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Linda Vallejo: Brown Power Artist

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Aimee Santos / June 3, 2015

As an artist, one works towards the answer. The answer comes through process and the process yields a tangible artistic style which becomes clearer and clearer. The same can be said for Linda Vallejo's work. As one looks through her recent project 'Make 'Em All Mexican.' there is this underlying question of what it means to be Mexican.

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Vallejo isn't necessarily giving the viewer answers but opening their eyes to a possible solution. Vallejo says " If we can see ourselves positively and are less likely to consider how others view us, we can grow to move ahead." Viewers have walked up to her sculptures and felt something society has never allowed them to feel, that of acceptance. Vallejo repurposes porcelain sculptures and copies of iconic paintings found in antique stores like figures of George Washington, The Virgin Mary, the Mona Lisa and even a bust of Superman, to name a few, and painted them all Brown. Vallejo gives the viewer a new way of seeing themselves as heroes, leaders and even Saints. But Vallejo also opened up the dialogue about why, in Latino neighborhoods, the stores carry figures that look white?

'Make 'Em All Mexican' became the catalyst for the question that lead to her most current body of work '[The Brown Dot Project](#)' opening at [Salt Fine Art](#)'s 'Colectiva 2015' Exhibition in Laguna Beach from June 4 through September 3, 2015. Vallejo asked the question "Keepin' it brown, what would my work look like if I was a minimalist?"

Vallejo began working on paper and finally found the answer in translating demographic population data of Latinos living in Los Angeles County to create geometric patterns made up of thousands of brown dots. These images give the viewer a minimalist perspective of a larger socioeconomic issue. Vallejo is literally counting one Latino at

a time, brown dot by brown dot.

Vallejo says "The artistic process presents endless questions with an endless series of answers." One could compare these new works to the geometric Nazca Lines of Peru where the exact numerical value and perspective are imperative. Both have meaning, both go deeper on closer inspection and both are culturally significant and relevant.

To see more of Linda's work click any photo below or visit www.lindavallejo.com

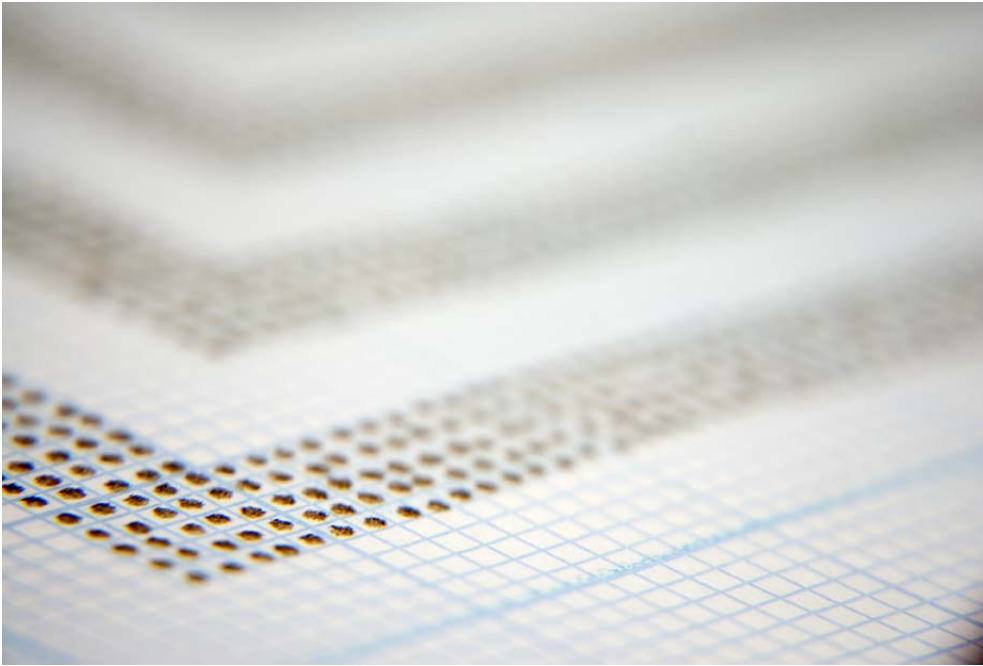
And check out her show at [Salt Fine Art](#) in Laguna Beach for 'The Brown Dot Project' opening reception this June 4 at 6pm-9pm.



Vallejo's work has always been about the details, yet now her work is so intricate every mark matters. Photo © Aimee Santos

"I encourage you as artists, teachers, professionals, parents, philosophers, poets in your own right to follow your own heart regardless of it's color, race, creed, age, gender. I encourage you to follow your dream, to be selfish about your dream and make your impact on the world and on the community that's meant for you to do. "

— Linda Vallejo during Artist's Talk: "Make 'Em All Mexican"



Every dot counts. Photo © Aimee Santos



Brown colored pencils line up next to Vallejo's 'canvas.' Vallejo has stripped away the visual layers and is using minimalistic elements for her current body of work. Photo © Aimee Santos



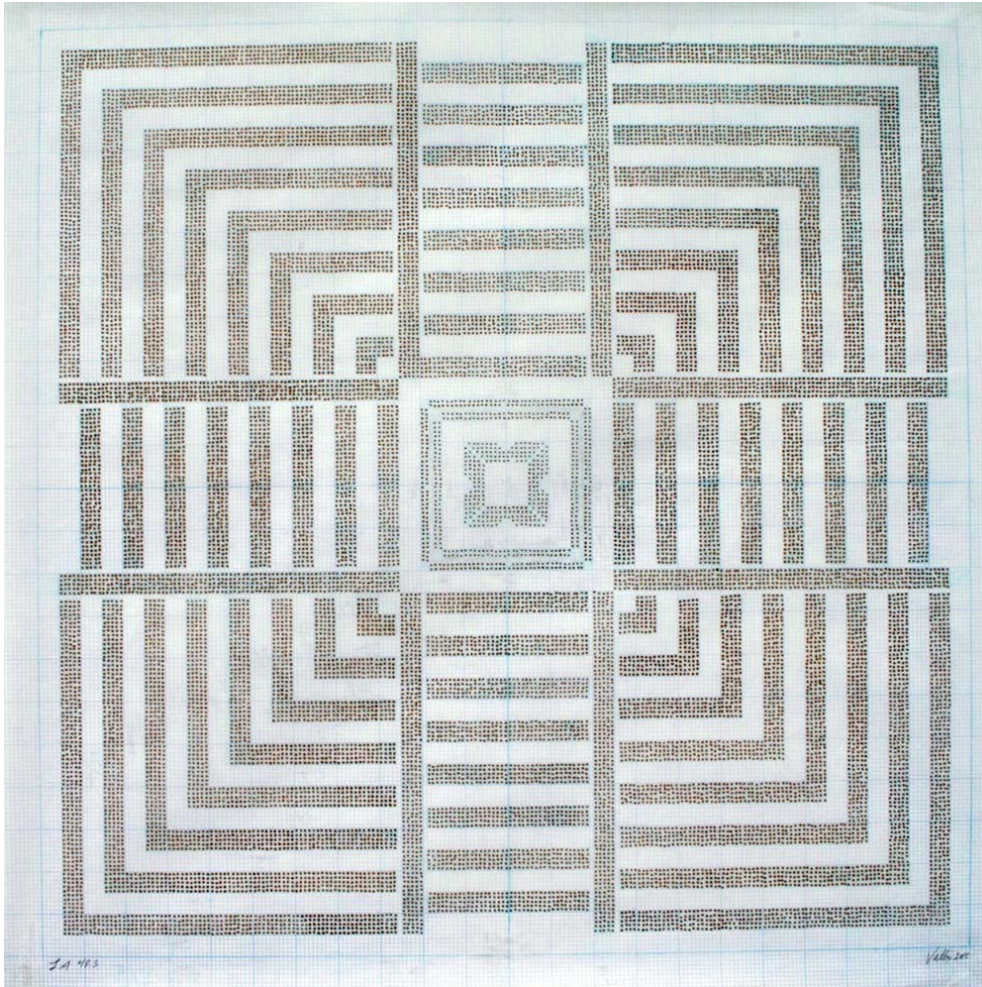
Vallejo sketches her pieces in blue pencil and after the dots have formed the shapes she envisioned she erases the pencil mark. Photo © Aimee Santos



The dots have a formula, one that Vallejo meticulously keeps track of with a calculator. Photo © Aimee Santos



At a distance one can see the geometric patterns the dots make and as one gets closer the amount of time and effort taken to create is more evident. Photo © Aimee Santos



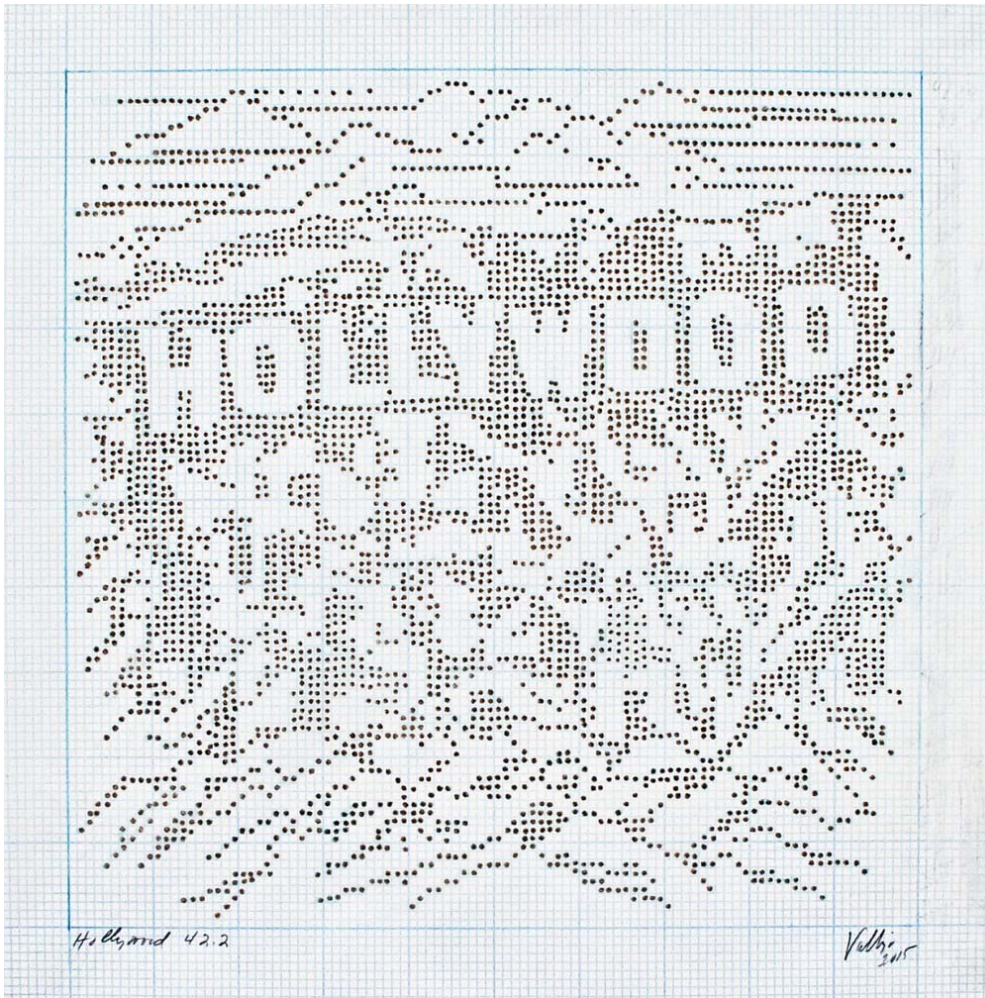
'LA 49.3%' of 'The Brown Dot Project' image courtesy of the artist Linda Vallejo.

“The question that led me to this new series was, ‘if I were a minimalist painter what would the work look like?’”

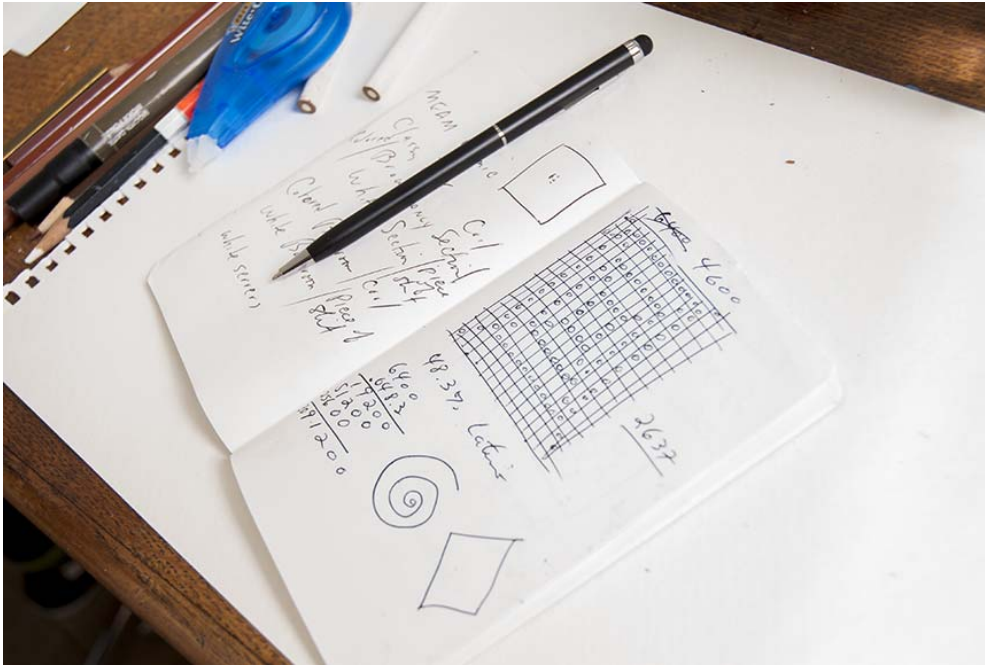
— Linda Vallejo



'ELA 96.7%' from 'The Brown Dot Project' Image courtesy of the artist Linda Vallejo.



'Hollywood 42.2' from 'The Brown Dot Project' image courtesy of the artist Linda Vallejo.



One of Vallejo's notebooks shows the preplanning detail that goes into each piece. Photo © Aimee Santos



A figure of a sasquatch lays on its side because it creeps Vallejo out and a binder full of DVD movies that keep her entertained in her studio as she works. Photo © Aimee Santos



Small test pieces lay the ground work for Vallejo's next potential work, Mexican faces on Japanese paper painted with 'Burnt Sienna' Gouache.



Burnt Sienna is the color that Vallejo has found does not offend Mexicans. Photo © Aimee

Santos



Suddenly instead of brown dots Vallejo felt inspired to work on another piece she had been thinking about that involved Japanese paper and Gouache paints to create elements of the Mexican face. Photo © Aimee Santos

“The issues and concerns are the same in large and small cities. How we see ourselves and how others see us. How we judge ourselves, our capacity and ability and how others judge us. Color and class issues are everywhere.”

— Linda Vallejo



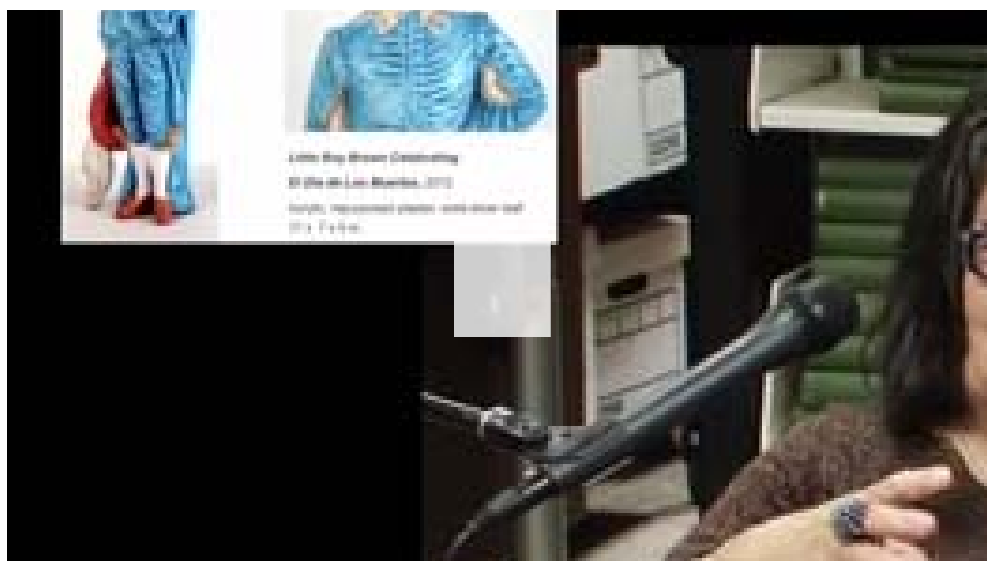
A broken piece of painted ceramic sculpture that had been painted brown was lying around Vallejo's studio yet to be used.

Photo © Aimee Santos



A test palette with q-tips and gouache paint lay out on a table. Photo © Aimee Santos

After moving her pieces from one storage facility to another Vallejo decided there were some pieces she no longer wanted to keep so she destroyed them in her backyard. Photo © Aimee Santos



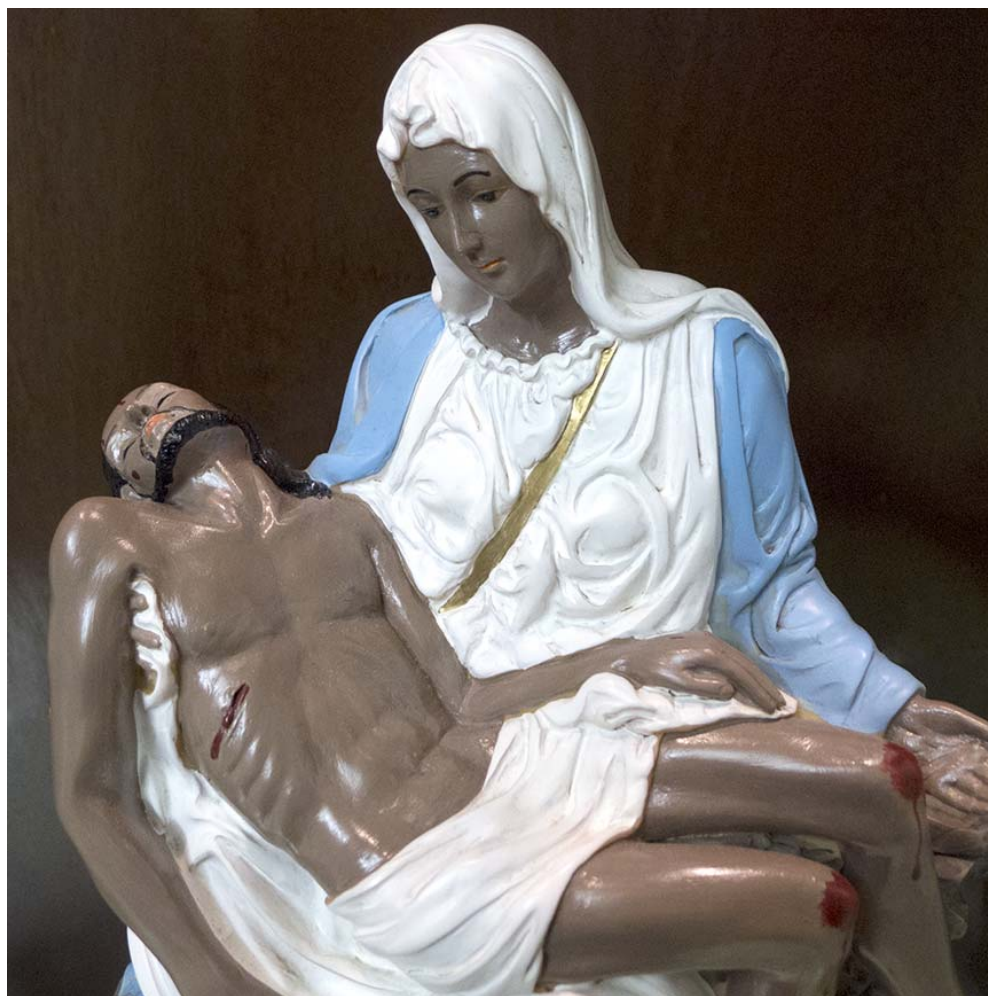
Wednesday, January 21, 2015 Meet the artist and creator of the exhibit "Make 'Em All Mexican: Works by Linda Vallejo." This exhibition at the Chicano Studies Research Center Library features works from Vallejo's acclaimed Make 'Em All Mexican series, plus excerpts from critical essays, publications that feature the series, and objects from the CSRC's portfolio on the artist in its collections.



Surrounding Vallejo as she works on her newest project sit pieces of her last project 'Make Em All Mexican' in which she painted traditional porcelain figures brown. In a way this project has merely evolved into the dots. Brown is still important. Photo © Aimee Santos

Born in Boyle Heights, a culturally rich neighborhood of Los Angeles, Vallejo has lived and traveled throughout the world. As a professional grant writer Vallejo

also teaches the art to anyone interested in learning. Vallejo says about her Grant Writing work 'You know art doesn't make money it spends money. You have to have money coming from somewhere to be able to buy supplies.' In fact it was her profession that allowed her to visit Galleries and Museums all over the United States that gave her inspiration for 'Make 'Em All Mexican' after noticing artists utilizing repurposed art and later realizing why can't they be brown.



'La Pieta' from 'Make 'Em All Mexican' project by Linda Vallejo. Photo © Aimee Santos



'El Andy' from 'Make 'Em All Mexican' project by Linda Vallejo. Photo © Aimee Santos



'Make 'Em All Mexican' pieces wait on the counter to be placed inside Vallejo's home while she works on her new body of work. Photo © Aimee Santos

In Painting, Paper, Sculpture

Tags Latina, Female Artist, Brown Power Artist, Make 'Em All Mexican, The Brown Dot Project, Salt Fine Art Gallery, Los Angeles, Sculpture, Painting

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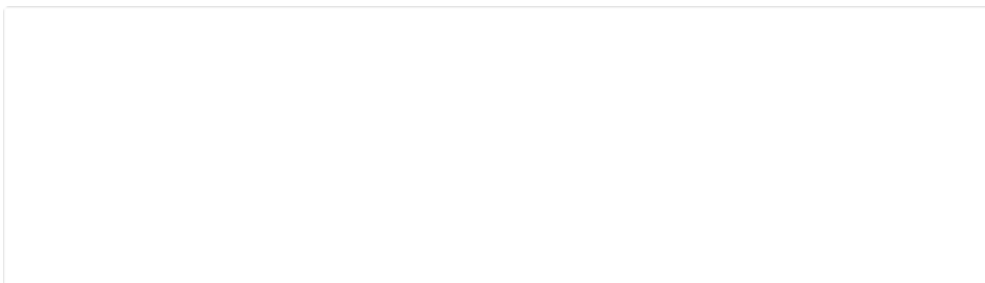
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Linda Vallejo 2 months ago

Thank you for your support, Aimee! All my very best, Linda

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