



For immediate release

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**‘On the Side of Angels: Latina Lesbian Activism’ opens at the
Vincent Price Art Museum**

Presented by Latina Futures 2050 Lab at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, the new installation captures social justice movements from the 1980s to the late 2000s. The exhibition runs June 21- August 30, 2025

June 5, 2025 (Los Angeles, CA) — A new exhibition showcasing archival collections of prominent Latina lesbians and narrating their involvement in LGBTQ+, immigrant, labor, and housing justice movements, will be presented at the [Vincent Price Art Museum](#) (VPAM) at East Los Angeles College (ELAC).

Opening June 21, 2025, *On the Side of Angels: Latina Lesbian Activism*, is a collaboration between VPAM and Latina Futures 2050 Lab, an initiative spearheaded by the [UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center](#) (CSRC). The exhibition features original material from the [CSRC Library](#) archives, highlighting movements from the 1980s through the late 2000s.

The exhibition runs June 21- Aug. 30 and features photography, posters, magazines, and video footage from the collections of policy and civil rights advocate **Laura Esquivel**, tenant rights attorney **Elena Popp**, and archivist, herstorian, and former CSRC librarian **Yolanda Retter Vargas**. While the materials on view primarily reflect Los Angeles-based activism, they also reveal how local organizing was often in active dialogue with broader national and transnational movements.

The exhibition’s title pays homage to Retter Vargas’s dissertation, *On the Side of Angels: Lesbian Activism in Los Angeles, 1970-1990*, completed at the University of New Mexico in 1999. Retter Vargas was an instrumental figure in diversifying archival collections across Los Angeles. During her tenure at the CSRC, she notably expanded the archives to include the papers of Esquivel and Popp, who were associated with social action entities such as Connexus/Centro

de Mujeres and Lesbianas Unidas (LU), an organization that emerged from Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU). Collectively, this exhibition showcases the complexity of Latina lesbian activism during this period and highlights the critical role of women in advocating for social justice and the broader acceptance of LGBTQ+ communities.

[Veronica Terriquez](#), director of the CSRC and cofounder of Latina Futures, said the exhibition is an opportunity for museum visitors to witness first-hand the pivotal contributions and understand the immense passion these women had in their pursuit of equal rights.

“We are incredibly proud of this exhibition because it features women who championed immigrant rights, safer working conditions, and broader acceptance of LGBTQ and other marginalized communities — efforts that have paved the way for cross-movement solidarity in Los Angeles and beyond,” Terriquez said. “We are grateful to our cocurators and our partners at VPAM for allowing residents to access in greater depth an important part of our history.”

“We are thrilled to once again partner with the CSRC to showcase its archival collections at the Vincent Price Art Museum,” said **Gloria Ortega**, VPAM curatorial assistant. “This exhibition examines a complex and often under-recognized history of Los Angeles, and we are excited to share it with our students and community.”

Cocurators for this project are **Vanessa Esperanza Quintero** and **Jocelyne Sánchez**.

“In researching the archival collections of Latina lesbians for this exhibition, we learned of the wide range of issues affecting Latina lesbian communities and the tactics used to vehemently protect them,” the cocurators said. “In many ways, the collaboration between the Vincent Price Art Museum and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center is an application of the lessons Latina lesbian activism teaches.”

The exhibition draws from the robust archives at the [CSRC Library](#), established in 1969. It currently holds over 648 archival and manuscript collections and is among the most important national and international research collections on the Latinx experience. [Archival research visits are available by appointment only.](#)

On the Side of Angels: Latina Lesbian Activism

When: Opening reception: Saturday, June 21, 4 – 6 p.m. Exhibition runs June 21-Aug.30. Free and open to the public.

Where: Vincent Price Art Museum, 1301 Avenida César Chávez in Monterey Park, CA.
Museum hours: Tuesday – Friday, noon – 4 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. – 5p.m.

Website: vincentpriceartmuseum.org

Latina Futures 2050 Lab, a research initiative spearheaded by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC), was created in 2022 in collaboration with the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute (LPPI). Funded by a \$15 million California state budget allocation, *Latina Futures* seeks to increase knowledge and insight through applied policy research on the contours of the economic, political, and social lives of Latinas living in the United States over the next several decades. Follow *Latina Futures* on [Instagram](#).

The ***UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center*** (CSRC), founded in 1969, is an established leader in the development of scholarly research on the Chicano-Latino population in the United States. For more information, visit www.chicano.ucla.edu. Follow CSRC on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Vincent Price Art Museum

The Vincent Price Art Museum (VPAM) at East Los Angeles College serves 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. Learn more about VPAM at vincentpriceartmuseum.org.

Follow VPAM on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

About East Los Angeles College

East Los Angeles College (ELAC) is the largest of nine two-year community colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). More information about ELAC is available online at www.elac.edu. Follow ELAC on social media at Facebook [@EastLACollege](#), X/Twitter [@EastLACollege](#), and Instagram [@ELACHuskies](#).