



April 1, 2024
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

COLLECTION 1: LATINX UNSETTLING

Settle(d): to place, so as to stay; to establish in residence; to make orderly; to fix; to resolve conclusively.

Unsettle(d): to loosen or move from a settled state; to make unstable, to discompose; to perturb.

(Merriam-Webster.com)

Latinx: the term unsettles and perturbs (some).

“**Latinx Unsettling**” is generative: it disrupts norming tendencies; it disrupts attempts to discipline “Latinx” itself.

At the US Latinx Art Forum, we employ the term Latinx to advocate for and make visible the extraordinary creativity of the visual artists who comprise this complex and cross-cutting community. For USLAF, Latinx is about building cross-group solidarity. Rather than subsume other identities and subjectivities, we employ the X to resist silos and boundaries. As a genderqueer neologism, the X in Latinx interrupts binary thinking; it interrupts Anglo-Hispano-Eurocentrism, patriarchy, racism, anti-LGBTQIA2S+ and anti-Black violence; and it interrupts the unequal distribution of power and resources. The X in Latinx enjoins us to queer dominant structures and reminds us that processes of unequal social differentiation cannot be separated from the critical study of geopolitical power, class, race and capitalism, gender and sexuality, patriarchy, and heteronormativity.

The inaugural collection “Latinx Unsettling” invites writers to propose essays highlighting the complexities denoted by Latinx by exploring 1-2 works by any one of the following artists: [Elia Alba](#), [Adriana Corral](#), [Coco Fusco](#), [Ester Hernandez](#), [Juan Sánchez](#).

[Diana Solis](#), and [Vincent Valdez](#). Regardless of artistic medium, aesthetic choices, or conceptual approach these artists, like Latinx art itself, are irreducible. The title takes inspiration from Cuban-born Jamaican philosopher Sylvia Wynter's provocative deployment of the concept in her various essays.

This inaugural collection will showcase how artists do not create, think, or take political action in silos. Moreover as a concept, "Latinx Unsettling" invites the critical questioning of the silos and borders that seek to exclude, contain or diminish us, including frameworks of center and periphery that fail to acknowledge Latinx aesthetic and conceptual innovations and contributions to the development of art and art history. Above all, by coupling Latinx with the concept "to unsettle," we invite consideration of artists and works that refuse to settle for less. The artists in this collection make work grounded in justice, in community, and a commitment to making as action (praxis) that is infinitely creative and coalitional in its orientation.

We invite writers to submit a proposal for a short essay of no more than 1,500 words in length focused on just *one* of these artists and a limited selection (1-2) of their artworks to allow for depth of consideration and analysis. (We encourage writers to consider the works for which USLAF has already secured permission to reproduce which appear on each artist's profile on our website. These profiles are hyperlinked above.)

Proposals can be submitted via this [google form](#) and should identify the artist, the works for consideration, the intended approach, and how the analysis amplifies the concept of Latinx Unsettling: <https://forms.gle/Cj86BAWRhb2QFztk9>

We welcome writing in a variety of genres ranging from art historical analysis to ekphrastic (meaning a literary commentary on a visual work of art), or a conversation with the artist (pending their agreement). We envision a broad audience for this platform and the essays. Essays should include citations as appropriate and a short bibliography to guide readers to key sources.

The editorial process will include group workshopping on Zoom, one round of editor review, and one round of anonymous review from the "X as Intersection" Writing on Latinx Art" editorial team. Writers who are selected will receive an honorarium of **\$1000** and are expected to produce a draft 1,500-word essay **by July 1, 2024**.

Later this year, calls for two more collections will be announced:

- **Materiality of Memory** curated by Mary M. Thomas is anchored by the work of Christina Fernandez, Lucia Hierro, Carmelita Tropicana, Consuelo

Jimenez-Underwood, Vick Quezada, and Mario Ybarra Jr. This collection will invite essays that examine the resonances and tensions that emerge when memory, whether individual or collective, is made tangible. By examining works spanning mediums such as weaving, ceramics, performance, photography, sculpture, and installation, it becomes possible to observe how labor, process, migration, erasure, and history converge, revealing the generative and radical possibilities of the physical enactment of the ethereal.

- **Unmasking Coloniality** curated by Tatiana Flores will invite essays on Felipe Baeza, Diógenes Ballester, Sofía Gallisá Muriente, María Gaspar, Carlos Martiel, and Amalia Mesa-Bains. This collection will invite writers to consider how these artists render visible the coloniality of power. Through diverse media such as painting, installation, performance, and video, these six artists dismantle, mediate, divert, and unmask the colonial structures undergirding our contemporary world.

And in 2025 we will call for submissions for four more collections:

- **Praxis as Form** curated by Elizabeth Ferrer will showcase Candida Alvarez, Yolanda Lopez, Leslie Martinez, Raphael Montañez Ortiz, Delilah Montoya, Postcommodity, and Edra Soto. These artists and their oeuvres complicate conventional narratives within our field. Conceptually dense work, interdisciplinary projects involving media and approaches not typically associated with the visual arts, and even fields like abstraction and photography, have inadequate visibility within the current critical discourse. Through the study of these artists, this collection encourages an expansion of how Latinx art is interpreted and understood.
- **Colonial Racial Capitalism** curated by Kency Cornejo will invite essays on María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Carolina Caycedo, Verónica Gaona, Joiri Minaya, Jay Lynn Gomez, Guadalupe Maravilla, and Las Nietas de Nonó. Writers will be asked to consider artistic practices that link colonialism, racism, capitalism, and various extractive modes of occupation and resource control. Collectively, the selected artists reveal how dispossession functions not only through racialization, enslavement, extraction, criminalization, and incarceration of bodies, but equally through the exploitation and extractivism of land, environment, kinship, and Black/Indigenous/feminist epistemes. Making these connections exposes a regime of accumulation affecting Latinx communities that is both capitalist and settler-colonialist, and thus requires new ways of imagining and creating intersected social action
- **Diasporic (un)Tethering** curated by Karen Mary Davalos will investigate artists whose work engages connection and/or disconnection from a homeland that is recognized or is not recognized by the nation-state, and the ways artists explore dispersal and relationships to space and people. This collection encourages new questions and approaches to the analysis of diaspora, perceived homeland, or notions of home in works by Margarita Cabrera, Miguel Luciano, Rosemary

Meza-DesPlas, Maria Cristina “Tina” Tavera, Daisy Quezada Ureña, and Juana Valdés.

- **Sacred Futurities** curated by Josh T. Franco will feature Tanya Aguiñiga, Celia Alvarez Muñoz, Beatriz Cortez, Koyoltzintli, rafa esparza, and Michael Menchaca, inviting writers to explore how modernist art and art historical narratives in the twentieth century have often failed to take the sacred--the field of thought and making in which humans forge connection to the mystery of life--into account. In contrast, contemporary artists at the millennium and into the 21st century have embraced and employed the sacred in their work. This collection accounts for some of these artists and practices from across a diverse set of Latinx experiences.

To read about the overarching premise and contours of this digital publishing initiative please visit our [website](#)

The “X as Intersection: Writing on Latinx Art” editorial team is led by Adriana Zavala, USLAF Executive Director and Mary M. Thomas, USLAF Director of Programs.

Editorial Board Members:

Kency Cornejo is associate professor in the Department of Art at the University of New Mexico where she teaches Contemporary Latin American and Latinx Art Histories. Her teaching, research, and publications focus on contemporary art of Central America and its US-based diaspora, art and activism in Latin America, and decolonizing methodologies in art. Some of her publications on US/Central American art can be found in the *Journal of Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*; *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*; *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*; and *Art and Documentation*, among others. She is author of the book *Visual Disobedience: Art and Decoloniality in Central America*, forthcoming with Duke University Press (Oct. 2024), which analyses thirty years of art and decoloniality in the isthmus. Her work has been supported by the Fulbright and Ford foundations, an Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, a National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Award Grant, and a Mellon Foundation funded Crossing Latinidades Humanities Research Initiative Working Group Grant. She holds a PhD from Duke University, an MA from UT Austin, and BA from UCLA. Kency was born to Salvadoran immigrant parents and raised in Compton, California.

Karen Mary Davalos, professor of Chicano and Latino Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, is a leading scholar in Chicana/o/x art history, with four books, one anthology, numerous articles, and curatorial projects. Her 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 Chican@/x art in Los Angeles since 1963. In 2016, she has launched with Dr. Constance Cortez (UTRGV), the search tool, [Mexican American Art Since 1848](#), which compiles nearly 20,000 records from existing digital collections at libraries, archives, and museums, and it will add an

additional 20,000 records in the near future. She serves on the board of directors of Self Help Graphics & Art, the oldest Chicana/o/x – Latinx arts organization in Southern California. With Tatiana Reinoza, she edited *Self Help Graphics at Fifty: a cornerstone of Latinx art and collaborative artmaking* (University of California Press, 2023), the first anthology about this important arts organization.

Elizabeth Ferrer is a curator and writer specializing in Latinx art and photography. She recently retired from her position as Chief Curator at BRIC, a Brooklyn, NY arts organization in order to fully devote herself to projects involving Latinx art. She is author of *Latinx Photography in the United States: A Visual History* (University of Washington Press, 2021); *Lola Alvarez Bravo* (Aperture, NY); and of numerous exhibition catalogues published in the US and Mexico. Ferrer has curated exhibitions for such institutions as Aperture, En Foco, the Smithsonian Institution, Notre Dame University, El Museo del Barrio, the Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University, and the Americas Society in New York, where she was Gallery Director for several years. She is currently curating an exhibition with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, on the pioneering Chicano photographer Louis Carlos Bernal. Her book on the photographer will accompany the exhibition and will be published by Aperture. She has also begun work on the first broad survey exhibition of Chicano photography, to open in 2026 at the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture, Riverside, CA. Ferrer, who studied art history at Wellesley College and Columbia University, is from Los Angeles and is based in New York's Hudson Valley.

Tatiana Flores is the Jefferson Scholars Foundation Edgar F. Shannon Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia. A scholar of modern and contemporary Latin America, Caribbean, and Latinx art, she is the author of the award-winning monograph *Mexico's Revolutionary Avant-Gardes: From Estridentismo to ¡30-30!* (Yale University Press, 2013) and curator of the critically acclaimed exhibition *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago* (Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA, distributed by Duke University Press, 2017). Her most recent publication is the co-edited volume *The Routledge Companion to Decolonizing Art History* (2023). A former president of the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP), Flores is senior editor of *ASAP/Journal*. She authored the widely cited article "‘Latinidad Is Cancelled’: Confronting an Anti-Black Construct," published in *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* (2021).

Josh T Franco is Head of Collecting at the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art, leading the team that identifies, investigates, and acquires personal papers, institutional records and oral histories that tell the stories of American art. In addition to ensuring their preservation at the Smithsonian, he advises researchers working in the Archives, making them aware of materials relevant to their pursuits. Franco also advises early and mid-career artists on planning for the future of their personal papers. Previously, he served as Latino Collections Specialist at the Archives of American Art (2015 - 2017). Franco received his PhD in the history of art from Binghamton University, SUNY (2016).

Mary M. Thomas (she/her/ella) is the Director of Programs for the US Latinx Art Forum and an independent scholar. Her writing and curatorial projects explore how Latinx and Black artists enact emergent strategies of solidarity and spatial justice through improvisation and other modes of creative practice. Her publications include “Generative Networks and Local Circuits: Self Help Graphics and the Visual Politics of Solidarity,” in *Self Help Graphics at Fifty: A Cornerstone of Latinx Art and Collaborative Artmaking*, “Bricozaje: Between Contested Terrains and Aesthetic Borderlands” in *The Archives of American Art Journal*, “Reframing Public Art in the Borderlands” in *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, and “Within/Against: Circuits and Networks of African American Art in California” in *The Routledge Companion to African American Art History*. She earned her PhD in Visual Studies from UC Santa Cruz.

Adriana Zavala (she/her/ella) is a member of the faculty at Tufts University, with a joint appointment in the departments of History of Art and Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora Studies. Trained as a modernist with a specialization in Mexican post-revolutionary art, she pivoted toward Latinx art history in the mid-2000s at the request of Latinx students eager to see their communities represented in the art history curriculum at Tufts. She currently researches and writes exclusively on Latinx art including essays on Juana Valdés, Juan Sánchez, Amalia Mesa-Bains, and María Magdalena Campos-Pons, as well as on the state of the field of Latinx art history. In 2015, she collaborated with Rose G. Salseda, Josh T Franco, Sonja Gandert and Sam Romero to establish the US Latinx Art Forum, which emerged from the 2-part panel “Imagining a US Latin@ Art History” at the College Art Association annual conference.