



- About
- Research
- Library
- Publications
- Events

## UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Media Release

### For Immediate Use

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## New DVD Surveys Four Decades of Work by Pioneer Avant-Garde Filmmaker Willie Varela

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The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press announces the release of *Video Art by Willie Varela*, the first DVD compilation of works by the pioneer avant-garde filmmaker in El Paso. This double-disc contains over six hours of material from 1974-2004, including short-format work in super-8 and video, plus an introspective feature-length film set during Varela's brief residence in San Francisco. The short-format work spans four distinct aspects of Varela's personal approach to filmmaking:

- eye/light, inspired by Stan Brakhage's experiments in sculpting light, foregrounds the act of seeing;
- visual politics explores the role of the artist in a media-saturated political culture;
- ambient spaces, inspired by Brian Eno, constructs a spatial and aural attention to place; and
- recuerdos (memories) documents the everyday as well as Varela's avant-garde peers (James Broughton and Stan Brakhage).

The CSRC Press worked closely with Varela to produce this original collection and is archiving his films and videos.

"Willie Varela is one of the most productive and stylistically wide-ranging Chicano filmmakers, and yet his work remains largely unknown outside of museums," says CSRC director Chon Noriega. "We are tremendously pleased to be able to bring his works to the public in this way, and to

celebrate his unique form of personal and visionary filmmaking.”

Varela’s videos emphasize the act of looking over storytelling, placing an emphasis on the relationship of the camera to his body, home environment, or nature. He stresses rhythm and repetition over linear development and direct associations, producing a cinema that functions as a crossroads—much as his native El Paso does—where personal, domestic, local, and national discourses meet.

Varela’s films have been screened at venues around the country, including the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Cinematheque, and the Guggenheim Museum. He was the subject of a retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and his video pieces were included in the 1993 and 1995 Whitney Biennials. Varela lives and works in El Paso, Texas.

*Willie Varela will be making guest appearances in Los Angeles in February 2014. To request an interview, please contact Rebecca Epstein, CSRC Communications, at [repstein@chicano.ucla.edu](mailto:repstein@chicano.ucla.edu) or (310) 206-9185.*

**Review copies:** *Video Art by Willie Varela* is distributed by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. For a review copy, please contact the CSRC Press at [support@chicano.ucla.edu](mailto:support@chicano.ucla.edu) or (310) 825-3428.

**About the Chicano Cinema and Media Art series:** The Chicano Cinema and Media Art series showcases important and rare Chicano films and videos. Included in the collection are feature-length films and artists’ videos. Many of these works have been restored and the originals archived in the CSRC Library’s special collections.

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**The CSRC Press** was founded in 1969 to provide a voice for young Chicana/o academics who could not find mainstream publishers. The Press’s contribution to academic scholarship continues to grow as Chicana/o and Latina/o studies develop in new directions.

**The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center** was established in 1969, integrating multidisciplinary research projects with an active library and archive, academic press, public programs, and community partnerships. Current research areas include archival preservation, public health, educational access, economic security, media impact, and arts and culture.

To learn more about the CSRC, visit [our website](#), [Wikipedia page](#), [Facebook](#) or [email us](#).