

one  
path two PATSSI VALDEZ  
JOURNEYS  
JUDITHE HERNÁNDEZ

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SEPT 1, 2017–JAN 28, 2018

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Judithe Hernández and Patssi Valdez: One Path Two Journeys  
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An exhibition at Fairplex

## **FAIRPLEX**

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## FOREWARD

**Judithe Hernández and Patssi Valdez: One Path Two Journeys** is the first exhibition to feature both of Los Angeles' pioneering Chicana artists together and marks the Millard Sheets Art Center's inclusion in **Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA**, the far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles. Supported by grants from the Getty Foundation, **Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA** takes place from September through January 2018 at more than 70 cultural institutions across Southern California, including our fellow Los Angeles County partners LA Plaza de Culturas y Artes, The Music Center and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

As President and CEO of Fairplex and the Los Angeles County Fair Association, it is my honor to be a part of this historic exhibition and to bring relevant and legendary artists to our community whose work will be seen by the millions of visitors who come to our annual LA County Fair. In many ways, the Millard Sheets Art Center was the original Los Angeles County art museum. In the 1920s and '30s there were art societies and associations but not many places for the public to go and experience art. The Fair built its fine art building in 1937 and we've displayed local and prominent artists since then. PST: LA/LA not only brings art to the community, but it also reflects the community, enhancing their connection to art and the Fair.

Throughout this project, both Hernández and Valdez, in addition to creating new artwork, have graciously worked with our team to build the relationships necessary for the lending of their artwork from 16 separate collections throughout Southern California. We extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to each of the collectors for their artwork, without whom we would not have the access we do to this fine work.

The writing that accompanies this catalogue has been beautifully produced by Scarlet Cheng, Dr. Ramón García, and Dr. Cristina Isabel Castellano González, each of whom are not only scholars of the artists's work, but fans as well. Through interviews and discussions with each artist, they have given us a unique insight into the artists' views, thoughts and hopes for the artwork and the continuation of politically charged art activism.

The exhibition, that this book fully illustrates, evolved from the work of Thomas Canavan, who has been passionately building the reputation of our fine art programs at Fairplex. As the curator for 'One Path,' Thomas has brought his experience in exhibition design, curating, community programming and project management together to create an exhibition and catalogue that will undoubtedly contribute to the continued growth of these artists and Latino art.

This exhibition is not just about Hernández and Valdez, **Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA**, the Millard Sheets Art Center, Fairplex, or any other institution; it is a message to our community that their heritage matters and that their history deserves to be shared on such a massive scale that is accessible to all. The generations of Mexican and Chicano families, that have made Los Angeles what it is today, have contributed more than any other group to the art, music, education and success of our region. We hope you enjoy this catalogue and learn from these two dynamic artists that we have had the privilege to work with and exhibit here at the Millard Sheets Art Center and celebrate with us the legacy of Latino and Latin American art.

Sincerely,



# **“FROM MEXICAN ROOTS: A CHICANA EXPERIENCE”**

CRISTINA ISABEL CASTELLANO GONZÁLEZ, PH.D.

In the book *Art Worlds*, the American sociologist Howard Becker demonstrated that because the art world is not homogeneous, we must think of the arts pluralistically. Artistic expression is dependent upon contexts which function within specific vocabularies, histories, languages, and emotional structures. If this is true, the complex process of hegemony in the arts has placed Western art in a unique spotlight making it the model for the twentieth century. However, American scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, has also clearly demonstrated that the creativity of bi-national artists is more than a simple synthesis of cultures. Border artists, particularly American-born Chicanos, have been forced by their socio-political status to create art as “outsiders” within the United States and as “foreigners” in their cultural homeland of Mexico. Accepted and rejected by both because of their “otherness” of race, language and culture, they create art in contradiction to the dominant mainstream Euro-centric culture in the U.S. and as cultural orphans in their ancestral home of Mexico. Consequently, Chicano artists have frequently explored issues such as immigration and the challenge of reconciling cultural exile in their work. The term “suspended roots”, first used by the French writer/philosopher Edouard Glissant to confront the myth that celebrates the existence of one-root national identity, is exemplified by the reality of Mexican Americans. By shifting the definitions of class, gender, ethnicity, and cultural borders, U.S. Chicana/o artists have developed their “own voice”. Beyond ethnocentrism, they have found both creative freedom and magical imagination.

## **JUDITHE HERNÁNDEZ AND PATSSI VALDEZ**

Judithe Hernández and Patssi Valdez are Chicana artists who have created art in Los Angeles since the 1970s. A city which is the epicenter of ethnic cultural fusion, blending imagination with intellect in a socio-politically charged atmosphere that is becoming increasingly more Latino. Hernández and Valdez became professional artists during a time when cultural institutions controlled the status of artists, as well as access to the arts by people of color. As children of working-class Mexican-Americans, their options were limited by the same mainstream stereotypes that persist today. Despite these obstacles, Hernández and Valdez refused to accept those limitations and earned university degrees in art. In response to mainstream art institutions that denied exhibition access to “ethnic artists”, they transformed the walls of their communities into urban museums, supported social protest with graphic art, and transformed graffiti into extraordinary urban calligraphy (*Tomas Ybarra-Fausto*).

The artist collective Los Four were the first Chicano artists to break through the museum barrier with their landmark exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in 1974. Initially, the group consisted of four male artists: Carlos Almaraz, Gilbert Lujan, Roberto de la Rocha and Frank Romero. Shortly following the LACMA exhibition, the group was completed with the addition of its

fifth member and only woman, Judithe Hernández. Together they created some of the most historic murals in Los Angeles and are considered the pioneers of the “Neo Muralismo del Gran México” in the U.S. At the beginning of the 1970s, Los Four became the most important collective in Chicano art, gaining international recognition for their critique of mainstream popular culture; and by seizing the opportunity to create an art “in between” the constraints of culture, politics, and ethnicity. They are credited with transforming Mexican popular culture and its symbols into a new American School of Art and introducing Chicanismo to the contemporary world of art and design (*Castellano*).

Judithe Hernández, as the only woman in this influential artist collective, played a significant role in the advancement of Chicana art. For ten years, she participated with Los Four to reclaim and redefine Mexicano/Chicano culture from the stereotypes that had stigmatized it in America. By 1984, the group was coming to the end of its active collaboration and she began to focus on her studio practice as a solo artist, which included her interests in the philosophical concepts of beauty and actuality:

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In American art and culture, beauty has historically been defined by the Renaissance, as such both the American and European concept of beauty was destined to remain incomplete without the influence of other specific cultural references, such as those of Mesoamerican art or those of art produced by Mestiza artists of the stature of Frida Kahlo.

*(interview with Judithe Hernández, June 26, 2012)*

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Figure 1

Inventing a visual vocabulary inspired by her cultural background, politics, and the status of women, her solo career has produced a vibrant and unique body of work. Among the works in the Juarez Series “The Weight of Silence” (2010) (fig. 1) denounces the on-going murders of the women in this border city whose victims have largely been young factory workers. Hernández’s raw unapologetic approach becomes a voice of resistance against institutional silence.

Like Hernández, Patssi Valdez was the only woman and founding member of another historic Chicano artist collective. In the 1970s, Valdez, Gronk, Willie Herron III, and Harry Gamboa Jr. formed the celebrated avant-garde collective Asco. Sophisticated and edgy, they challenged the status quo and the art establishment. Unlike other Chicano artists whose work was excluded from galleries and museums their response was extraordinary: Asco tagged the walls of Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Theirs was not an act of irrational vandalism, but an act protesting cultural and racial discrimination. Today, the photographs of this performance chronicle not only the legend of a masterpiece of Chicano art, but also the social-political commitment of a generation of radical young artists.

After a decade of work in public spheres, in the 1980s Valdez began her studio practice and the development of her personal universe. Her work now centers on large-scale canvas painting, gouaches, ceramics, and screen-printing. But she explains that Chicano culture is part of her structure of feeling, constituting her source of inspiration:

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My paintings portray an actual and or imagined place that depict an inspirational or emotionally charged feeling or experience. They are snippets of environments that I consider meaningful and symbolic of my individual as well as collective Chicano experience. (Valdez, 2012)

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Figure 2



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These two artists have worked against the hegemonic tendencies in the mainstream American art world, overcoming the dichotomies between the private and public spheres, the street and the home, the interior and exterior, and the me and the them.

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For Valdez, whose early work included photography and street performance, the move to the privacy of her studio allowed her to explore intimacy and internal space. Ever present in her work are the colorful interiors of a mysterious, magical house. Valdez paints a “different American house”; the house “in between”, where the exterior and interior blend, integrating imaginary fragments (*Castellano 2007*). For French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, the house was “one of the possible places for the construction of the self.” For Valdez, the house became the jewel embellished world of childhood dreamscapes. Windows open towards the bright horizon, and yet lamps illuminate the interior. Valdez plays with our perception of time. In these swirling interiors, time stops, and walls fade in a circular gesture of movement. We see birthday cake and candles that evoke expectation and waiting. The table, sofa, and glasses of lemonade announce anonymous guests (fig. 2). The house is “open” to hospitality. It is an artistic proposition that erases the paradoxes of Jacques Derrida’s hospitality, a process of confrontation and recognition of otherness. The Mexican motto for hospitality is “mi casa es tu casa”, but in Valdez’s mysterious world the guests are asked to navigate discovery in this beautiful interior alone.

The careers of Judithe Hernández and Patssi Valdez are a testament to the creative talent and perseverance of Chicana/o artists who established an American School of Art that has earned a growing respect for Latino Art internationally. These two artists have worked against the hegemonic tendencies in the mainstream American art world, overcoming the dichotomies between the private and public spheres, the street and the home, the interior and exterior, and the me and the them. Their visual commentary deconstructs patriarchal order, revealing imagination in constant transformation, always open to cultural and artistic exchange. Their extraordinary achievements have opened the museum doors for the next generation Latin artists. By honoring these two pioneering artists, the PST LA/LA acknowledges their enormous influence and contribution to the art of Los Angeles, Latino Art, and contemporary American Art.

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## EXHIBITION IMAGES



#1  
Judithe Hernández  
Todavía Sueño de Mariposas  
(I Still Dream of Butterflies)  
2015  
Pastel mixed-media on archival  
paper board  
24 x 36 in.



#6  
Judithe Hernández  
La Hija Buena (The Good Daughter)  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence  
Bischoff



#2  
Judithe Hernández  
The Purification (La Purificación)  
2013  
Pastel mixed-media on archival wood  
panel  
30 x 40 in.



#7  
Judithe Hernández  
Flores Blancas (White Flowers)  
1983  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.



#3  
Judithe Hernández  
The Weight of Silence  
(El Peso del Silencio) #10, 11, 13  
2012  
Pastel mixed-media on paper  
8 x 10 in.



#8  
Judithe Hernández  
El Mar de las Desconocidas  
(The Sea of the Unknown)  
2017  
Pastel mixed-media on canvas  
40 x 60 in.



#4  
Judithe Hernández  
La Reina del Barrio  
(The Queen of the Barrio)  
1975-77  
Aerosol, pastel mixed-media on paper  
20 x 24 in.  
Collection of Ariel X. Hernández



#9  
Judithe Hernández  
Juarez Quinceañera  
2017  
Pastel mixed media on canvas  
40 x 60 in.



#5  
Judithe Hernández  
The Judgement of Eve  
(El Juicio de Eva)  
2010  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.



#10  
Judithe Hernández  
La Virgen de la Oscuridad  
(The Virgin of Darkness)  
2010  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.

# EXHIBITION IMAGES



#11  
Judithe Hernández  
Mekong Ollamaliztli  
2011  
Pastel mixed-media on canvas  
40 x 60 in.



#16  
Judithe Hernández  
Aetatis Suae #3 (At the Age of)  
2016  
Pastel mixed-media on archival wood  
panel  
16 x 20 in.



#12  
Judithe Hernández  
La Luchadora (The Warrior)  
2008  
Pastel mixed-media on archival paper  
board  
16 x 20 in.



#17  
Judithe Hernández  
L'Épée de Saint Jeanne  
(The Sword of Saint Joan)  
2013  
Pastel mixed-media on canvas  
40 x 60 in.



#13  
Judithe Hernández  
Virgen de las Palomas de Paz  
(The Virgin of the Doves of Peace)  
2008  
Pastel mixed-media on archival paper  
board  
16 x 20 in.



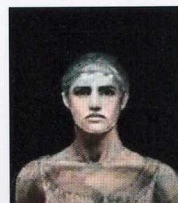
#18  
Judithe Hernández  
The Birth of Eve (El Nacimiento de Eva)  
2010  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.



#14  
Judithe Hernández  
Aetatis Suae #1 (At the Age of)  
2016  
Pastel mixed-media on archival wood  
panel  
16 x 20 in.



#19  
Judithe Hernández  
The Beginning of Sin  
(El principio del Pecado)  
2010  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.



#15  
Judithe Hernández  
Aetatis Suae #2 (At the Age of)  
2016  
Pastel mixed-media on archival  
wood panel  
16 x 20 in.



#20  
Judithe Hernández  
La Santa Desconocida  
(The Unknown Saint)  
2017  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 88 in.

## EXHIBITION IMAGES



#21  
Judithe Hernández  
Scattered Flowers (Flores Dispersas)  
2016  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.



#26  
Judithe Hernández  
Metzpil Xochitl  
(Little Moon Flower)  
1976-78  
Pastel on paper  
19 x 25 in.



#22  
Judithe Hernández  
La Virgen de las Rosas Sangrientas  
(The Virgin of the Bloody Roses)  
2009  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.



#27  
Judithe Hernández  
El Jardín de Sueños  
(The Garden of Dreams)  
2015  
Pastel on paper  
29.5 x 39.25 in.



#23  
Judithe Hernández  
Musas del Desierto  
(The Muses of the Desert)  
2008  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.



#28  
Judithe Hernández  
I See in Dreams  
(Veo en los Sueños)  
2015  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.



#24  
Judithe Hernández  
La Bruja y Su Gato  
(The Witch and Her Cat)  
2007  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.  
Collection of Matthew Hernández



#29  
Judithe Hernández  
Las Espinas del Amor  
(The Thorns of Love)  
2008  
Pastel mixed-media on archival  
paper board  
16 x 20 in.  
Collection of Dr. Valerie  
Taylor and A. Bache Perry



#25  
Judithe Hernández  
Remnants of Eden  
(Restos del Edén)  
2011  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.



#30  
Judithe Hernández  
The Wedding (La Boda)  
2012  
Pastel mixed-media on paper  
23 x 38  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs.  
Francisco "Spunky" Jimenez

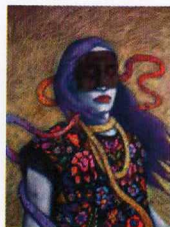
# EXHIBITION IMAGES



#31  
Judithe Hernández  
Corazón Enjaulada  
(Caged Heart)  
2007  
Pastel on paper  
22 x 30 in.



#36  
Patssi Valdez  
Pyrah  
1980's  
Mixed media photo collage  
22 x 28 in.



#32  
Judithe Hernández  
Salvate Mexico!  
(Save Yourself Mexico)  
2010  
Pastel on Paper  
22 x 30 in.



#37  
Patssi Valdez  
Pan Mexicano  
(A Merging of Two Cultures)  
2017  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 48 in.  
Collection of Castulo de La  
Rocha



#33  
Judithe Hernández  
The Surrender of Adam  
(La Rendición de Adán)  
2009  
Pastel on paper  
30 x 44 in.



#38  
Patssi Valdez  
The Hummingbird Queen  
2017  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 in.



#34  
Patssi Valdez  
The Little Girl in the  
Yellow Dress  
1995  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 36 in.  
Cheech Marin Collection



#39  
Patssi Valdez  
Mexican Tchotchkes  
2014  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 48 in.  
Collection of Nely Galan



#35  
Patssi Valdez  
Portrait of Sylvia Delgado  
1980's  
Mixed media photo collage  
44 x 50 in.



#40  
Patssi Valdez  
Milagros  
2016  
Acrylic on canvas  
60 x 36 in.

## EXHIBITION IMAGES



#41  
Patssi Valdez  
Room With Black Curtains  
2010  
Acrylic on canvas  
46 x 15 in.  
Collection of Ann Gutierrez and  
Teresa Seward



#46  
Patssi Valdez  
A Mystical Afternoon  
2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
38 x 28 in.  
Collection of Tim and Maria  
Sanchez



#42  
Patssi Valdez  
The Letter  
2010  
Acrylic on canvas  
46 x 15 in.  
Collection of Marty Kaplan



#47  
Patssi Valdez  
Somber Clouds  
2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
38 x 28 in.



#43  
Patssi Valdez  
Farewell  
2006  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 in.  
Collection of Dr. Lane Igoudin and  
Mr. Jonathan Clark



#48  
Patssi Valdez  
The Rodriguez's  
2005  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 32 in.  
Collection of Marty Kaplan



#44  
Patssi Valdez  
The Delgado's  
2004  
Acrylic on canvas  
24 x 30 in.  
Colburn Family Collection



#49  
Patssi Valdez  
Tangerine Sunday  
2004  
Acrylic on canvas  
68 x 48 in.  
Colburn Family Collection



#45  
Patssi Valdez  
What Is She Writing?  
2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 30 in.  
Collection of Tim and Maria  
Sanchez



#50  
Patssi Valdez  
The Birthday  
2000  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 72.  
Chech Marin Collection

## EXHIBITION IMAGES



#51  
Patssi Valdez  
Autumn  
2000  
Acrylic on canvas  
66 x 53 in.  
Cheech Marin Collection



#56  
Patssi Valdez  
The Dream  
2000  
Acrylic on canvas  
72 x 98 in.  
Colburn Family Collection



#52  
Patssi Valdez  
Studio at Playas Tijuana  
2000  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 96 in.  
Collection of Walter F. Ulloa



#57  
Patssi Valdez  
The Aztec Goddess  
2017  
Acrylic on canvas  
65 x 78 in.



#53  
Patssi Valdez  
Esperanza's Vitrine  
2005  
Acrylic on canvas  
78 x 56 in.



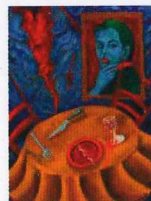
#58  
Patssi Valdez  
Souvenirs  
2014  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 40 in.



#54  
Patssi Valdez  
Stormy Skies  
2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
72 x 30 in.  
Collection of Castulo de la Rocha



#59  
Patssi Valdez  
Memories of Feelings Past  
2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 60 in.



#60  
Patssi Valdez  
Broken  
1992  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 in.



#55  
Patssi Valdez  
The Glass Heart  
2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
72 x 30 in.



#61  
Patssi Valdez  
Kwan Yin  
2002  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 in.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### JUDITH HERNÁNDEZ

Judith Hernández is a visual artist and native of Los Angeles. As a founding member of the Chicano art movement, her work has had a profound influence on Chicano art, as well as the contemporary visual aesthetics of Los Angeles through her public art.

She was a member of the celebrated East L.A. artist collective Los Four, who are credited with breaking through the museum barrier to become the first Chicano artists to exhibit in mainstream museums.

Hernández taught for 30 years at the university level and continues to lecture frequently at museums and universities. She has been an Artist in Residence at the University of Chicago and the recipient of the City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship.

Her significant record of exhibition is complemented by a robust repository of her work in private and public collections, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum; the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art; the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach; the Bank of America Collection; the Crocker Museum, Sacramento; the National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago; and the Vincent Price Art Museum. In 2018, she will be the first American-born woman to mount a solo exhibition at the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach.

### PATSSI VALDEZ

Internationally acclaimed Patssi Valdez is best known for her vibrant paintings, installations and performance work with the avant-garde art group Asco, of which she is a founding member.

Valdez received her BFA from Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles and was named outstanding alumni in the 1980s. In 2005, she was named the “Latina of Excellence in the Cultural Arts” by the U.S. Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Valdez’s art has been featured at the Alma Awards and the Latin Grammys. She is the recipient of many prestigious awards, including from the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Brody Arts Fellowship in Visual Arts.

Her work is included in major public collections, including the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Tucson Museum of Art, Arizona; The San Jose Museum of Art, California; and the El Paso Museum of Art, Texas; as well as the private collections of Cheech Marin; Nely Galan, Galan Entertainment; Castulo de La Rocha, CEO of Altamed; and Walter Ulloa, CEO of Entravision.

Valdez currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. She remains one of the most impactful Mexican-American female artists in the contemporary art world and is studied in art curriculums throughout the US and abroad.



# CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

## CRISTINA ISABEL CASTELLANO GONZÁLEZ, Ph.D.

Dr. Castellano González earned a Ph.D. in the Arts at the Sorbonne University (France). Presently, she is a Researcher Professor at University of Guadalajara where she teaches 20th Century and Contemporary Mexican Art History and Art Sociology. Her recent publications include: *Feminismos Visuales* (2017) and *Raíces Suspendingidas* (2018).

## RAMÓN GARCIA, Ph.D.

Ramón García is the author of two books of poetry *The Chronicles* (Red Hen Press, 2015) and *Other Countries* (What Books Press, 2010), and *Ricardo Valverde* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), a monograph on the photographer, Ricardo Valverde. *The Chronicles*, was a finalist for the International Latino Book Award, in the category of Poetry Book in English.

His poetry has appeared in a variety of journals and anthologies including *Best American Poetry 1996*, *Ambit*, *The Floating Borderlands: Twenty-Five Years of US-Hispanic Literature*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Los Angeles Review*, and *Mandorla: New Writing from the Americas*. He teaches at California State University, Northridge and lives in downtown Los Angeles.

## SCARLET CHENG

Scarlet Cheng is an arts writer and adjunct professor based in Los Angeles. She is a regular contributor to *The Los Angeles Times* and *Artillery* art magazine, and has been published in *The Art Newspaper*, *Art & Auction*, *ARTnews*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and many other print and online publications. Formerly, she was associate editor at Time-Life Books in Alexandria, VA, working on several of their most popular series, and managing editor of *Asian Art News* magazine in Hong Kong. *Asian Art News* was the first English-language magazine to focus on the modern and contemporary art of Asia.

Ms. Cheng has authored numerous introductions and essays for monographs and art catalogs, including *Made in China: New Ceramic Work* by Keiko Fukazawa (2016), Quentin Shih's *Moving Theatre from Shanghai, Hong Kong, to Havana* (2013), and Gwynn Murrill: *Early Wood Sculpture* (2011). She wrote the Hong Kong chapter for the specialized guidebook *Film + Travel: Asia, Oceania, Africa* published by Museyon Guides. Ms. Cheng also teaches art and film history at two of Southern California's major art colleges, Art Center College of Design and Otis College of Art & Design.

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## FAIRPLEX

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Cielo Castro, Chief of Staff

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Renee Hernandez, Communications & Public Relations Manager

Heather Tanji, Social Media Coordinator

Natalie Chaidez, Ambassador Volunteer Program Coordinator

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