

home • artnews • news

The Year in Latinx Art: Continued Museum and Biennial Support Bolstered by New Market Interest

BY **MAXIMILIANO DURÓN**

December 31, 2024 5:30am



Karla Ekaterine Canseco, *Neobiota*, 2024.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND MURMURS

This year has been filled with a continued growth for the visibility of Latinx art in the US and abroad. While, as in years past, there was continued growth in New York and Los Angeles, this year saw new developments in other US cities with sizable Latinx populations and

important institutions like Boston, Dallas, and Philadelphia. Those are far from the only locations with showings for Latinx art. Venice, Italy; Palm Springs, California; and Buffalo, New York, also had outings for Latinx artists.

The lion's share of representation for Latinx artists this year came via institutional support, both in museums, where Latinx artists were given in-depth surveys in mid-career and after death, and on the biennial circuit, where artists were especially prone to experiment in their practices and push them forward. A welcome change came on the market front, where one blue-chip gallery gave a group of Latinx artists a major showcase. While there's still much more work to be done to ensure that Latinx artists are given their deserved places in the art historical canon, 2024 saw an even greater push toward that end goal.

Below, a look at my highlights for Latinx art from 2024.

In Museums and Alternative Spaces



Ryan Preciado, *Sandoval stools*, 2024, installation view.

Photo : Maximiliano Durón/ARTnews



Latinx artists featured in several museum group shows as well as solo shows surveying their artistic output, showing that institutions across the country increasingly continue to embrace the work of Latinx artists.

A trio of mid-career artists had high-profile outings this year. The Institute of Contemporary Art Boston mounted a stunning exhibition for Firelei Báez, looking at the breadth of her practice, from mesmerizing paintings to immersive installations. At the Dallas Contemporary, Patrick Martinez presented recent works alongside ones made specifically for

the show, like his seven-part cityscape, *Fleeting Bougainvillea Landscape*, that takes his singular use of materials—a combination of neon lights with stucco and acrylic paint which represent the worn atmosphere of LA—to new heights. In Central Park, Edra Soto installed one of her well-known “Graft” sculptures as part of a Public Art Fund commission; on view through August 2025, the sculpture has already been activated by important programming, like two episodes of Domino Table Talks, a playful gathering–cum–oral history project that is part of the Clemente Center’s “Historias” initiative.

Further afield, **Ryan Preciado** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/ryan-preciado-artist-profile-1234716245/>), one of the standout artists from the last edition of the Hammer Museum’s Made in L.A. biennial, offered a moving portrait to Manuel Sandoval, a nearly forgotten 20th-century Nicaraguan American carpenter who created several furniture sets for iconic architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and R.M. Schindler. In a touching tribute, Preciado re-created several of Sandoval’s lost designs and paired his work with that of Sandoval’s, blurring the boundaries of authorship, as well as the lines between fine art and design. *noé olivas*, a cofounder of the Crenshaw Dairy Mart, had a powerful solo show at the independent art space. Titled “Gilded Dreams,” the show explored issues of labor as it relates to Mexican American communities on this side of the border—the perils that come with arriving here and the broken promises of the so-called American Dream that never seem to manifest as one thought they would.

Three thematic museum exhibitions in which Latinx artists stole the show stand out. The first, “On the Edge” at the Laguna Art Museum, showcased the collection of **Joan Agajanian Quinn** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/joan-agajanian-quinn-collector-profile-1234720409/>) and her late husband Jack Quinn. The Quinns have been a centrifugal force of the LA art scene for decades, their Beverly Hills homes serving as a salon that saw the likes of Warhol, Hockney, Ruscha, and more spend countless evenings there. The Quinns were also major collectors of work by artists of color in an era where most Westside collectors wouldn’t deign to do so. Among those they have collected include Carlos Almaraz, Elsa Flores Almaraz, Joey Terrill, John Valadez, and Yolanda Gonzalez, who created a new portrait of Joan in the museum’s galleries. In giving their works pride of place in the exhibition, the museum and Quinn show just how important Latinx artists have been and continue to be to LA’s art scene.



Installation view of “Where I Learned to Look: Art from the Yard,” 2024, at ICA Philadelphia.
PHOTO: CONSTANCE MENSCH

By contrast, “[Where I Learned to Look: Art from the Yard](https://www.artnews.com/art-news/reviews/yard-art-where-i-learned-to-look-ica-philadelphia-review-1234718236/)” at the ICA Philadelphia, curated by Josh T. Franco, takes two of Chicano art’s founding aesthetic analyses—*rasquachismo* and *domesticana*—and places them in the wider context of Yard Art. For me, this is a natural development and speaks to a wider embrace of Latinx art. While the focus here isn’t necessarily on Latinx artists, the show is grounded in Franco’s experience as a Chicano artist and art historian from West Texas. In the opening wall text, Franco writes that the yard art of his late grandfather, Hipolito “Polé” Hernandez, was the “unexpected training grounds for my earliest exercises in close observation ... My grandfather’s yard is where I learned to look.” Franco opens the show with one of his own mixed-media works that includes a video that introduces the concepts of *rasquachismo* and *domesticana*. In front of the video is a re-created yard altar from the Sanchez family—neighbors to Donald Judd in Marfa, Texas. Elsewhere in the show, we see Hernandez’s work, a small painting of a yard by the underknown Chicano artist Jose Esquivel, and Rubén Ortiz Torres’s advertisement-cum-video work of a souped-up lawnmower not far from pieces by Beverly Buchanan, John Outterbridge, and Noah Purifoy.

The big fall show at Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles is dedicated to the photorealist movement. Instead of producing an expected exhibition on a popular, late 20th-century -ism, curator Anna Katz turn the movements on its head. Its most famous proponents, like Robert Bechtle, Vija Celmins, Duane Hanson, and Chuck Close, are present but the curators have cast a wider net. Katz gives the spotlight to artists like Jesse Treviño, John Valadez, Shizu Saldamando, Sayre Gomez, and Vincent Valdez who have previously not been as closely associated with the movement. It’s a sharp curatorial thesis that is supported by excellent work.

In the Galleries



Installation view of "At the Edge of the Sun," 2024, at Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles.

Photo : Photo Joshua White/Courtesy the artists and Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles

For this year's edition of Frieze LA, dealer Jeffrey Deitch's exhibition, "At the Edge of the Sun," handed over his LA space to 12 Latinx artists, including rafa esparza, Guadalupe Rosales, Mario Ayala, and Shizu Saldamando. In allowing the artists to curate an exhibition of their own work, Deitch allowed this closely watched cohort of artists to present their art on their terms. (The show won **Best Gallery Group Show** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/at-the-edge-of-the-sun-jeffrey-deitch-artnews-awards-2024-best-gallery-group-show-1234725133/>) for the inaugural ARTnews Awards, for which I sat on the jury.) In a moment where Latinx artists have received increasing institutional support over the past few years, the Deitch show provides a necessary next step in Latinx artists receiving blue-chip market support, which has been a missing key element.

One of the younger artists featured in "At the Edge of the Sun," Karla Ekaterine Canseco had

a concurrent solo show at Murmurs. I haven't been able to get the show out of my head since I saw it. I'm still not quite sure what to make of the all-black sculptures made of various cobbled together found objects that filled the gallery—many of them seemingly canine-like that are equal parts charming and menacing. One standout featured a headless, humanoid figure in a pool of thick black motor oil. I'm excited to see where her career goes.

In both LA and New York, a select number of galleries have embraced Latinx artists over the past few years. David Kordansky began **representing Raul Guerrero** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/raul-guerrero-joins-david-kordansky-1234595855/>) in 2021, mounting a solo show for the artist in LA that year, and this year, the gallery its first New York solo show for the artist (his first in New York since 2018). Continuing his decades-long humorous exploration of the history of the Americas, this suite of new paintings looked at the beginning of the Spanish conquest on the continent. At P.P.O.W, **Jay Lynn Gomez** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/jay-lynn-gomez-ppow-exhibition-1234707862/>) also had her first New York solo since 2018, presenting a moving series of works that document her transition and the journey of figuring out how to navigate the world from the lens of Jay Lynn.



Joey Terrill, *50 Christs*, 2023.

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND MARC SELWYN FINE ART

Two exhibitions this year also revealed new sides of artists' oeuvre, both explorations using the earth: Gisela Colón (at Efraín López) and **Frank Romero** (at **Ruiz-Healy Art**). Colón is better known for her meticulously fabricated and polished sculptures that are studies in light and color, while Romero is best known as a founding member of the Chicano collective Los Four and for dynamic paintings of cars. Romero's earth works, the "Adobe Series," date back to 1995, while Colón's are a recent turn for the artist. But the strength in these two shows comes from the respective gallery's smart move to give these artists the space to highlight artistic inquiries that might not always be popular with collectors, who often like buying the work that artists are best known for.

Finally, one of the year's most impactful gallery shows came via Joey Terrill at Marc Selwyn Fine Art in Beverly Hills. The exhibition presented several of Terrill's "Still Life" works,

which he started creating in 1997, the year after he first tested undetectable due to his antiretroviral treatment. The works, in many ways, have come to serve as a timeline to how HIV treatment has evolved in that timeframe, with many treatments simplifying to just one daily pill. The most poignant of the new works on view was *50 Christs* (2023), a large-scale, Warhol-esque close-up of a scene showing Christ at his burial. Terrill chose the number 50 because he has said that he stopped counting the number of friends he lost to AIDS after the toll hit 50 at some point in the '80s. The sheer amount of death that surrounded him became too overwhelming. On the work's right-hand side, he painted a thick strip of black to represent the unknown total number of people he knew who died.

Around PST ART



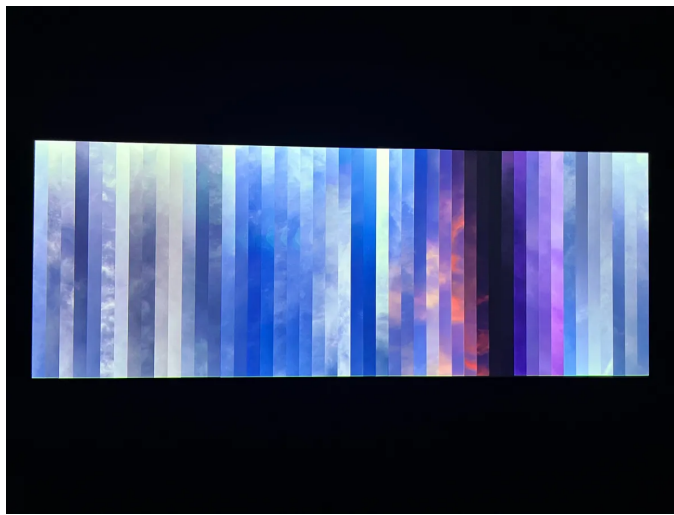
Maru García, *Boiling Rock 3*, 2024, installation view.

Photo : Maximiliano Durón/ARTnews

The last edition of the Getty Foundation's PST ART (née Pacific Standard Time), in 2017, took the title "LA/LA," with a focus on LA's connection to Latin America. Several of the exhibitions in the sprawling initiative looked at the city's Latinx artists; for many, myself included, those were the highlights of that iteration of PST. This year's PST, which officially opened across Southern California at some 60 venues in September, looked at the connections between art and science. While Latinx artists were certainly represented across the program, few of the major institutional shows focused on how US-based Latinx artists approach various strains of the scientific in their practices.

That's what made the exhibition, "Sinks: Places We Call Home," all the more special. Of the dozen or shows I made it to, it was by far the strongest in its approach to embracing science as a way to not only create powerful art but also to try to effect change. Organized by Self-Help Graphics, an epicenter for Chicana and Latinx creative production in LA, and presented at Cal State LA's Luckman Gallery, the exhibition looked at how two LA-based artists, Beatriz Jaramillo and Maru García, have used their art to call attention to sinks, "or places where pollution can be deposited. Sinks typically are land, air, or water, but racially devalued bodies can also function as sinks," as defined by Laura Pulido, a professor of ethnic studies and geography. (It's worth noting that LA is home to the largest urban oil field in the country, with many oil wells dotting residential neighborhoods, typically those home to communities of color.)

The exhibition focused specifically on two communities in LA not far from Self-Help—the Exide Battery plant in Vernon and the former Athens Tank Farm (Exxon/Mobil Oil Corporation) in Willowbrook—that had been severely impacted by this kind of pollution. The exhibition explains just how these two sites came to be essentially inhabitable because of how harmful they are, the stories of the people who live in their vicinity and are initially unaware of the state of this land, and their activism to hold these corporations accountable and most importantly to remediate the land and attempt to nurture it back to health. But this exhibition is not simply didactic. Jaramillo and García both present aesthetically and formally impactful works that help illustrate these environmental concerns. Jaramillo's *In-Between Time* (2024) shows nine screenprinted pieces of sheer fabric that have been dyed with tar from the La Brea Tar Pits; the tar has seeped past its initial boundaries, muddying the firm boundaries of the maps, much like pollution does. Garcia's totem-like set of sculptures, *Boiling Rock 3* (2024), is a visual representation of the "lasagna method" for capturing contaminants in the soil. One sculpture had collapsed during the show's run, a powerful metaphor for the fragility of our earth.



Rebeca Méndez, *Any-Instant-Whatever* (still), 2020, installation view.
PHOTO MAXIMILIANO DURÓN/ARTNEWS

One of PST’s most high-profile shows, “Storm Cloud: Picturing the Origins of Our Climate Crisis,” also convincingly told the story of how science and art didn’t use to be as seemingly far apart as they are today—an era in which STEM programs have been put at the forefront of the US education system at the expense of the arts and humanities. In looking at scientist-artists and artist-scientists from the late 18th century to the early 20th century, the show looks at how these creators documented the changes, both of progress and pollution, they were witnessing in a rapidly industrializing world. But the show’s curators, Melinda McCurdy and Karla Nielsen, have also smartly brought the exhibition into the 21st century, as a way to show how artists are still responding to the current climate crisis. Among those is Rebeca Méndez, whose *Any-Instant-Whatever* (2020) presents strips of footage of the LA sky from dawn to dusk. These dozens of strips present a semi-abstract portrait of the sky, with deep blues and misty grays contrasted with vivid oranges and dreamy purples. While car-related pollution causing dramatic sunsets may be more urban legend than scientific fact, the pictured clouds’ “shifting appearance suggest their ability to absorb and reflect human activity,” per the wall text. It’s a stirring reminder that the beauty may hide something more sinister.

At UCLA’s Fowler Museum, “Sangre de Nopal/Blood of the Nopal” presents the work of Zapotec artist Porfirio Gutiérrez and Chicana artist Tanya Aguiñiga in dialogue with each other. Both artists have used cochineal as a dye in their works as ways to discuss the realities faced by Indigenous peoples in Mexico today and by living along the US-Mexico border, respectively. (Gutiérrez also has an incredible installation that is featured in LACMA’s “We Live in Painting: The Nature of Color in Mesoamerican Art” exhibition.) The exhibition invites visitors to participate in creating a community weaving by knotting, braiding, or tying fabric onto several hanging sculptures, themselves serving as transmitters of knowledge, of those who came to experience this moving show. For the show, the two artists collaborated on a work that responds to an Indigenous textile in the Fowler’s collection. Among the questions that they came to in responding to one another’s contributions: “How do our exchanges across border change us and our histories? What gets lost and what gets passed

exchanges across border change us and our histories? What gets lost and what gets passed down between generations? How do we keep ties across time and space? How do we learn from and share with one another?”

On the -ennial Circuit



Pablo Delano, *The Museum of the Old Colony*, 2024, installation view at the 2024 Venice Biennale.

Photo : Courtesy La Biennale di Venezia

Latinx artists also featured in some of this year’s most important recurring exhibitions. At

the Venice Biennale, curator Adriano Pedrosa included two of these artists—Freddy Rodriguez and Fanny Sanín—in his historical section dedicated to abstraction. Though born in the Dominican Republic and Colombia, respectively, Rodriguez, who passed away in 2022, and Sanín, who turned 86 this year, spent the majority of their careers in New York, where they produced prolifically. While the abstraction section’s salon-style display made it hard to appreciate each individual artist’s approach to the genre, I nonetheless gravitated to both artists’ work. While I have long respected Rodriguez’s work, Sanín’s art was completely new to me. Seeing their work elevated to the Venice Biennale, the world’s top biennial, and placed alongside dozens of other artists who too have been underrecognized was nothing short of sublime. What remains for these two artists is for a museum to mount a retrospective of their work; neither artist has yet to have been given the treatment.

One of the works at Venice that everyone was talking about was Pablo Delano’s room-size installation *The Museum of the Old Colony* (2024). Part of an ongoing, decades-long investigation, Delano serves up what can only be read as a condemnation of the continued colonization of Puerto Rico, via US imperialism. The work takes the form of an anthropological diorama and wryly subverts it via a gathering of collected objects—photographs of life under colonization, a classroom desk, a light-skinned Puerto Rican Barbie (marked down from \$24.99 to \$12.99), a jar labeled “Little White Lies,” and more. Many of these objects and images aren’t that old. Puerto Rico’s colonization is not a thing of the past, Delano seems to say with these objects. So why do we treat it that way? He doesn’t provide an easy answer but rather forces viewers to reckon with their thoughts on Puerto Rico’s continued colonization and the neo-colonialism that continues throughout the world today. That is the power of this work.



Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio, *Paloma Blanca Deja Volar/White Dove Let Us Fly*, 2024.

COURTESY WHITNEY MUSEUM

Likewise, at the Whitney Biennial, artist Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio's towering amber sculpture was the talk of the town. The work continues the artist's use of amber as a material that can encase and preserve a set of objects or concerns (at the Whitney, documents related to LA activists regarding the civil war in El Salvador) and as a substance that is equally fragile. That the work, exposed to the intense sunlight pouring in from the adjacent floor-to-ceiling windows, collapsed early into the Biennial's run only proves the point. Elsewhere in the exhibition were striking works by Ektor Garcia, Eamon Ore-Giron, and Ser Serpas.

Both Serpas and Aparicio also featured in two triennials this year. At El Museo del Barrio's "La Trienal 2024," Serpas presented immersive installations that bring elements of her studio in the gallery space, the remnants of private performances with found objects and paintings that occur long before heading to the museum. While at the Whitney Serpas's works were cordoned off, viewers are encouraged to walk on the installation at El Museo. The museological concern for the preservation of the art object is removed at El Museo, where visitors can stage their own semi-private performances in dialogue with Serpas's. At Prospect.6 in New Orleans, Aparicio presented a completely different side of his work, soft sculptures made of various textiles that resemble the powerlines that dot the artist's hometown of LA. It was fascinating to witness both of these works as counterpoints to their Whitney Biennial presentations.

This year's "La Trienal" took the title of "Flow States," as a way to contemplate both the creative process (a state of flow) and the exchange—economical, political, artistic—between different parts of the world, from the US to Latin America, the Caribbean to the Philippines. In one project, Studio Lenca presented a series of small paintings created during workshops in Mexico City and Brooklyn with individuals who depicted their stories of migration. A similar kind of exchange was also present at Prospect.6 in a piece by rafa esparza, an adobe creation of Dewey Trafoya's *Mexica Falcon* drawing. These various forms of artistic exchange are what successful -ennials can accomplish, providing platforms for artists to experiment in new ways. Here's to more of that in 2025.



Installation view of "Marisol: A Retrospective," 2024–25, at Buffalo AKG Art Museum, showing, at center *Baby Boy*, 1962–63.

Photo : Brenda Bieger/Courtesy Buffalo AKG Art Museum

When thinking about a given year in review, I tend to think of artist retrospectives as the best place to begin. But I'll end here instead. The year's most high-profile one was "Marisol: A Retrospective," which finally landed at its organizing institution, the Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Its opening in Buffalo is a homecoming of sorts as Marisol bequeathed her entire estate to the museum upon her death in 2016. In the years since the donation, the Buffalo AKG has worked tirelessly to catalog what Marisol left behind. Even though that work is still ongoing, the fruits of the museum's labors are evident in "A Retrospective," curated by Cathleen Chaffee, in the way it navigates Marisol's career. (The exhibition and this effort also provide an interesting rebuttal to a [recent *New York Times* article](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/29/arts/design/scott-burton-sculptor-legacy-moma.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/29/arts/design/scott-burton-sculptor-legacy-moma.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>) about how the Museum of Modern Art has effectively done nothing to promote the legacy of Scott Burton, who likewise bequeathed his estate to the museum upon his death from AIDS-related complications in 1989.)

Marisol is best known for her biting and often humorous sculptures of the 1960s, which came out of her two shows at the storied Stable Gallery. (The Buffalo AKG acquired one work from each of those shows.) The gallery dedicated to this pivotal period of production is the show's centerpiece—and it is a knockout. Add to this her riveting wood sculptures from a decade later that merge man and fish. After leaving the art world for a second time, in the '70s,

Marisol took up scuba diving, capturing hours of underwater footage of the oceans. She knew then that human and fish need each other; our destruction of our oceans was only to both our detriments. (Marisol would eventually stop diving after she personally began to notice the death of coral reefs that had once been teeming with life.) Taken together, these works are just as fresh as they would have been decades ago with the sharp curatorial analysis that shows just how political and incisive Marisol’s art is—and always has been. *Baby Boy* (1962–63), for example, isn’t just a monstrous (both in scale and demeanor) toddler holding a doll. Upon close inspection, the boy’s shirt is that of a US flag; he is America—the tormentor of those much smaller than he—as Marisol would say decades later. That political edge was ever-present in the work, though often disregarded in favor of Marisol’s celebrity. Thankfully that is no longer the case.

Another artist who is finally getting her due is Magdalena Suarez Frimkess, who received her first museum exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. While not officially billed as a retrospective or a survey, the show, titled “The Finest Disregard,” brought together work from across five decades of the 95-year-old artist’s career. Suarez Frimkess’s work intentionally eschews notions of good taste with a certain whimsy to them that makes them endearing. The show’s installation, featuring several works in mini-vitrines, was an intriguing way to showcase a lot of her work, especially given that the exhibition only got one room. I only wish there had been more of it.



Yolanda M. López, *Things I Never Told My Son About Being a Mexican*, 1985, installation view, at the Cheech.
PHOTO JACOB WILLSON

The Cheech in Riverside dedicated its temporary exhibition programming this year to two retrospectives for pathbreaking Chicana artists: Judithe Hernández and Yolanda M. López. Both exhibitions track important moments of the artist’s careers. For Hernández, we see how

her dedication to working on an intimate scale with pastel on paper has only deepened. Across two exhibitions for López, we see the artist's MFA thesis works of her running across UC San Diego's campus as she breaks free from the institutional barriers that sought to contain her, the program's only student of color. Those would lead the artist to eventually develop her now iconic artistic reconfigurations of the Virgin de Guadalupe, remaking this emblem of womanhood and femininity in Mexican and Chicano culture into a powerful feminist critique. The *Guadalupe Triptych* (1978) shows her grandmother, her mother, and the artist taking matters into their own hands; they are the makers of their own destiny. But it is the new accompanying exhibition, "Women's Work is Never Done," curated by López's son, Rio Yañez, and her archivist, Angelica Rodriguez, that moved me to tears. In this show, we see the struggles that López faced as an artist who was also a single mother. She worked the gift-wrapping counter at Macy's, sold May Kay products, and was a Bay Area leader for the 2000 Census; a brain aneurysm in the mid-'90s forced her to stop making work for several years. But her artistic prowess never wavered, as evidenced by her forceful mixed-media, museum-quality works like *Things I Never Told My Son About Being a Mexican* (1985) and *The Nanny* (1994).

López received a diagnosis of liver cancer around 2014, and it would ultimately take her life in 2021. In a letter to chosen family and friends, dated about a month before **her passing** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/yolanda-lopez-artist-dead-1234603270/>), she thanks those whom she met and who inspired her work. And, as she reminds us: "We have been in this world to make a better place. Continue the fight, and the fun. MAKE A RUCKUS!"