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Photos: A Retrospective Of Chicano Artist Ricardo Valverde

[Carman Tse](#) in [Arts & Entertainment](#) on May 17, 2014 12:05 pm



Untitled, 1971/1990 (from the Esperanza Valverde and Christopher J. Valverde Collection)(Pictures courtesy of the Vincent Price Art Museum)



A retrospective showcasing the work of Los Angeles-based Chicano artist Ricardo Valverde, whose work was an artistic voice in the Chicano community, opens today at the [Vincent Price Art Museum](#) at East Los Angeles College. The late artist's work spanned twenty five years of documenting the world that he was most familiar with, namely that of his friends and family and the larger Mexican-American community of East Los Angeles.

Valverde moved to Los Angeles from Phoenix, Arizona at a young age and later attended UCLA from which he graduated with a BA and MFA in the mid-70s. His photographic work in the 70s and 80s served as a counternarrative to both the romanticization and fear mongering his community was, and remains, subject to. Instead of documenting tumultuous events such as the Watts Riots that were the only exposure these communities were ever afford, he turned his camera to slices of inner-city life including Day of the Dead celebrations and low riders.

Later in his career and shortly before his untimely death in 1998, Valverde began experimenting with mixed media and even revisited some of his earlier works. He would alter his older prints, with expressionistic touches that ranged from mere flourishes here and there to near-obliteration. He turned his own work on its head, transforming his portraits of the intimate and familiar into something dramatically different.

Ricardo Valverde: Experimental Sights, 1971-1996 showcases not just the photographic prints that became the hallmarks of his body of work, but also videos, slide projections, and even sculptures that not only were a document of but also an expressive outlet of the Chicano community of Los Angeles. The exhibit runs until July 26th, with its opening reception today at 4 p.m. The museum and exhibit are both free to the public.