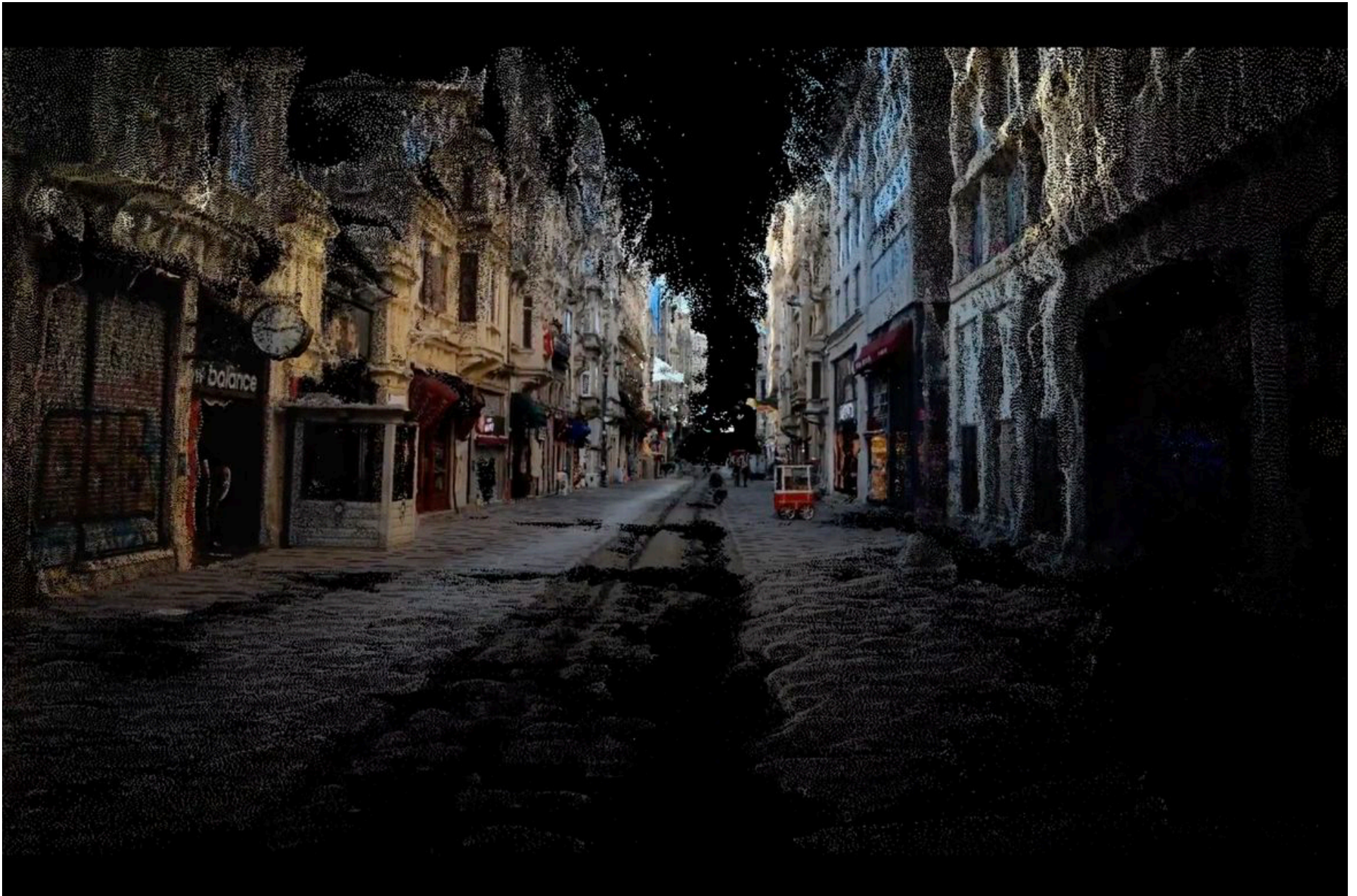


## LA Art Show has a strong UCLA vibe

Professor Chon Noriega helped curate the show, which features alumnae Carmen Agote and Zeynep Abes



*Zeynep Abes*

“Memory Place,” by artist and UCLA alumna Zeynep Abes, which she describes as “an exploration of three moments of memory particular to the fraying certainty of my home. The piece navigates through visualizations of private and public recollections, delving into the Istanbul I once called home, now existing increasingly more as an idea than a place.”

### Jessica Wolf | July 28, 2021

Two UCLA alumni, Carmen Argote and Zeynep Abes, are part of this year’s DIVERSEartLA program at the LA Art Show, which was curated by UCLA professor Chon Noriega.

Noriega, a distinguished professor of film, television and digital media in the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, said he was drawn to the new works by Argote and Abes, which were created and experienced entirely online during the pandemic. Now, their multimedia installations will be on view in person for the first time in the exhibition “Immersive Distancing,” presented by UCLA’s Chicano Studies Research Center.

“Immersive Distancing” is part of the DIVERSEartLA section of the LA Art Show, which opens Thursday, July 29, and runs through Sunday, Aug. 1 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

This is the fourth exhibition Noriega has curated for LA Art Show. DIVERSEartLA’s 2021 focus is on women and non-binary artists bringing together art, science and technology, for which both Argote, whose piece is titled “[Last Light](#),” and Abes, whose piece is titled “[Memory Place](#),” were a natural fit.

“Their works offer a new way of thinking about home and the urban landscape,” Noriega said. “Ironically, the iPhone and internet made it possible for the artists to make these works during the ‘shelter at home’ phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing them to work around the necessary distancing, while the fact of having to do so also foregrounded the inherent isolation and non-presence of social media.”

Using photographs, video and photogrammetry, Argote and Abes integrate their experiences in Los Angeles during the first phase of the COVID-19 lockdown as part of the work itself, revealing ways in which they navigated isolation, loneliness and challenging personal situations.



*Carmen Argote*

Shot during the first wave of the pandemic, the artist Carmen Argote's first film, "Last Light," is a meditation on walking and memory in Los Angeles. Argote describes her walking habit as synonymous with thinking, a way of taking in and digesting the conditions of her environment. Through walking, the artist "deconstructs and reconstructs my ideas, thoughts and self."

Noriega watched and re-watched their online works during a 14-day quarantine, feeling a sense of immersion in the isolation.

"The artists were pulling in the viewer and immersing them in visual stories about the loss of a certain presence in the world, where one no longer feels directly connected to the past, a society, and a sense of home," said Noriega, who recently stepped down as director of the Chicano Studies Research Center. "That immersion is a complicated thing. How does one capture loss? I feel each work offers a subtle answer in their meditative nature ... Carmen's walks across Los Angeles, Zeynep's flights between her native Istanbul and her new home in Los Angeles. There is no easy answer, but you get a sense of their resilience through movement, looking and listening."

Noriega encountered Argote, who holds an M.F.A. from the UCLA art department as he researched the 2017 Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition "Home — So Different, So Appealing." He met Abes virtually after Noriega participated in 2020 installment of UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture's "[10 Questions](#)" series. Abes was inspired by the conversation around "What is Power?" drawing parallels between the experiences of Latino artists in the United States that Noriega discussed and her own experiences in Turkey. She earned an M.F.A. in design media arts.

Now in its 26th year, the [LA Art Show](#) partners with Los Angeles's major art institutions, as well as features artworks from 120 galleries and across 23 countries.

"I wanted the 'Immersive Distancing' exhibition to bring these artists' work into public space, since it has only been seen online," Noriega said. "Given the power and impact of their work, the 250,000-square-foot space of the LA Art Show seemed appropriate."

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