



UCR ARTS: Christina Fernandez's photo exhibition captures life

This is Fernandez's first major solo museum show. The images reflect on various social issues and explores her Mexican American identity



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For photographer Christina Fernandez, nothing is ordinary.

An abandoned couch on a grassy knoll, people washing clothes at public laundromats in the middle of the night, or seemingly abandoned buildings in downtown Los Angeles, can all appear mundane. But a closer look through her camera's lens uncovers a world full of life.

Fernandez's images capture narratives surrounding the day-to-day of Latinos in east Los Angeles neighborhoods. These photos are now on display at UC Riverside's California Museum of Photography, part of [UCR ARTS](#) in downtown Los Angeles. Fernandez is part of the traveling exhibition "[Christina Fernandez: Multiple Exposures](#)," the museum will host a public reception on Saturday, Oct. 1 from 6-9 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

This is Fernandez's first major solo museum show. The exhibition — available in English and Spanish — includes more than 60 photographs that showcase 30 years of work.




Joanna Szupinska, senior curator at UCR ARTS, walking through the exhibition while it was being installed at the California Museum of Photography on Wednesday, September 7, 2022. (UCR/Sandra Baltazar Martínez)

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Through her images, Fernandez, an LA-based photographer, highlights social issues and disparities surrounding poverty, immigration, and labor. The photos also explore her Mexican American identity. One of the photo projects on display is partially influenced by Italian photographer Tina Modotti, Mexican photojournalist Nacho López, and Mexican cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa Mateos.

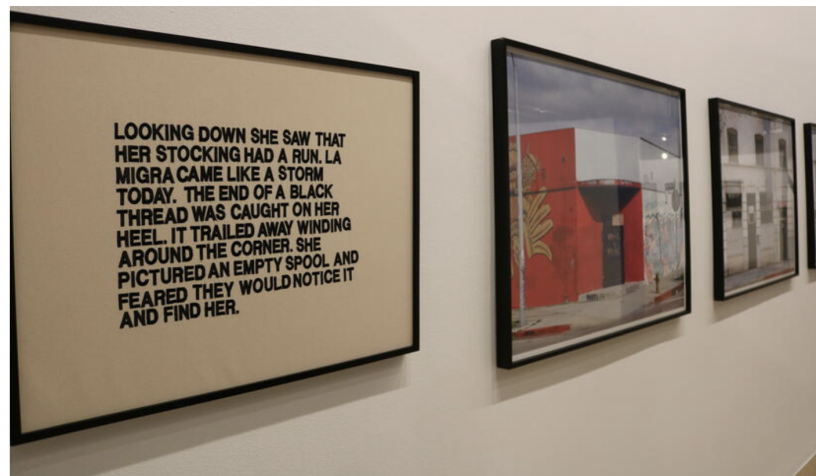
“We are honored that this renowned photographer has agreed to share her work with our community,” said Joanna Szupinska, senior curator at UCR ARTS and curator of this exhibition and [accompanying publication](#) .

One of the photos series, “Manuela S-T-I-T-C-H-E-D” speaks to the workers in LA’s garment district. The images show no faces, just buildings that appear empty. But handwritten cardboard signs taped to windows indicate otherwise, seeking someone who can operate a “cover stich” sewing machine, or a worker “*para planchar*,” to iron.



Close-up of one of the photos in the series, “Manuela S-T-I-T-C-H-E-D” by Christina Fernandez. (UCR/Sandra Baltazar Martínez)

Throughout the exhibition visitors get to examine personal pieces, too. One shows Fernandez herself, posing in the early 20th century attire her grandmother would have worn while living in rural Michoacán, Mexico. The photo series shifts in dress styles as her grandmother’s journey to Colorado and California progresses. Another is “Sisyphean Act,” a triptych — three-paneled image — of Fernandez with her young son going up and down a long set of stairs in El Sereno, an LA neighborhood. One set of photos show Fernandez carrying her son on her back; in another panel they walk together, with Fernandez holding his hand.



“Manuela S-T-I-T-C-H-E-D” is a series featured in “Christina Fernandez: Multiple Exposures.” (UCR/Sandra Baltazar Martínez)

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Next door, the Culver Center of the Arts greets visitors into the atrium with a massive sign announcing a related exhibition, “Tierra Entre Medio.” Curated by Fernandez and Szupinska, this space features new work by Fernandez with three emerging artists: Arlene Mejorado, Lizette Olivas, and Aydinaneth Ortiz. These include photographs made in San Bernardino, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Guadalajara, Mexico. One photo series poignantly addresses mental health using exterior shots of California’s mental hospitals. Another series features a child’s happy memories in San Bernardino.

“For Christina, mentorship and giving back to the community are very important. She supports emerging photographers by sharing her platform,” Szupinska said. “Since the very beginning of our conversations, this was an important point she brought up. It’s important to remember that no artist is working in a vacuum: mentors, peers, and students can all have an effect on an artist’s practice. So in addition to the traveling survey exhibition of Christina’s work, we decided to organize this group show featuring Latinx women photographers.”



Joanna Szupinska, senior curator at UCR ARTS, works on a vitrine display of the “Christina Fernandez: Multiple Exposure” exhibition on Wednesday, September 7, 2022. (UCR/Sandra Baltazar Martínez)

“Tierra Entre Medio” is Spanish for earth in between. The artists speak to the diversity of Latinx communities and “beyond demonstrating the socio-cultural and physical nuances of landscapes between the border and inland Southern California, these works provide a framework through which to consider how environments shape the perspectives and experiences of working class, migrant, and diasporic communities,” wrote April Baca, UCR ARTS curatorial assistant.

“Christina Fernandez: Multiple Exposures” will be on display through February 5, 2023 at UCR Arts’s California Museum of Photography. The exhibition is then scheduled to travel nationally. “Tierra Entre Medio” will be on view through April 2, 2023 at UCR ARTS’s Culver Center of the Arts.

The five-month exhibition at UCR Arts is made possible by various grants and community sponsors. [The accompanying publication, “Christina Fernandez: Multiple Exposures,”](#) is co-published by UCR ARTS and UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. Contributors include Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Julian Myers, Chon A. Noriega, Sally Stein, Joanna Szupinska, Roberto Tejada, and Susanna V. Temkin.

Visit UCR ARTS

UCR Arts is located 3824 & 3834 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501

Saturday, Dec. 3: [Fernandez will host an artist-led tour at 11 a.m.](#) This is a free event and open to the public. Ticket reservations are highly recommended. The exhibition is presented concurrently with the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College in Claremont; on Dec. 3 Fernandez will also lead a tour at 2 p.m. at the Benton.

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Every Sunday at 2 p.m. and every first Thursday of the month: [Public tours](#) led by UCR Gluck Fellows are available. Groups of 10 or more people must schedule a private tour.

UCR ARTS hours

Monday-Wednesday: Closed

Thursday: Noon to 5 p.m. (open until 9 p.m. on First Thursdays)

Friday: Noon to 5 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Christina Fernandez, "Lavanderia #1," 2002, from the series Lavanderia. Photo courtesy of the artist and Gallery Luisotti, Los Angeles.

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