

# LACMA 'Home' Exhibit Offers 'So Different' Perspectives

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Home conjures up different images to different people: an immediate family, a building or room, a community, a city, or a country. An exhibit opening June 11at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) shows various artists' perspectives of "Home—So Different, So Appealing: Art from the Americas since 1957."

Featuring approximately 100 pieces, the exhibition offers an artistic look at the concept of home. The artworks illustrate familiar objects in residences, personal memories, community design, political repression and immigration concerns, diaspora, and more. There are paintings, sculptures, performance pieces, photos, and videos. Many employ materials from homes, such as floor plans, carpets, and even destroyed furniture turned into sculptures.

This is the first group show at a major area museum focused on

Latin American and Latino art in more than 50 years. It features 40 artists who are from large Latino groups from the U.S. (of Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican descent), Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, and Uruguay.



“We are thrilled to present ‘Home—So Different, So Appealing,’ the first of five exhibitions at LACMA in conjunction with ‘Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA

(<http://guardianlv.com/2017/05/southern-california-becoming-la-la-land-pacific-standard-time/>),’ the ambitious regional collaboration devoted to exploring Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles,” said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “Drawing from a range of artist voices, this exhibition offers a thought-provoking look into the ways in which Latino and Latin American artists have understood the idea of ‘home’ amid a changing political and socioeconomic landscape.”

## Different Approach

The LACMA exhibition is organized thematically into sub-categories of “home” versus traditional approaches by country or timeframe. The curators used a “constellation model” that juxtaposed works from different nationalities and generations in the galleries with the idea of visitors comparing and contrasting pieces. “The constellations are arranged according to conceptual or formal affinities as well as tensions that illuminate unsuspected relations between the artists and their production,” explained co-curator Mari Carmen Ramírez (curator and International Center for the Arts of the Americas director for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, whose earlier exhibitions developed this model).

Co-curator Chon Noriega (CSRC director and adjunct curator at LACMA) noted that this gives the works their due and put them in play with other works. The artists and pieces speak across social history and art history to get at something about home that is so different, so appealing, as the show is named.

Walking through the LACMA galleries is a treasure hunt with dissimilar pieces catching visitors’ eyes and conveying diverse messages. In fact, some require careful scrutiny from different directions to capture aspects. For example, “Políptico de Buenos Aires (2014/2016),” a polyptych by the artist collective Mondongo, requires careful study. The interior panels show a vast shantytown. The outside panels show better-off Argentinians inside their nice high-rise homes with windows showing the outside reality.

## Thematic constellations of works

Each constellation is a meditation on interpretations of “home” as a concept, whether referring to the womb, one’s house, neighborhood, community, etc.

- The first section, **Model Homes**, looks at the single-family house as an economic and social American Dream goal. A photo by Livia Corona Benjamin, called “47,547 Homes (2009),” shows vast poorly planned public housing developments built in Mexico for low-wage workers. Missing many basic infrastructure needs like schools, markets, or churches, “these are not the neighborhoods of a ‘Home Sweet Home’ dream fulfilled.” as Benjamin has noted. They “are ubiquitous grids of ecological and social intervention on a scale and of consequences that are difficult to grasp.”
- In **Archeology of the Home**, the works show deconstructed furniture and spaces as sculptures as well as paintings that depict the significance of personal or family objects. One piece here is “720 Sq. Ft.: Household Mutations (2010)” by Carmen Argote. It features the carpet that once covered the floors of her childhood home painted white except for a one-foot border around the edges and various stains or marks that reflect her family history. As an artwork, it is huge, but it shows how small her domestic milieu was within the vast gallery.
- **Mapping Home** artworks use floor plans or maps to merge the exterior geography with interior representations.



- The fourth section, **Recycled Homes**, features pieces that span the boundary between debris and domesticity. They reflect how low-income urban dwellers will recycle materials they find to construct their homes.
- **Home as Forms** features works that show the difference between domestic contexts and household life. This includes a series by Ramiro Gomez that uses upscale magazine images on which he painted acrylic images of an uncomfortable gardener or maid waiting for their pay.
- **Embodied Homes** examines the relationship of the females to domesticity and relationships with household life.
- **Troubled Homeland** explores the violence and patriotism that affect people’s view of their nation. This includes two triptychs by Juan Sánchez, “Conditions That Exist” and “¿Dónde está mi casa?” on on Puerto Rico’s colonial status.
- The last constellation groupings, **Going Home**, address immigration and the displacement involved in journeys northward and crossing borders for a “better” home. The eye-catching “Ark” painting, created by Luis Cruz Azaceta, reflects

the desperation of the over 30,000 Cubans who tried to come to the U.S. during 1994 Cuban Rafter Crisis. It faces a minimalist sculpture by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled (North),” with light blubs as beacons pointing the way to the U.S. border.

The “Home—So Different, So Appealing” exhibit at LACMA is the vanguard of the Getty’s “Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA” initiative (<http://guardianlv.com/2017/05/southern-california-becoming-la-la-land-pacific-standard-time/>) that will soon encompass museums and cultural settings throughout Southern California. This exhibit will be at LACMA until October 15. Then, it will be featured at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, from November 2017 to February 2018.

By Dyanne Weiss

Sources:

Exhibition Preview

LACMA: Exhibition Advisory: Home – So Different, So Appealing: Art from the Americas since 1957

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Photos by Dyanne Weiss of “Políptico de Buenos Aires (2014/2016),” a polyptych by the artist collective Mondongo, courtesy of LACMA.

Photo of “47,547 Homes, 2009” by Livia Corona Benjamin, chromogenic print, edition of 5 + 2 A.P., 30 x 38 in., courtesy of the artist and Parque Galería, © 2009 Livia Corona Benjamin

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