lindavallejo.com/artworks/paintings/the-brown-dot-project/>.
11. Vallejo created this work at a time when available exit polls overestimated the proportion of Latinx Trump voters (see page 80). The actual figure was closer to 18%. Francisco I. Pedraza and Bryan Wilcox-Archuleta, "Did Latino Voters Actually Turn Out for Trump in the Election? Not Really," *Los Angeles Times*, January 11, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-pedraza-latino-vote-20170111-story.html>.
12. There is no single, comprehensive Chicane politics. "Chicano politics" refers to the rhetoric of the Chicano civil rights movement of the 1960s, which relied on the notion of a cohesive community.
13. Linda Vallejo, interview by the author, Los Angeles, CA, September 13, 2018.
14. Arlene Dávila, "Culture," in *Keywords for Latina/o Studies*, eds. Deborah R. Vargas, Nancy Raquel Mirabal, and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 41.



**FIGURE 14**  
**Symbols and Signs VII**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
22 × 16 ¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**FIGURE 15**  
**Pretty Little Doll**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed photograph,  
16 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



# mujer chingona<sup>1</sup>

MICHELLE L. LOPEZ

While pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree, I took my share of traditional art and art history classes, all of which were taught from a Eurocentric perspective. It wasn't until I began taking courses in Chicana Studies that I realized that my exposure to and awareness of Chicana artists was limited. As I learned about artists who looked like me, a new world opened up.

During this time, I was fortunate to meet and befriend Margaret "Quica" Alarcón, a Chicana artist whose work I came to admire. Margaret was a longtime member of Mujeres de Maíz (MdM), an arts organization run by and for women of color. It was invigorating for me to see how these women had created space to show, publish, and perform their work, and how they had embraced the queer and trans communities from their inception, defying traditional Chicano patriarchy. I wanted to become involved right away, and MdM welcomed me with open arms.

In 2012, I curated the annual MdM exhibition, which took place at Corazón del Pueblo in Boyle Heights, California. It was during this period that Linda Vallejo and I had our first conversation. She had submitted a piece from her *Make 'Em All Mexican* series, a work entitled *Pretty Little Doll* (2012) (Figure 15). Due to a logistical mix-up, the work never actually made it onto the wall, but I remember it very well—because it left me in awe.

I had never seen anything like *Pretty Little Doll*. As a child, I used to watch old movies alone on Saturday and Sunday mornings, while my mother slept. Back then, the number of television channels was limited. Often, old Shirley Temple films were the only alternative to sports. I watched this little white girl with curly hair sing and dance weekend after weekend, but I couldn't identify with her. Nothing about her said that I could be like her. Linda's version of Shirley Temple didn't make me think I could be like her but, rather, that she could be like me. Seeing

her as Mexican gave me what I can only describe as a sense of empowerment.

Linda's work has also left lasting impressions on veteran MdM members. In 2009, the MdM zine, *La Sagrada*, featured a painting from Linda's *Electrics* series. The work—*Electric Oak: Full Moon in Daylight* (2008) (Figure 16)—is a vibrant portrait of a tree, a symbol that functions as an archetypal element in various traditions and cultures. The colors in the painting give the appearance that electricity is coursing through the branches, the roots, and the sky, lending the work an almost hallucinogenic appearance. From a spiritual perspective, this electrical charge represents the universal energy that runs through and connects everything that exists in the universe.

Linda describes her *Electrics* series as a combination of hippie psychedelia, digital imagery, and a host of other influences, among them Andy Warhol, Gustav Klimt, Huichol yarn art, and indigenous beadwork.<sup>2</sup> Her ability to combine subtle references to both indigenous spirituality and universal cultural signifiers challenges the mainstream art world's tendency to discourage the integration of spirituality. At the same time, this approach allows her to appeal to a broad audience—including MdM members, for whom spirituality plays a key role. For me, spirituality is among the most appealing aspects of Chicana artwork in general.

Linda's support for MdM extends back more than two decades. She has participated in exhibitions and zines, and, more recently, by serving on our advisory board. Her community engagement reaches back even further, to the 1970s. MdM co-founder Felicia "Fe" Montes recounts childhood memories of Linda—such as seeing her at the Day of the Dead exhibitions at Self Help Graphics & Art (SHG), a renowned community arts center in Boyle Heights. Linda was one of the original members of SHG's Barrio Mobile Art Studio, which offered multicultural workshops to schoolchildren until the mid-1980s. In 1989, she started her own gallery, Galería Las Américas, which Felicia would visit with her mother. In retrospect, Felicia observes that by representing Chicana artists and exhibiting their work back then, the gallery was "ahead of its time."<sup>3</sup>

At Mujeres de Maíz, we value the fact that Linda provides support and advice not only at the organizational and community levels, but also at the individual one. Like my MdM peers, I have



been able to learn and benefit from her guidance, such as by completing her A to Z Grantwriting course, yet I also know I can always turn to her for help in personal matters. Her palpable drive, determination, and strength are inspiring qualities, as is her ability to balance her art practice, entrepreneurship, spirituality, relationships, and family. To us, Linda is not only an artist, but also a pioneer, mentor, and friend. Along with her community engagement, Linda's art practice has nurtured our ability to identify and see ourselves, and to connect to the universal energy. It leaves me wondering what lies ahead, where her next series will take us. I, for one, am looking forward to the journey.

## NOTES

1. Mexican slang for an influential, empowered woman.
2. Linda Vallejo, interview by the author, Los Angeles, CA, September 23, 2018; Linda Vallejo, "The Electrics: Artist Statement," n.d., <https://lindavallejo.com/artworks/paintings/the-electrics/page/2/>.
3. Felicia "Fe" Montes, interview by the author, Los Angeles, CA, September 16, 2018; Self Help Graphics & Art, "History," n.d., <https://www.selfhelpgraphics.com/history>; Eva Zetterman, "Curatorial Strategies on the Art Scene during the Feminist Movement: Los Angeles in the 1970s," in *Curating Differently: Feminisms, Exhibitions and Curatorial Spaces*, ed. Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 12–13.

## FIGURE 16

**Electric Oak: Full Moon in Daylight**, 2008

From *The Electrics*

Oil on canvas, 48 × 60 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

## La Mona, 2014

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*

Acrylic on aluminum sublimation print,

40 × 27 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST







# culture as color wheel

WILLIAM MORENO

The color brown doesn't appear on a typical color wheel.

For artists and designers—not to mention primary and secondary school students—the color wheel is a time-honored and indispensable creative tool. Purportedly invented by Isaac Newton and modeled after the spectral scale, such wheels generally display primary and secondary colors. Brown can be an amalgam of these: red, yellow, or blue mixed with a dab or more of the respective complementary color, and perhaps black. Over time, various brown hues have found approval and integration in a multitude of settings—from the umber applied to cave walls in Neolithic times, to the Vandyke brown popularized in seventeenth-century European painting, to contemporary shades used in commercial and residential contexts, often to foster a warm, woody atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

The same cannot be said of the color brown in the context of human skin.

Scientists hypothesize that our skin color reflects our ancestors' proximity to the equator—the closer to the equator, the darker the hue. Brown skin is commonly described as dark as coal, mahogany, mud, dirt, smoke, coffee, bronze, and chocolate. The imagery and usage are extensive, ranging from comforting, romantic notions to weaponized, derogatory, and racist inferences, particularly in politicized notions of invaders, outsiders, or burdens.

It follows that skin color and its cultural permutations serve as fertile ground for artists. In 2012, artist Angélica Dass began photographing her Brazilian family members to build one of the first databases of skin hues, a "chromatic inventory" entitled *Humanae*. Dass describes this work in progress as an attempt to draw attention to "our true color, rather than the untrue colors of red, yellow, black, and white."<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, this project will yield a skin color catalog that matches Pantone shades.

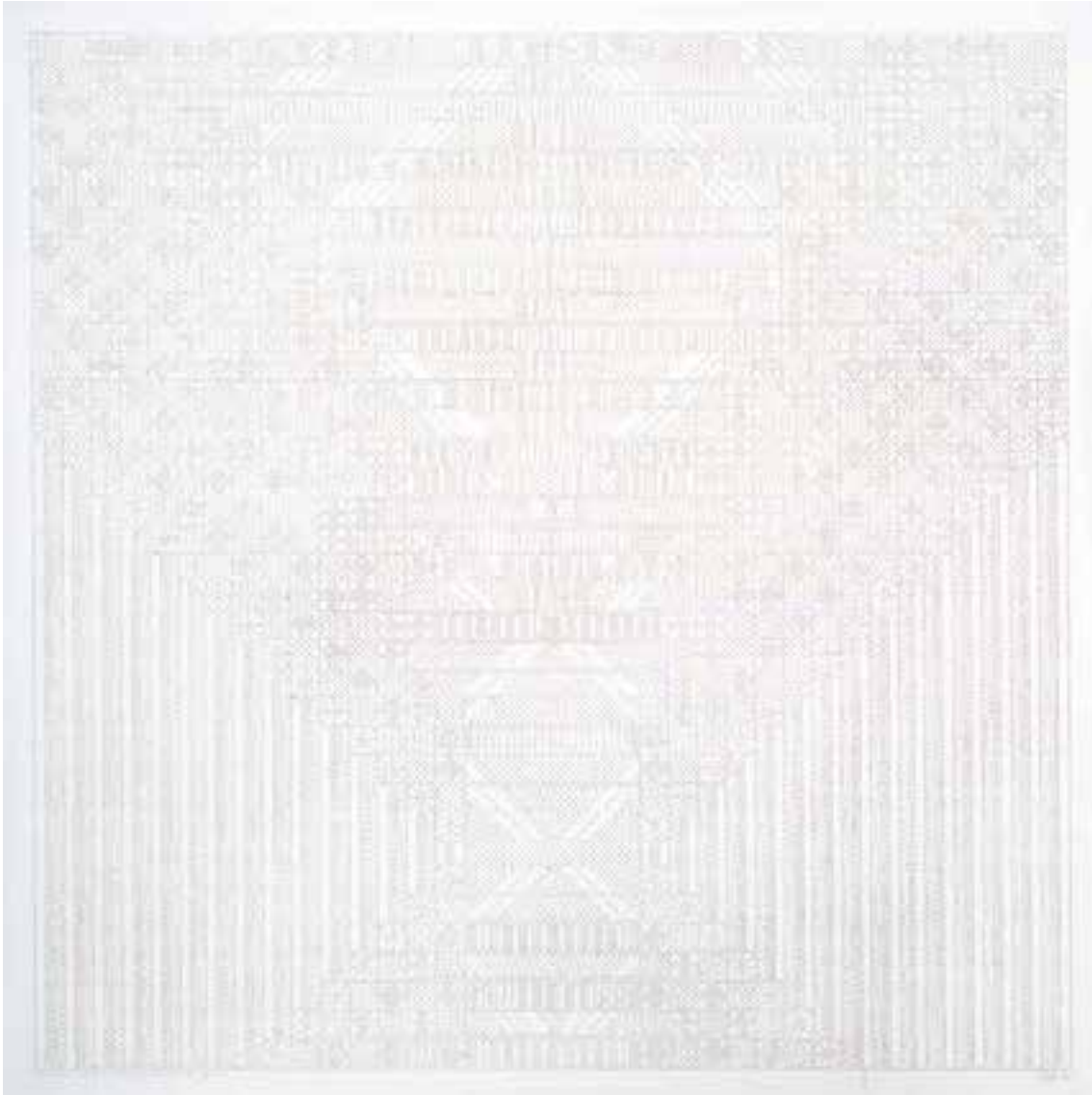
In the 1993 Whitney Biennial, artist Byron Kim exhibited *Synecdoche*, an ongoing project then composed of 204 panels measuring eight by ten inches—a common photographic portrait size. The panels, which have since more than doubled in number, showcase the skin tones of strangers, friends, fellow artists, and the artist himself. The installation represents a personal exploration of racial identity and its political dimensions. The National Gallery of Art acquired the work in 2009.<sup>3</sup>

Linda Vallejo's work also has a propensity to compel introspection about skin color, sometimes with propositions that are positively "in your face." Starting around 2011, with the series *Make 'Em All Mexican*, Vallejo began to stun viewers with a kind of colorizing graffiti—a reimagining of cultural sacred cows. By exposing viewers to a manifestation of what might have been—had prominent and influential figures had brown skin—she leaves them little choice but to ponder what could be. Vallejo succeeds in turning both appropriated images and their titles into alternative histories. A case in point: *American Gothic* (1930) is rechristened *Mexican Gothic* (2014) (Figure 17).

The series can be controversial among viewers of all backgrounds. It can elicit debate about what constitutes the "right" shades of paint and trepidation that artworks may be too dark or not representative of the full complement of skin tones. Some of this "color anxiety" is rooted in insecurity about class and social standing. It is not unusual for people to perceive lighter-skinned individuals to be at the top of the social pyramid, with others following—the darker the skin tone, the lower the social status. The very composition of Latin American and US elites and media appears to substantiate this perception. Vallejo's objective is to invite viewers to question—without resolution.

Moving beyond overt cultural castigations, Vallejo experiments with digital encryptions—or so it seems—with *The Brown Dot Project*. Here she turns to the realm of data-driven figuration to generate abstracted imagery. Her technique is a bit of a ruse. At once intriguing and daunting, these resplendent designs are deceptive: upon closer inspection, patterns that initially may have looked laser-printed reveal themselves to be composed of fastidiously hand-stippled brown dots. The approach moves beyond the color question, casting a much wider social and

**FIGURE 17**  
**Mexican Gothic, 2014**  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on aluminum sublimation print,  
40 × 30 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



demographic net to transmit a call for increased inclusivity. The Zen-like quality of some of these works—such as *Miami 66%* (2016)—is both meditative and provocative (Figure 18). Viewers are induced to make sense of a demographic narrative that they otherwise may not have noticed or sought out, particularly in the form of data points on a spreadsheet.

*Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)* is Valjeo’s most recent engagement with race and culture—and her most ambitious. Awash in delicate hues of rust and brown, these works on handmade paper are emblazoned with mysterious markings (Figure 19). The artist offers them as what she calls “cultural Rorschach tests,” a variation on the inkblots used in psychology. But it is unclear what these markings are: Hieroglyphics? Native American symbols? Hybrids? This series offers no data, no identifiable memes; the viewer is left to interpret, to unlock

**FIGURE 18**  
**Miami 66%**, 2016  
 From *The Brown Dot Project*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 36 × 36 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





meaning. Perhaps most discernible is what *Cultural Enigma* is essentially about—its “aboutness,” to use the term employed by philosopher and art critic Arthur Danto. The works in this series allow for a deeper look at the meaning of culture and color in our lives, in a way that may cause alarm or instill a desire to transform. In that sense, this series shares its aboutness with Vallejo’s earlier series, *Make ‘Em All Mexican*, *The Brown Dot Project*, and *Datos Sagrados*.

So what are viewers to make of this latter-day parsing of culture and color? Some might carry out a formal analysis—of the patterns, textures, colors, and tones in Vallejo’s work—to initiate deeper discussion. Yet like the color wheel, which can be used to compose a boundless range of hues, the works invite experimentation and personal projection. Vallejo proffers no straightforward answers or reconciliations, nor does she take a position. Her accomplishment is the successful integration of artistic elements into a treatise on current affairs, one that doesn’t prognosticate or suggest a preferred outcome.

That responsibility is left to the viewer.

#### NOTES

1. Robert L. Feller and Ruth M. Johnston-Feller, “Vandyke Brown: Cassel Earth, Cologne Earth,” in *Artists’ Pigments: A Handbook of Their History and Characteristics*, vol. 3, ed. Elisabeth West FitzHugh (2012; reprint, Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1997), 162–163.
2. Margaret Rhodes, “Artist Wants to Map Every Single Human Skin Tone on Earth,” *Fast Company*, March 14, 2014, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3027693/whats-your-pantone-color-consult-this-incredible-spectrum-of-human-skin-tones>.
3. Peggy McGlone, “Contemporary Artist Uses Skin Color for Abstract Portrait on Race and Identity at National Gallery,” *Washington Post*, January 12, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/01/12/contemporary-artist-uses-skin-color-for-abstract-portrait-on-race-and-identity-for-national-gallery/?utm\\_term=.4a94f4e569d0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/01/12/contemporary-artist-uses-skin-color-for-abstract-portrait-on-race-and-identity-for-national-gallery/?utm_term=.4a94f4e569d0); National Gallery of Art, “*Synecdoche: 1991–Present*,” n.d., <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.142289.html#overview>.

**FIGURE 19**  
**Symbols and Signs V**, 2019  
 From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
 Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
 22 ½ × 30 ¾ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**30% of US Public School Students Will Be Latino in 2023** (detail), 2018  
From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on gridded vellum, 72 × 28 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

*plates*

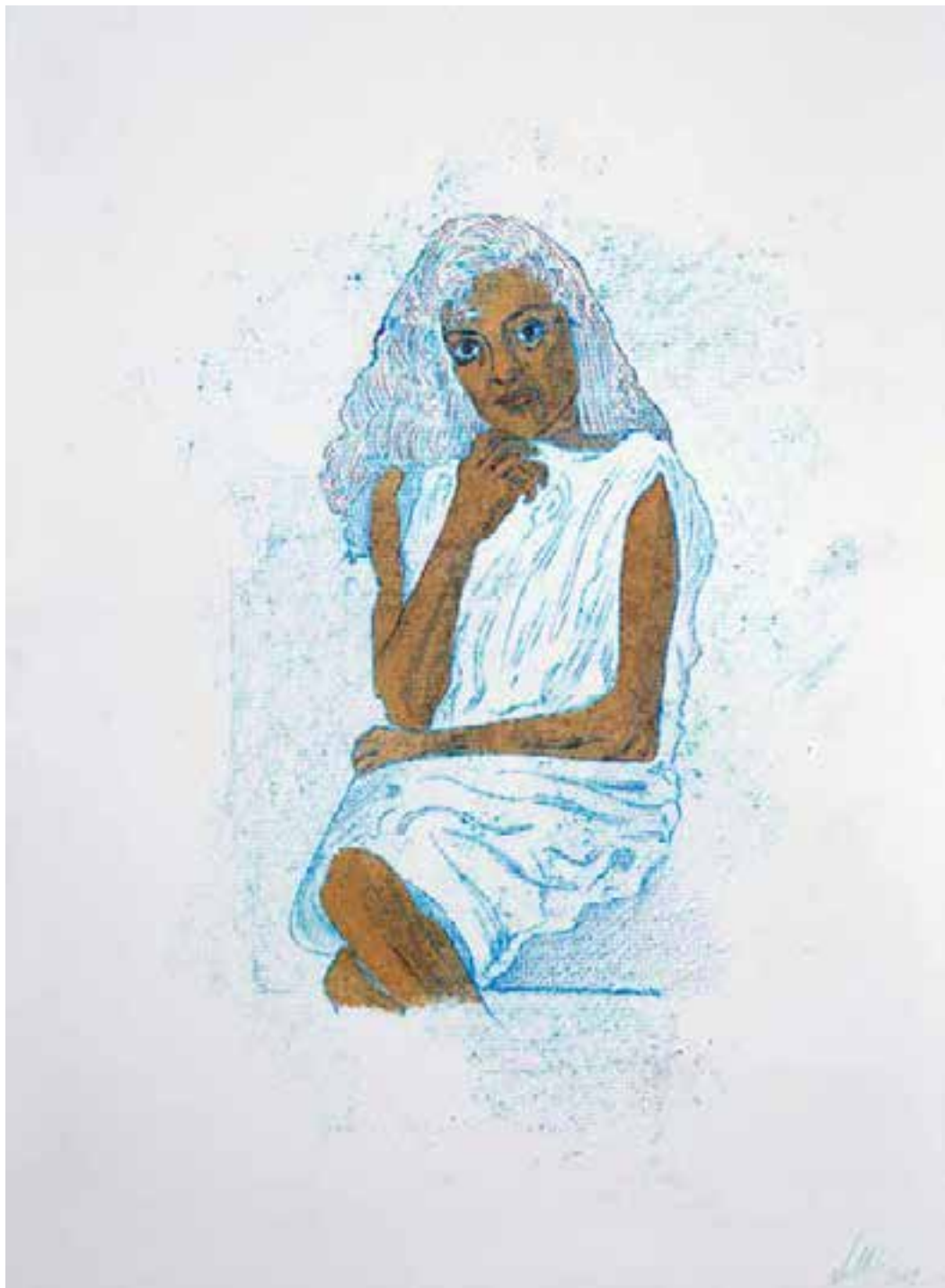




**American Portrait I**, 2019  
(after David Hockney, *Maurice Payne*, 1971)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**American Portrait II, 2019**  
(after Antony Williams, *Girl with Dreadlocks*,  
date unknown)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**American Portrait III**, 2019  
(after Alice Neel, *Spanish Woman*, 1950)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**American Portrait IV**, 2019  
(after Alice Neel, *Jackie Curtis as a Boy*, 1972)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**American Portrait V**, 2019  
(after Philip Pearlstein, *Portrait of Linda  
Nochlin and Richard Pommer*, 1968)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**American Portrait VI**, 2019  
(after David Hockney, *Lila de Nobilis*, 1973)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

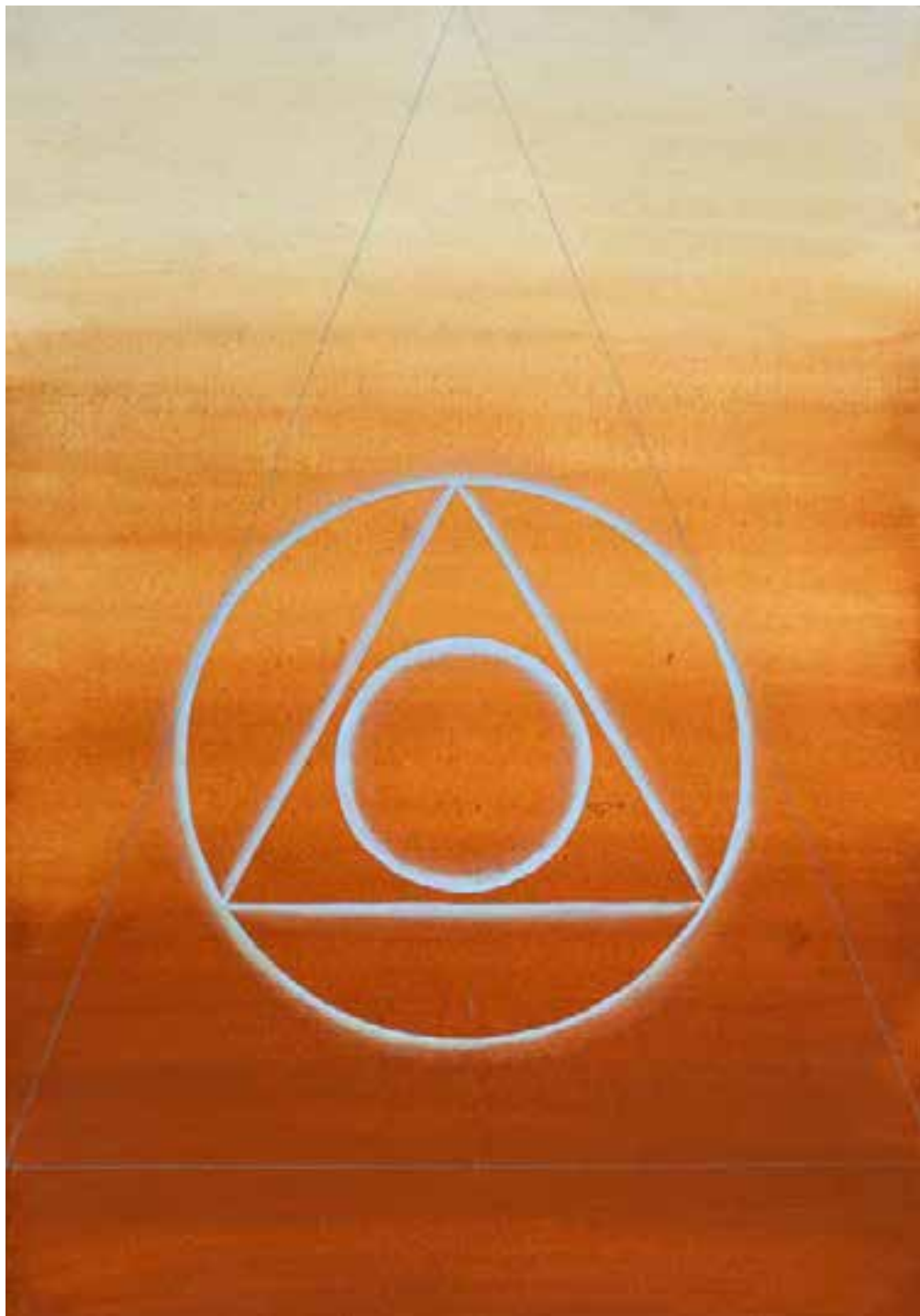




**American Portrait VII**, 2019  
(after Stephen Gjertson, *Dave A. Anderson*, 1993)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

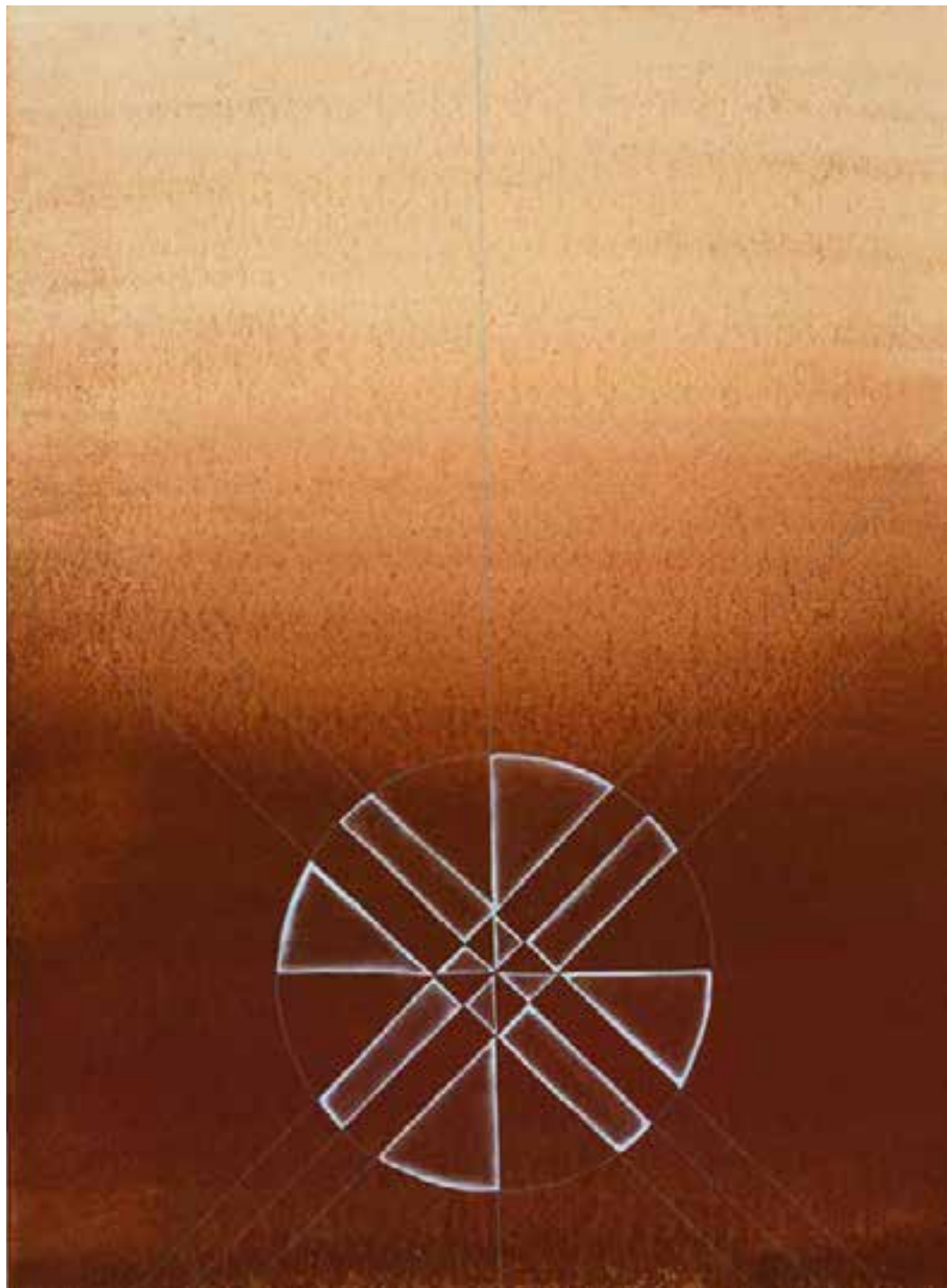


**American Portrait VIII**, 2019  
(after Jolene Hesse, *What Started It All*, 2015)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Symbols and Signs II**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
16¾ × 11¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Symbols and Signs III**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
15 ¼ × 11 ¼ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Symbols and Signs IV**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
23 × 30¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Symbols and Signs VI**, 2019  
 From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
 Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
 12 × 16½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Symbols and Signs VIII**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
22½ × 17¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Symbols and Signs IX**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
26¼ × 34 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**47.7% of US Latino Households Are Married Households (2015), 2017**

From *Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 22 x 22 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**50% of US Immigrants Were Latino  
(1965-2008), 2017**  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 12 x 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**50% of US Latinos Self-Identify as  
White, 2017**

From *Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 12 × 12 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

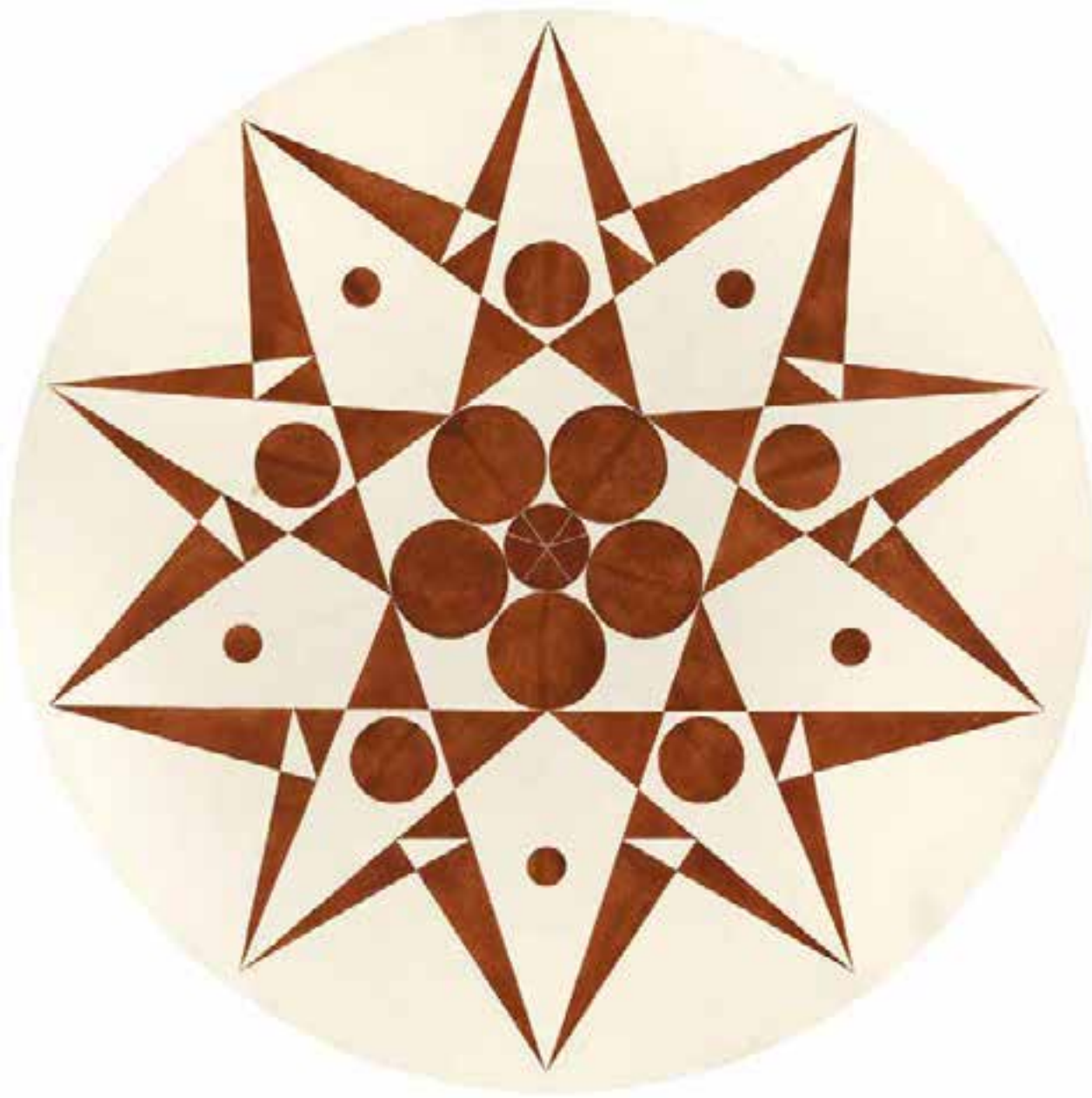


**51% of US Latinos Self-Identify  
as Democrats, 2017**

*From Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 12 × 12 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**53% of US Latinos Live in 15 Metropolitan  
Areas, 2017**

From *Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 44 × 44 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**63% of US Labor Trafficking Is  
Latino, 2017**

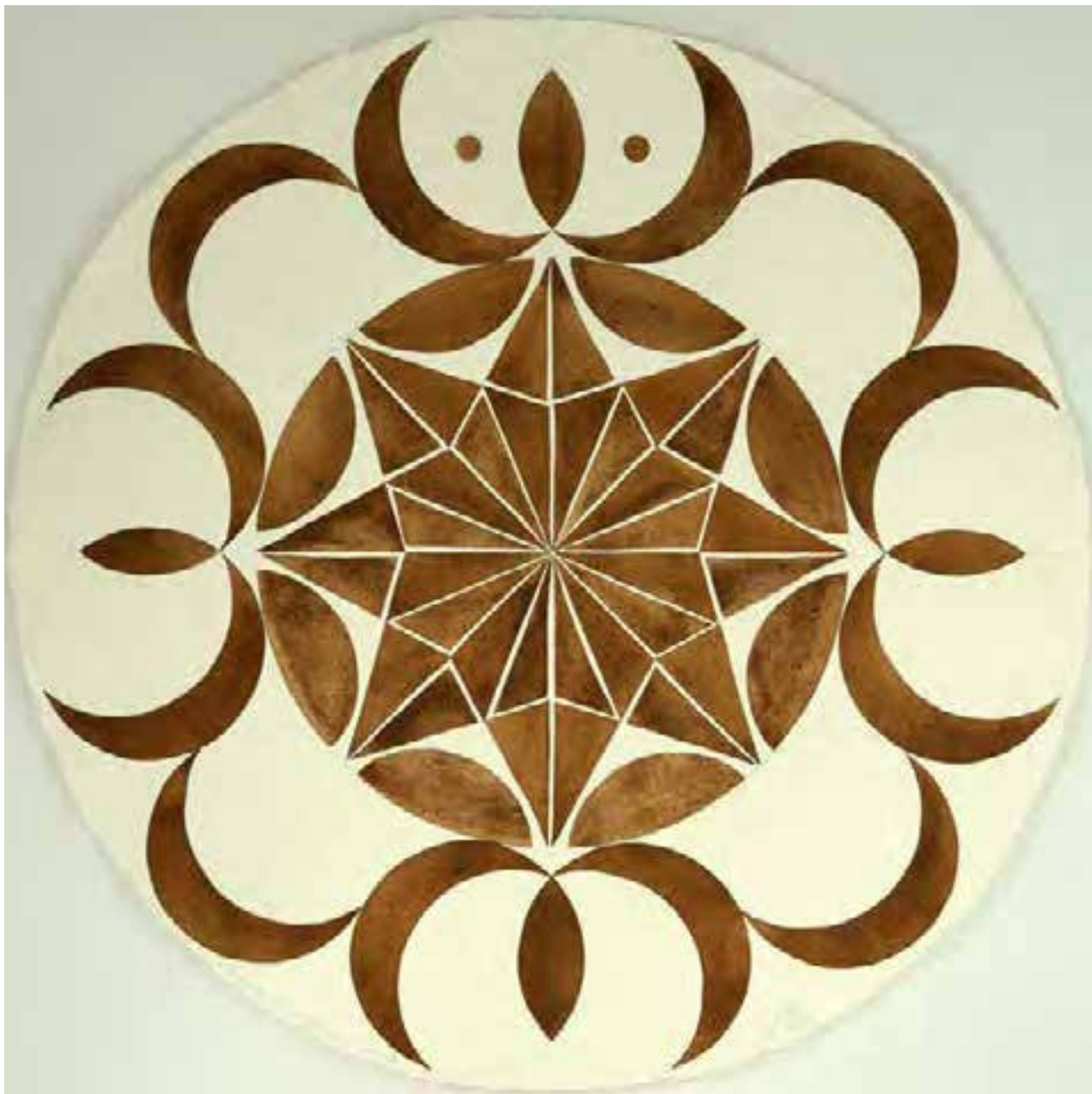
*From Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 22 × 22 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**64% of US Latinos Are Mexican, 2017**  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**65% of US Latino Children Live with Two  
Parents, 2017**

*From Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 22 × 22 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**65% of US Latinos Are US Native-**

**Born, 2017**

From *Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 12 × 12 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**66% of Unauthorized Latino Immigrants in  
the US Have Lived There for at Least  
a Decade, 2017**

From *Datos Sagrados*

Colored pencil and gouache on handmade  
paper, 12 × 12 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**American Eagle**, 2017  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
20 × 12 × 10 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Altar Boys**, 2012  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figures,  
 6 × 3 × 2½ inches each  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Big Boy “Muchachote,”** 2012  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed rubber figure,  
 9¼ × 4 × 5 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Blanca Brown and Her Friends**, 2011  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed plastic figures,  
 2¾ × 2 × 1¾ inches each  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Chicana Virgen**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
7 × 3¼ × 4 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Diana de la Cruz, 2011**  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic, gold leaf, silver leaf, and pigment print  
of original painting on repurposed plaster figure,  
25 × 12¼ × 6¼ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Dick and Jane** (details), 2010  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Gouache, whiteout, pigment print of original  
 painting, and repurposed book pages,  
 12 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 61 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches  
 DURÓN FAMILY COLLECTION



**El Vaquero, 2013**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
 16 × 7 × 5 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**El Vis, 2012**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic, gold leaf, and pigment print of original  
 painting on repurposed plaster figure,  
 12½ × 7½ × 5½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**The First Prom**, 2013  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
5¼ × 3 × 3 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Hidden Beauties, 2011**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Gouache, whiteout, pigment print of repurposed  
 photograph, and repurposed book pages and  
 postcards, 15 3/4 x 78 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Justice**, 2016  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic and metal flake on repurposed  
composite figure, 34 ½ × 16 × 10 ¼ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**La Elegante**, 2014  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
13 × 8 × 5 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**La Pietà, 2011**

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*

Acrylic on repurposed composite figure,

12 × 10½ × 6 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Liberty**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed resin figure,  
17 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 6 inches  
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA BELCO AND  
WILLIAM GOODMAN

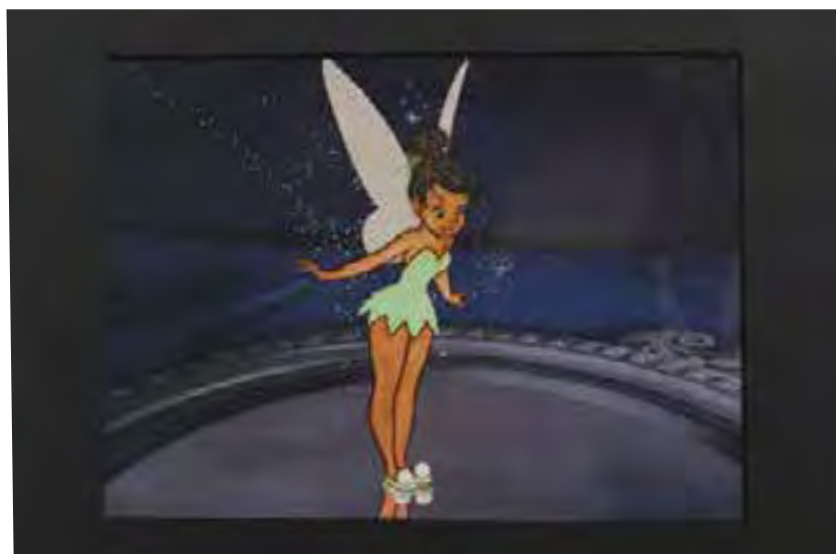


**Little Boy Brown and Brownie, 2012**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figures,  
 8 × 3 × 2 and 8 × 3¼ × 2¾ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Little Fourth of July Princess**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil on repurposed postcard, 11 × 9 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Makes No Difference Who You Are**

(complete work and details), 2011

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*

Oil, whiteout, pigment print of original painting,  
and repurposed magazine pages,  
76 5/8 × 12 5/8 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Mi Indita**, 2012  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed ceramic figure,  
 14 × 12½ × 7 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Mi Indito**, 2012  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed ceramic figure,  
 10 × 8½ × 7 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Mi Niño**, 2012  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
 6 ¼ x 6 x 3 ½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Mi Niña**, 2012  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
 5 ¾ x 5 ½ x 3 ½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Off to School, 2013**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
 6¼ × 5¼ × 4½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**With This Ring, 2013**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
 6½ × 4 × 2½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Young Leaders**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil on repurposed postcard,  
10½ × 13½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST







**Postmodern Toasties**, 2011  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Oil, whiteout, pigment print of  
 repurposed photograph, and repurposed  
 magazine pages, 18½ × 84 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**The Presidents, 2011**

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*

Oil, whiteout, lithographic monotype, and  
repurposed postcards, 16¾ × 49 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**The Sun God Tonatiuh, 2011**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic, gold leaf, and pigment print of original  
 painting on repurposed plaster figure,  
 22 × 17 × 10 ¼ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Venus de Milo II, 2012**  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
 Acrylic and gold leaf on repurposed composite  
 figure, 17 × 4¾ × 4¾ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Aurora Hernandez**, 2016  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
Gouache and pigment print of repurposed  
photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



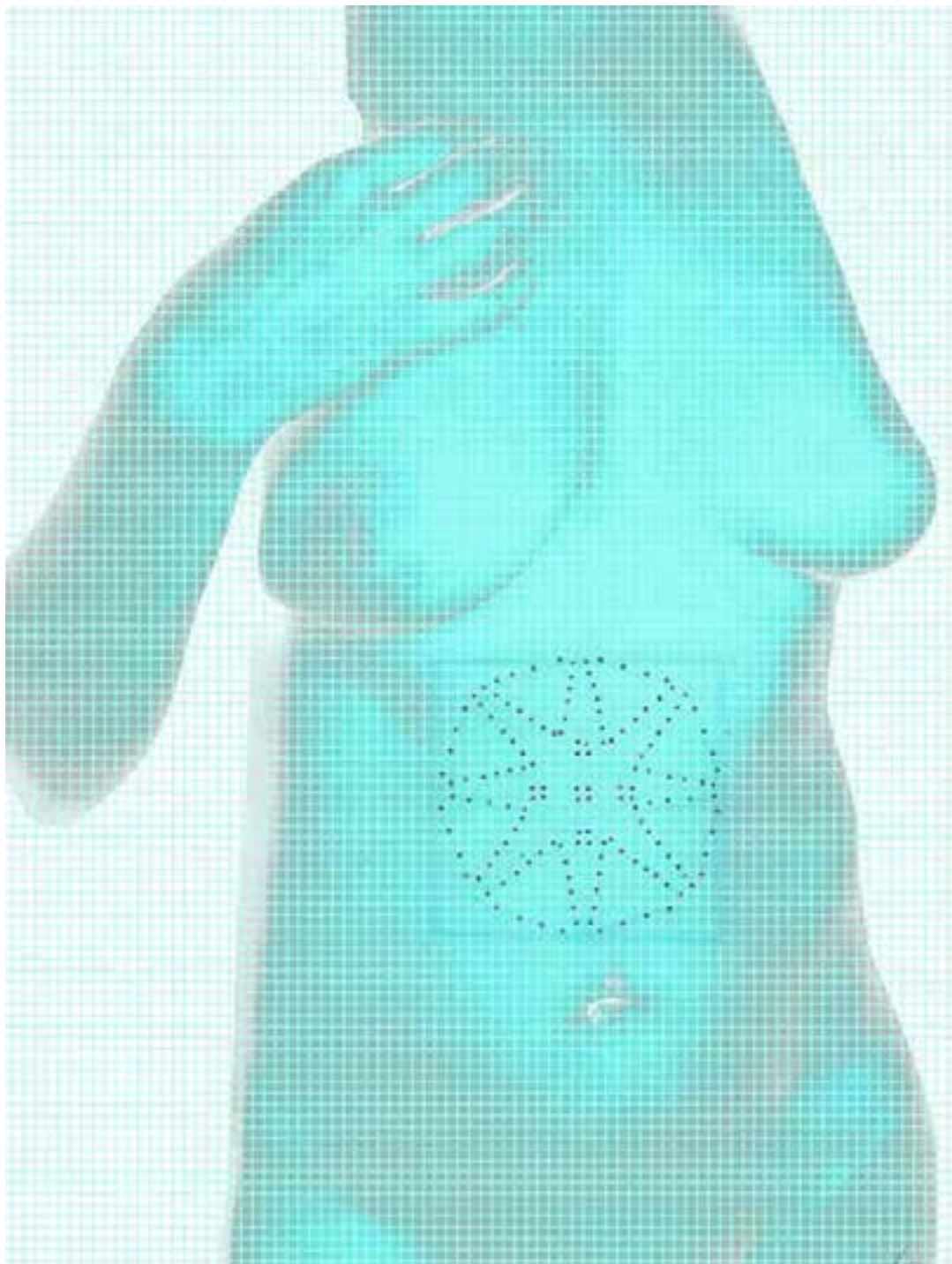
**Bernardo y Mateo**, 2016  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
 Gouache and pigment print of repurposed  
 photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Emilio “El Indio” Fernández**, 2019  
 From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
 Acrylic on three-dimensional printed figure,  
 14¼ × 4¾ × 4¾ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Juanita Lorenzo, 2016**  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
Gouache and pigment print of repurposed  
photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**23.9% of Sex Trafficking Victims in the US  
Are Latino (2011), 2017**  
From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





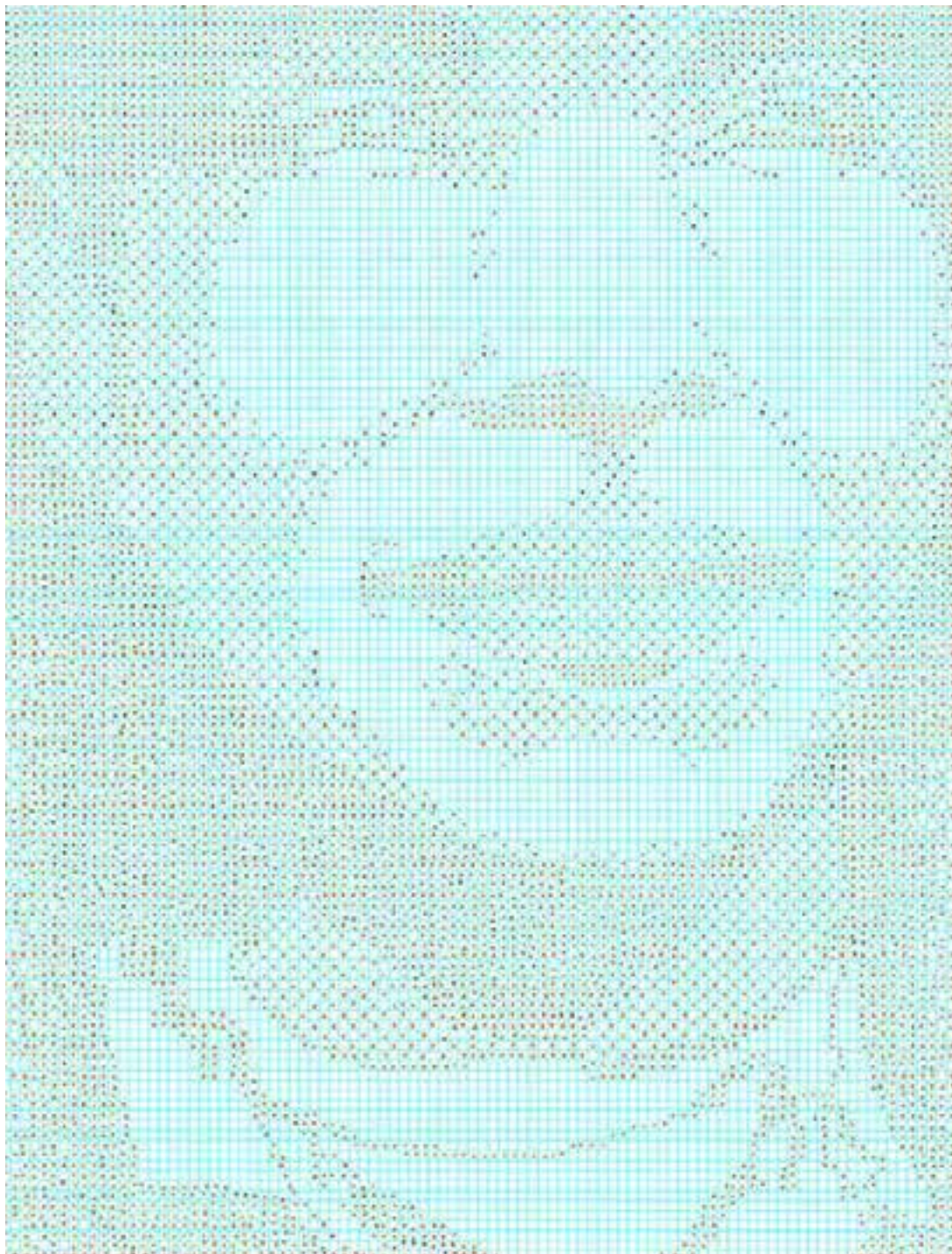
**25% of Gay and Bisexual Latino Males in the  
US Will Have AIDS in Their Lifetime, 2017**

*From The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**25% of US Latinos Experience**

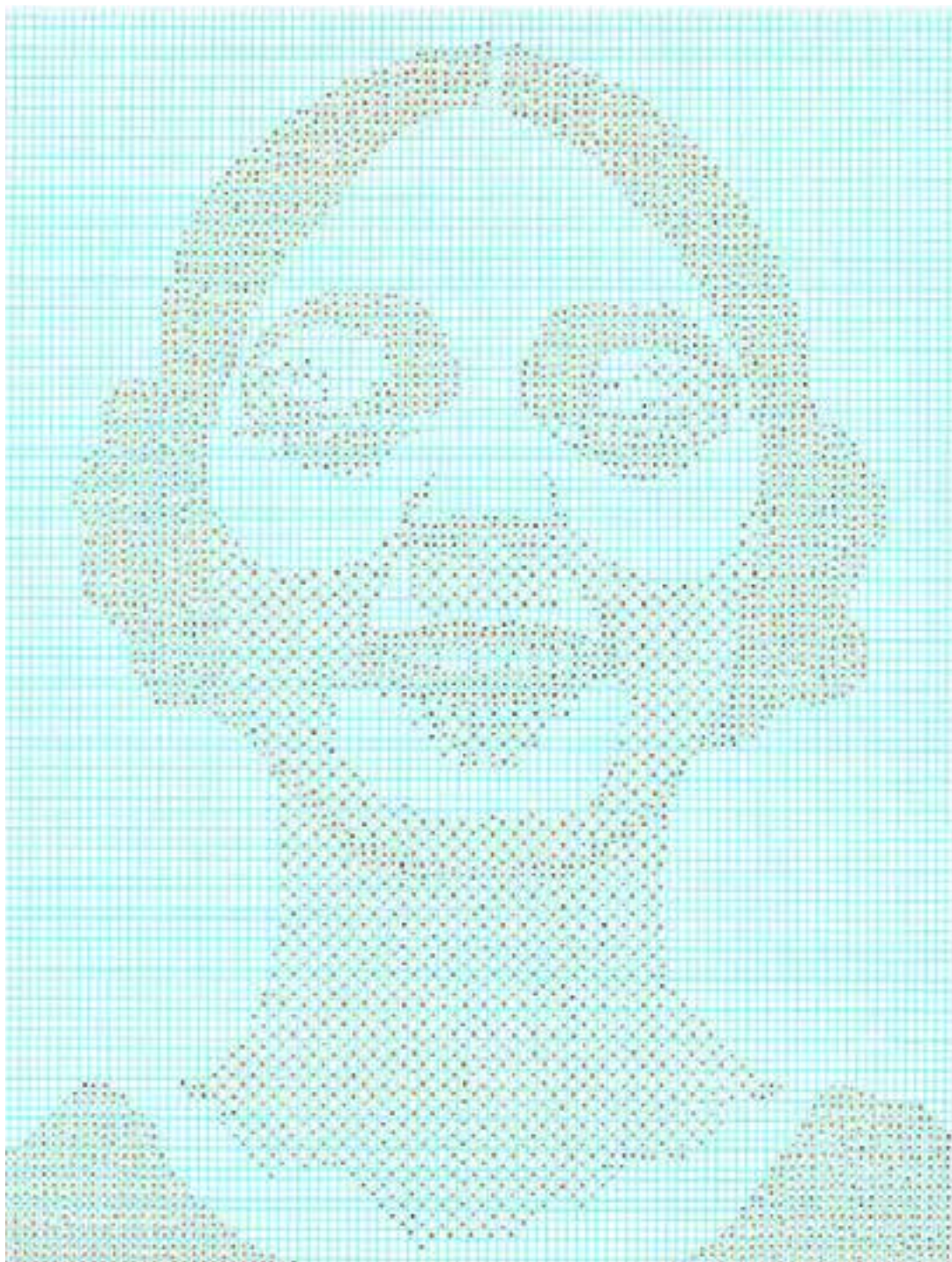
**Discrimination, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**35% of US Latinos Voted for Trump, 2017\***  
From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

\* See page 12, note 11.



**Educational Attainment of US Latinos**

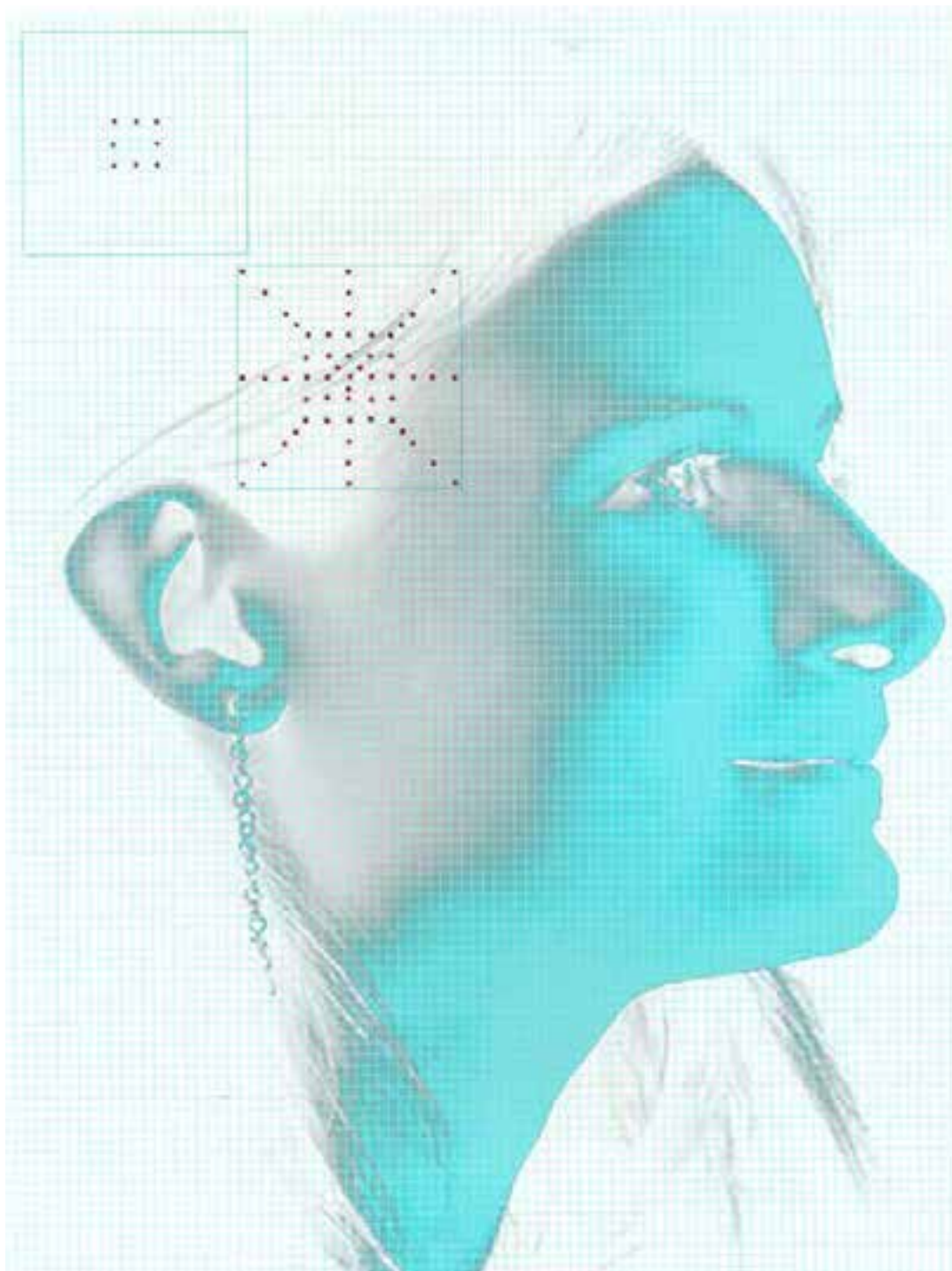
**Over 25 (2013), 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



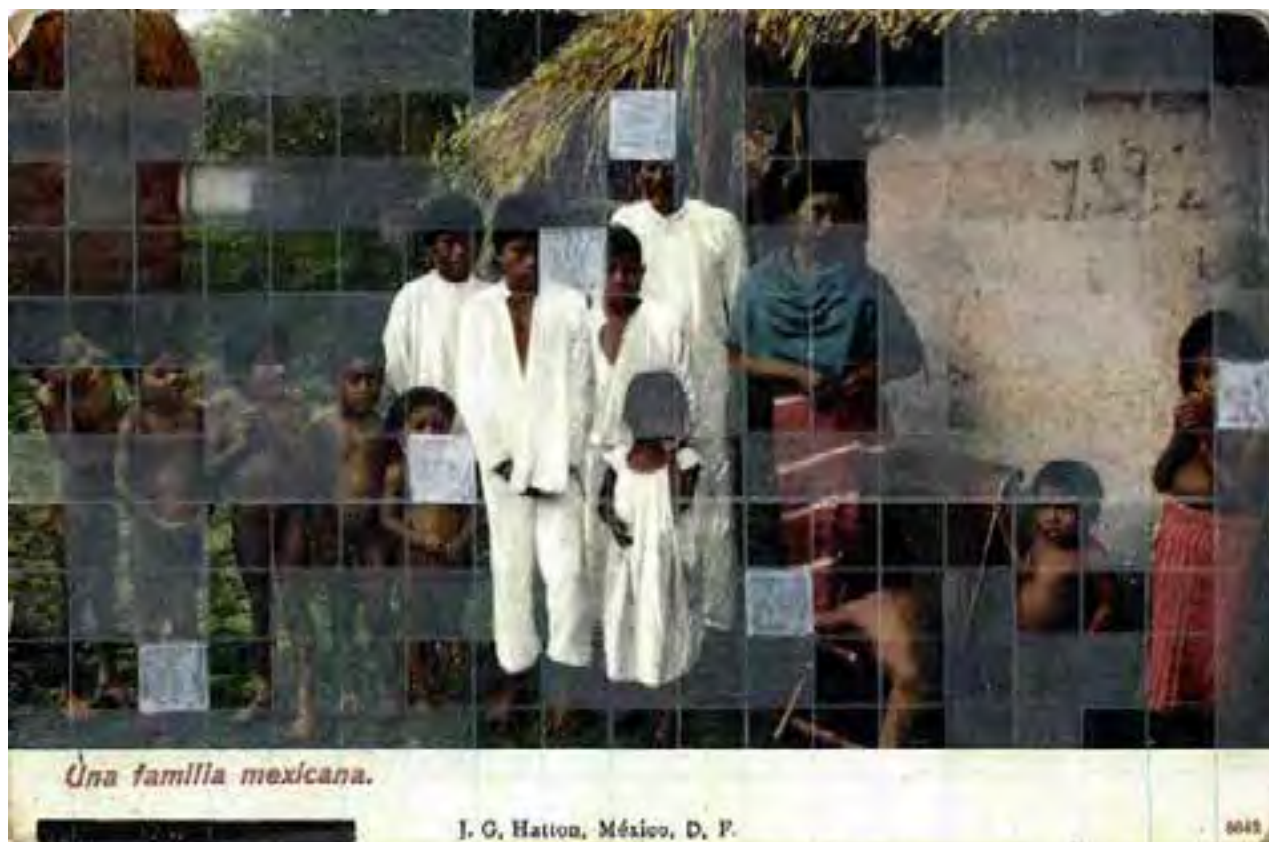


**US Latino AA and BA Degrees Growth  
Pattern (1993–2013), 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**43.4% of US Farmers Are Latino, 2017**  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*

Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print  
 of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**43.8% of US Maids and Housekeepers Are Latina, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*

Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**52.4% of US Latino Children's Mothers Have  
Less Than a High School Education (2000),  
2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories  
of Mexico)*

Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print  
of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**87.4% of Latino Children Are US Citizens,**  
2017

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*

Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print  
of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



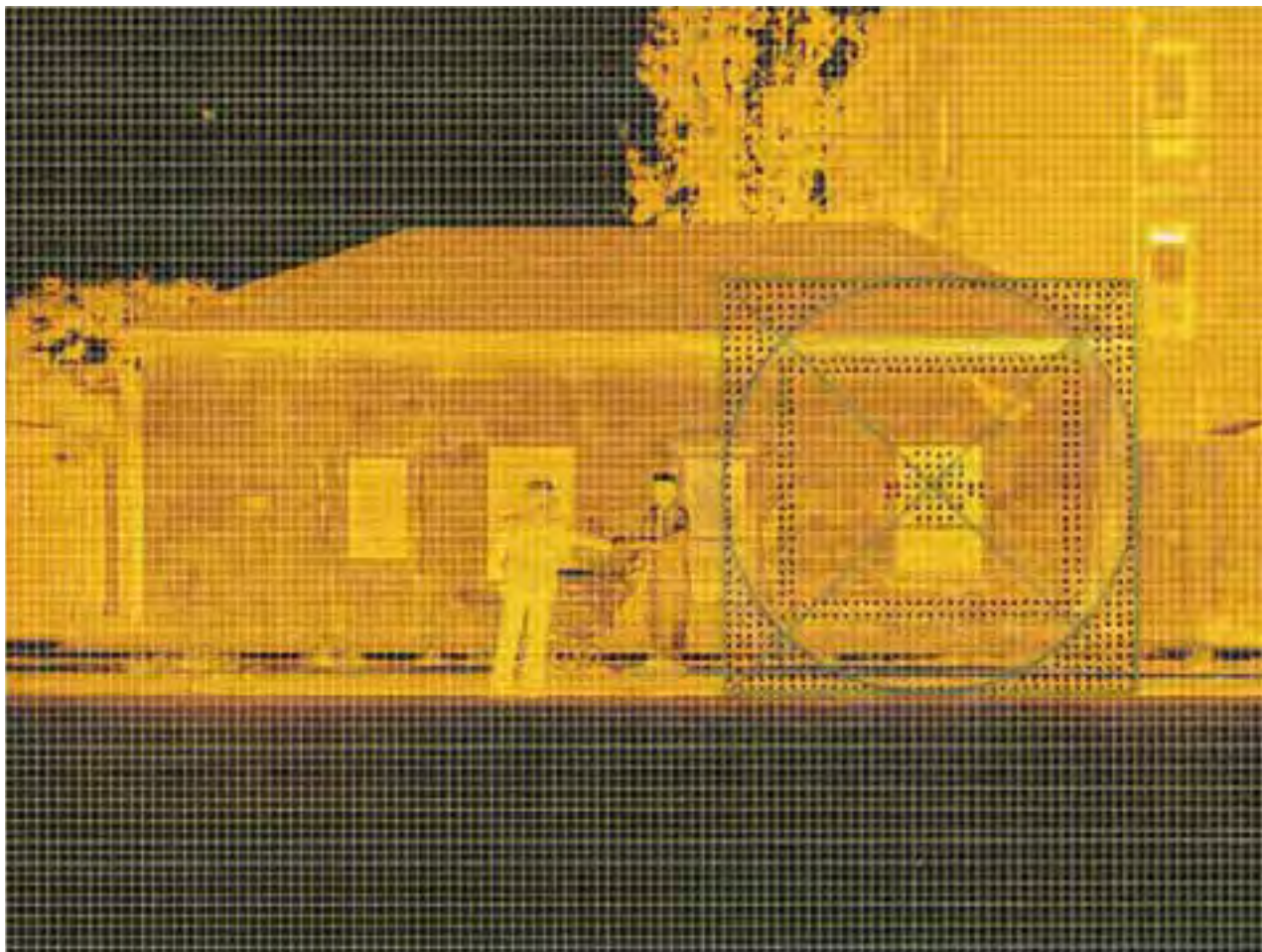
**25.7% of All DACA Recipients Live in  
California, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**38% of Los Angeles County's Housed Latinos  
Own Their Homes, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



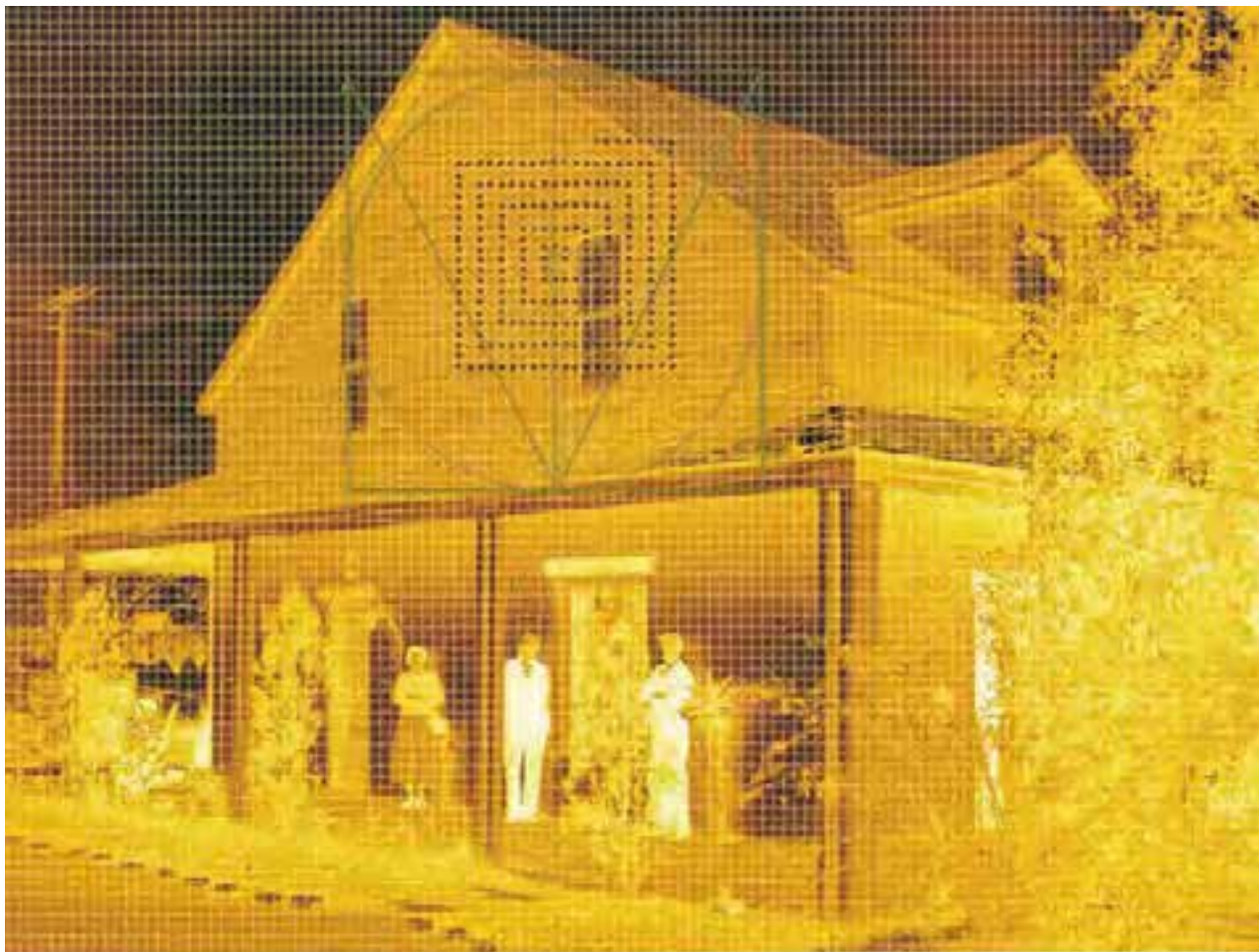
**94% of All DACA Recipients Were Born  
in Mexico, Central America, or South  
America, 2019**

*From The Brown Dot Project*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Westside 15.7%**, 2019  
 From *The Brown Dot Project*  
 Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
 print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
 8½ × 11 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**East Los Angeles 96.7%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
24 × 24 inches  
COLLECTION OF LUISA FERNANDA ESPINOSA



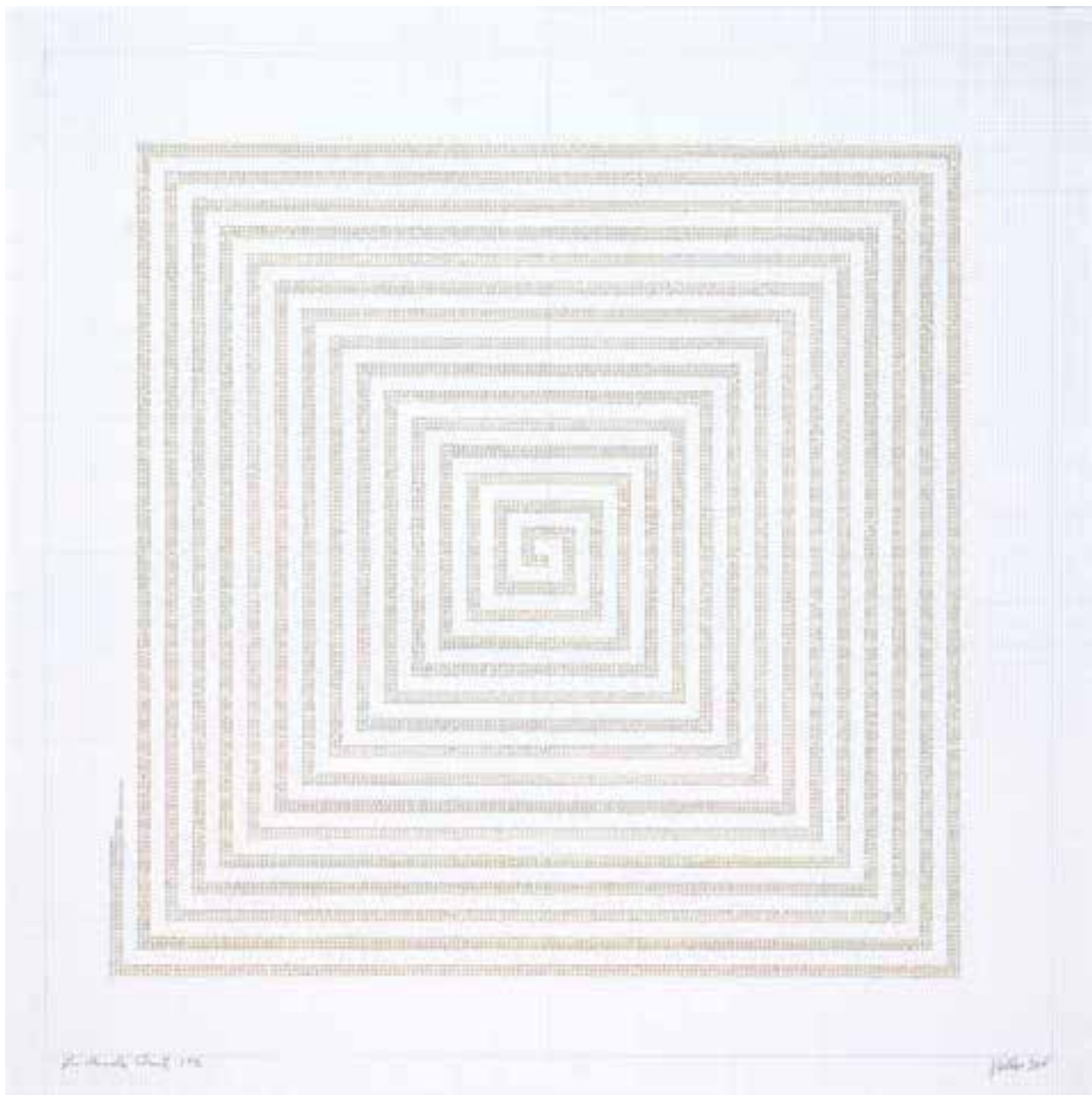


**Hollywood 42.2%, 2015**  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Colored pencil and archival marker on gridded  
 vellum, 12 × 12 inches  
 COURTESY OF BARBARA AND ZACH HOROWITZ

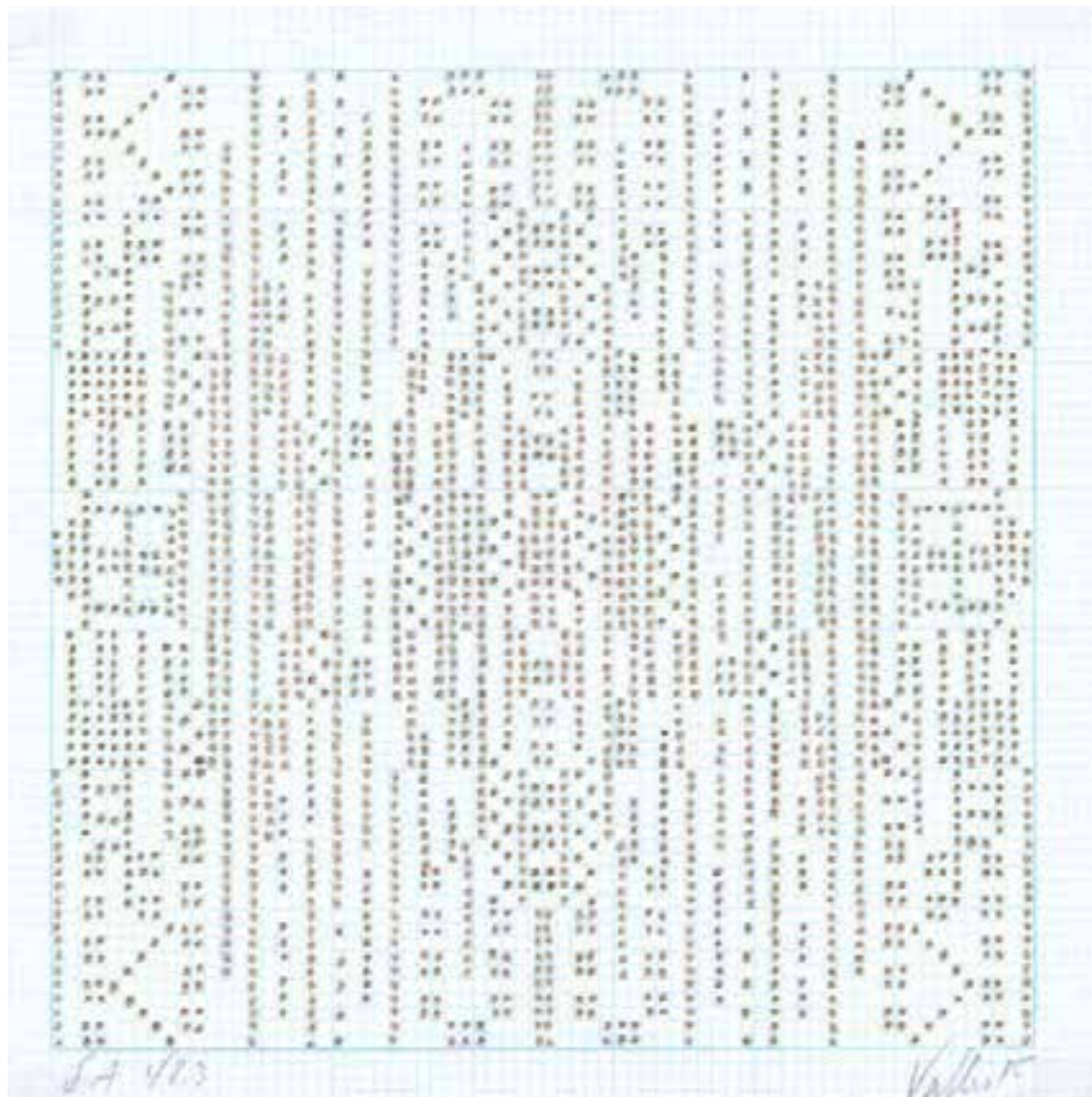


**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
24 × 24 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

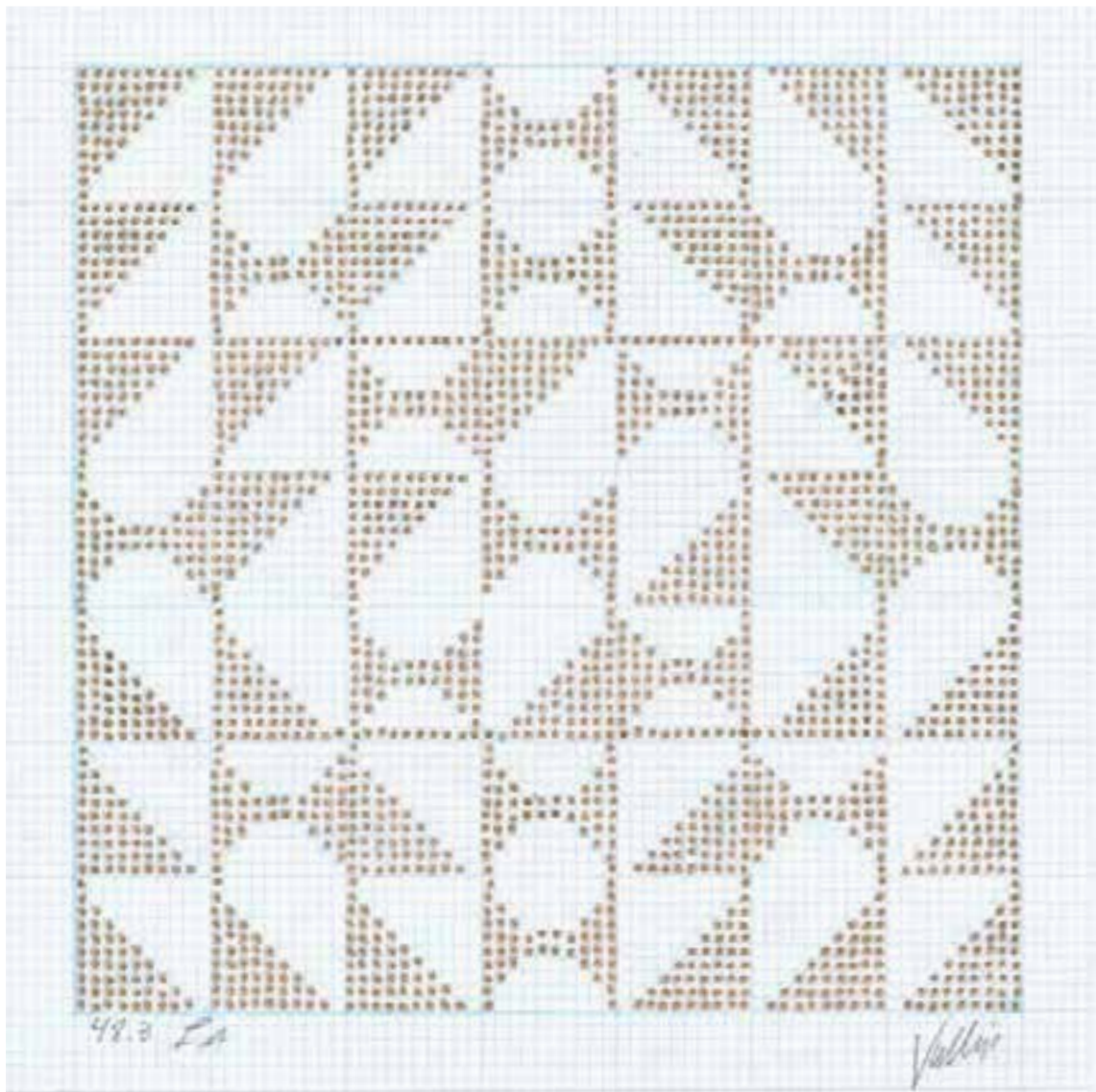




**Los Angeles County 39%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
24 × 24 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

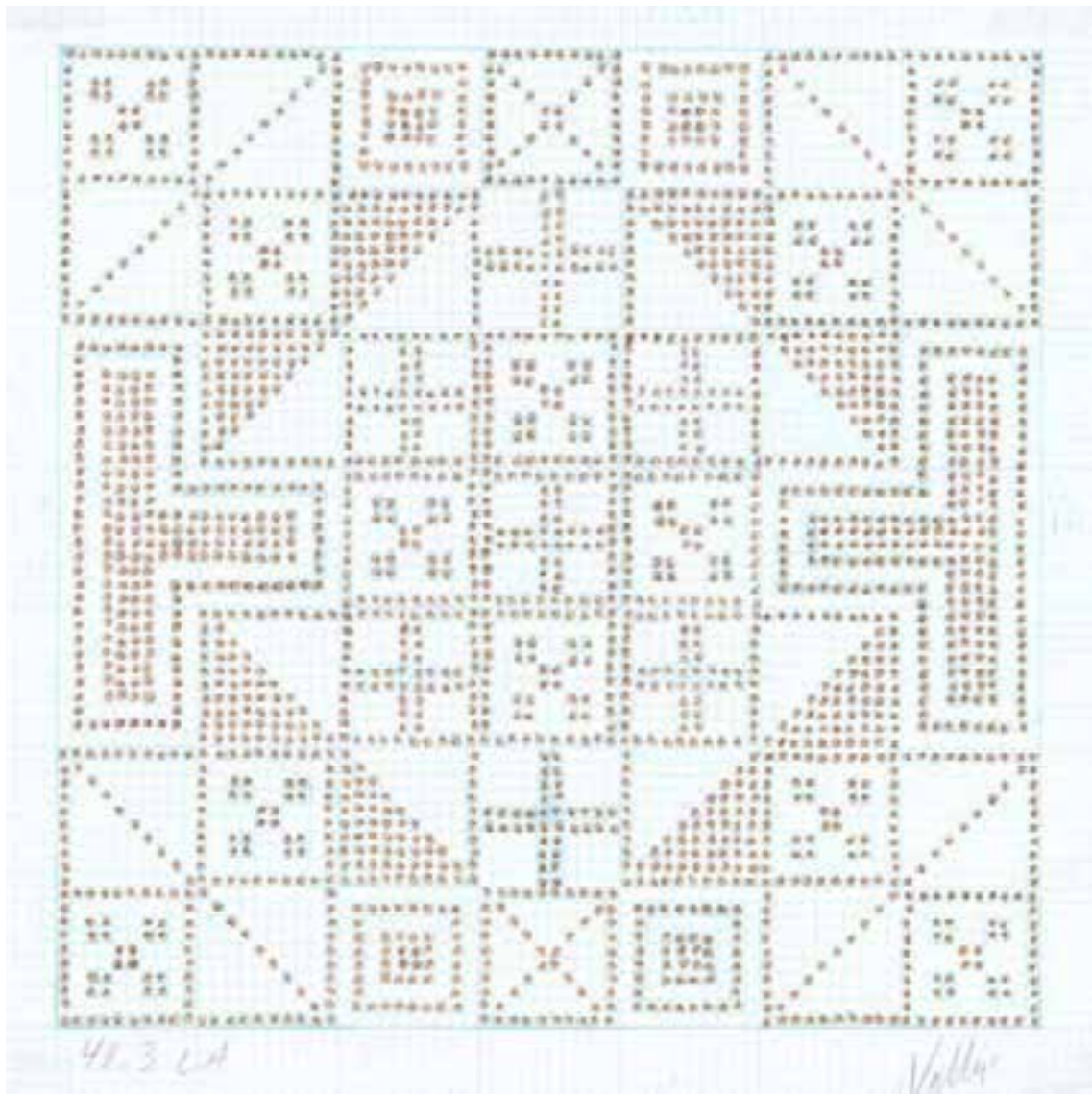


**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 8% × 8% inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



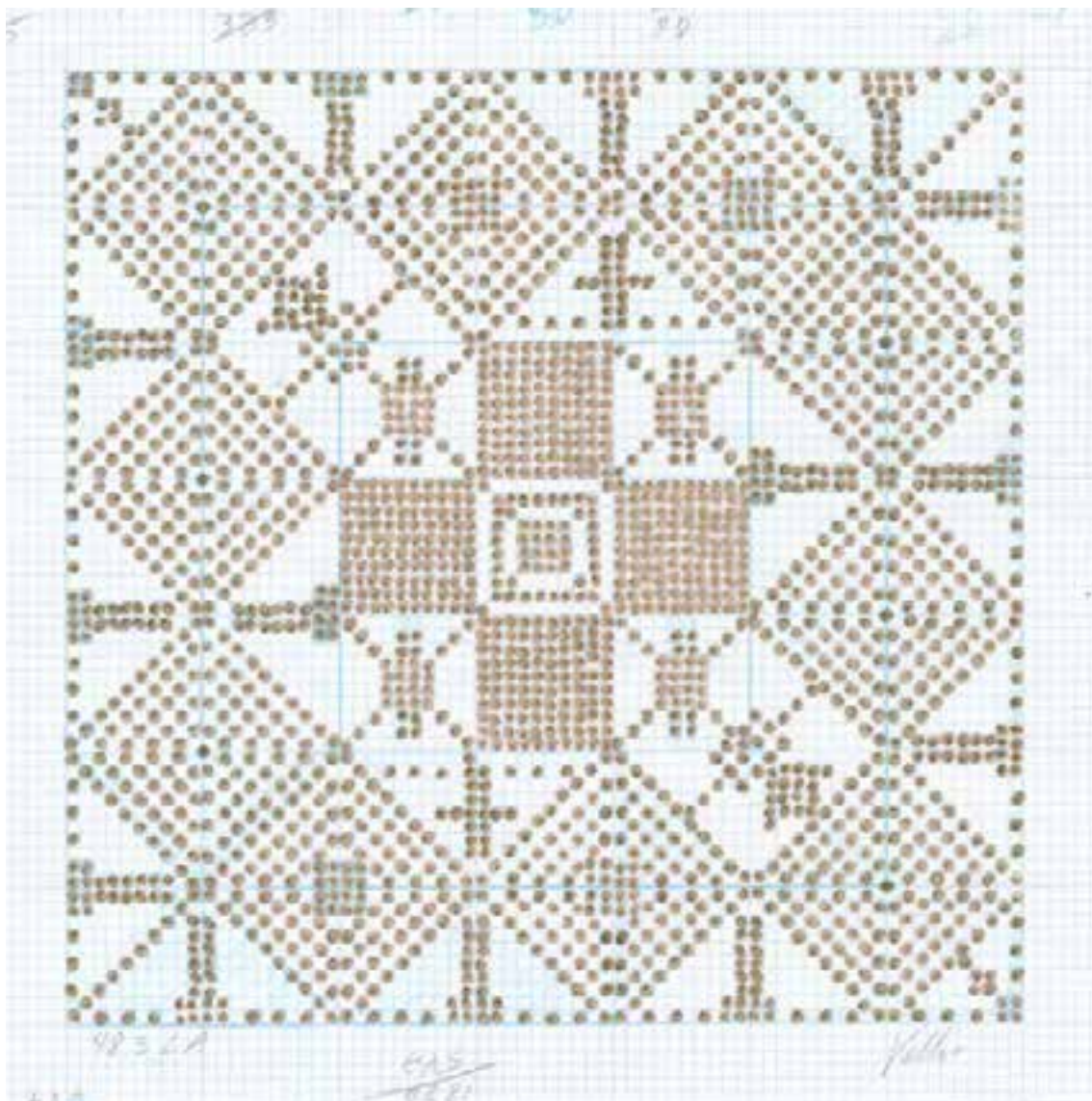
**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 8 1/8 × 8 1/8 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



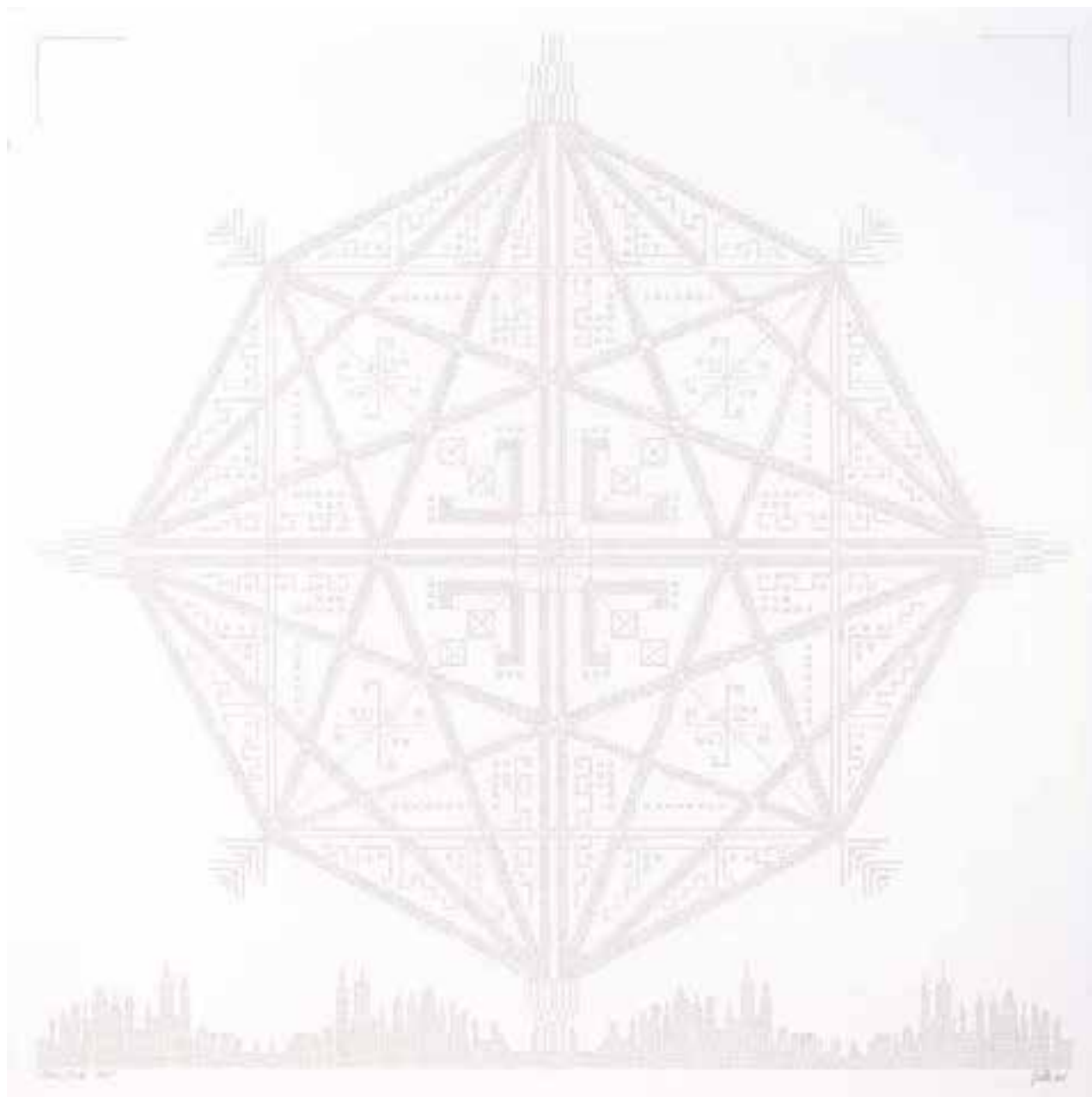


**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 8% × 8% inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
 Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
 8 1/8 x 8 1/8 inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



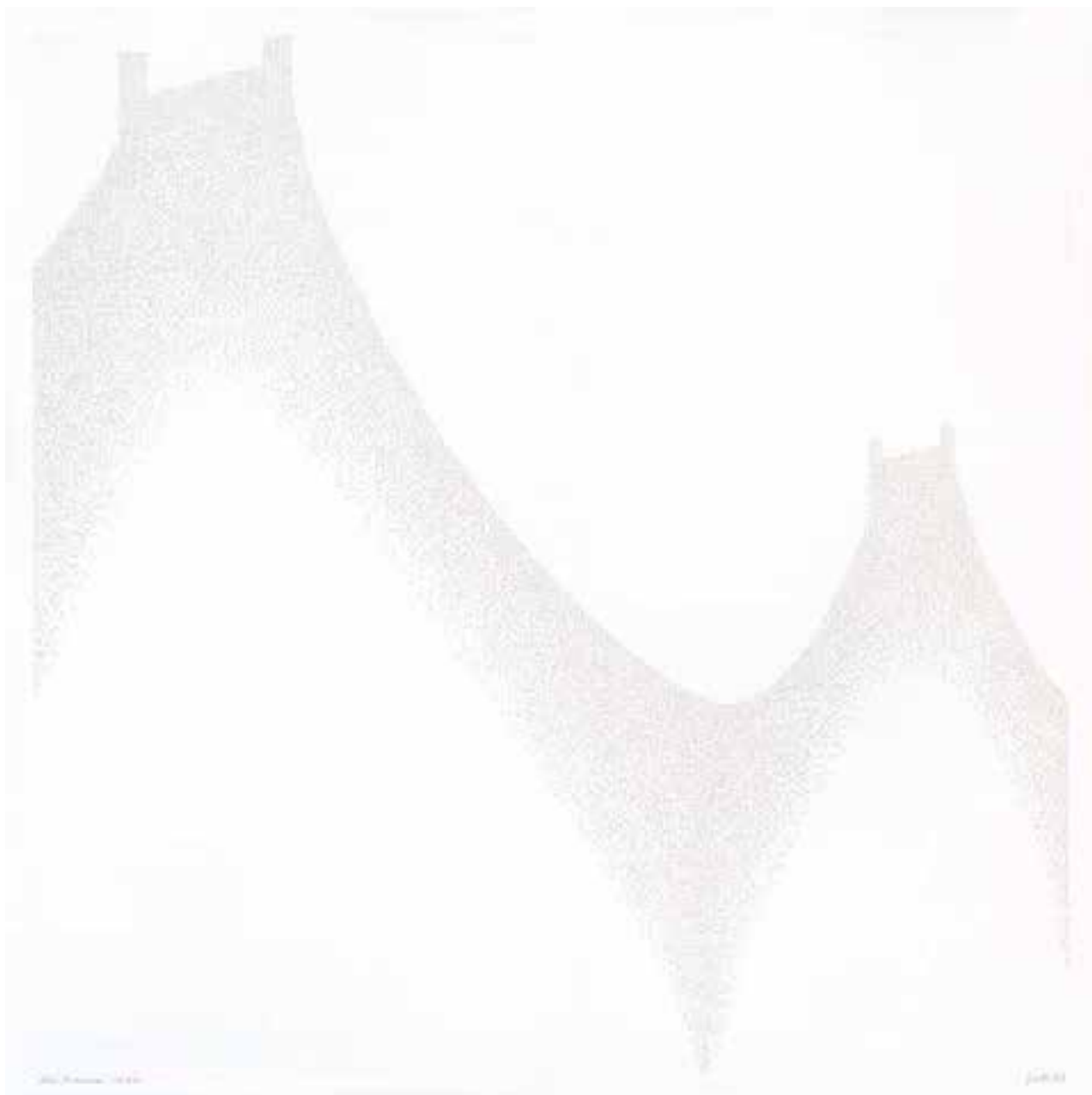
**New York 27.5%, 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*

Archival marker on gridded vellum,

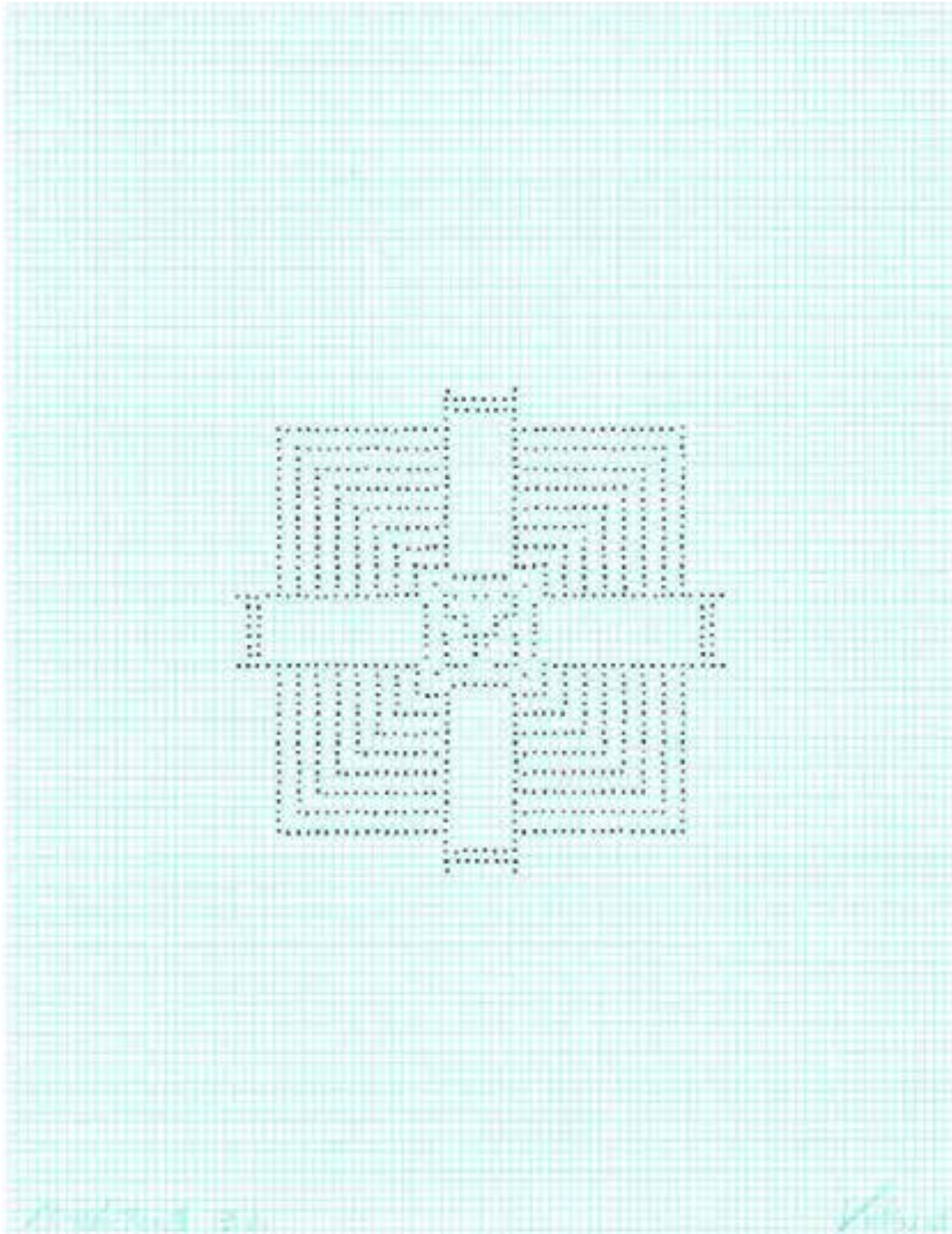
36 × 36 inches

PRIVATE COLLECTION

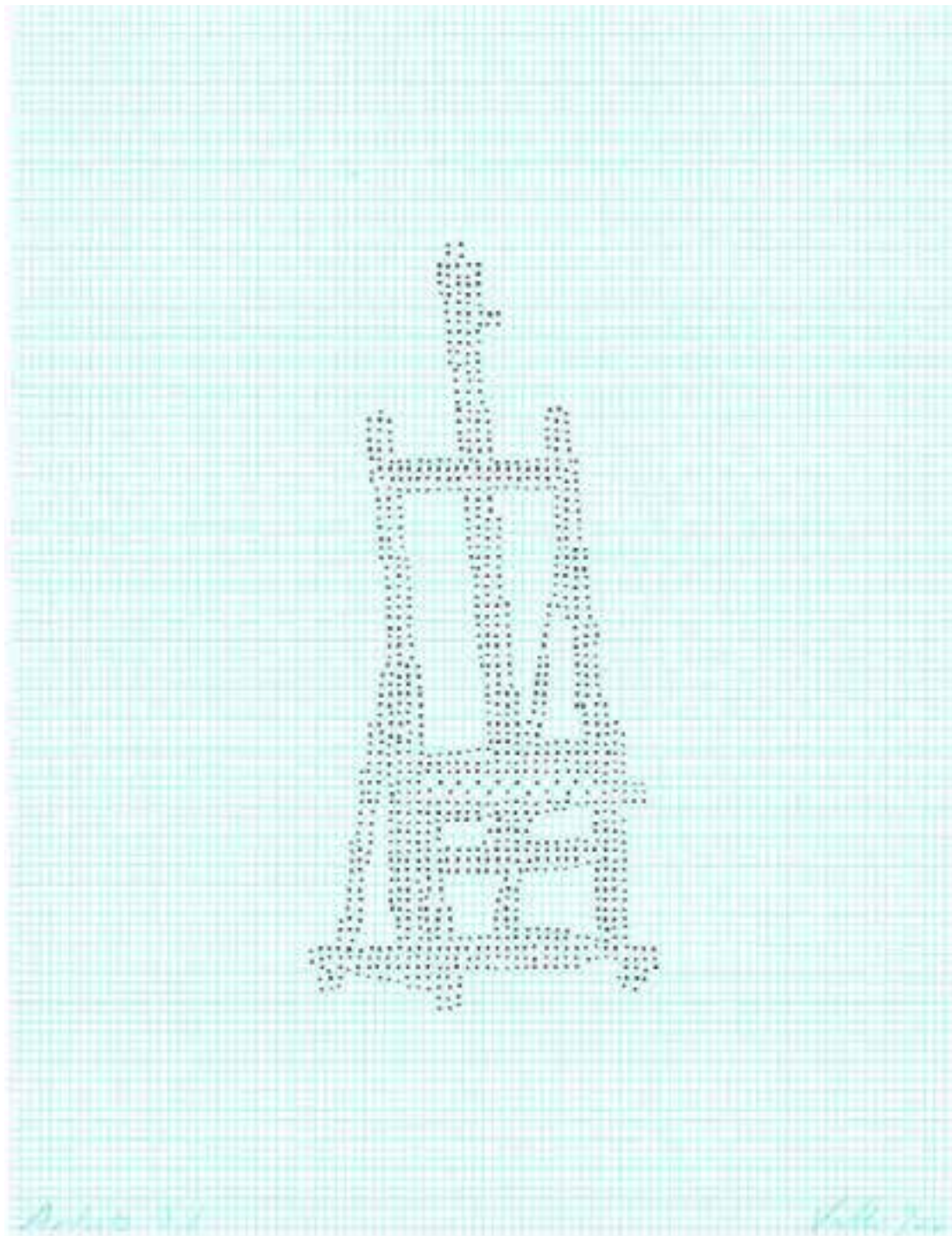


**San Francisco 17.6%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
36 × 36 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



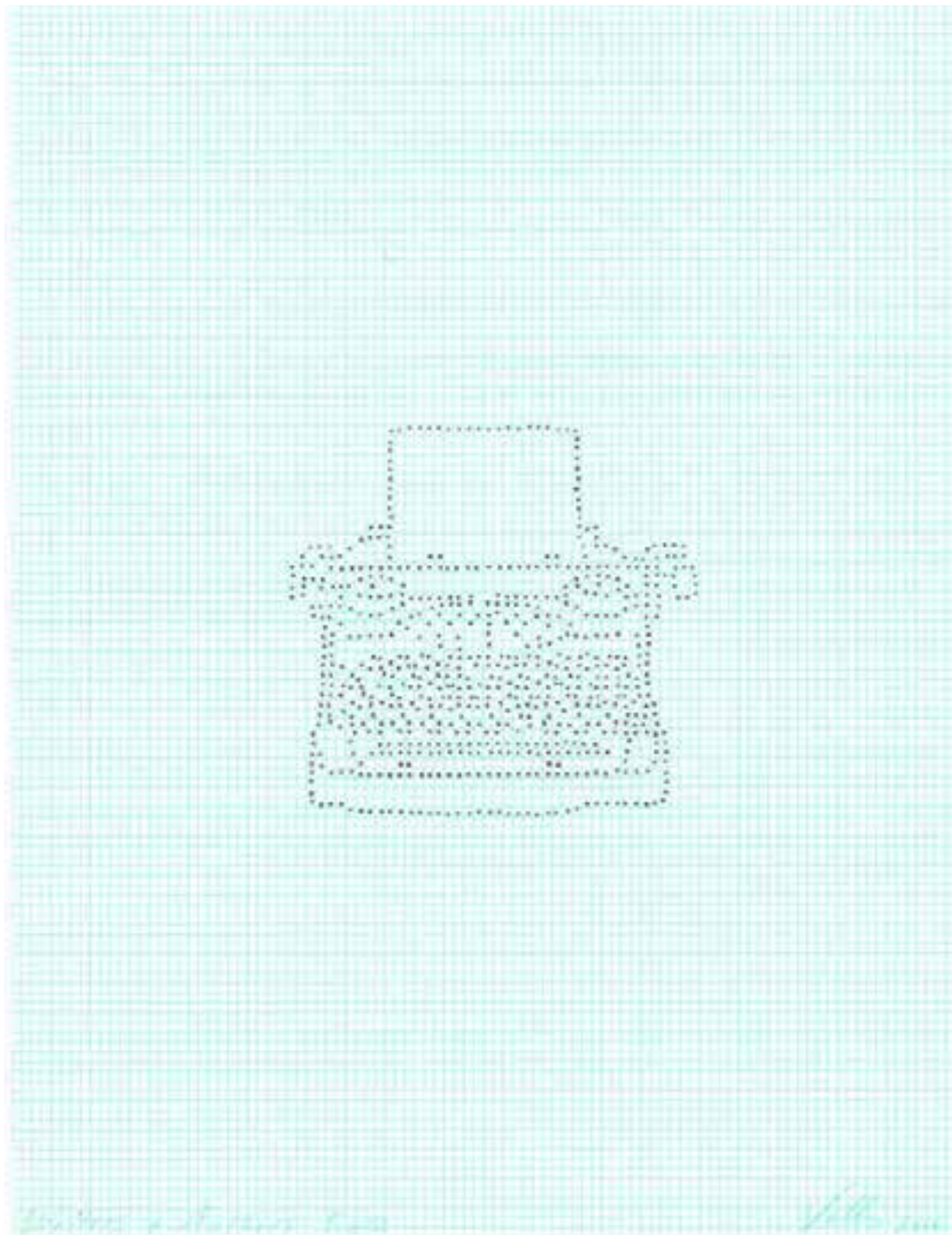


**National Latino Architects 7.2%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**National Latino Artists 9.12%, 2016**  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



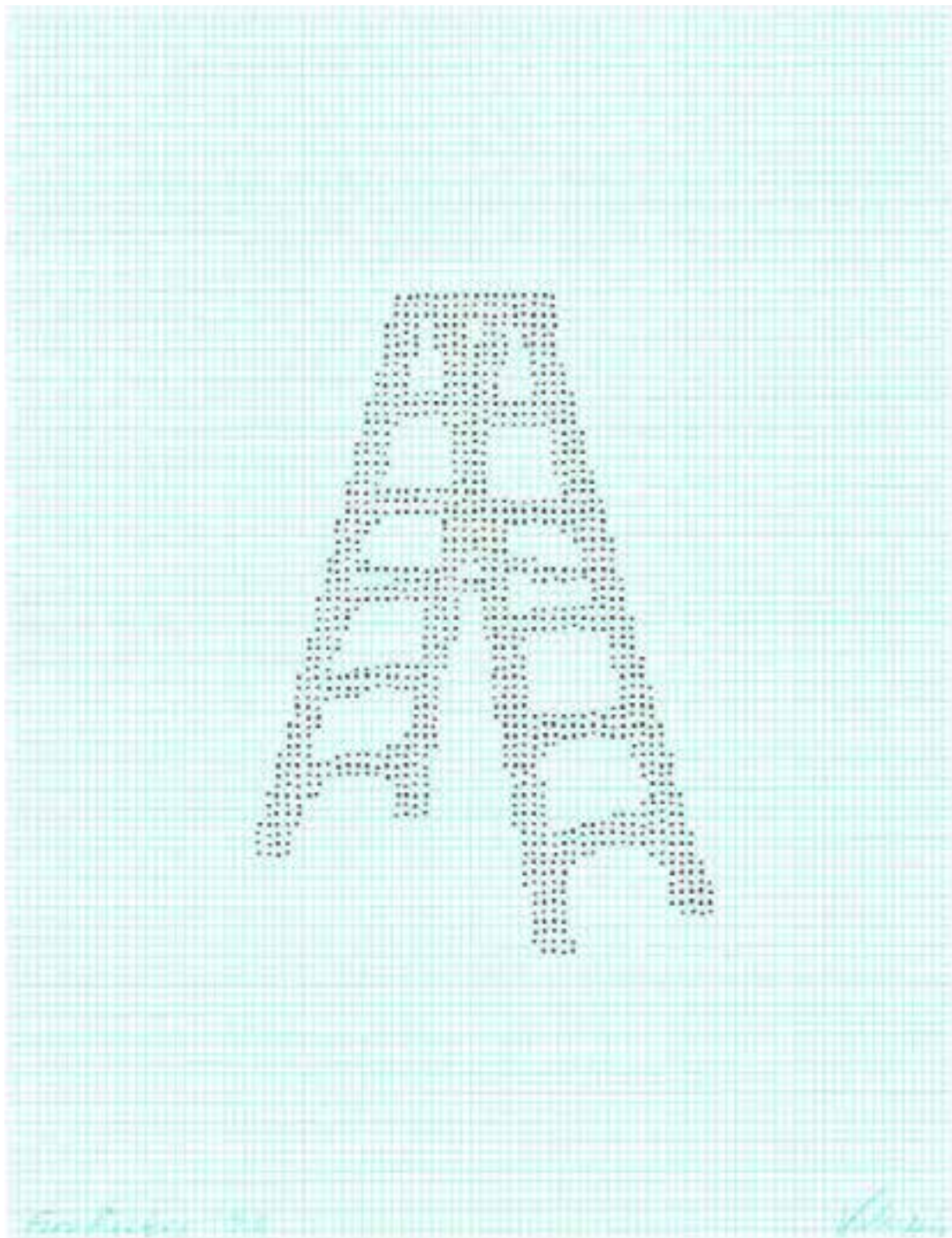


**National Latino Authors and Writers 5.6%,**  
2016

From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*

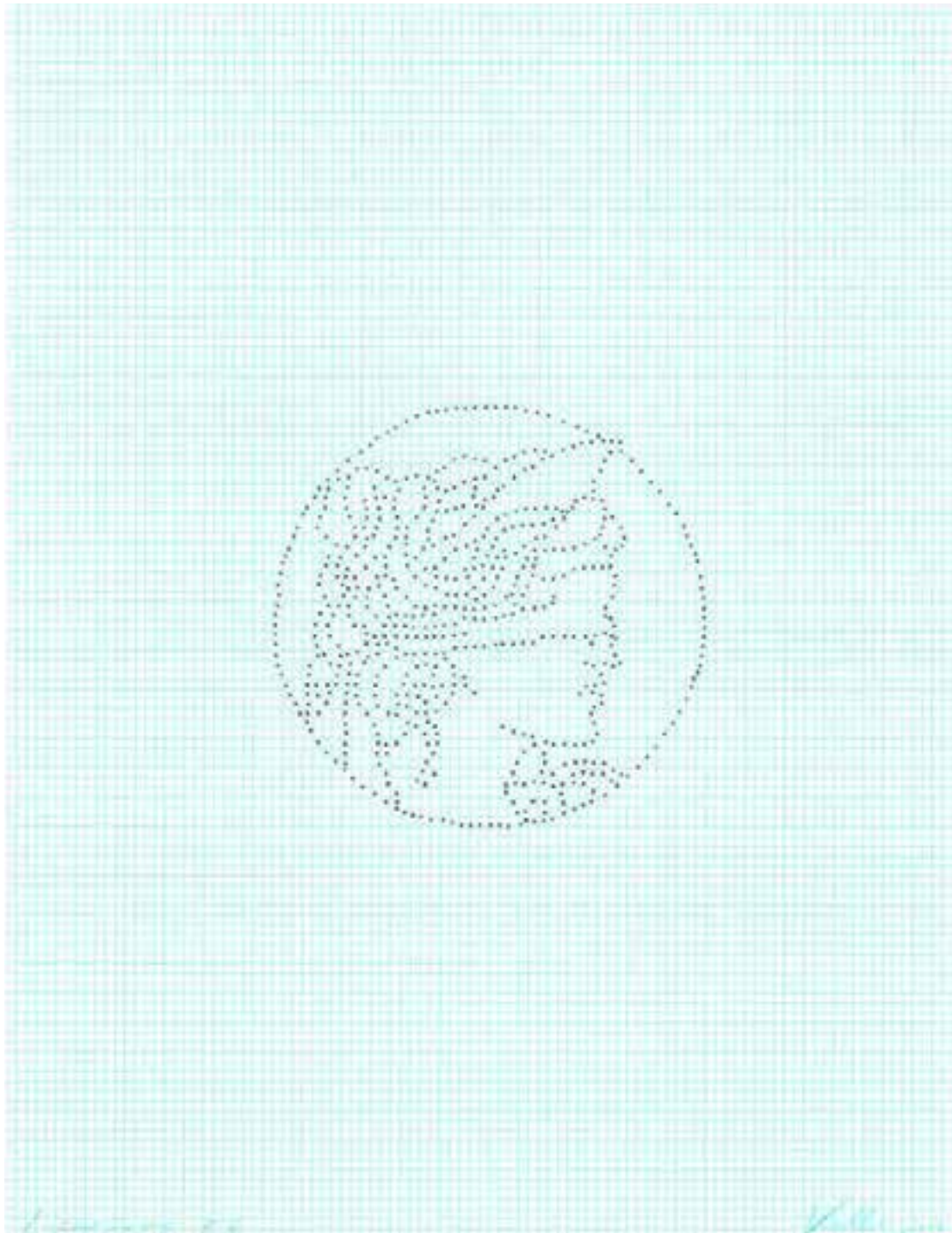
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

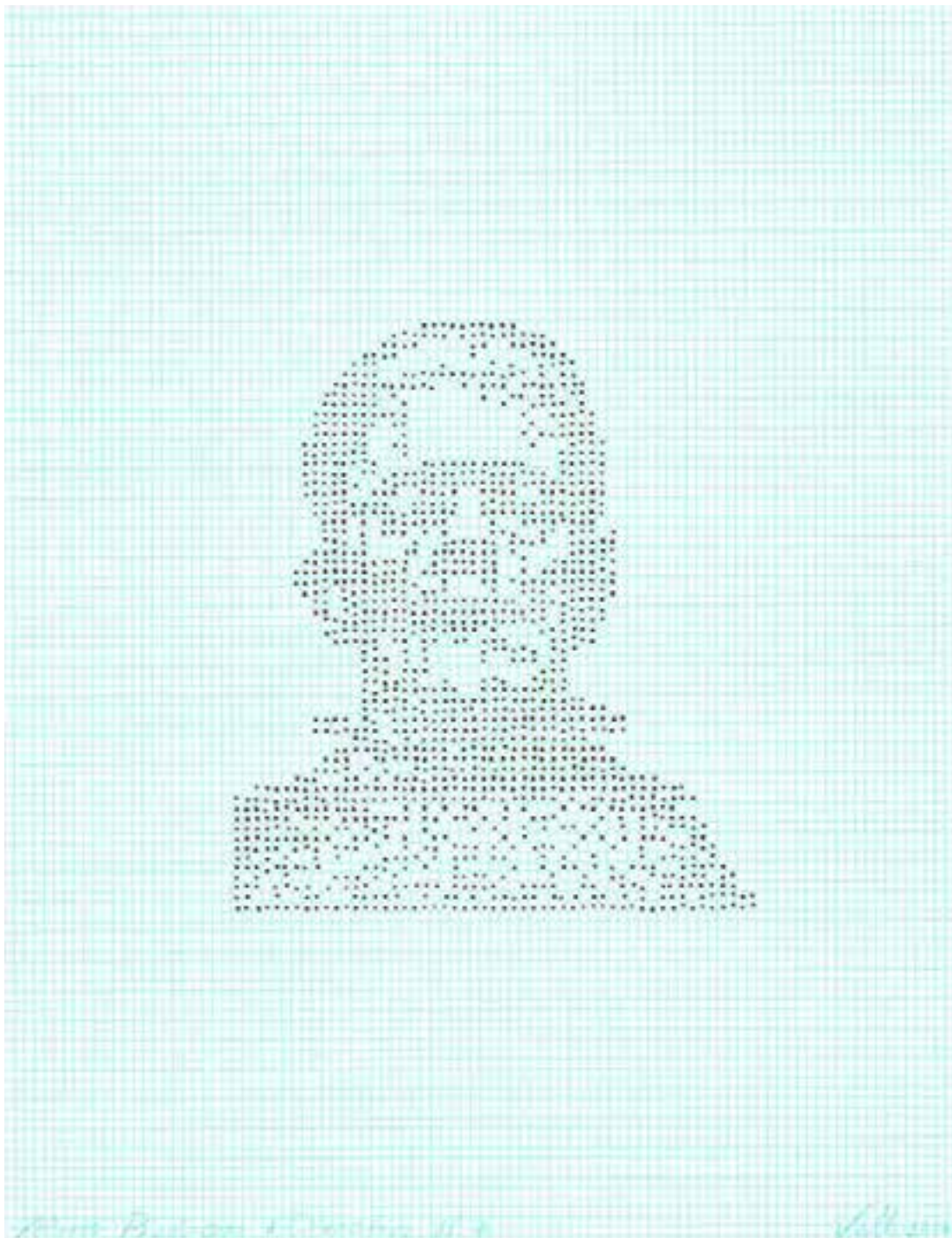


**National Latino Firefighters 9.62%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



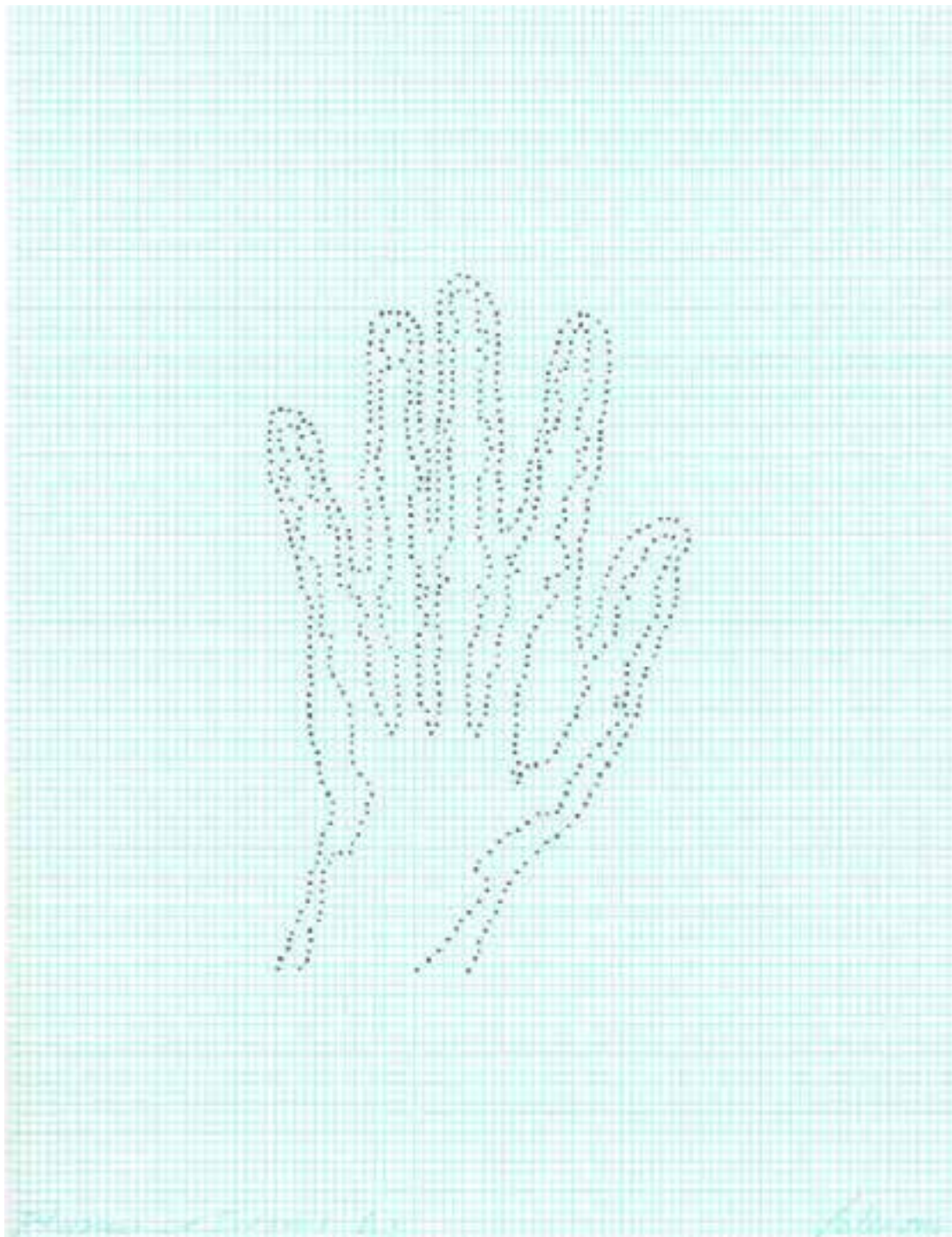


**National Latino Lawyers 5.6%, 2016**  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**National Latino Movie Producers and Directors 11.72%**, 2016  
 From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
 Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





**National Latino Physicians and Surgeons**

**6.3%, 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*

Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

EXHIBITION HISTORY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CONTRIBUTORS

# exhibition checklist

## THE BROWN DOT PROJECT

### **13% of All DACA Recipients Live in Los Angeles, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **16% of California DACA Recipients Own Their Homes, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **23.9% of Sex Trafficking Victims in the US Are Latino (2011), 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **25% of Gay and Bisexual Latino Males in the US Will Have AIDS in Their Lifetime, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **25% of US Latinos Experience Discrimination, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **25.7% of All DACA Recipients Live in California, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **30% of US Public School Students Will Be Latino in 2023, 2018**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on gridded vellum, 72 × 28 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **35% of Los Angeles County's Homeless Population Is Latino, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **35% of Los Angeles's Homeless Population Is Latino, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **35% of US Latinos Voted for Trump, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **38% of Los Angeles County's Housed Latinos Own Their Homes, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **55% of US Latinos Are Catholic (2013), 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

### **62% of Los Angeles County's Housed Latinos Rent Their Homes, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print of repurposed photograph on paper,  
8½ × 11 inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**94% of All DACA Recipients Were Born in Mexico, Central America, or South America, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**The Brown Dot Scrolls, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print on gridded vellum, 180 × 42 inches each  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Eastside 91.2%, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Educational Attainment of US Latinos Over 25 (2013), 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**US Latina Business Owners 36% (2013), 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**US Latino AA and BA Degrees Growth Pattern (1993–2013), 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**US Latino Children Living in Poverty 49% (2014), 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**US Latino High School Graduation Rates (1993 vs. 2013), 2016**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Latinos Make Up 30% of New Nissan Sales in the US (2014), 2018**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print on gridded vellum, 72 × 28 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Westside 15.7%, 2019**

From *The Brown Dot Project*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment print of repurposed photograph on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**34.1% of US Cafeteria Attendants Are Latina, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*  
Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**43.4% of US Farmers Are Latino, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*  
Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**43.8% of US Maids and Housekeepers Are Latina, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*  
Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**52.4% of US Latino Children's Mothers Have Less Than a High School Education (2000), 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*  
Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**75% of Immigrants in the US Are Lawful, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*  
Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**87.4% of Latino Children Are US Citizens, 2017**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Memories of Mexico)*  
Colored pencil, gouache, and pigment print of repurposed postcard on paper, 8½ × 11 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Chicago 28.9%, 2015**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum, 24 × 24 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**East Los Angeles 96.7%, 2015**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum, 24 × 24 inches  
Collection of Luisa Fernanda Espinosa

**Hollywood 42.2%, 2015**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Colored pencil and archival marker on gridded vellum, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF BARBARA AND ZACH HOROWITZ

**Los Angeles 48.3%, 2015**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum, 24 × 24 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles 48.3%, 2015**

From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum, 24 × 24 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
24 × 24 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
8½ × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
8½ × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
8½ × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
8½ × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles 48.3%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
8½ × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Los Angeles County 39%**, 2015  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
8½ × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Miami 66%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
36 × 36 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**New York 27.5%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
36 × 36 inches  
PRIVATE COLLECTION

**San Francisco 17.6%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Population Data)*  
Archival marker on gridded vellum,  
36 × 36 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Architects 7.2%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Artists 9.12%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Authors and Writers  
5.6%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Firefighters 9.62%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Lawyers 5.6%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Movie Producers and  
Directors 11.72%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**National Latino Physicians and Surgeons  
6.3%**, 2016  
From *The Brown Dot Project (Workforce Data)*  
Colored pencil, archival marker, and pigment  
print on paper, 11 × 8½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

CULTURAL ENIGMA

**American Portrait I**, 2019  
(after David Hockney, *Maurice Payne*, 1971)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait II**, 2019  
(after Antony Williams, *Girl with Dreadlocks*,  
date unknown)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait III**, 2019  
(after Alice Neel, *Spanish Woman*, 1950)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait IV**, 2019  
(after Alice Neel, *Jackie Curtis as a Boy*, 1972)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait V**, 2019  
(after Philip Pearlstein, *Portrait of Linda  
Nochlin and Richard Pommer*, 1968)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait VI**, 2019  
(after David Hockney, *Lila de Nobilis*, 1973)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait VII**, 2019  
(after Stephen Gjertson, *Dave A. Anderson*, 1993)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait VIII**, 2019  
(after Jolene Hesse, *What Started It All*, 2015)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Portrait IX**, 2019  
(after David Hockney, *Self-Portrait*, 1999)  
From *Cultural Enigma (American Portraits)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
17¼ × 12½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs I**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
16¾ × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs II**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
16¾ × 11¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs III**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
15 ¼ × 11 ¼ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs IV**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
23 × 30¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs V**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
22½ × 30¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs VI**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
12 × 16¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs VII**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
22 × 16¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs VIII**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
22½ × 17¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Symbols and Signs IX**, 2019  
From *Cultural Enigma (Symbols and Signs)*  
Colored pencil and gouache on paper,  
26¼ × 34 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

## DATOS SAGRADOS

**30% of the US Population Will Be Latino in 2050**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 22 × 22 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**47.7% of US Latino Households Are Married Households (2015)**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 22 × 22 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**50% of US Immigrants Were Latino (1965–2008)**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**50% of US Latinos Self-Identify as White**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**51% of US Latinos Self-Identify as Democrats**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**52% of US Latinos Self-Identify as Mestizo**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**53% of US Latinos Live in 15 Metropolitan Areas**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 44 × 44 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**60% of US Latinos Experience Good Relations with Blacks**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**63% of US Labor Trafficking Is Latino**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 22 × 22 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**64% of US Latinos Are Mexican**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**65% of US Latino Children Live with Two Parents**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 22 × 22 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**65% of US Latinos Are US Native-Born**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**66% of Unauthorized Latino Immigrants in the US Have Lived There for at Least a Decade**, 2017  
From *Datos Sagrados*  
Colored pencil and gouache on handmade paper, 12 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

## MAKE 'EM ALL MEXICAN

**Altar Boys**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figures,  
6 × 3 × 2½ inches each  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**American Eagle**, 2017  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
20 × 12 × 10 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Ares**, 2013  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic, gold leaf, and silver leaf on repurposed composite figure, 15 × 5 × 4 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Big Boy “Muchachote,”** 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed rubber figure,  
9 ¼ × 4 × 5 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Blanca Brown and Her Friends**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed plastic figures,  
2¾ × 2 × 1¼ inches each  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Chicana Virgen**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
7 × 3¾ × 4 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Diana de la Cruz**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic, gold leaf, silver leaf, and pigment print of original painting on repurposed plaster figure,  
25 × 12 ¼ × 6 ¼ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Dick and Jane**, 2010  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Gouache, whiteout, pigment print of original painting, and repurposed book pages, 12⅞ × 61½ inches  
DURÓN FAMILY COLLECTION

**El Lugar Más Feliz del Mundo**, 2018  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed plaster figures, 9¼ × 5½ × 4 inches each  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**El Vaquero**, 2013  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 16 × 7 × 5 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**El Vis**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic, gold leaf, and pigment print of original painting on repurposed plaster figure, 12½ × 7½ × 5½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**The Emperor's Guardian Angel**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic, gold leaf, and silver leaf on repurposed plaster figure, 19 × 10 × 6 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**The First Prom**, 2013  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 5¼ × 3 × 3 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Hidden Beauties**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Gouache, whiteout, pigment print of repurposed photograph, and repurposed book pages and postcards, 15¾ × 78 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Justice**, 2016  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic and metal flake on repurposed composite figure, 34½ × 16 × 10¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**La Elegante**, 2014  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 13 × 8 × 5 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**La Mona**, 2014  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on aluminum sublimation print, 40 × 27 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**La Pietà**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed composite figure, 12 × 10½ × 6 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**La Victoria**, 2014  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic and metal flake on repurposed composite figure, 40½ × 27½ × 27 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Liberty**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed resin figure, 17⅞ × 3¾ × 6 inches  
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA BELCO AND WILLIAM GOODMAN

**Little Boy Brown and Brownie**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figures, 8 × 3 × 2 and 8 × 3¼ × 2¾ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Little Fourth of July Princess**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil on repurposed postcard, 11 × 9 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Madre y Niño**, 2018  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil on repurposed painting, 24 × 20 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Makes No Difference Who You Are**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil, whiteout, pigment print of original painting, and repurposed magazine pages, 76⅝ × 12⅞ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Marielena la Fabulosa**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 8½ × 5 × 4½ inches  
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA BELCO AND WILLIAM GOODMAN

**Mexican Gothic**, 2014  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on aluminum sublimation print, 40 × 30 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Mi Indita**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed ceramic figure, 14 × 12½ × 7 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Mi Indito**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed ceramic figure, 10 × 8½ × 7 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Mi Niña**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 5¾ × 5½ × 3½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Mi Niño**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 6¼ × 6 × 3½ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Off to School**, 2013  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure, 6¼ × 5¼ × 4⅞ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Our Founders: George and Martha Washington**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic and handmade clothing on repurposed porcelain figures, 14 × 6 × 6 and 13½ × 6 × 6 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Pageant**, 2019  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Gouache on repurposed magazines, 7¾ × 5½ × ¾ inches each  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Postmodern Toasties**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil, whiteout, pigment print of repurposed photograph, and repurposed magazine pages, 18½ × 84 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**The Presidents**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil, whiteout, lithographic monotype, and repurposed postcards, 16¾ × 49 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Pretty Little Doll**, 2012  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed photograph, 16 × 12 inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**The Sun God Tonatiuh**, 2011  
From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic, gold leaf, and pigment print of original painting on repurposed plaster figure, 22 × 17 × 10¼ inches  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**Theseus, the Mythological King of Ancient Athens**, 2019

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Gouache on repurposed photograph,  
10½ × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Venus de Milo II**, 2012

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic and gold leaf on repurposed composite  
figure, 17 × 4¾ × 4¾ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**With This Ring**, 2013

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Acrylic on repurposed porcelain figure,  
6½ × 4 × 2½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**A Woman of Means**, 2014

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil on repurposed painting, 20¼ × 24¾ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Young Leaders**, 2012

From *Make 'Em All Mexican*  
Oil on repurposed postcard,  
10½ × 13½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Aurora Hernandez**, 2016

From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
Gouache and pigment print of repurposed  
photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Bernardo y Mateo**, 2016

From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
Gouache and pigment print of repurposed  
photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Emilio “El Indio” Fernández**, 2019

From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
Acrylic on three-dimensional printed figure,  
14¼ × 4¾ × 4¾ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Juanita Lorenzo**, 2016

From *Make 'Em All Mexican (The Brown Oscars)*  
Gouache and pigment print of repurposed  
photograph on paper, 11 × 8½ inches

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Linda Vallejo at work in her studio, 2015.

PHOTO BY AIMEE SANTOS



# exhibition history

## AWARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Puffin Foundation individual artist grant, Teaneck, New Jersey, 2019  
*We Are Los Angeles* public art commission, California Community Foundation, 2016  
City of Los Angeles individual artist fellowship, Los Angeles City Cultural Affairs, 2014  
Artista Que Inspira individual artist award, Self Help Graphics & Art, Los Angeles, 2013  
First Place, California Sculpture SLAM, San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, California, 2013  
Focus on the Masters individual artist award, Ventura, California, 2009  
Durfee Foundation individual artist grant, Los Angeles, 2005  
Brody Arts Fund emerging artist fellowship, California Community Foundation, 1985

## PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara Library  
Carnegie Art Museum, Oxnard, California, from a gift provided by the Peter Norton Collection  
Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles  
El Museo del Barrio, New York  
Focus on the Masters, Ventura, California  
Latino Art Museum, Pomona, California  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles  
National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago  
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (permanent installation), Los Angeles  
Online Archive of California, University of California Digital Library  
Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

### 2019

*Cultural Identity in America*, Art Museum of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, California  
*Linda Vallejo: Brown Belongings*, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Los Angeles  
*My Hero: Contemporary Art & Superhero Action*, exhibition running from 2016 to 2020, traveling this year to Museum of Art & Sciences, Daytona Beach, Florida; Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts, Spring, Texas; Carnegie Arts Center, Turlock, California

### 2018

*Art Speaks! Lend Your Voice*, presented by the Women's Caucus for Art, arena1, Santa Monica, California  
*Bridges in a Time of Walls: Mexican/Chicano Art from Los Angeles to Mexico*, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City  
*The Brown Oscars*, We Choose Art and The Mezz Gallery at The Montalbán Theatre, in collaboration with bG Gallery, Los Angeles  
*El Exploratorio: Zona 1—Beyond the Limits and the Processes of Creation*, Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California  
*Entre Tinta y Lucha: 45 Years of Self Help Graphics & Art*, Cal State LA Fine Arts Gallery, Los Angeles  
*Hablamos Juntos: Un Diálogo Visual/Together We Speak: A Visual Dialog*, Pajaro Valley Arts, in partnership with Museo Eduardo Carrillo and the Young Writers Program, Watsonville, California  
LA Art Show, with bG Gallery, Santa Monica, Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles  
*Linda Vallejo: American LatinX*, Karl and Helen Burger Gallery, Kean University, Union, New Jersey  
*My Hero: Contemporary Art & Superhero Action*, exhibition running from 2016 to 2020, traveling this year to Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Michigan; South Dakota Art Museum, Brookings, South Dakota; Art Museum at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia  
*Pure not Proper*, Coagula Curatorial, Los Angeles  
*A Universal History of Infamy: Those of This America*,\* Charles White Elementary School Gallery, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles

### 2017

*6th Chicana/o Biennial*, MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana, San Jose, California  
*Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A.*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles  
*Chapters: Book Arts in Southern California*, Craft & Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles

*Deconstructing Liberty: A Destiny Manifested*,\* Museo Museum and Cultural Center, Anaheim, California

*Descendants and Dissonance: Cultural Iconography in Contemporary Los Angeles*,\* saltfineart, Laguna Beach, California

*Embedded Messages, Debating the Dream: Truth, Justice and the American Way*, The Art Center—Highland Park, Illinois

*Fault Line*, Brewery ArtWalk, Los Angeles

*Ghetto Gloss: The Chicana Avant-Garde, 1980–2010*, Bermudez Projects, Los Angeles

*Homage to Mango Street*, Strohl Art Center, Chautauqua, New York

*Imagen Angeleno*,\* Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, California

*Keepin' It Brown*,\* bG Gallery, Santa Monica, California

*LA/Landscapes: Real and Imagined*,\* Studio Channel Islands, Camarillo, California

*Los Four Meets Los 40*, La Bodega Gallery, in collaboration with Gregorio Escalante Gallery, Los Angeles

*Mujeres de Maíz: 20 Years of ARTivism and Herstory en Los Angeles*, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Los Angeles

*My Hero: Contemporary Art & Superhero Action*, exhibition running from 2016 to 2020, traveling this year to Daura Gallery at Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia; International Museum of Art and Science, McAllen, Texas; Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, Montana

*One Year: The Art of Politics in Los Angeles*, Brand Library & Art Center, Glendale, California

*Power of the Page: Artists Books as Agents for Change*, New Museum Los Gatos, Los Gatos, California

*Radical Home*, saltfineart, Laguna Beach, California

*With Liberty and Justice for Some*, Walter Maciel Gallery, Culver City, California, and San Francisco Arts Commissions Galleries, San Francisco

## 2016

*Embedded Messages, Debating the Dream: Truth, Justice & the American Way*, University of Redlands Peppers Gallery, Redlands, California

LA Art Show, with Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago, Illinois, and bG Gallery, Santa Monica, California, Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles

*Linda Vallejo: Selections from the Make 'Em All Mexican, The Brown Dot Project, and The Brown Oscars*, Memorial Student Center Visual Arts Committee at Texas A&M University, Reynolds Gallery, College Station, Texas

*My Hero: Contemporary Art & Superhero Action*, exhibition running from 2016 to 2020, traveling this year to California Center for the Arts, Escondido, California; Huntsville Museum of Art, Alabama

*ONE: Mind, Body, Spirit*, Mujeres de Maíz group exhibition, Self Help Graphics & Art, Los Angeles

*Pattern Recognition*, MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana, San Jose, California

*Social Subconscious*, City of Brea Art Gallery, Brea, California

*This Used to Be Mexico*, Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles

## 2015

*5th Chicana/o Biennial*, MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana, San Jose, California

*Aquí Estamos/We Are Here: California Chican@ Art*, Cabrillo College Gallery, Aptos, California

*Colectiva 2015: Featuring Linda Vallejo's Brown Dot Project*, saltfineart, Laguna Beach, California

*Cut N' Mix*, El Museo del Barrio, New York

*Make 'Em All Mexican*, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago, Illinois

*Make 'Em All Mexican*, Denise Bibro Fine Art, New York

*Make 'Em All Mexican: Works by Linda Vallejo*, Chicano Studies Research Center Library, University of California, Los Angeles

*The New Nude*, bG Gallery, Santa Monica, California

*Pulse of LA*, presented by the Southern California Women's Caucus for Art, curated by Leslie Cozzi of the Hammer Museum, L.A. Artcore (Union Center for the Arts Gallery), Los Angeles

*Suggestive Role Play*, Walter Maciel Gallery, Culver City, California

*Talleres de la Frontera (Workshops from the Frontier)*, Taller Boricua Gallery, Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center, New York

## 2014

*Aqua Art Miami*, with Coagula Curatorial Gallery of Los Angeles, Miami Beach, Florida

*City of Los Angeles (COLA) Individual Artist Fellowship Exhibition*, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles

Municipal Art Gallery at Barnsdall Art Park, Los Angeles

*El Gran México: Shared Border Spaces*, a collaborative print project of University of Notre Dame Center for Arts & Culture, University of Texas at San Antonio, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, and El Centro Cultural Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico

*Hispanic Heritage*, Lancaster Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, California

*Make 'Em All Mexican*, Abrazo Interno Gallery, Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural and Educational Center, New York

## 2013

*Make 'Em All Mexican*, George Lawson Gallery, Culver City, California

*Make 'Em All Mexican*, New Mexico State University Art Gallery, Las Cruces, New Mexico



*Mock/Bite: Bling, Guns and Greed*, Southwest School of Art,  
Russell Hill Rogers Gallery, San Antonio, Texas

## 2012

*4th Chicana/o Biennial*, MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura  
Latino Americana, San Jose, California  
*Aqua Art Miami*, with George Lawson Gallery, Miami Beach, Florida  
*Make 'Em All Mexican*, Arte Américas in collaboration with Fresno  
Art Museum, Fresno, California  
*Make 'Em All Mexican*, Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of  
Art, California State University, San Bernardino, California  
*Momentum*, presented by Women's Caucus for Art, Gallery 825,  
Los Angeles Art Association, Los Angeles

## 2011

*Breaking in Two: Provocative Visions of Motherhood,\*\** Arena 1,  
Santa Monica, California  
*Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Women's Building,\*\** Ben  
Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles  
*From a Whisper to a Roar: Women Artists Charting Their Own  
Course*, Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles  
*Make 'Em All Mexican*, Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles  
*Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement*, part of *L.A.  
Xicano,\*\** in collaboration with the Chicano Studies Research  
Center and the Fowler Museum of the University California,  
Los Angeles, the Autry National Center, and the Los Angeles  
County Museum of Art, Los Angeles  
*Random Acts of Time*, ArtPadSF, Phoenix Hotel, San Francisco

## 2010

*Collector's Choice*, Latino Art Museum, Pomona, California  
*The Electrics: New Works by Linda Vallejo*, Galerie Anaïs,  
Bergamot Station, Santa Monica, California  
*Fierce Beauty: The Artwork of Linda Vallejo*, Plaza de la Raza  
Cultural Center for Arts and Education, Los Angeles  
*Linda Vallejo: A Prayer for the Earth Eco Installation*, Mary G. Hardin  
Center for Cultural Arts, Gadsden, Alabama

\* Part of *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*, a Getty-led initiative that  
explored Latin American and Latino art in Los Angeles from  
September 2017 to January 2018.

\*\* Part of *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980*, a Getty-led  
initiative that focused on the birth of LA's art scene from October  
2011 to March 2012.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Aboriginal Women Cross-Cultural Exchange, College for  
Indigenous Studies, Education and Research at the University  
of Southern Queensland, Australia, and Department of  
Chicana/o Studies, California State University, Northridge, 2016  
*The All City Waitress Marching Band*, produced by Jerri Allyn, LA  
art scene fundraiser, Los Angeles County Museum of Art Plaza,  
Los Angeles, 2010  
*Artists in Their Own Words*, Visiting Artist Program, California State  
University, Long Beach, California, 2018  
*Chicana/o Remix: Art and Errata since the Sixties*, panel discussion  
chaired by Dr. Karen Mary Davalos, Professor of Chicano and  
Latino Studies, with Laura E. Perez and Sandra de la Loa,  
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Minnesota, 2018  
*Día de los Muertos: A Cultural Legacy, Past, Present and Future,\** lead  
curator Linda Vallejo, Self Help Graphics & Art, Los Angeles, 2017  
*Fierce Beauty* panel discussion with curator Betty Ann Brown and  
exhibition catalog essayists, 2010  
“*From a Whisper to a Roar: An Intimate Dialogue with Multicultural  
Artists*,” Women's Caucus for Art National Conference  
Multicultural Artist Panel, moderated by Betty Ann Brown and  
Linda Vallejo, Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles, 2011  
*Hablamos Juntos: Together We Speak*, 3D interactive exhibition,  
Museo Eduardo Carrillo and Pajaro Valley Arts Young Writers  
Program, California, 2016  
*How Will Feminist Culture Engage the Future?*, The Feminist Art  
Project at Rutgers University panel discussion, University of  
Southern California, Los Angeles, 2018  
*Latino Art Midwest*, a Humanities without Walls Consortium  
project, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities at the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2018  
*Latino Art Now! The New Wave/La Nueva Ola*, Third Biennial  
National Conference, Plaza de la Raza Cultural Center for the  
Arts and Education, Los Angeles, 2010  
Latino Family Literacy Project, illustration and essay published by  
Lectura Books, 2016  
*LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A. Short Films*, images of Linda Vallejo  
and Madre Tierra Press, 2017  
Membership of the Arts & Letters Council of the Mexican Museum,  
San Francisco, California, 2013  
*Pickles Galore: A Pop-Up Event*, curated by Linda Vallejo,  
Lamperouge Gallery, Brewery Art Complex, Los Angeles, 2017  
*Transformation Touchstones*, A Window Between Worlds 25th  
Anniversary, Santa Monica, California, 2016  
Woman's Building Reunion Dinner and Brainstorming, Metabolic  
Studio, Los Angeles, 2016

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## contributors

**MARIAH BERLANGA-SHEVCHUK** was born and raised in Arizona, with the exception of a few formative years spent in Italy and Germany. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology with double minors in Classics and Religious Studies, specifically researching Nazi-era art restitution. She subsequently completed a Master of Arts in Museum Studies, focusing on the impact culturally specific museums have on the communities they serve; the research culminated in an educational program that provides at-risk eighth graders with age-appropriate methods of activism. She has held a range of curatorial, education, and development positions at the Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles; The Contemporary Jewish Museum; and the Petersen Automotive Museum. As a museum educator and as Associate Curator at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, she seeks ways to incorporate more social justice and social practice into her work, as well as methods to make museums as inclusive and accessible as possible.

**ERIN M. CURTIS** is a Los Angeles-based historian and curator. She currently serves as a member of the founding curatorial team of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. As Senior Curator at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, she developed a series of exhibitions, including *Peloteros in Paradise: A Los Angeles Béisbol Story*; *¡Murales Rebeldes! L.A. Chicana/o Murals under Siege*; and *¡Ya Basta! The East L.A. Walkouts and the Power of Protest*. Curtis previously worked as an Assistant Curator at the Skirball Cultural Center, where she curated *Creating the United States; Decades of Dissent: Democracy in Action, 1960–1980; Rock & Roll Billboards of the Sunset Strip; Petit Takett: Love, Legacy, and Recipes from the Maghreb*; and *The Unauthorized History of Baseball in 100-Odd Paintings: The Art of Ben Sakoguchi*. She was a Smithsonian Institution Predoctoral Fellow at the National Museum of American History and has held positions at other museums and institutions, including the experience design firm Local Projects. She holds a PhD in American Studies from Brown University, from which she also earned a Master of Arts in Public Humanities. She is the award-winning co-author of *¡Murales Rebeldes! L.A. Chicana/Chicano Murals under Siege* (Angel City Press, 2017) and has contributed chapters to *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader* (New York University Press, 2013) and *American Chinese Restaurants: Society, Culture and Consumption* (Routledge, 2019).

**KAREN MARY DAVALOS**, professor and chair of Chicano and Latino Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, has published widely on Chicana art, spirituality, and museums. She has written two books on Chicana museums, *Exhibiting Mestizaje: Mexican (American) Museums in the Diaspora* (University of New Mexico Press, 2001) and *The Mexican Museum of San Francisco Papers, 1971–2006* (UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2010), for which she won the International Latino Book Awards silver prize for best reference book in English. For her book *Yolanda M. López* (UCLA CSRC Press, 2008), she received two book awards: the 2010 Honorable Mention from the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies and the 2009 Honorable Mention from International Book Awards. Her most recent book, *Chicana/o Remix: Art and Errata since the Sixties* (NYU Press, 2017), is informed by life history interviews with eighteen artists, a decade of ethnographic research in Southern California, and archival research examining fifty years of Chicana art in Los Angeles. From 2015 to 2018, she served as president of the board of directors at Self Help Graphics & Art, the legacy arts organization in East Los Angeles. In 2012, she received the President's Award for Art and Activism from the Women's Caucus for Art. In 2017, from the University of Minnesota, she launched an ambitious initiative, "Mexican American Art since 1848," which will produce a co-authored, multi-volume book and a searchable online digital platform linking art collections and related documentation from libraries, archives, and museums across the United States.

**MICHELLE L. LOPEZ** earned a master's in art history and a Master of Fine Arts from California State University, Los Angeles. In 2014 she joined the university's Department of Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies as a lecturer. She is an educator, artist, curator, grant writer, community organizer, and mom. Her research focuses on pre-Columbian and contemporary cultural studies and forms of activism. She serves as the finance director of Mujeres de Maíz, an arts organization run for and by women of color, and works with the community arts center Self Help Graphics & Art in Boyle Heights, California. In 2018, she co-curated the exhibition *Entre Tinta y Lucha: 45 Years of Self Help Graphics & Art* at the Cal State LA Fine Arts Gallery.

**WILLIAM MORENO** is a Los Angeles native and a private art advisor, dealer, curator, and writer. He was founding executive director of the Claremont Museum of Art in Los Angeles County and also served as executive director of the Mexican Museum in San Francisco. He was previously the director of a contemporary art gallery in Silicon Valley. Moreno has been a featured speaker at the Commonwealth Club and the American Institute of Architects

and appeared on PBS-KCET's series *California's Gold*, hosted by Huell Howser, as well as other television and radio shows. He regularly participates in panel discussions on contemporary art topics, has served on grant panels for the City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowships, the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Fund for the Arts, the California Community Foundation Mid-Career Artist Fellows, and as a portfolio reviewer for PhotoAlliance and the Los Angeles Art Association. He has curated a number of independent exhibitions, including at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, the Vincent Price Museum, and the George Billis Gallery. He is an advisory board committee member for the California Association of Museums and served as board chair of Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE).

**ESPERANZA SANCHEZ** is a Los Angeles-based public historian and the Assistant Curator at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes. She previously held archival, curatorial, and educational positions at the Autry Museum of the American West, the Museum of Latin American Art, and California State University, Northridge. She was also an archival and collections volunteer for the Petersen Automotive Museum and an intern at HOPE (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality), a non-profit organization in Los Angeles. She holds a Master of Arts in History with a focus on public history and a Bachelor of Arts in History with an emphasis on US and Latin America foreign relations and a minor in sociology, both from California State University, Northridge. Her research interests include immigration, race, ethnicity, art communities, and organizations in Los Angeles, the history of Los Angeles and California, US foreign policy in Latin America and Europe, Latin America's military governments, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century US history and art.



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Linda Vallejo works on and cleans a *Brown Dot Project* piece, 2015.

PHOTOS BY AIMEE SANTOS





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