

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Friday, September 1, 2017

## Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell

September 16, 2017–February 10, 2018



**(MONTEREY PARK, CA)** – As part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, The Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College presents *Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell*, the first comprehensive retrospective of American photographer Laura Aguilar, assembling more than one hundred thirty works produced over three decades.

Through photographs and videos that are frequently political as well as personal, and which traverse performative, feminist, and queer art genres, Aguilar offers candid portrayals of herself, her friends and family, and LGBT and Latinx communities. Aguilar's now iconic triptych, *Three Eagles Flying* (1990), set the stage for her future work by using her nude body as an overt and courageous rebellion against the colonization of Latinx identities – racial, gendered, cultural and sexual. Her practice intuitively evolved over time as she struggled to negotiate and navigate her ethnicity and sexuality, her challenges with depression and auditory dyslexia, and the acceptance of her large body.

This exhibition tells the story of the artist who for most of her life struggled to communicate with words yet ironically emerged as a powerful voice for numerous and diverse marginalized groups.

"This is a landmark exhibition for our institution," said Vincent Price Art Museum Director Pilar Tompkins Rivas. "Laura Aguilar's work is so important for its many intersections across queer, brown communities, and in relationship to feminist and Latinx scholarship. She is a highly intuitive and gifted photographer and we are honored to be able to present the first major survey of her work."

"This exhibition is also significant as it is the only solo exhibition of a Chicana artist organized by a museum for the Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA initiative," said exhibition curator Sybil Venegas.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from *Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell* include:

***Three Eagles Flying (1990)***: Often examined through the lens of self-portraiture and hybrid cultural identity, this triptych also operates as a powerful form of political image-text. The 'three eagles' within the photograph are implicit – the Spanish word for eagle, *águila*, denotes the artist's surname, while the national emblems of the United States and Mexico are also referenced. With head wrapped and body bound, Aguilar establishes her own figure as a forceful political symbol to be contended with.

***Plush Pony Series (1992)***: The Plush Pony was a working class, lesbian bar in El Sereno, a neighborhood east of downtown Los Angeles, where Aguilar met the women who form the core of this series. Like much of Aguilar's oeuvre, this work documents a piece of the American experience from the perspective of a photographer whose identified subjects are often invisible to the mainstream lens. As a photo essay, it captures a microcosm of the city's queer community of color in the early 1990s.

***Nude Self-Portraits (1996)***: This series was shot while on a road trip through New Mexico with friend and fellow photographer, Delilah Montoya. As an artist, Aguilar was moving towards a place of greater self-acceptance and was overtly and visually beginning to challenge her limiting beliefs of her own self image and self esteem. Portrayals of her body in nature, particularly set against the forms of rocks and stone, resonated powerfully with her and she began pursuing this artistic direction. Aguilar would later gain international recognition for these photographs, influencing her subsequent nude series, *Stillness (1999)*, *Motion (1999)*, *Center (2000)*, and *Grounded (2006)*.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Laura Aguilar (b.1959) is an American photographer born and raised in the San Gabriel Valley. She studied photography at East Los Angeles College and for more than thirty years she has shown her work extensively. Between 1993 and 2005, she was included in more than fifty exhibitions, showing in La Biennale di Venezia, Aperto 93, the Smithsonian Institution's International Gallery in Washington D.C., and the International Center of Photography in New York City.

## CATALOG

*Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell* is accompanied by a fully-illustrated, 195-page catalog co-produced by the Vincent Price Art Museum and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center in association with the University of Washington Press. Edited by Rebecca Epstein and designed by Bill Morosi, the catalog traces the development of Aguilar's work over three decades, exploring her photography in terms of its social and art historical contexts. Authors include Deborah Cullen, James Estrella, Amelia Jones, Stefanie Snider, Sybil Venegas, Mei Valenzuela, and Christopher Anthony Velasco, with forewords by Pilar Tompkins Rivas and Chon Noriega.

## **RELATED PROGRAMS**

### **OPENING RECEPTION**

Saturday, September 16, 2017  
5:00 – 7:00 pm

### **SHOW AND TELL: PANEL DISCUSSION + BOOK SIGNING**

Saturday, October 7, 2017  
1:00 – 3:00 pm

This in-depth discussion features *Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell* exhibition curator and art historian Sybil Venegas and contributing scholars Amelia Jones and Chon Noriega in dialogue with artist Laura Aguilar. Copies of the exhibition catalog will be available for purchase.

### **GENDERED AND QUEER SPACE + PLUSH PONY AFTER HOURS**

Saturday, November 4, 2017  
Panel Discussion: 3:00 – 5:00 pm  
Party: 5:00 – 8:00 pm

This two-part program centers on issues of gendered and queer space, including physical sites such as The Plush Pony bar, where artist Laura Aguilar created a series of the same name. A group discussion with artists and cultural producers organized in collaboration with Freewaves will be followed by an after hours party with DJ sets hosted by Guadalupe Rosales featuring Crasslos and Brown Amy.

### **CUERPOS UNIDOS: PERFORMANCES IN DIALOGUE WITH LAURA AGUILAR**

Saturday, January 13, 2017  
12:00 – 4:00 pm

This performance and social practice event features new commissions by artists who have named Laura Aguilar as a critical influence in their development and identification as Latinx artists and performers. Part of the RECAT Pacific Standard Time Festival, event participants include organizer Edgar Fabián Frías, with Irina Contreras, Cesia Dominguez, Cindy Vallejo, and Freddy Villalobos.

### **SHOW AND TELL: LAURA AGUILAR IN DIALOGUE WITH DELILAH MONTOYA**

Saturday, February 10, 2018  
1:00 – 3:00 pm

Join artists Laura Aguilar and Delilah Montoya in the galleries as they discuss their practices, the medium of photography, and the works on display in the exhibition. This special artist dialogue will be the final opportunity to view the exhibition.

### **ABOUT PACIFIC STANDARD TIME: LA/LA**

Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles taking place from September 2017 through January 2018. Led by the Getty, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a collaboration of arts institutions across Southern California.

Through a series of thematically linked exhibitions and programs, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA highlights different aspects of Latin American and Latino art from the ancient world to the present day. With topics such as luxury arts in the pre-Columbian Americas, 20th century Afro-Brazilian art, alternative spaces in Mexico City, and boundary-crossing practices of Latino artists, exhibitions range from monographic studies of individual artists to broad surveys that cut across numerous countries.

Initiated through \$14 million in grants from the Getty Foundation, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA involves more than 60 cultural institutions from Los Angeles to Palm Springs, and from San Diego to Santa Barbara. Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

### **ABOUT THE VINCENT PRICE ART MUSEUM**

The mission of the Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College is to serve as a unique educational resource for the diverse audiences of the college and the community through the exhibition, interpretation, collection, and preservation of works in all media of the visual arts. VPAM provides an environment to encounter a range of aesthetic expressions that illuminate the depth and diversity of artwork produced by people of the world, both contemporary and past. By presenting thoughtful, innovative and culturally diverse exhibitions and by organizing cross-disciplinary programs on issues of historical, social, and cultural relevance, VPAM seeks to promote knowledge, inspire creative thinking, and deepen an understanding of and appreciation for the visual arts.

### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Vincent Price Art Museum is free. Hours: Tuesday–Saturday 12:00pm–4:00pm, with extended hours on Thursday until 7:00pm. Closed Sundays and Mondays and national holidays. Vincent Price Art Museum, 1301 Avenida Cesar Chavez, Monterey Park, CA 91754–6099. Onsite parking \$2 in the structure located at Collegian Avenue and Floral Drive.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Vincent Price Art Museum  
vincentpriceartmuseum@elac.edu  
(323) 265–8841

### **WEBSITE**

vincentpriceartmuseum.org

## EXHIBITION CREDITS

*Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell* is organized by the Vincent Price Art Museum in collaboration with the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, and is guest curated by Sybil Venegas, Independent Art Historian and Curator and Professor Emerita of Chicana/o Studies at East Los Angeles College.



Presenting Sponsors



Major support is provided through grants from the Getty Foundation.



**The Getty Foundation**

This project is supported in part by grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

## The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



All exhibitions at the Vincent Price Art Museum are underwritten by the Vincent Price Art Museum Foundation and East Los Angeles College.

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## IMAGE CREDITS

**LEFT:** Laura Aguilar, *Three Eagles Flying*, 1990. Three gelatin silver prints. 24 x 20 inches each. Courtesy of the artist and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. © Laura Aguilar.

**CENTER:** Laura Aguilar, *Plush Pony #15*, 1992. Gelatin silver print. 14 x 11 inches. Courtesy of the artist and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. © Laura Aguilar.

**RIGHT:** Laura Aguilar, *Nature Self-Portrait #2*, 1996, Gelatin silver print, 16 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. © Laura Aguilar.