



## Directors Letter 2016

We are the predecessors of political artists.

It's such an important and interesting form today.

We were political. We were resisters.

We were affirmers before it was a popular notion

within American art. We were the precursors

of neo-expressionism. We were makers of

new monuments, public monuments that rose

from below as opposed to being imposed from above.

We refined what we should memorialize.

Quote by artist Judith F. Baca from the conference proceedings of *Crossing Borders: The Next 500 Years/Cruzando fronteras: los siguientes 500 años*, National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, San Antonio, Texas, September 24-27, 1992. Material located in the Tomás Ybarra-Frausto research material on Chicano art, 1965-2004 at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

November 15, 2016  
U.S. Latinx Art Forum (USLAF)

Dear Members:

On November 9, 2016, we awoke to the sobering reality that our country--yes, *our* country--is even more divided than many of us had thought. The inclusion and participation of Latinxs in U.S. society, culture, and the political landscape--as well as that of our sisters and brothers who are Black, Muslim, LGBTQI, Asian, Native American, immigrants, refugees, undocumented, and differently abled--is at a crisis. As disconcerting as this awakening may be, we must stand in solidarity as we look toward the future. Together, through activism and advocacy, we can ensure that the progressive future the majority of voters supported is kept alive.

Last month marked the one year anniversary of the U.S. Latinx Art Forum's public debut and our initial call for membership. Today, USLAF membership has exceeded our expectations with 202 members. This is over a **172% increase in membership** in just one year! Thank you for joining USLAF in our mission to advocate for Latinx art and art history.

As a growing community of artists, scholars, curators, educators, and activists, USLAF's work is more important than ever. The USLAF Executive Committee and Advisory Board are committed to advancing the cause of Latinx art and to collaborate with organizations that, like ours, are determined to build a brighter and more inclusive future. As we look to 2017, we envision USLAF to be at the forefront of attesting to Latinxs vital and fundamental contributions to the American cultural landscape.

In that spirit, we offer an update of our activities this past year. In addition, we hope you will bookmark our new website at [www.USLAF.org](http://www.USLAF.org). We will update the "Resources" page soon with new publications and other information. Also, please don't forget to like our [Facebook page](#).

We are embarking on a critical political climate--one that possibly risks the decades of hard work that veteran artists, scholars, and activists have championed to make it possible for Latinx art to thrive. We must not allow this progress to be undone. Together, we will ensure the future of our field. In support of the greater Latinx community, *la lucha continua!*

In solidarity,

Adriana Zavala, Ph.D.  
USLAF Director, 2016-18  
Associate Professor of Art History  
Tufts University

Rose G. Salseda, M.A.  
USLAF Associate Director, 2016-18  
Ph.D. Candidate in Art History  
University of Texas at Austin

## 2015-16 USLAF Activities

Over the course of the year, the USLAF Executive Committee has been working diligently to establish the organization while advocating for the increased representation and support of Latinx art and the field of Latinx art history.

### CAA Affiliation

One of our first initiatives involved applying for societal affiliation with the College Art Association (CAA). Affiliated Society status provides many benefits, including sponsoring a 90-minute session and a business meeting at the Annual Conference, which is the largest yearly meeting for the visual arts. It also entitles affiliates to appear in the *CAA Directory of Affiliated Societies* and to submit news, information, and articles to CAA's *Affiliated Society News*, Opportunities page, and Listserv.

We were dismayed to learn in January that CAA's (then) Board of Directors had rejected our application. We have now established a more formalized Executive Committee (details below), revised our bylaws, and re-submitted our application to affiliate. CAA's Board of Directors will vote on our application at the Annual Conference in February and we have good reason to believe we will be approved. In the meantime, we have been in active conversation with CAA's representatives including recently elected officials, such as Hunter O'Hanian, the Executive Director, and Dr. Roberto Tejada, the Secretary of the Board of Directors.

As a result of these productive dialogues, our request to hold a business meeting at the upcoming conference has been approved. It is rare, if not unprecedented, for an unaffiliated organization to be granted this privilege. Please join us for this meeting on Thursday, February 16, 2017 from 12:15-1:15pm in the 2nd floor Regent Parlor of the New York Hilton Midtown.

We are also pleased to announce that, in partnership with CAA, we will hold a plenary session at the Annual Conference to address the state of Latinx art. Please mark your calendars for this special event, which will take place on Friday, February 17, 2017 from 10:30-12pm (speaker details and room location will be announced shortly).

### Executive Committee and Advisory Board

In spring 2016, we established an inaugural Executive Committee and Advisory Board. For the 2016-18 term, the Executive Committee comprises the following officers, who were among the original organizing committee of USLAF: Dr. Adriana Zavala, Director; Rose G. Salseda, Associate Director; Dr. Josh Franco, Secretary and Membership Coordinator; Sonja E. Gandert, Social Media Manager; and, Sam Romero, Creative Director and Web Developer. Our Advisory Board includes the following members: Drs. Constance Cortez, Karen Mary Davalos, Jennifer A. González, Cherise Smith, Charlene Villaseñor Black, and Amalia Mesa-Bains. Our graduate student representative to the Advisory Board is Mary Thomas.

### Summer 2016 Data Collection Initiative and Call to Action

The representation of Latinx art has been consistently low at CAA's Annual Conference. Our concern about the lack of representation increased with the June 2016 publication of CAA's *Call for*

*Papers.* Due to the rejection of USLAF's application for societal affiliation, we began to wonder how Latinx art would fare if advocacy for the field continued to be absent within CAA. In other words, how would this affect Latinx artists and the growing infrastructure of curators, critics, educators, and scholars at the preeminent professional organization for the visual arts?

In August 2016, USLAF published [Call to Action: Latinx Art at CAA 2017](#), which highlights data collected by Rose Salseda and Mary Thomas on the underrepresentation of Latinx art at the CAA Annual Conference. Based on the analyses of the session and paper descriptions for conferences held from 2012 to 2016, Latinx art constituted an average of just 1% of all sessions and papers. In a comparative analysis, Salseda and Thomas found that Latinx art constituted 9% of all sessions and papers at the 2016 Latina/o Studies Association Conference and 15% of all papers on art and visual culture at the 2016 American Studies Association Annual Meeting.

These findings indicate the need for a definitive space for Latinx art at the CAA Annual Conference in order to support our distinctive, thriving, and growing field. Besides, Latinx artists and specialists deserve recognition at CAA because it is *our* professional organization, too. In an attempt to directly influence representation of the field at the Annual Conference, the *Call to Action* also urged USLAF members and allies to submit paper proposals on Latinx art. Please read art critic Seph Rodney's *Hyperallergic* article on our *Call to Action* [here](#).

Shortly after publishing the *Call to Action*, Salseda, Thomas and Adriana Zavala, directly appealed to and found support in Dr. Tejada and Dr. Judith Rodenbeck, the Chair of the Annual Conference Committee. Our productive dialogues have resulted in the aforementioned USLAF business meeting and the Latinx art plenary session at the 2017 Annual Conference.

We would like to thank the following for their show of solidarity on the issues of Latinx art representation at the CAA Annual Conference and USLAF's efforts to gain societal affiliation: Hunter O'Hanian, Judith Rodenbeck, Roberto Tejada, Christine Young-Kyung Hahn, Julie McGee, the CAA Committee on Diversity Practices, and the Co-Chairs of the [Queer Caucus for Art](#), Jennifer Tyburczy, Charles Snyder, and Oli Rodriguez.

### **USLAF at the U.S. Latinx Arts Futures Symposium**

In September, USLAF Executive Committee members participated in the U.S. Latinx Art Futures Symposium in New York. The event was spearheaded by artist Teresita Fernández, Project Director, and Olga Garay-English, Project Manager, with support from the Ford Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation. The gathering centered on visual artists, but also included scholars, museum directors, curators, funders, and other stakeholders who candidly discussed the barriers Latinx artists face within our country's museums and visual arts institutions. Adriana Zavala, Rose Salseda, and Josh Franco of USLAF presented lectures on the obstacles students and faculty experience within the fields of Latinx art and art history; how cross-racial and cross-discipline solidarity, mentorship, and allyship can safeguard the growth and future of Latinx art; and the recent institutional initiatives and acquisitions of Latinx art archives, respectively. Writer Max Duron highlighted USLAF's presentations in an article for [ARTnews](#).

## U.S. Latinx Art Forum At-A-Glance

### Quick Links:

- ★ [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#)
- ★ [Become a USLAF member!](#)
- ★ [Call to Action: Latinx Art at CAA 2017](#)
- ★ Articles on USLAF: [Hyperallergic](#) and [ARTnews](#)

### 2017 CAA Annual Conference Info

USLAF Business Meeting:

Time: Thursday, February 16, 2017 from 12:15-1:15pm

Location: New York Hilton Midtown, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Regent Parlor

Click [here](#) for link

USLAF-CAA Joint Plenary:

Time: Friday, February 17, 2017 from 10:30-12pm

Location and Speakers: To be announced

### Forthcoming January Publications

- ★ *U.S. Latinx Art Forum's CAA 2017 Highlights* (updated data/statistics on the representation of Latinx art; listings of sessions and papers on Latinx art; USLAF event info)
- ★ *USLAF Member Newsletter* (a call for submissions will be circulated soon)