



RICARDO VALVERDE

EXPERIMENTAL SIGHTS, 1971–1996









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Curated by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill

Essays by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Armando Cristeto Patiño, Jesse Lerner

Foreword by Karen Rapp and Chon A. Noriega

Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College
in collaboration with UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center



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Front cover: Ricardo Valverde, *Boulevard Night*, 1979/1991. Hand-painted gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 inches.

Page i: Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, from the Corporate Logos series, 1971–1981. Color slide.

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Page iv: Ricardo Valverde, *Conquista de la Cruz* (Conquest of the Cross), 1992. Gelatin silver print with acrylic, hand-stamped acrylic, ink, and gouache, 11 x 14 inches.

Credits: page 28, Collection of Adam and Lupita Avila; all other illustrations, Esperanza Valverde and Christopher J. Valverde Collection.

Ricardo Valverde: Experimental Sights, 1971–1996, an exhibition at the Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College, in collaboration with the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, May 17–July 26, 2014. Curated by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill.

vincent price
ART MUSEUM

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the contributions of many people in bringing about this long overdue retrospective of Ricardo Valverde's work.

Our first thanks must go to Esperanza (Espie) Valverde for preserving Ricardo's extensive body of work, facilitating access through the establishment of a digital collection at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC), opening up her home and sharing her experiences and knowledge during the curatorial process, and, with her son, Christopher J. Valverde, serving as generous lenders to the exhibition. We are also grateful for exhibition loans from David and Sue Auther, Adam and Lupita Avila, Carl and Luz Meyerson, and Sandra and John Valadez.

Ramón García deserves special recognition for his book-length study of the artist, *Ricardo Valverde*, published in 2013. While he never met the artist, those of us who knew Ricardo are grateful for the way in which he captured his unique spirit and vision. His book and the digital collection provided a framework from which it was possible to think about and pursue this exhibition.

In preparing this exhibition within a rather compressed time frame, curator Cecilia Fajardo-Hill brought an expansive appreciation of Ricardo's contributions to photography as well as to art of the Americas. Her critical insights, contagious enthusiasm, and evolving vision of a truly inclusive art history have not only made this exhibition grow in size and scale, it inspired us to produce this catalog! Her curatorial essay, along with incisive contributions by Armando Cristeto Patiño and Jesse Lerner—and Garcia's *Ricardo Valverde*—set the stage for further research and critical assessments of Valverde's work. Thanks also to Colin Gunckel for the translation of Cristeto's essay.

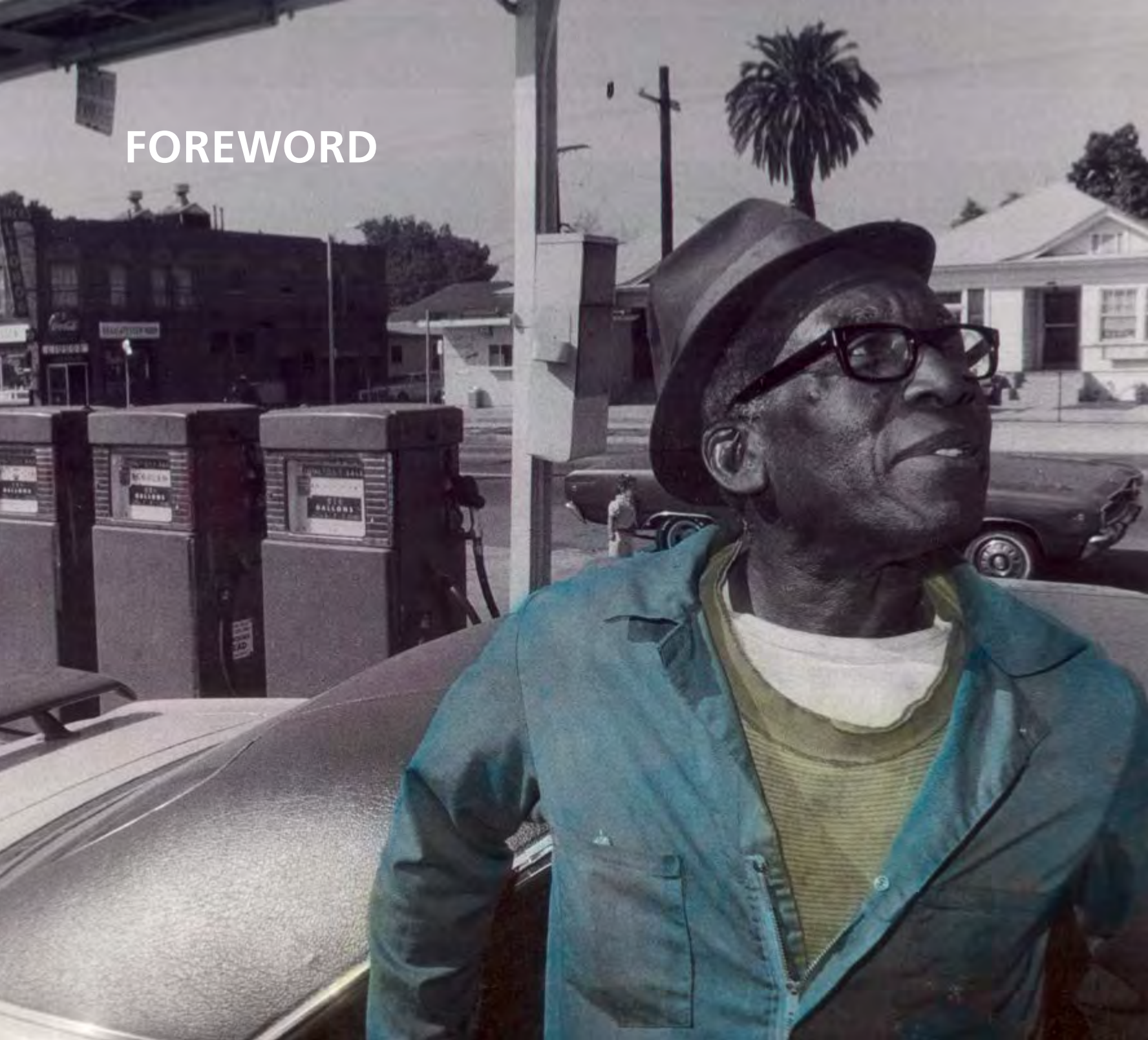
While this exhibit is the first retrospective on the artist, it nonetheless owes a debt of gratitude from the curator, the Vincent Price Art Museum (VPAM), and the CSRC to Ruben Ortiz-Torres for his inspiring approach to Valverde's work in *MEX/ILA: Mexican Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985*, an exhibition at the Museum of Latin American Art that opened in September 2011.

Finally, this exhibition would not be possible without the tireless contributions of the VPAM and CSRC staff. The VPAM staff played a key role in bringing the artwork out from the archives and into the gallery. Former preparator Brian Porray, along with curatorial assistant Allyson Unzicker, organized the initial checklist for the exhibition and contributed to the many registrarial responsibilities of the show. Museum manager Victor Parra oversaw the coordination of the ephemeral materials and multimedia works. And VPAM's art installer, Jorge Claustro, successfully brought together an installation with several disparate parts and gave it his professional polish. The CSRC staff were instrumental in preparing the digital collection, providing research access, and assisting with the exhibition, catalog, and outreach. Elize Mazadiego, while an undergraduate student, did the painstaking legwork to digitize and describe the Ricardo Valverde collection. Archives manager Michael Stone facilitated research access and also provided technical support for the slide and video presentations. Digital archivist Jenny Walters documented additional works for the digital collection and handled the art program for the catalog. Senior editor Rebecca Frazier oversaw all aspects of catalog production, and Bill Morosi provided the catalog layout and design. And Rebecca Epstein has contributed to communications and programming efforts as part of the VPAM-CSRC partnership.

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FOREWORD



M*ientras en Los Angeles...* This title of a 1992 artwork by Ricardo Valverde (1946–1998) captures the artist’s distinctive approach to photography (fig. 1). Valverde documented Los Angeles throughout his career, doing so in diverse styles and from multiple perspectives. Here, the artist used the city’s original language to provide a narrative for the work, in which the simultaneity implied by *mientras* (meanwhile) is manifested through the use of multiple negatives. The resulting photographic print shows a repeated image of four men in suits set above a tight shot of elevated freeways. The men are walking out of one of the twin skyscrapers of Arco Plaza, briefly the tallest twin towers in the world and a major financial and corporate headquarters (“ARCO” is visible above a revolving door). This is placed above the freeways that serve the region’s economic development but also cut through and isolate East Los Angeles. Valverde then applied acrylic and gouache to define objects, add an expressive sense of movement, and, with the smudges at the bottom, suggest the photographer’s position. Valverde’s “meanwhile” works along three tiers: corporate executives at the top, labor (the unseen truck drivers) in the middle, and the unseen artist at the bottom. Along the top edge is evidence that Valverde burnt the negatives of the men—deliberate damage that contrasts with the child-like smudges that represent the artist. The artwork is an uncanny and compelling visualization of the “meanwhile” marking the racial and class struggle that is structured into the built environment.

Figure 1. Ricardo Valverde, *Mientras en Los Angeles* (Meanwhile in Los Angeles), 1992. Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache, 14 x 11 inches.



Ricardo Valverde: Experimental Sights, 1973–1996, guest curated by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, is the first career retrospective of the artist, and it highlights more than one hundred artworks spanning a twenty-five-year period of production. The exhibition is organized by subject matter (from the artist and his family to urban life to car culture), location (Los Angeles and Mexico), and approach (traditional printing, superimposition, mixed media) (figs. 2, 3). Themes are not segregated: they are integrated and overlapped to reflect Valverde’s work style. Indeed, the artist’s practice was to



Figure 2. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1974. Gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 inches.



Figure 3. Ricardo Valverde, *Sanctity*, 1973/1994. Solarized gelatin silver print with adhesive labels, hand-applied pigment, and scratching, 14 x 11 inches.

engage simultaneously with different bodies of work as well as to rework images to produce different versions. Even with “finished” works, the artist was constantly creating anew (figs. 4, 5).



This exhibition is part of an ongoing partnership between the Vincent Price Art Museum (VPAM) at East Los Angeles College and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC). Our goal is not only to facilitate critical exchanges between the two campuses and beyond but also to engage audiences with Chicano art in both East L.A. and West L.A. This exhibition establishes an important collaborative and international framework for such a goal. It builds upon a digital archive of Valverde’s work established at the CSRC by the artist’s wife, Esperanza (Espie) Valverde, and processed by Elize Mazadiego when she was a student. That archive resulted in the inclusion of Valverde’s work in the Getty Foundation’s 2011–2012 initiative Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980. Valverde was represented with multiple pieces in

Figure 4. Ricardo Valverde, *Jack*, 1976/1991. Gelatin silver print with hand-applied pigment, 11 x 14 inches.

Figure 5. Ricardo Valverde, *I See What You Never Saw*, 1976/1991. Gelatin silver print with acrylic, 8 x 10 inches.

two exhibitions: *Asco: Elite of the Obscure, 1972–1987* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and *MEX/LA: Mexican Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985* at the Museum of Latin American Art. Curators Ondine Chavoya (Williams College), Rita Gonzalez (LACMA), Ruben Ortiz-Torres (UC San Diego), and Jesse Lerner (Pitzer College) appreciated Valverde’s work as the basis for advancing and complicating stories other than his own—specifically, those of the conceptual art group Asco and Mexican modernisms. But it was Ramón García (CSU Northridge) who undertook the first extended study of the artist in *Ricardo Valverde* (2013), a new monograph in the CSRC’s A Ver: Revisioning Art History series.

In this catalog Fajardo-Hill (currently a CSRC visiting scholar) argues for Valverde’s importance as an experimental artist whose extensive body of work contributes a “critical and creative rethinking of the medium of photography.” A noted specialist in modern and contemporary Latin American art, she brings a hemispheric context to bear on Valverde’s work, but she also makes the case for the significance that Chicano and Latino art have for art history of the Americas. Mexican photographer Armando Cristeto Patiño provides a critical and personal account of Valverde through the filter of Valverde’s engagement with Mexico and Mexican art. Filmmaker and writer Jesse Lerner provides the first consideration of Valverde’s forays into video art. Together these essays complement García’s *Ricardo Valverde*, providing new insights about the artist’s practice.

Valverde was conversant with both American and Mexican modern photography, producing images that possess what García calls “an uneasy and critical beauty” and

Figure 6. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1971. Gelatin silver print, 8 x 5 inches.



“surrealist disquiet” (fig. 6). Valverde’s photographs and multimedia pieces documented L.A. families (including his own), neighborhoods, cultural practices, and corporate logos, among other subjects (fig. 7). He also took self-portraits, none of which he exhibited in his lifetime. Valverde, with his wife Espie, played a catalytic role in bringing Chicano and Mexican artists together, and he was among the founders of Self Help Graphics & Art, Ojo, Council of Latino Photography/USA, and Chicano Art Collectors Anonymous (CACAA). Valverde was highly influenced by the New York

Figure 7. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, from the Corporate Logos series, 1971–1981. Color slide.



School of street photographers, yet his photographs are never simply documents. They are works of art, visual artifacts of urban modern life in East L.A. during his lifetime. They constitute a very personal expression, unlike that of any other celebrated art photographer from Los Angeles (fig. 8).

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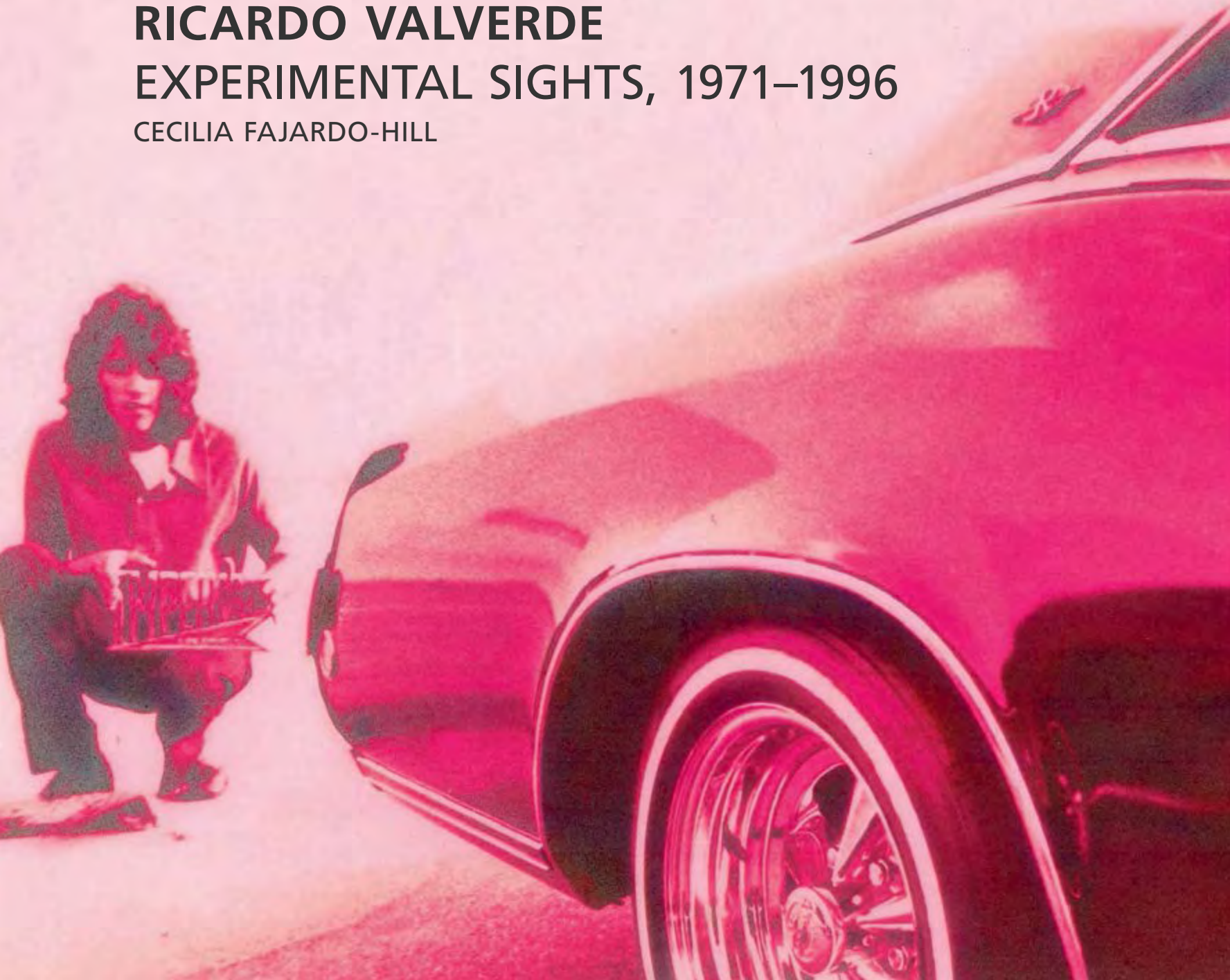


Figure 8. Ricardo Valverde, *Segregated Neighborhood*, 1974/1994. Gelatin silver prints with acrylic and scratching, 8 x 10 inches.

RICARDO VALVERDE

EXPERIMENTAL SIGHTS, 1971–1996

CECILIA FAJARDO-HILL



Ricardo Valverde was one of the most innovative artists to live and work in Los Angeles from the early 1970s through the mid-1990s. Primarily a photographer, he was a highly experimental artist who approached the medium and his subject matter without prejudice (figs. 1, 2). Nevertheless, his unique contribution to the critical and creative rethinking of the medium of photography has yet to be recognized. His themes were of a specific and often personal nature: family, especially his wife, Esperanza; self-portraiture; portraiture; landscape, cityscape, and streetscape; neighborhood traditions such as Day of the Dead; lowrider culture (figs. 3, 4). Because of this he has been read primarily as a documentary photographer who helped shape the identity of the Chicano people and increased the visibility of Chicano culture through his contributions to the Chicano social body. That Valverde produced some of the most lasting and influential images related to his social and cultural context is unquestionable, but what has not been fully understood is that his work cannot be categorized as either plain, uncritical documentary photography—a genre that tends to objectify and exoticize “the other” or anything different—or photography with a purely modernist approach. It is telling that Valverde did not find dialogic or critical support from his teachers while studying at UCLA, because his work seemed simultaneously too traditional and too unconventional.

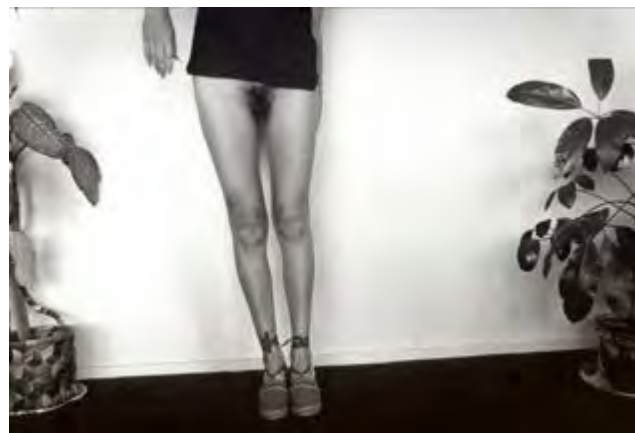


Figure 1. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled (Half Nude)*, 1979. Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 inches.

Figure 2. Ricardo Valverde, *La Espera II (The Wait II)*, 1979/1993. Gelatin silver print with acrylic, ink and scratching, 11 x 14 inches.



Figure 3. Ricardo Valverde, *Reflections, Mazatlán, Mexico*, 1974. Color print, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches.

Figure 4. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1971. Rose-tinted gelatin silver print, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 inches.

Photography is one of the most widely utilized mediums in contemporary art. Since the 1960s it has been invested with a conceptual function that is more ambiguous and complex than its initial role as the ultimate recorder of reality. Photography's potential for manipulation and for blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality (or truth) has been explored since its inception. The belief that photography "captures reality" has been dispelled, and theorists affirm that photography's privileged status as a truthful witness has been lost, as photographers fabricate reality as much as illustrate it. Yet, no matter how conceptual or postconceptual the tendencies of contemporary art may be today, and regardless of how these tendencies translate into the realm of photography, it is photography's apparent realism that constitutes the basis of its popularity. The public continues, consciously or unconsciously, to connect photography to visual perception, to some idea of veracity. David Company acknowledges this when he writes that photography "is inherently of the world. It cannot help but document things however abstract, theatrical, artificial, or contentious that documentation may be. So the meaning of photography is intimately bound up with the meaning of the world it records."¹

1. David Company, "Still Standing, Still," *Contemporary 21* (special issue on photography), no. 67 (2004): 19.

Valverde's work was often rejected by those in the art world because they confused it with the popular, "old-fashioned" idea of documentary photography. His critics had no knowledge or understanding of, or interest in, the subject matter he represented, and their stereotypical preconceptions established boundaries for the reception of Valverde's work. Because he was seen as a minority artist, and because his photography dealt with subjects that were seen as alien, he fell into the deep pool of misunderstood "outsider" artists. Socially and culturally rejected, his work was considered automatically outside the sphere of avant-garde contemporary art as well as that of high culture. Ironically, this "not-fitting" into canonical approaches to a medium and subject matter is what defines originality in art and art historical terms and identifies the avant-garde artist. What made Valverde's work contemporary (avant-garde) and unique was his critical, inspired, and experimental eye. He looked for ways to represent and to interpret unselfconsciously themes that were highly charged, multifaceted, and complex (figs. 5, 6).

Figure 5. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1971. Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 inches.

Figure 6. Ricardo Valverde, *Consencia* (Conscience), 1992. Acrylic and solarized gelatin print on fabric, 25½ x 30 inches.





A key aspect of his art is that the people he photographed were never objects—a refutation of Jean Baudrillard’s cynical observation that “the magic of photography is that it is the object which does all the work.” When a photographer is closely involved with the subject, as Valverde was, the result is not the objectification described by Baudrillard. Instead, Valverde subjectified the thing or person photographed (fig. 7). This subjectification is not only interpretative but also political, conceptual,

Figure 7. Ricardo Valverde, *Aliso Village*, from the *Aliso Village* series, 1977. Gelatin silver print, 8⅞ x 12⅞ inches.



and aesthetic. It is nothing like the pretended objectivity of documentary photography. Neither does it align with the “realist” school of photography as practiced by Bernd and Hilla Becher; they interrogate documentary photography, but this is done paradoxically, by distancing themselves from what is represented. In contrast, a symbiotic relationship existed between Valverde and his subjects. He was involved either through complicity with what was represented—sometimes himself—or in a transformative and interdependent relationship with it/he/she. This is demonstrated in the vast number of photographs of Esperanza and the many ways in which Valverde portrayed her. These images range from the erotic and intimate, to staged scenes, to snapshots that recorded fleeting moments, to documentary family portraits (fig. 8). Esperanza was not just a muse; she was always part of and participant in his creative process and daily life, which was the core of his work.



Figure 8. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1972. Gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 inches.

Valverde was a political person, aware of Chicano causes and the tribulations of the Chicano people, and a critical thinker. This, in combination with a demonstrated freedom from convention and his criticality, situates his work closer to conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s than to documentary photography. Conceptual artists at that time were exploring photography's relationship with truthfulness, challenging its attachment to a particular ideology and questioning the discourse offered by straight photography. Valverde was multifaceted and engaged without being self-conscious about the politics of representation. The photographs that are more documentary in nature are situational, contextual, and processual. He registered the moment—his life and the life around him—as a way of making art and for experimenting and making sense of reality and his own identity. A clear demonstration of this is Valverde's Mejico and LA series, a set of superposed images that he completed in 1996. Beginning with his first trip to Mexico in the mid-1970s, and during every trip thereafter, he produced a large body of portraits and records of his experiences during these journeys. For the series the artist combined these images with his portrayals of Los Angeles, creating symbolic, conceptual, and cultural connections between the two places (fig. 9). The result is a dialogic map of Los Angeles and Mexico that reveals nuances of an interconnected relationship that is often mute and problematic and needs ongoing examination.

Figure 9. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, from the Mejjico and LA series, 1996. Gelatin silver prints, ink, pen, and adhesive labels on watercolor paper, 11½ x 14 inches.





Figure 10. Ricardo Valverde, *Sapo* (Toad), 1973–1974. Glazed stoneware and natural fibers, 6 x 13 x 10 inches.



Figure 11. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1973–1974. Glazed stoneware in five parts, 7½ x 23 x 16 inches.

An innovative and highly productive artist, Valverde built a dark room wherever he went so that he could develop and copy his photographs and produce solarized gelatin silver prints, double exposures, and negative transfers with great success. He created sculpture and mixed media tridimensional works in the 1970s (figs. 10–13), and he was also interested in video, which he used to portray intimate family events, much as he used photography. Over the course of several months in the mid-1970s he recorded long dialogues with his sister, Maya, who had declared that she was gay and had changed her life after being married and having two children. Valverde also produced videos that verged on the surrealistic, in which footage taken during drives along the freeways was intercut with elements that disrupt narrative, linearity, and sense.



Figure 12. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1973–1974. Glazed stoneware and natural fibers, 7 x 18 x 15 inches.



Figure 13. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1977. Plexiglas, gelatin silver print, rubber tube, paper, and ink, 9 x 10½ x 8½ inches.

Valverde's representations are always multilayered, defying easy categorization. In 1978 the director of photography at New York's Museum of Modern Art, John Szarkowski, wrote that most photographs fall into two categories: the "mirror" photograph, which tells us more about the photographer, and the "window" photograph, which tells us more about the world, though it is sometimes difficult to define the difference and at times there is overlap: "This thesis suggests that there is a fundamental dichotomy in contemporary photography between those who think of photography as a means of self-expression and those who think of it as a means of exploration."² This dichotomy does not exist in Valverde's work, where the "mirror" and "window" categories blur and are in productive dialectic tension. The reworking of his photographs over the years indicates that their meaning and aesthetic was open-ended and in continuous transformation. In the 1990s he started to revisit his photographs from the 1970s and 1980s, making interventions that included collage and scratching, marking, and painting on the prints. He went so far as to convert

2. John Szarkowski, *Windows and Mirrors: American Photography since 1960* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1978), 11.

the picture plane of a photograph into a painting in which none of the original image is visible to the eye, though it determined the theme and composition of the work. This practice, which he continued to develop until his death in 1998, can be compared to the idea of the neo- (postwar) avant-garde as repetition. Writers such as Hal Foster and Rosalind Krauss approach repetition in contemporary art through the Freudian concept of repression: the more you revisit and repeat what has been repressed—the many issues and problems posed by the pre-war avant-garde—the more you comprehend what is unsolved. In this way, no form of Valverde’s photography can be considered conclusive. Each work is unfinished and open-ended and offers a laboratory for exploration and reinscription.

Valverde’s art does not display a dichotomy between aesthetic, documentary, and conceptual concerns, which is one of its important characteristics. Valverde’s attitude toward photography was free and experimental, and his work may be simultaneously conceptual, political, self-critical, playful, ironical, experimental, erotic, intimate, public, same, other, and so forth (figs. 14, 15). It cannot be defined with a single label—even less with one that denies the conceptual and aesthetic singularities of his work as contemporary photography. Fred Ritchin, in his recent book *Art after Photography*, writes:

If every photograph, as part of an evolving conversation informed by the dialectics of history and culture, can be considered multivocal, with a diversity of meanings, then there is no pretense at a single reality or a single interpretation....This is not to imply that the photographs cannot also be factual but that its meanings are open to diverse interpretations....Photography of this sort is far from a mechanical recording; it becomes a collaborative, multivocal interrogation of both external and internal realities in which the initial exposure is only a minimalist starting point.³

Valverde turned his attention not only to what had been made invisible and misrepresented in the Chicano social body but also to challenging issues such as queer identity, as in his photographs and videos of his sister, Maya. His work in portraiture and his treatment of the body and love renewed these genres and subjects, transforming the familiar into something unique, as in the involved, erotic, intimate representations of his wife. Finally, he was unapologetic about the medium of

3. Fred Ritchin, *After Photography* (New York and London: Norton, 2009), 75



Figure 14. Ricardo Valverde, sheet of twenty scratched, burned, and hand-colored 35 mm color slides, 1971–1975.



Figure 15. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, ca. 1971. Scratched, burned, and hand-colored 35 mm color slide.

photography, in that he undermined its “sanctity” and promoted a multidisciplinary approach to it, and in this he was a precursor. A true understanding of the medium allowed him to explore its possibilities and test its limits by experimenting with the gaze of the camera, the restraints of the dark room, various types of support, and the application of different techniques and materials to his prints (fig. 16). Toward the end of his life Valverde’s photography became an interdisciplinary

medium in which the photographic print was a surface to be scratched and painted and its images were subjects to be reinterpreted (fig. 17).

Photography's elusive relationship with "the real" is the key to our continued engagement with the medium, and this is true for Valverde's work.



Figure 16. Ricardo Valverde, *La Dejada (Sloven)*, 1992. Acrylic and solarized gelatin print on fabric, 26½ x 29¼ inches.



Figure 17. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1979/1993. Gelatin silver print with scratching, 11 x 14 inches.



RICARDO VALVERDE
REFLECTIONS FROM
MEXICO

ARMANDO CRISTETO PATIÑO
TRANSLATED BY COLIN GUNCKEL

Si tuviera que pasar por el mismo dolor, lo haría con gusto.
—Esperanza Valverde

During his lifetime Ricardo Valverde traveled multiple times to the Mexican Republic, visiting different cities and diverse latitudes—places that were very disparate, as is Mexico. But he didn't have the deep yearning that was common in persons of Mexican origin of his generation, of going in search of their past, in search their roots...to search for Aztlán, the lost paradise from which they had been cast out. They were, in other words, in search of their identity.

This major difference is without a doubt due to the fact that Valverde's parents and his ancestors were born and raised in the state of Arizona. The Valverde line was not the product of migration and had no connection to the twentieth century's dominant labor form in the Southwest: *bracero*. Like many families in the region, the Valverdes did not move from their land; instead, the geopolitical boundary suffered the fluctuation. Of course, the Valverdes' origin was mixed, with pre-Hispanic indigenous ethnicities combining with European blood, primarily from the Iberian Peninsula. It's a curious fact that both Valverde's parents had the proper name de Refugio, a Spanish word that has so many applications: *refugio* can be used as the name of a man or woman, as a substantive noun; a *refugio* is a favorable place from which to protect or defend oneself.

We could never say that Ricardo Valverde never suffered racism, but we can certainly say that racism did not mark his life. He always acted with the confidence and assurance of a person with education, a person that from childhood had been raised and had coexisted around all racial groups and understood thoroughly the life, society, and politics of the United States. Born in Phoenix in 1946, he was a U.S. citizen and his first language was English. In the late 1950s his family moved to the West Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles. He attended Los Angeles schools and ultimately received an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1976. But his heritage was very clearly based in two countries: Mexico and the United States.

Cinema, music, and live concerts were a part of Valverde's youth. He also followed and was in solidarity with the struggles of César Chávez and the problems confronting immigrants, just as he was

with those in the graphic arts and theater who were part of the countercultural struggle. He did not join political activities in a permanent way, finding in art the best means of communication and creation. He integrated it into his life by treating Los Angeles as a living school of art. He made prolonged excursions to museums big and small, where he became familiar with and absorbed the art of the United States from all periods. His favorites were pop art and abstraction, and he also discovered German expressionism. But there was a pending matter: Mexican art. He knew that the representations on the streets of his city—the great city of Los Angeles (one of his great passions)—and muralism were only the tip of the iceberg. He knew that Jesús de la Helguera, the painter that had created the legend of the volcanoes Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl, was only one Mexican artist and that Mexico in the early twentieth century was plural and dynamic. Caught up in all this ferment, he decided on photography, a medium that permitted him to interact in a direct way with his reality and to feed off the spectator that seeks to reaffirm customs and beliefs, some of them very contrary to those of the Anglo-Saxon, others in an openly syncretic process.

As he explored the “exterior,” the richness of life on the street, he simultaneously worked on forms of self-knowledge. The portrait was his best vehicle. At this time, in the late 1960s, his life was enriched by the presence of the young Mexican American Esperanza Chávez, who within a short time became his wife. Shortly thereafter, in 1970, Christopher Jude was born, the only child of both. Richard dedicated his attention to them, producing an exemplary body of work almost unprecedented in the photography created by persons of Latino origin (fig. 1). In that period, 1970 through 1980, Valverde used the nude figure as the basis for his work. Located in the intimate space of the home, his subjects move freely and confidently: Richard himself, Esperanza, Jude—whether individually, as a couple, or all three. Nothing could be further from the idealized and worn-out family images that we see in albums and even in cultural spaces. Here the photographer’s frankness, evidenced by the frontal gaze of his subjects, shows the body’s qualities as fundamental compositional elements imbued with the profound emotions that the pride of genealogy brings forth.

Other images give an account of erotic practices, like bondage or exhibitionism in public spaces. In one powerful image, *Hermanas* (1980), two women with their hands tied look at us in a way



Figure 1. Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1976. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 inches.

that is far from submissive (fig. 2; a similar print from the Collection of Carl and Luz Meyerson is in the exhibition). The subsequent interventions in oil paint to the original print—subtle, but of very vibrant colors—remind us of religious images of the souls in purgatory. But here, again, Valverde broke with convention. These are not afflicted faces; they possess confrontational and empowering attitudes. And we know that they are the sisters Esperanza and Luz María Meyerson, the wife and sister-in-law of Ricardo Valverde. Together they stage an action especially for the camera, a

Figure 2. Ricardo Valverde, *Hermanas* (Sisters), 1980. Gelatin silver print, 8 x 12 inches.



practice that flourished at the end of the twentieth century and that currently holds sway. These photographs, in which the protagonists are members of the family, constitute pioneering works in this genre.

During the 1970s and early 1980s Mexican and Latin American photography was dominated by urban and indigenist documentary. Pedro Meyer and the Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía (Mexican Photography Council) convened with great success and international impact the *Coloquio Latinoamericano de Fotografía* (Latin American Colloquium of Photography), a series of three colloquiums. The first was held in 1978 and the second in 1981, both in Mexico City, and the third was in 1984 in Havana, Cuba. U.S. photographers of Latino and Latin American origin participated, primarily Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. It was through these exhibitions and publications that we came to know Louis Carlos Bernal, Isabel Castro, Harry Gamboa Jr., Roberto Gil de Montes, John Valadez, Ricardo Valverde, and Kathy Vargas, among others, all of Mexican origin.

The colloquiums activated a flow of communication between creators and countries that resulted in exhibitions and trips to Mexico on the part of Chicano photographers. It was in this era that the Cold War intensified between the United States and the Soviet Union and its allies, and U.S. citizens were prohibited from traveling to Cuba, except for professional reasons. Louis Carlos Bernal, noted master of photography, who was born and lives in Arizona, was invited by the Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists), the Casa de las Américas de la Habana (House of the America, Havana), and the Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía to travel to Cuba, and he did so on two occasions: in 1982, for the Primer Encuentro de Fotografía Cubana (First Conference of Cuban Photography), and in 1984, for the III Coloquio Latinoamericano de Fotografía (Third Latin American Photography Colloquium).

Valverde was unable to travel to Cuba, but his images did, and they were placed together with those of the other great Latin American and Latino creators in the spacious and beautiful galleries of the Museo Nacional de La Habana. Valverde's indomitable spirit demanded that he do something to recover the memory of the event, so he went on a work trip with Judy Miranda to Mexico

City after the third colloquium was over. With tape recorders and cameras they interviewed the key professionals who had participated in the colloquium, visiting them in their homes and studios. They spoke with Graciela Iturbide and Pedro Meyer in Coyoacán and the historian and critic Raquel Tibol—one of the most influential thinkers of Mexican art and author of an erudite biography of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera—at her home in the Anzures neighborhood.

With his friends—artists Adolfo Patiño, Carla Rippey, and Rogelio Villarreal—Valverde resumed exhaustive tours of the city and its museums and private galleries, observing the art of viceregal Mexico as well as everything produced in the twentieth century, without missing performances, book presentations, or heated roundtable discussions. Valverde couldn't miss out on the old neighborhoods of Mexico City, like Plaza Garibaldi, the nerve center of mariachis and nightclubs. During one of these excursions, he and Judy Miranda found themselves in Las Ruinas de Pompeya (The Ruins of Pompeii), a bar located in an old abandoned building. This was a clandestine spot where sex workers, vagabonds, and the police came together to drink and have fun. The place did not have an electric refrigerator—beers were kept cold in an icebox—and music emerged from a little tape recorder. There were no restrooms, either. Men and women urinated in what was once a garden. It was a Mexico City gathering—a Chilango night out.

Some years later, the Mexican government's Consejo Nacional de Población (National Population Council) held a binational competition for Mexican and Chicano photographers. The awards were bestowed upon Ricardo Valverde and the Mexican photographers Elsa Medina and Frieda Broido. Honorable mention went to Adam Avila and Laura Aguilar, Chicano photographers from Los Angeles. Valverde and Avila traveled to Mexico City to receive their awards. The exhibition, held in 1988, was mounted in the Archivo General de la Nación, which is housed in an old panoptic prison built by Porfirio Díaz.

Among other activities during this trip, Valverde was invited to view the pre-Hispanic sculptures known as the Giants of Tula, created by the Toltec culture and located in the current state of Hidalgo. He looked upon them in amazement during this encounter with the past, but that very night he visited the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, where he witnessed the great

found-object installation of Enrique Hernández, *A la casa-caza de la abuela-niña* (The House-Hunting of the Grandmother-Daughter, 1988). Later he enjoyed himself at the El 9 club (the Mexican version of Studio 54), where he photographed the performance *Las perras pagan* (Bitches Pay) by Guillermo Santamarina and Mario Lafontaine. The following morning he toured the city's historic center and some working-class neighborhoods. Electoral fraud was widely accepted as the cause of leftist presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's defeat in 1988, and discontent was evident in conversations, in the press, and in graffiti on the walls.

Valverde saw exhibitions in the recently created photography museum in Mexico City, the Centro de la Imagen (Center for the Image) of the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and the Arts), and he almost compulsively acquired publications on photography, one of his constant pleasures. He attended the church where the modern film version of *Romeo and Juliet* was made, and here a cross for Ash Wednesday was marked on his forehead. At the Polyforum Cultural Siqueiros that evening, he was transported by the voice of Peruvian-Mexican singer Tania Libertad.

In an even more significant engagement, Graciela Iturbide hosted a dinner for Richard and Esperanza Valverde, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Coco Fusco in her house—designed by her son, the architect Mauricio Rocha Iturbide—in the Niño Jesús neighborhood of Coyoacán (very near the house of photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo). Others invited were the Chicana photographer and curator Marietta Bernstorff and the photographer Antonio Turok, who documents conflicts in Central America and southern Mexico. That night they met and became a couple.

During subsequent trips Valverde visited the Mexican countryside and took portraits of farmers in which the empathy and respect they deserve is apparent. He encountered the harshness of Mexican rural areas and their poverty, but this area already “belonged” to other great documentary photographers such as Nacho López, Graciela Iturbide, and Mariana Yampolsky.

In the 1990s Valverde found himself in a period of creative and personal maturity. He was in command of his time and his varied knowledge. He collaborated in the creation of a gallery in the L.A.

neighborhood of Echo Park that served as an outlet for Latino artists, and he became a founding member of a group of collectors called Chicano Art Collectors Anonymous, or CACA. It was a moment of great freedom and creative control. His obsessions and interests merged and all his influences mixed together. He combined technical processes ranging from traditional gelatin silver printing to photocopying to color processes like Cibachrome, and he produced new works that used images from many different moments in the past, which he altered with oil or acrylic pigment. He also paired images and bordered them with cartoonish graphics or designs, some of them reminiscent of the decorative borders and hieroglyphics of the Egyptian pyramids, lending a three-dimensional quality to these pieces.

Portraiture was the genre in which he operated with great precision (fig. 3). He created a number of self-portraits between 1970 and 1990. Some of the prints he left as they were, while in others he transformed the primary image with color, punctures on the surface, or written symbols or words. Observing them all together, we see that he offered us a series of premonitions: Ricardo convulsed by Mick (fig. 4). Ricardo in Mazatlán with a little reflecting box at the height of his skull. Richard very young, very skinny, disheveled...sick? Even Richard wearing a red T-shirt (suggesting blood perhaps), gazing directly into the lens (fig. 5). Here he appears to be standing behind a sheet of glass that splits the self-portrait into parts. In one part an eye is visually “cut” by the edge of the glass, reminiscent of the first scene in *Un chien andalou*, by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, in which vision is annulled.

Valverde’s vision began to deteriorate in the mid-1990s. During his journeys on the freeways, his sight would be hampered by white circles and black edges that prevented him from having a complete view. The cause was a brain tumor, discovered in the late 1980s. The artist died in 1998.

The cadence of this exhibition is organic. It is full of rhythms and events, of intimate and relaxed accents, of stridencies and frenzies. It is, in synthesis, a complete life, full of nuances. It is also, in its force, a cultural legacy.



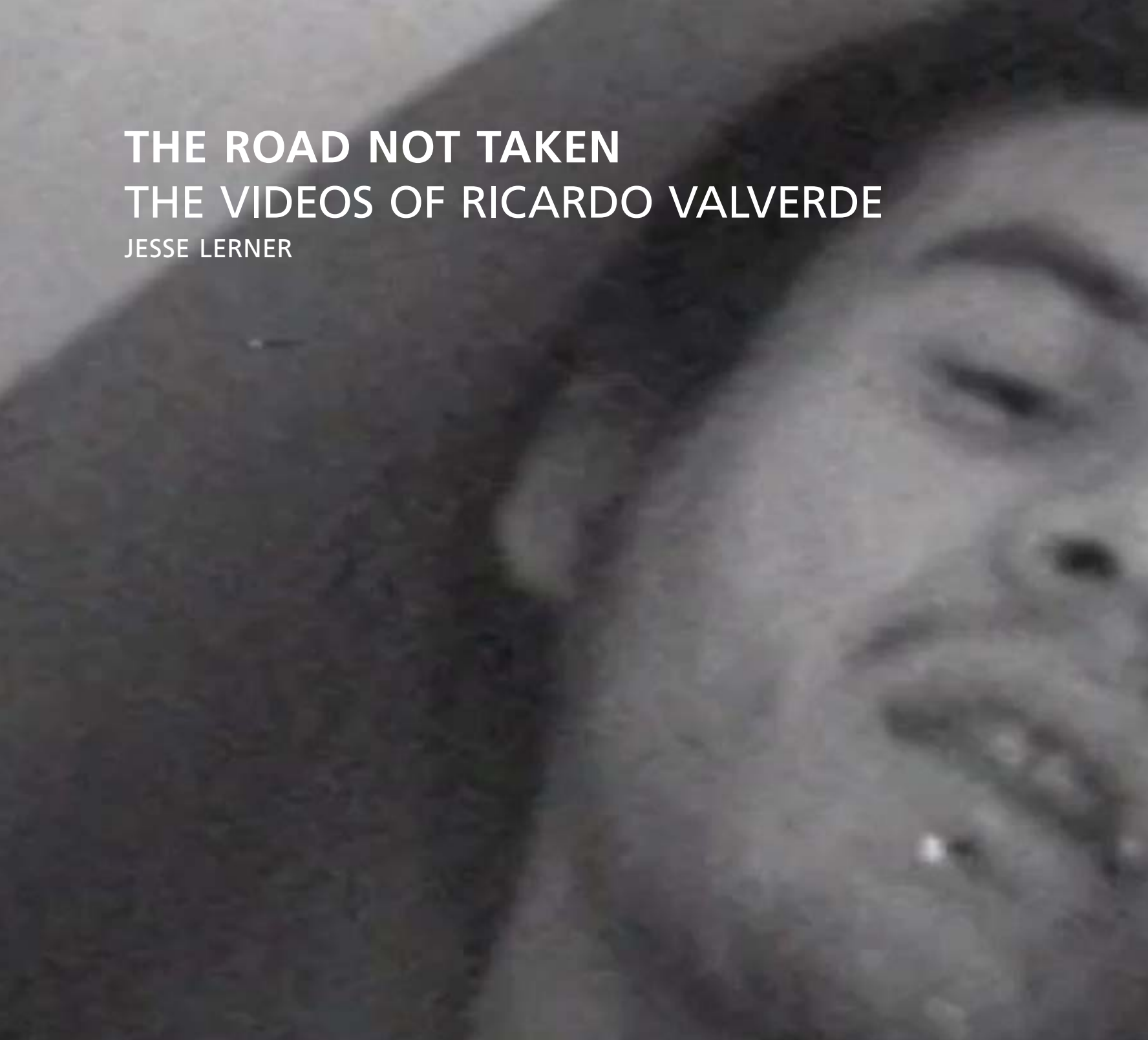
Figure 3. Ricardo Valverde, *Maya*, 1970s. Gelatin silver print, 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches.



Figure 4. Ricardo Valverde, *Self-Portrait con Mick*, 1973/1993. Gelatin silver print with hand-applied pigment and scratching, 10 x 8 inches.



Figure 5. Ricardo Valverde, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young(er) Man*, 1991. Gelatin silver print with acrylic and hand-applied pigment, 6½ x 10 inches.



THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

THE VIDEOS OF RICARDO VALVERDE

JESSE LERNER

In the mid-1970s, while working on his MFA at the University of California, Los Angeles, Ricardo Valverde gained access to an Electronic Industries Association of Japan (EIAJ) video tape recorder, one of the early half-inch analogue portapak video cameras. He used this new video technology only briefly, creating several tapes that echo some of the recurring concerns of his work in still photography. Around the same time, he created several other video recordings in a variety of half-inch and quarter-inch formats, none of which had been transferred or preserved at the time of this writing. In the years following Valverde's experiments with video, as the medium became more and more accessible, an ever-increasing number of artists turned to it either as their primary creative vehicle or as one of several media in which to work. Valverde did not. His videos from the 1970s represent a brief flirtation with a new medium by a restless artist exploring the diverse creative opportunities available to him.

The longest and most substantial of his videos is an extended interview with his sister, Maya, on her thirtieth birthday (fig. 1). The two siblings, youngest and next to youngest in a family of eleven, were particularly close. Ricardo and Maya were the only two in the family to attend college, and they clearly felt a deep affinity. Maya is also the subject of many portraits and candid images of domesticity and everyday life. In fact, the announcement for Ricardo Valverde's MFA thesis exhibition in 1976 features an image of Maya with her partner, seated together in the open back of a van, looking directly at the camera. The conversation between siblings takes place at Las Hermanas Women's Cultural Center and Coffeehouse, the San Diego women's collective where Maya lives. On the occasion of her birthday, Maya assesses the last decade of her life, a clearly turbulent period during which she

Figure 1. Ricardo Valverde, frame from *Mujeres (Women)*, ca. 1974. Video tape, transferred to digital format.



married, had two children, divorced, took vows as a Catholic novice, left the convent, came out of the closet, and found a partner; as she summarizes it, “The past ten years have been very rough.” The public disclosure of her sexuality created issues for more-conservative family members. She proudly states that she is the first in the family to come out, but a slip of the tongue betrays some apprehension as to whether she can put the process behind her: “I’m the only member of the family that is coming—that has come out.” Clearly at ease with her interlocutor, Maya segues from autobiographical reflection to a wide-ranging rant against patriarchy, capitalism, the nuclear family, sexism, harassment, the U.S. government’s program of space exploration, discrimination, and the crisis of U.S. imperialism in the Third World. Training as an auto mechanic in a federal program has given Maya much firsthand exposure to gender-based discrimination and sexist expectations and prejudices. In this meandering and spontaneous interview, Maya calls for socialist revolution and states that the ongoing crisis of capitalism is evidence that this change is imminent.

At some point in the interview, the conversation shifts to Maya’s work at Las Hermanas. The collective, founded by a group of mostly working-class Chicana feminists including Dolores Valenzuela, Carlota Hernández, and Teresa Oyos, featured feminist film screenings and live performances of jazz and folk music by the likes of Holly Near and Joan Armatrading. In the video interview, after she describes her participation and goals for the cultural center, Ricardo playfully asks his sister, “So do you think we could go there and get some takeout?” Shaking her head, she is forced to state what they both already know: “No, it’s for...we have a policy of women only, [laughter] so you wouldn’t be welcome [laughter].” Ricardo demands that his sister justify the distinction between a safe space for women only and a discriminatory policy of exclusion.

Maya: Channel 38 wanted to do an interview on us, and we told them we’d do an interview outside because they didn’t have any women, camerawomen, or any camera people who are women.

Ricardo: It sounds like discrimination.

Maya: It is! Oh really! It sure is discrimination. Why wouldn’t they have camerawomen?

Her partner: Really.

Maya: It sounds—real discrimination.

Maya and Ricardo push back at each other jokingly. She states that the necessity to rethink traditional gender roles is a shared one: “Men need liberation as much as women do, and I suggest men need to get themselves together.” At this point in the conversation, Maya’s young daughter, who is off screen, vocally objects to being excluded and insists on getting her turn with the microphone.

Maya: So, you know, you talk about discrimination, and you know, it’s rampant. And it’s very much against women. And it’s, I saw this tape—

Daughter: Give it to me. [*unintelligible*] Mom, you’re mean.

Maya: Go ahead.

[*Maya hands the microphone to her daughter.*]

Daughter: And [*unintelligible*] poop on your butt. No. Okay. Well, the way they tell you, well, I can do this and you can’t do that, it’s like, because this is a man’s job, they tell you that. But that’s not right because, because, um, women can do whatever they want. And we can, we can work on a car if we want. Yeah.

Ricardo: And anybody can do whatever they want.

Daughter: Yeah. And anybody can do whatever they want.

[*Cut.*]

The family conversation negotiates a network of norms and challenges to those norms in an intimate and affectionate tone that resonates with the photographs Valverde was producing in this time of many “Changes in the Family,” to use the title of his thesis exhibition.

Around the same time, Valverde videotaped other sequences that suggest the preliminary stages of experimentation with a new medium. The photographer’s son, Jude, four years old at the time, dances and threatens the camera with a toy pistol while wearing a monstrous mask (fig. 2). The low-resolution black and white video lacks the richness of visual textures and tonalities of Ralph Eugene Meatyard’s photographs of his masked children, but the video shares something of their spirit. Another sequence captures a series of abject self-portraits in the bathtub in close up, as the photographer feigns death (fig. 3). Other tapes record a long traveling shot taken from a moving car or the reflections of light off a fast-moving railroad train (fig. 4). All these sequences share the strictly visual sensibility of still photography, while the conversation with his sister Maya foregrounds the voice. In addition, the Valverde archive contains the other handful of tapes shot in several distinct formats, which are from around the same moment. Because these have not yet

Figure 2. Ricardo Valverde, frame from *Untitled (Mask)*, ca. 1973–1976. Video tape, transferred to digital format.
Figure 3. Ricardo Valverde, frame from *Untitled (Drowning)*, ca. 1973–1976. Video tape, transferred to digital format.



been preserved, there is little that can be said about the content beyond the simple descriptive notes on the tapes themselves, such as “Jude” and “Espie,” that name family members (and recurring photographic subjects). Valverde never returned to video after these tentative first steps. He experimented with the moving image as part of what was an ongoing process of exploration and self-discovery that led him back to photography.

Figure 4. Ricardo Valverde, frame from *Freeway Dreams*, ca. 1973–1976. Video tape, transferred to digital format.



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted, objects are from the Esperanza Valverde and Christopher J. Valverde Collection

Espie Sleeping

1970s
Gelatin silver print
11 x 7 inches

Maya

1970s
Gelatin silver print
4 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Polaroids

1970s
Seven Polaroid prints
4 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches each

Untitled

1970s
Gelatin silver print
10 x 8 inches

Untitled

1970s
Rose-tinted gelatin silver print
8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 inches

Untitled

From the Experimental series
1970–1975
Twenty light box images scanned from scratched, burned, and hand-colored 35 mm color slides

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
5 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
8 x 5 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
8 x 10 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Untitled

1971
Color print
8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
9 x 12 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1971
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches



Ricardo Valverde, *La Virgen de Guadaluja* (The Virgin of Guadaluja), 1992. Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache, 11 x 14 inches.

- Untitled*
1971
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches
- Untitled*
1971
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches
- Untitled*
From the Corporate Logos and Graffiti series
1971–1981
Fifty-one images, scanned from 35 mm color slides
- Untitled*
1972
Gelatin silver print
8 x 10 inches
- Mother and Son*
1973
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 inches
- Untitled*
1973
Solarized gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches
- Sapo (Toad)*
ca. 1973–1974
Glazed stoneware and natural fibers
6 x 13 x 10 inches
- Untitled*
ca. 1973–1974
Glazed stoneware in five parts
7½ x 23 x 16 inches
- Untitled*
ca. 1973–1974
Glazed stoneware and natural fibers
7 x 18 x 15 inches
- Freeway Dreams*
ca. 1973–1976
EIAJ-1 Sony video (transferred to digital format)
8 minutes, 37 seconds
- Untitled (Mask)*
ca. 1973–1976
EIAJ-1 Sony video (transferred to digital format)
3 minutes, 1 second
- Untitled (Drowning)*
ca. 1973–1976
EIAJ-1 Sony video (transferred to digital format)
3 minutes 45 seconds
- Mujeres (Women)*
ca. 1974
EIAJ-1 Sony video (transferred to digital format)
36 minutes, 44 seconds
- Reflections, Mazatlán, Mexico*
1974
Color print
7⅞ x 9⅞ inches
- Untitled*
1974
Gelatin silver print
8 x 10 inches
- Untitled*
From the Low Rider series
1974
Twenty-two projected images, scanned from 35 mm color slides
- VNE (Varrío Nuevo Estrada)*
1974
Twenty-one gelatin silver prints in a hardbound artist's book
5 x 8 x ½ inches; photos, 5 x 8 inches each
- Invitation to Ricardo Valverde's master's thesis exhibition, *Cambios en la Familia* (Changes in the Family)
1976
Paper flyer
8 x 5 inches
- La juventud y la vejez: Photos by Ricardo Valverde* (Youth and Old Age: Photos by Ricardo Valverde)
1976
Sixteen gelatin silver prints in a two-volume artist's book
6½ x 4½ x 2½ inches; photos, 4 x 6 inches each
- Untitled*
1976
Gelatin silver print
6 x 9 inches
- Untitled*
1976
Gelatin silver print
14 x 11 inches
- Untitled*
From the Day of the Dead series
1976–1993
Twenty-one images, scanned from 35 mm color and black-and-white slides
- Aliso Village*
From the Aliso Village series
1977
Gelatin silver print
8⅞ x 12⅞ inches



Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, from the Day of the Dead series, 1980s. Black and white slide.

Aliso Village
From the Aliso Village series
1977
Gelatin silver print
8⅞ x 12⅞ inches

Aliso Village
From the Aliso Village series
1977
Gelatin silver print
8⅞ x 12⅞ inches

Aliso Village
From the Aliso Village series
1977
Gelatin silver print
8⅞ x 12⅞ inches

Double Shot
1977
Gelatin silver prints
4 x 6⅞ inches each

Double Step
1977
Gelatin silver prints
4 x 6⅞ inches each

Double Take
1977
Gelatin silver prints
4 x 6⅞ inches each

Double Thick
1977
Gelatin silver prints
4 x 6⅞ inches each

Untitled
1977
Gelatin silver print
3½ x 5¼ inches

Untitled
1977
Plexiglas, gelatin silver print, rubber tube,
paper, and ink
9 x 10½ x 8½ inches

*Kenny's Kar Klub Series—A Dickie Duck
Postcard*
1978
Six gelatin silver prints on card stock
3½ x 4¾ inches each

Nude #1
1978
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Nude #2
1978
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Untitled
1978
Solarized gelatin silver print
11 x 17 inches
Collection of Carl and Luz Meyerson

Untitled
1979
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Untitled
1979
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Untitled (Half Nude)
1979
Gelatin silver print
11 x 14 inches

Boulevard Night
1979
Gelatin silver print
12½ x 18¼ inches

New Year's Greetings
1979–1992
Ink on paper
Various dimensions

Hermanas (Sisters)
1980
Gelatin silver print
8 x 12 inches
Collection of Carl and Luz Meyerson

Untitled
1970s/1990s
Gelatin silver print with pen
5⅞ x 8 inches

Untitled
1971/1990s
Gelatin silver print with hand-applied
pigment
5½ x 8 inches

Amazing Grace (Black)
1990
Tricolor offset lithograph with pastel
12 x 9 inches

Carro/Peso (Car/Money)
1990
Tricolor offset lithograph with pastel and
peso note
12 x 9 inches

Untitled
1990
Tricolor offset lithograph
9 x 12 inches



Ricardo Valverde, *Homenaje* (Homage),
1992. Gelatin silver print with acrylic and
gouache, 14 x 11 inches.

<i>Untitled</i> 1990 Tricolor offset lithograph 9 x 12 inches	<i>Santo, Yo, El Diablo</i> (The Saint, I, The Devil) From the El Santo, El Diablo y Yo series 1975/1991 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and hand-applied pigment 7¾ x 9¾ inches Collection of David and Sue Auther	<i>Espiritu Santo Ruega por Nosotros</i> (Holy Spirit Pray for Us) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 11 x 14 inches
<i>Untitled</i> 1990 Tricolor offset lithograph 10 x 8 inches	<i>I See What You Never Saw</i> 1976/1991 Gelatin silver print with acrylic 8 x 10 inches	<i>El Fin del Mundo</i> (The End of the World) 1992 Solarized gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 11 x 14 inches
<i>Untitled</i> 1990 Tricolor offset lithograph 9 x 12 inches	<i>Jack</i> 1976/1991 Gelatin silver print with hand-applied pigment 11 x 14 inches	<i>Homenaje</i> (Homage) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 14 x 11 inches
<i>Untitled</i> 1990 Tricolor offset lithograph with pastel and pen 10 x 8 inches	<i>Boulevard Night</i> 1979/1991 Gelatin silver print with hand-applied pigment 11 x 14 inches	<i>El Ladron del Pan Santificado</i> (The Thief of the Holy Bread) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 11 x 14 inches
<i>Untitled</i> 1990 Tricolor offset lithograph with pastel and pen 10 x 8 inches	<i>Conquista de la Cruz</i> (Conquest of the Cross) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic, hand-stamped acrylic, ink, and gouache 11 x 14 inches	<i>Mientras en Los Angeles</i> (Meanwhile in Los Angeles) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 14 x 11 inches
<i>Untitled</i> 1990 Tricolor offset lithograph with pastel and lottery ticket 10 x 8 inches	<i>La Dejada</i> (Sloven) 1992 Acrylic and solarized gelatin print on fabric 26½ x 29¼ inches	<i>El Santo de los de Abajo</i> (The Saint of the Underdogs) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 14 x 11 inches
<i>Untitled</i> 1971/1990 Color print with hand-applied pigment 8½ x 11 inches	<i>Diablitos del Diamante</i> (Devils of the Diamonds) 1992 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache 11 x 14 inches	
<i>Portrait of the Artist as a Young(er) Man</i> 1991 Gelatin silver print with acrylic and hand-applied pigment 6½ x 10 inches Collection of Adam and Lupita Avila		



Ricardo Valverde, *Untitled*, 1971. Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 inches.

La Virgen de Guadaluja (The Virgin of Guadaluja)

1992

Gelatin silver print with acrylic and gouache

11 x 14 inches

Consencia (Conscience)

1971/1992

Acrylic and solarized gelatin print on fabric
25½ x 30 inches

Metáfora (Metaphor)

1979/1992

Acrylic and gelatin silver print on fabric
25½ x 30 inches

Self-Portrait con Mick

1973/1993

Gelatin silver print with hand-applied pigment and scratching

10 x 8 inches

La Espera II (The Wait II)

1979/1993

Gelatin silver print with acrylic, ink, and scratching

11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1979/1993

Gelatin silver print with scratching

11 x 14 inches

Hernán Cortés Busca La Malinche (Hernan Cortes Searches for La Malinche)

1983/1993

Gelatin silver print with hand-applied pigment

8½ x 11 inches

Sanctity

1973/1994

Solarized gelatin silver print with adhesive labels, hand-applied pigment, and scratching

14 x 11 inches

Integrated School

1974/1994

Gelatin silver prints with gold leaf, silver leaf, acrylic, and tinted Cellophane
9½ x 13 inches

Segregated Neighborhood

1974/1994

Gelatin silver prints with acrylic and scratching

8 x 10 inches

Untitled

1978/1994

Gelatin silver print with adhesive labels and scratching

11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1978/1994

Gelatin silver print with adhesive labels and scratching

11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1978/1994

Gelatin silver print with adhesive labels and scratching

11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1978/1994

Gelatin silver print with adhesive labels and scratching

11 x 14 inches

Untitled

1978/1994

Gelatin silver print with adhesive labels and scratching

11 x 14 inches

Envy

1995

Oil, acrylic, gelatin silver prints, hand-applied pigment, scratching, gold leaf, and adhesive labels on paper

22½ x 30¼ inches

Homicide

1995

Acrylic and gelatin silver print on paper
22½ x 30¼ inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints and ink on watercolor paper

15 x 11½ inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints and ink on watercolor paper

15 x 11½ inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints, ink, and acrylic on watercolor paper

15 x 11½ inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints, ink, and adhesive labels on watercolor paper

11½ x 14 inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints, ink, and staples on watercolor paper

11½ x 15 inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints, ink, pen, and adhesive labels on watercolor paper

15 x 11½ inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints, ink, pen, and pencil on watercolor paper

11½ x 14 inches

Untitled

From the Mejico and LA series

1996

Gelatin silver prints, ink, pen, and pencil on watercolor paper

11½ x 14 inches

CONTRIBUTORS

Armando Cristeto Patiño is a photographer, curator, and researcher based in Mexico City. He studied medicine at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Mexico City and started practicing photography in 1977. He has been an active member of the Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía since 1980 and was its president and curator from 1996 to 1998. He collaborates with the Fototeca Nacional of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and the Instituto Potosíno de Bellas Artes, helping organize exhibitions and conferences, giving lectures, and participating in workshops. Since 2007 he has been the coordinator of the degree in contemporary photography at UNAM.

In the 1970s and 1980s he was a member of the Grupo de Fotógrafos Independientes and the multidisciplinary art group Peyote y la Compañía. His artwork has been shown in numerous solo and groups exhibitions, including *Fotografía Latinoamericana contemporánea* (Centre George Pompidou, Paris, 1982), *El cuerpo aludido: Anatomías y construcciones, México, siglos XVII–XX* (Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City, 1998), *La era de la discrepancia: Arte y cultura visual en México 1968–1997* (Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes, Mexico City, 2007), and *Revelación, revuelta y ficción* (Centro de la Imagen, Mexico City, 2007).

Cristeto has curated numerous exhibitions and his essays and articles have been published in art magazines such as *Alquimia*, *Hecho en Latinoamérica*, *Cuartoscuro*, *Art in America*, *Afterimage*, and *Luna Córnea* and in collections such as *La era de la discrepancia: Arte y cultura visual en México, 1968–1997* (UNAM, 2007) and *Conversaciones con 22 fotógrafos mexicanos* (Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2007).

Cecilia Fajardo-Hill is a British-Venezuelan art historian and curator in modern and contemporary art. Currently based in Southern California, she has a PhD in art history from the University of Essex, and an MA in twentieth-century art history from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

Fajardo-Hill was the chief curator and vice-president of curatorial affairs at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, California, from 2009 to 2012. Previously she was the director and chief curator of the Cisneros Fontanals Arts Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Miami devoted to the promotion of contemporary art from Latin America, and the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection, an international collection of contemporary art, from 2005 to 2008, and from 1997 to 2001 she was the general director of Sala Mendoza, an alternative space for contemporary art in Caracas. She has curated and organized numerous group and solo exhibitions of international artists such as Susan Hiller and Mona Hatoum and emerging and mid-career contemporary artists from Latin America such as Johanna Calle, Mariana Castillo Deball, Leandro Erlich, and Javier Téllez. Fajardo-Hill has published broadly on contemporary art and artists from Latin America.

At present she is co-curating, with Andrea Giunta, *The Political Body: Radical Women in Latin American Art 1960–1985*, a survey of radical artistic practices by women artists in Latin America; part of the Getty's Pacific Standard Time: LALA initiative, it will open at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles in 2017. Other current curatorial projects include a multiplatform project on contemporary abstraction in Latin America organized for the Sayago & Pardon initiative Abstraction in Action; and *XIX Bienal Paiz* in Guatemala, for which she is the general curator. In collaboration with the Getty Research Institute, she conceived and organized the international symposium *Between Theory and Practice: Rethinking Latin American Art in the 21st Century*, which was held in 2011 at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, the Getty Research Institute, and MALI in Lima, Peru.

Chon A. Noriega is director of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and a professor in the UCLA Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media. He is author of *Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema* (University of Minnesota, 2000), co-author of *Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement* (LACMA/California, 2008), and co-editor of *L.A. Xicano* (CSRC Press, 2011). He is editor of nine other books and three book series. Since 1996 he has been editor of *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*. He co-curated four interrelated exhibitions on Chicano art from 1945 through 1980 that were on display at three art museums in Los Angeles from October 2011 through February 2012. His awards include the Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship

in the History of Art, the Rockefeller Foundation Film/Video/Multimedia Fellowship, and the Ann C. Rosenfield Distinguished Community Partnership Prize.

Jesse Lerner is a documentary filmmaker, a writer and curator, and a professor of media studies at Pitzer College in Claremont, California. He received his PhD from Claremont Graduate University, his MA from the University of Southern California, and his BA in Latin American studies from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Lerner's short films *Magnavoz* (2006), *T.S.H.* (2004), and *Natives* (1991, with Scott Sterling) and feature-length documentaries *Atomic Sublime* (2010), *The American Egypt* (2001), *Ruins* (1999), and *Frontierland* (1995, with Rubén Ortiz-Torres) have won prizes at film festivals in the United States, Latin America, and Japan and have shown at New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Sydney Biennale and the Sundance Film Festival. He has curated film and photography exhibitions for the Robert Flaherty Seminar, the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao, and the National Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City; *The Shock of Modernity* (2004), an exhibition of crime photography in Mexico City, originated at Centro Fotográfico Manuel Álvarez Bravo in Oaxaca and traveled to museums in Mexico City and Claremont. He is the author of *F Is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth's Undoing* (with Alex Juhasz; University of Minnesota Press, 2006), *The Maya of Modernism: Art, Architecture, and Film* (University of New Mexico Press, 2011), and *The Shock of Modernity* (Turner, 2007).

Karen Rapp is the director of the Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College. A longtime resident of Southern California, Rapp earned her BA in history and art history from the University of California, Los Angeles and her MA in cultural history from the University of California, Riverside. Prior to this appointment Rapp was the civic art coordinator for the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, which administers the percent-for-art program for the County of Los Angeles. She has also held positions at the Sweeney Art Gallery at UC Riverside, the California Museum of Photography at UC Riverside, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Prussian State Art Library in Berlin, Germany. Rapp is known for her interdisciplinary work within the arts as well as for building connections with communities through exhibitions and public programming.

RESOURCES

*Selected resources available through the
UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center*

MATERIALS ON RICARDO VALVERDE

Ricardo Valverde, by Ramón García (2013),
A Ver: Revisioning Art History, volume
8, CSRC Press
Richard Valverde Digital Image Collection,
CSRC Library

RELATED COLLECTIONS ON CHICANO PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE CSRC LIBRARY

Oscar R. Castillo Photograph Collection*
Garment Workers of Los Angeles
Photograph Collection*
La Raza Newspaper and Magazine Records
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Investigative Files Pertaining to the
Death of Ruben Salazar*
Los Angeles Latino Families Photo Project*
Yolanda Retter-Vargas Collection of
Orphan Photographs*
Josefa L. Serna Papers
Nancy Tovar Murals of East L.A. Collection*
Roybal (Edward R.) Photograph Collection*

*Also accessible through the UCLA Library |
Digital Collection

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ART/ART HISTORY/CHICANO STUDIES

Ricardo Valverde: Experimental Sights, 1971–1996, an exhibition at Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College in collaboration with the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, is the first survey of Valverde's extensive body of work. A resident of Los Angeles, Valverde worked in diverse styles and from multiple perspectives. His photographs and multimedia pieces focused on many subjects, including families (particularly his own), neighborhoods, and cultural practices in Los Angeles and in Mexico. The essays presented in this catalog—by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, guest curator of the exhibition, Armando Cristeto Patiño, and Jesse Lerner—explore the different aspects of Valverde's art and argue for his importance as an experimental artist who ranged far beyond the documentary aspects of photography.



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