

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vincent Price Art Museum Presents

[We Place Life at the Center / Situamos la vida en el centro](#)

**An exhibition of art, science, and environmental justice in the Americas
Presented as part of PST ART: *Art & Science Collide***

On View Sept. 28, 2024 – Mar. 2, 2025



Carolina Caycedo, *Fuel to Fire* (video still), 2023, Video, color, sound. Courtesy of the artist.

MONTEREY PARK, Calif. – Opening Sept. 28, 2024, the [Vincent Price Art Museum \(VPAM\)](#) at **East Los Angeles College (ELAC)** proudly presents [We Place Life at the Center / Situamos la vida en el centro](#), an exhibition, publication, and educational platform exploring points of exchange among art, science, and environmental justice in the Americas. The project stems from the work of Los Angeles-based Colombian artist **Carolina Caycedo**, whose art and research engage with the interrelated issues of water and land stewardship, food sovereignty, and fair and just energy transition.

“For more than a decade, Carolina Caycedo’s work has been central in raising awareness of art and the environment—where these two areas intersect, diverge, and make space for social justice,” said **VPAM Curator of Exhibitions Joseph Valencia**. “This project leverages Caycedo’s expansive network to create new opportunities for learning and action for artists, environmentalists, students, and community members within Los Angeles and across the Americas.”

Building upon four years of research and fieldwork in frontline communities across the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the project promotes alternative solutions to global climate crisis rooted in ecofeminist and environmental justice perspectives, and fosters networks of solidarity and action among diverse organizations and social movements throughout the Western Hemisphere.

“Our hemispheric approach responds to the urgency for recognizing allies and companions in contexts that may be geographically distant, but closely knitted in how we are debating and tackling the energy and climate crises far beyond the current capitalist model,” said Caycedo. “This project represents our attempt to highlight solutions and proposals across the continent to help underscore how energy does not limit itself to electricity, but is instead the ultimate sustenance for life on our planet.”

Running through March 2025, *We Place Life at the Center / Situamos la vida en el centro* debuts among more than 70 exhibitions and programs presented as part of PST ART. Returning in September 2024 with its latest edition, *PST ART: Art & Science Collide*, this landmark regional event explores the intersections of art and science, both past and present. PST ART is presented by Getty. For more information about *PST ART: Art & Science Collide*, please visit pst.art.

The exhibition assembles 35 artworks in various mediums produced by Caycedo since 2018 — several on view for the first time — alongside 30 artworks from artists and environmental movements within Caycedo’s network. More than the presentation of a single artist’s work, the exhibition provides a dynamic space for knowledge-sharing across communities and geographies, inviting members of the public to reflect on the interconnectivity of the natural world and shared responsibility in its stewardship. In doing so, the exhibition seeks to recognize the power of individual and collective efforts to confront the global extractive energy system and its negative effects on the planet.



Carolina Caycedo and MAB (Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens),
Águas para a vida / Water is Life, 2016, Geochoreography. Courtesy of the artist.

“We are especially excited about the opportunity to partner with our students and colleagues at East Los Angeles College,” said **VPAM Director Steven Wong**. “The project’s educational component allowed us to offer a new interdisciplinary course and travel program to Mexico City’s Xochimilco last Spring, as well as the opportunity to integrate ELAC students in the exhibition’s research, development, implementation, and public programs.”

The exhibition’s development has included several online and in-person events organized since 2021, including a research advisor’s convening, a specialized course on art and environmental studies co-taught with the ELAC Department of Anthropology, Geography and Geology, and a unique travel program and gathering of students, artists, scientists, and environmental leaders in the canals of Xochimilco, Mexico City.

The aim of the project is much grander than the single exhibition. As Colombian environmentalist and **project research advisor Tatiana Roa Avendaño** eloquently stated, “It is about going further than a change in the energy matrix; the planetary crisis demands radical cultural transformations from us. In other words, to rethink our relationships with nature and between human beings.”

We Place Life at the Center / Situamos la vida en el centro is organized by the Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College. The exhibition is curated by Joseph Valencia, Curator of Exhibitions, with the assistance of Nadia Estrada, PST ART Project Manager, and Gloria Ortega, Curatorial Assistant.

Exhibition Highlights

- Caycedo's ***Water Portraits*** (2015–Ongoing) and ***Plant Portraits*** (2021–Ongoing) series provocatively reorient the Western portraiture tradition toward non-human living beings such as rivers, waterfalls, and a diverse cast of plants of varying bio-cultural significance. Several works within these related series are on view in the exhibition, inviting viewers to consider the agency of these subjects and what can be learned from them.
- Caycedo's ***Fuel to Fire*** (2023), a single-channel video, highlights the importance of individual actions and rituals as gestures to uphold the ecological balance of the earth. The video depicts a *pagamento* or payback of gold to a body of water in the Páramo de Santurbán, an unprotected moorland ecosystem in northwestern Colombia known for its sought-after gold deposits. As viewers witness the hands and bodies engage with gold and return it to the river, Caycedo reminds them of the importance of reciprocity and care over the logic of ownership and extraction.
- A new ***Los Angeles-Colombia collaborative mural*** (2024) depicts the ecologies and environmental justice issues of two locations of significance to Caycedo: Los Angeles's Eastside, where the artist lives, and Colombia, where she was raised. The collaborative artwork was created through a series of online and in-person exchanges among VPAM, Caycedo, students at East Los Angeles College, artists/water protectors of Seres de Rio in Colombia, and muralist **Pavel Acevedo**. The resulting mural highlights hemispheric solidarities and collective struggles to protect our lands, waters, and communities.
- Artworks from artists and environmental movements within Caycedo's network, including **Annelia Hillman** (lower Klamath River); **Mercedes Dorame** (Los Angeles); **Coyotl + Macehualli** (Los Angeles); **MAB–Movement of People Affected by Dams** (Brazil); **El Movimiento Social en defensa de los rios Sogamoso y Chucuri** (Colombia); **ASPROCIG–The Association of Fishermen, Farmers, Indigenous and Afrodescendant Community** (Colombia); and **Ruta del Castor** (Mexico), among others.

About the Lead Artist

Carolina Caycedo is a multidisciplinary artist based in Los Angeles. Her practice and research focus on the future of our shared resources, ecosocial transition, and bio-cultural diversity. Her art installations, performances, videos, sculptures, and artist's books examine social and environmental issues and contribute to the construction of environmental and historical memory. She has exhibited internationally and has developed publicly engaged projects in Los Angeles, Mexico City, Bogotá, San Juan, New York, London, and Paris, among others. Caycedo received a 2023 Soros Arts Fellowship and was the 2023-2024 Artist in Residence at the Getty Research Institute.

Publication

A fully-illustrated English-Spanish publication will be co-published by VPAM and X Artists' Books (XAB) in early 2025. Co-edited by Carolina Caycedo and Joseph Valencia, the publication features research and fieldwork activities, exhibition plates, original essays, and reproduced materials that represent more than 25 environmental justice organizations and collaborators in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Essay contributors illuminate connections between art and science across these locales and emphasize their artistic, curatorial, theoretical, and practical approaches to eco-social transition.



Left: Carolina Caycedo, Crossfade LAB performance with Lido Pimienta, Crescent Ballroom, Phoenix, Arizona, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and CALA Alliance, photograph by Alonso Parra, Lamp Left Media.

Right: Carolina Caycedo, *The Salute of the Fish* (detail), 2022. Artisanal hand-dyed cast net, embroidered patches, thread, steel, acrylic paint, lead weights. Private collection. Photograph by Ruben Diaz.

Public Programs

During the exhibition's run, a robust slate of public programs will include artist talks, exhibition walk-throughs, film screenings, art and seed exchange workshops, student programs, and additional offsite events presented in collaboration with PST ART partners. Details will be announced soon on the [VPAM website](#).

Additionally, an international convening of community scientists and grassroots environmental leaders led by Caycedo will take place in 2025. Co-organized in collaboration with the USC Wrigley Institute for Environment and Sustainability, this unprecedented event aims to strengthen hemispheric solidarity action networks, mobilize political thought through art, and foster collaboration with local contingencies and partners.

The opening of *We Place Life at the Center / Situamos la vida en el centro* will be celebrated with a reception on Saturday, Sept. 28, from 6 to 8 p.m. Admission is free, no reservations required.

We Place Life at the Center / Situamos la vida en el centro is made possible through lead grants from Getty as part of the PST ART: Art & Science Collide initiative.



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All exhibitions and programs at the Vincent Price Art Museum are underwritten by the Vincent Price Art Museum Foundation and East Los Angeles College.



Vincent Price Art Museum participated in the PST ART Climate Impact Program, a groundbreaking integration of climate action, community building, and data reporting. Learn more at pst.art/climate.

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About Vincent Price Art Museum

The Vincent Price Art Museum (VPAM) at East Los Angeles College serves as a unique educational resource for the diverse audiences of the college and the community through the exhibition, interpretation, collection, and preservation of works in all media of the visual arts. VPAM provides an environment to encounter a range of aesthetic expressions that illuminate the depth and diversity of artwork produced by people of the world, both contemporary and past. By presenting thoughtful, innovative, and culturally diverse exhibitions and by organizing cross-disciplinary programs on issues of historical, social, and cultural relevance, VPAM seeks to promote knowledge, inspire creative thinking, and deepen an understanding of and appreciation for the visual arts. Learn more about VPAM at vpam.org.

Follow VPAM on [Facebook](#), [X/Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)!

About East Los Angeles College

East Los Angeles College (ELAC) is the largest of nine two-year community colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). More information about ELAC is available online at www.elac.edu. Follow ELAC on social media at Facebook [@EastLACollege](#), X/Twitter [@EastLACollege](#), and Instagram [@ELACHuskies](#).

About PST ART: Art & Science Collide

Southern California's landmark arts event, PST ART, returns in September 2024, presenting more than 60 exhibitions from organizations across the region exploring the intersections of art and science, both past and present. For more information about PST ART: *Art & Science Collide*, please visit pst.art.

For VPAM press inquiries, please contact Katie Dunham, Katie Dunham Communications, at katie@katedunham.net.