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"Laura Aguilar's work speaks to so many people," Pilar Tompkins Rivas, the director of VPAM, said in an email. "Her work is personal, political, celebratory, and difficult, all at the same time. She speaks about a journey of self-acceptance—she speaks about visibility and difference, and the nature of life's challenges."

Despite having spent years without widespread critical acclaim, Aguilar remained confident and continued producing powerful work. Maybe it's best to remember Aguilar by the ways she depicted herself. In one work from the "Latina Lesbians" series, she's seen smiling and wearing a cowboy hat, standing in front of a reproduction of a Frida Kahlo self-portrait. Beneath her image, a caption reads, "Im not comfortable with the word Lesbian but as each day go's by I'm more and more comfortable with the word LAURA. I know some people see me as very child like, naive. Maybe so. I am. But I will be damned if I let this part of me die!"