



THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

LEADERSHIP
EDUCATION
SUCCESS



Dr. Jeffrey Ward
Dean of the College of Fine Arts

Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen
Director of the Center for Latin American Arts



2025
2026

PROJECT OVERVIEW 2025-2026



SENDING OUR APPRECIATION AND THANK YOU

The Center for Latin American Arts advances scholarship, performances, and the exhibition of the art in the popular, folk, and academic traditions from the United States and Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries. Based in the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley College of Fine Arts, the Center facilitates the exchange of ideas among students, performers, artists, and scholars united by common interests to bring performances and knowledge of these arts to the Rio Grande Valley community and beyond. The core values of the Center are a dedication to community engagement, excellence in scholarship, art production and instruction, and performance, and a focus on student success by providing our students with unique learning opportunities on and off campus.

The Center for Latin American Arts has served more than 13,000 students of all disciplines from the fine arts, liberal arts, medicine, education, and engineering. Over 3,700 public school students have benefited from workshops and clinics provided by the CLAA and UTRGV faculty and students over the years. Art historians, curators, graphic designers, playwrights, artists, dancers, writers, poets, ethnomusicologists, and music performers have presented their talents and research to members of our community in the past year with generous funding from our winning grants and UTRGV's Marialice Shary Shivers Endowment.

In 2025-2026, the CLAA used funding from grants to support exhibitions, travel opportunities, and visiting artists and scholars to visit our campus, host research roundtables, and present dance and theatre performances by artists and performers from around the world. This programming demonstrates the CLAA's dedication to community engagement and multidisciplinary projects in the arts. These winning grants include funding from the Rea Charitable Trust at Wells Fargo (\$50,000) and the Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation (\$7,500). The Center has achieved its goals this year because of the generosity of these institutions, endowments, and private donors listed above, as well as and those who remain anonymous, and the Center for Latin American Arts is forever thankful for this support. We hope you enjoy this overview of our events from the 2025-2026!



CENTER FOR

LATIN AMERICAN ARTS

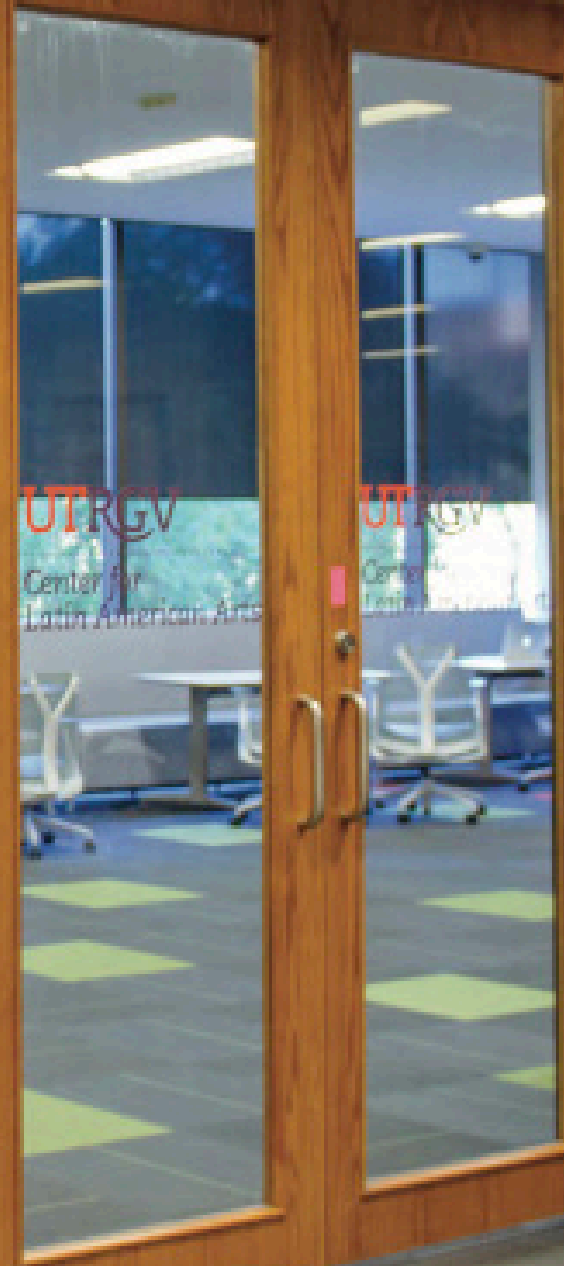


UTRGV

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GRANTS AWARDED TO THE CLAA 2025-2026

THE REA CHARITABLE TRUST AT WELLS FARGO
THE ALICE KLEBERG REYNOLDS FOUNDATION



ALICE KLEBERG REYNOLDS
FOUNDATION

WELLS
FARGO

The Center for Latin American Arts has received grants from these organizations to make our research and programming possible: |

The Rea Charitable Trust at Wells Fargo (\$50,000)

The Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation (\$7,500).

In addition to The Rea Charitable Trust grant at Wells Fargo (\$50,000 for 2022-2024), The Center for Latin American Arts has also won another grant from this institution to support programming from 2025 to 2027. In addition to winning grants from The Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation (\$10,000 for 2020-2021 and \$10,000 for 2022-2023), this foundation has also awarded the Center for Latin American Arts with another grant (\$7,500) from 2024 to 2026.

We are thankful to be recognized for our successful dedication to community outreach projects that educate students at UTRGV and help K-12 teachers, museum curators, and students outside of our campus collaborate with our faculty to enjoy unique learning opportunities in music, dance, theatre, and museum art exhibitions. By focusing our innovative programming on the creative disciplines for young people in the Rio Grande Valley to enjoy, we aim to support today's students and involve

them in meaningful research and creative activities, so they can connect to our community and study art that resonates with our Latin American culture along the border.

With the Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation grant and the Rea Charitable Trust grant at Wells Fargo, the CLAA completed art, photography, dance and museum workshops with the International Museum of Art & Science. In 2025-2026, the Rea Charitable Trust grant funded important travel initiatives by our students and faculty to leave South Texas and attend international conferences, conduct research in museum collections, network with art galleries and scholars across the country, perform in prestigious venues, and study in countries throughout Latin America. Our various projects serving our community helped create unique learning opportunities in the living classroom of museum spaces and the outdoors with student-curated art exhibitions and engaging lecture events and art production workshops, which are featured on our Center for Latin American Arts YouTube channel.

This financial support to help faculty and students travel to conferences, art residencies, and academic venues

helps create a catalyst for new research to support sharing knowledge and new creative works in the Rio Grande Valley. These important opportunities also help our faculty advance their own research in their fields of expertise and support the students they are mentoring. When students feel acknowledged supported, and involved in their creative practice, they become lifelong learners and educators, and they are more likely to be academically successful, finish school, and receive their college degree.

The CLAA is honored to help support our students and faculty and we are forever thankful for the generous funding that makes these programs possible.

CLAA YOUTUBE CHANNEL



SCAN ME

The Center for Latin American Arts continues to offer recording of all our events, which are later uploaded on our YouTube Channel under the name Center for Latin American Arts. Our channel features all Center performances, lectures, roundtables, exhibitions, and a series of visits to artists' studios entitled Visita Mi Estudio (Visit My Studio).

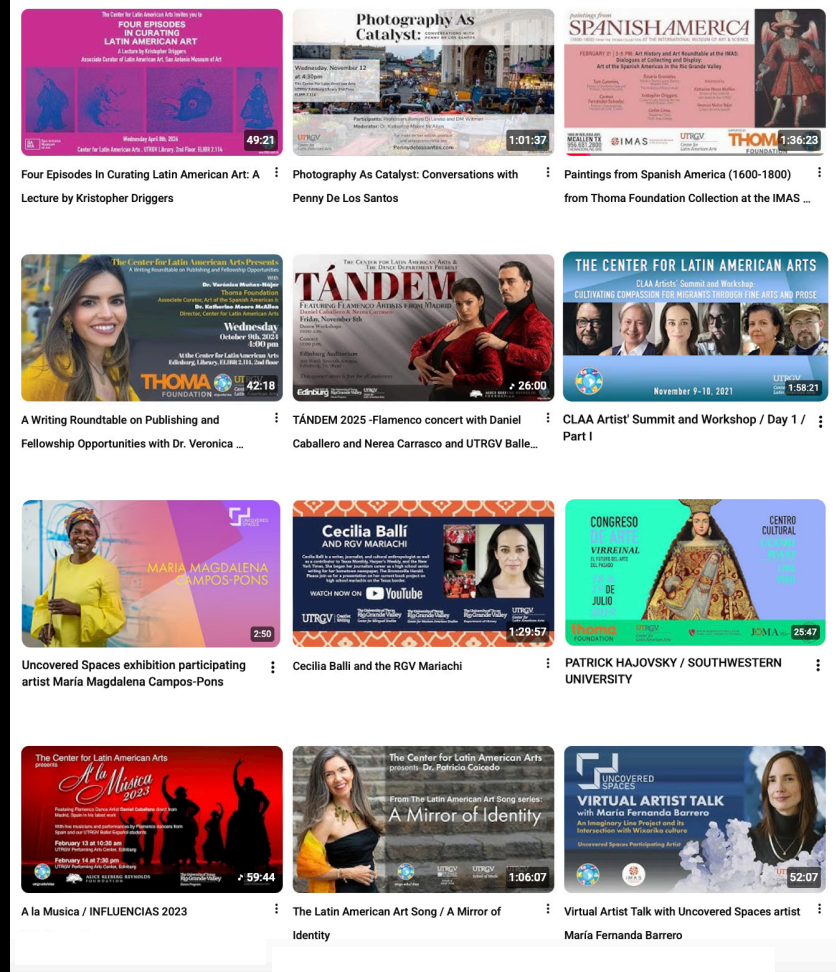
The Center for Latin American Arts YouTube Channel can be accessed on the application and any other internet platforms as the hyperlinks are interconnected on the official CLAA website and Linktree on Instagram. Viewers can safely access recorded events at their leisure on cellular devices, smart televisions, laptops, desktops, and tablets.

YouTube: Center for Latin American Arts



VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Center for Latin American Arts



utrgv.edu/claa

**FOLLOW US
ON YOUTUBE
AND SUBSCRIBE**

UTRGV
Center for
Latin American Arts

GOING VARSITY IN MARIACHI

A FILM SCREENING AND ROUNDTABLE WITH ALEJANDRA VASQUEZ AND SAM OSBORN

UTRGV STUDENT UNION THEATER, EDINBURG CAMPUS
OCTOBER 15, 2026

The Center of the Borderlands proudly presented a special screening and roundtable discussion about *Going Varsity in Mariachi*, a powerful documentary by Alejandra Vasquez and Sam Osborn as part of the finale celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

The film is set in the competitive world of high school mariachi, where the musicians from the South Texas borderlands reign supreme. Under the guidance of Coach Abel Acuña, the teenage captains of Edinburg North High School's acclaimed team must turn a shoestring budget and diverse crew of inexperienced musicians into state champions.

A special thank you to Professor Gina Palacios of the School of Art & Design and Director of the Center of the Borderlands for organizing this collaboration with the Center for Latin American Arts, the Literature & Cultural Studies Department, and the Mexican American Studies and Film Studies.



THE POWER OF BILINGUAL AND BILITERATE LEARNING IN THE ART GALLERY

PANELISTS: RIGOBERTO GONZALEZ, KATHERINE MOORE MCALLEN
MARCELO RAMIREZ GARCIA-ROJAS

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS, UTRGV EDINBURG
SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

The Center for Latin American Arts, in collaboration with the Office for Bilingual Integration, hosted a CLAA Roundtable in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. The panel discussed the importance of providing access to bilingual learning opportunities in the art gallery and museum and explored how our community was uniquely positioned to share knowledge about art and cultural experiences bilingually.

Panelists examined iconographies relevant to bicultural communities and discussed various periods of art across cultural diasporas. They also emphasized the importance of bilingual exhibitions, wall texts, and publications, highlighting how bilingual information helped connect artists, students, educators, and families across countries, hemispheres, and local communities in meaningful and inclusive ways.

The student and faculty panel also discussed how these artistic and curatorial contributions served as gifts to our communities and young audiences by celebrating the binational and bicultural heritages supported by our Hispanic-Serving Institution. The conversation concluded with reflections on the importance of continuing to share the artworks appreciated throughout our border region.



AUSTIN STUDENT RESEARCH: HARRY RANSOM CENTER AND THE BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN & THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF ART CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
OCTOBER 23-26, 2025

As Director of the CLAA, Dr. Katherine McAllen traveled to Austin as the faculty mentor of 7 MFA graduate students, who applied for funding to conduct research at the University of Texas at Austin on the history of fashion, photography, and contemporary art studies. The goals at the Harry Ransom Center (HRC) were to conduct research in the reading room, archives, and special collections at the HRC, including studying the Robert De Niro Costumes and Personal Effects collection. The group then compared these works to other paintings and photography at the Blanton Museum and the Rahim Fortune Exhibition in the Black Studies galleries, while also networking with curators and professors in these various institutions.

Working in the HRC, students requested rare books and costumes to study in the HRC reading rooms for their MFA Thesis research. Dr. McAllen also made appointments for the group to visit the art restoration lab and the permanent collection to study the large number of artworks in storage and the rare manuscripts, prints, and costume pieces currently under conservation.

In addition to conducting research related to each of the students' specific art practices and interests, the group also traveled to the Blanton Museum of Art to view the

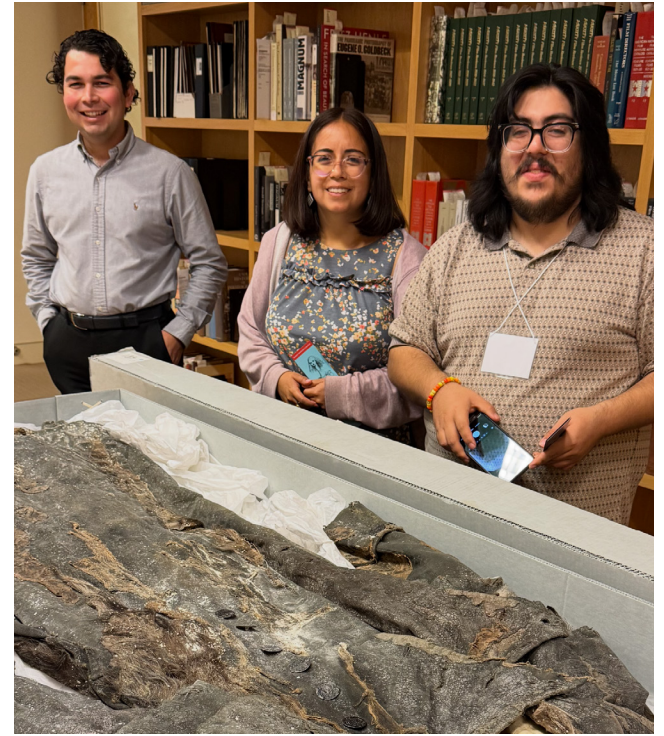
permanent collection and see the temporary exhibition on Spanish Baroque painting. Meeting with curators in the Latin American Contemporary Art wing of the Blanton, students were also able to see and discuss artworks in the galleries of the university art museum and network with these scholars. The group also visited the newly installed artworks from the Thoma Foundation collection on display at the Blanton Museum of Art. This was an important trip to advance the professional development of our students and support them in their research as they formulate their MFA projects in preparation for completing their graduate degrees.

Dr. McAllen was accompanied by Professor Romeo Di Loreto to support these students on this trip to meet curators and art conservationists, as well as scholars of fashion, photography, and painting at the HRC and the Blanton Museum to start conversations and build bridges between UT and UTRGV via the Center for Latin American Arts. This travel funding was supported by the Rae Charitable Trust grant and the Shary Shivers Endowment.

While in Austin, the students also attended the Texas Association of the Schools of Art (TASA) conference, participated in a Risograph printing workshop, and



networked with other artists and art historians. They also joined UTRGV faculty Gina Palacios, DM Whitman, and Romeo Di Loreto at the conference. Professor Palacios also attended her final event as a board member of the TASA. Professor Palacios was honored with a glass trophy for initiating the Portfolio Reviews, a program she launched that has become a valued part of the TASA conference to benefit attending students.



MUJERES INNOVADORAS: CULTURAL ARTISTRY OVER TIME

AN IMAS OUTREACH EXHIBITION AND RECEPTION

UTRGV LIBRARY EDINBURG
SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 5, 2025

After hosting a roundtable earlier in the academic year to support bilingual art education with the International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS), the Center for Latin American Arts collaborated again to host an exhibition directed by IMAS curator Marcelo Ramirez Garcia-Rojas. This exhibition, *Mujeres Innovadoras: Cultural Artistry Over Time*, showcased Mexican and Latin American artworks from the permanent collection of the museum and presented works in spaces throughout the UTRGV Library.

Mujeres Innovadoras was curated by Garcia-Rojas and presented artworks in the culmination of an internship collaboration between the Department of Anthropology, the IMAS, and the Center for Latin American Arts. UTRGV faculty mentors played a key role in helping with the professional development of student interns working with IMAS curator Garcia-Rojas, and this exhibition showcased works that were key objects in this research and study.

This reception hosted by the CLAA welcomed UTRGV students, faculty, staff, and community members to learn more about this internship and exhibition project that fostered interdisciplinary research and encouraged

students and faculty to explore themes of art, culture, and history at the museum. The project was made possible through funding provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).





YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A

EXHIBIT RECEPTION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 | 4:00-6:00 PM

HOSTED BY THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS
2ND FLOOR UTRGV LIBRARY ELIBR 2.114

MUJERES INNOVADORAS:

CULTURAL ARTISTRY OVER TIME

An IMAS Outreach Exhibit at
UTRGV Main Campus Library
1201 W University Dr, Edinburg, TX 78541



In Partnership with:

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

In Partnership with:

UTRGV
Center for
Latin American Arts



In Partnership with:

UTRGV
Anthropology



956.681.2800 | THEIMASONLINE.ORG
@IMASMUSEUM @IMASMCALLEN

This exhibit was curated from the permanent collection of the International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS) in collaboration with UTRGV Department of Anthropology, UTRGV Center for Latin American Arts (CLAA), and supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

PHOTOGRAPHY AS CATALYST: A CONVERSATION WITH PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

ROUNDTABLE WITH DM WHITMAN AND ROMEO DI LORETO

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS, UTRGV EDINBURG
NOVEMBER 12, 2025

The Center for Latin American Arts welcomed photographer Penny De Los Santos, a visiting artist from New York, for Photography as Catalyst, a roundtable conversation held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025.

The discussion explored the creative process of storytelling and the development of images and ideas across various art forms, with a particular emphasis on photography. UTRGV photography professors Romeo Di Loreto and DM Whitman participated in the roundtable, contributing to a thoughtful conversation on artistic practice and visual storytelling.

Reflecting on the power of photography, the discussion drew on Roland Barthes' observation that "photography always carries the punctum—that piercing detail which unsettles, provokes, and compels us to see differently." This idea framed a conversation about photography's ability to shape perception, preserve memory, and inspire reflection.

Penny presented photographs from her previous work in South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. Originally from Laredo and based in New York, she also shared insights into her successful photography career, including her

collaborations with Fuji, marketing firms, and her popular podcast. She shared additional resources about her work and business model. The Center for Latin American Arts also supported Penny's initiative to accompany students on a photographic excursion to research site-specific narratives captured behind the camera at local pulgas.





Photography As Catalyst: CONVERSATIONS WITH PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

To Watch this
Roundtable on the
CLAA YouTube Channel
Scan Here!



Participants: Professors Romeo Di Loreto and DM Witman
Moderator: Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen

UTRGV
Center for
Latin American Arts

For more on her artistic practice
and entrepreneurship see

Pennydelossantos.com



UTRGV.edu/CLAA
Zoom Option Here



EXPERIENCING LOUVRE COUTURE AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS HOUSTON

A GRADUATE SEMINAR TRIP TO THE MFA HOUSTON, SICARDI-AYERS GALLERY & THE MENIL COLLECTION

HOUSTON, TEXAS
MARCH 6-8, 2026

Funding provided by the Center for Latin American Arts allowed a graduate art history seminar class to embark on a research trip to Houston to meet with curators and artists and view world renowned exhibitions. At the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, graduate students had the unique opportunity to engage in viewing the Louvre Couture from Paris, a decentralized exhibition (with the artworks arranged throughout the museum amidst the permanent collection rather than in one gallery alone) to create a visual art historical narrative related to the history of fashion. Seeing the decentralized Louvre Couture show exposed the graduate students to alternative methods of curators' choices to display artworks in innovative ways. Curators and museum leaders, including staff in the Office of Development and curator May Howard in the Department of Decorative Arts and Crafts, and Dr. Naveen Krishnan in the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art accompanied the group throughout the museum. Students and their faculty mentors, Dr Katherine McAllen and Professor Romeo Di Loreto, were able to have conversations the curators and museum leaders about the diverse, intersecting roles of fashion, decorative arts, and fine art. These tours and conversations about these exhibitions, including the current Thoma Foundation show of Spanish American art on display at the MFA Houston, provided important networking opportunities for our students, who are very familiar with the Thoma collection after its recent visit to the IMAS in McAllen.

While on this research trip, graduate students also visited and networked with curators and the Office of Development at the Menil Collection museum. At the Menil Collection, students engaged in an academic tour by the Office of Development Carolina Borja so they could examine both the permanent collection and the photography exhibition curated by Wendy Watriss. Viewing Surrealist artworks was especially impactful, given that the museum is known for having one of the largest permanent collections of this period of art in the United States. Professor Di Loreto led the discussions with graduate students in the photography collection at the Menil and in the exhibition curated by Watriss to continue the conversations and research of artworks that are ongoing for many graduate students' MFA thesis projects. Students also visited the Cy Twombly gallery at the Menil and the Rothko Chapel nearby.

The graduate students and faculty mentors also visited the Sicardi-Ayers gallery of Contemporary Latin American Art. Owner of the Sicardi-Ayers gallery, Allison Ayers, gave the students a tour of the collection and current exhibitions on display. Ayers and her curators invited the group to engage in discourses on contemporary Latin American art and its significance in the art historical canon. Ayers also showed the students their vast collection of articles, books, and publications used for research, which made a profound impact on their professional development



as they are writing their own thesis drafts and planning their MFA exhibitions.

This inspiring experience gave the graduate students a powerful opportunity to conduct research and engage in professional development related to curatorial practices, the contemporary art world, and art history careers. These experiences opened their minds to the vast array of opportunities in the fields of gallery business management, art and design, and art history curatorial work.

This trip would not have been possible without the support of Dr. McAllen in her role as the Shary Shivers Chair and Director of the Center for Latin American Arts and the generous funding of the Rae Charitable Trust grant.



THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION FOR THE CERAMIC ARTS

UTRGV CERAMICS STUDENTS ATTEND THE NCECA CONFERENCE

DETROIT, MICHIGAN
MARCH 25-28, 2026

The Center for Latin American Arts provided conference travel funding to support student attendance at the 60th annual National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts conference (NCECA). Eight students and their faculty mentor Assistant Professor Coleton Lunt attended this conference, which took place March 25–28, 2026 in Detroit, Michigan. Student and faculty research centered on participation in workshops led by nationally recognized ceramicists to be a part of the creative energy of the NCECA conference in Detroit.

Our UTRGV ceramics students connect their ceramics art practice with Latin American history, culture, ethnography, and art in their material investigations. By sourcing and transforming materials directly from the landscape, such as using mesquite ash in their glazes, their approach aligns with traditions of craft production through community practice and oral histories.

The CLAA's support to attend this conference made it possible for our students to engage with leading artists, educators, and scholars in the field of contemporary ceramics by attending exhibitions, lectures, and workshops to enhance professional networking opportunities. By strengthening connections within the national ceramics community, students expanded the artistic development of their studio practice and contributed to the continued growth of the reputation of the UTRGV ceramics program.





RISOGRAPH PRINTING WORKSHOP

HOSTED BY JOHN BORAN AND JILL HONEYCUTT FROM
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

UTRGV EDINBURG VISUAL ARTS BUILDING
MARCH 27, 2026



The CLAA hosted a Risograph Workshop with Texas A&M University Visualization Professors John Boran and Jill Honeycutt at the UTRGV Visual Arts Building in Edinburg. They became a point of contact for our graduates via the 2025 TASA Conference wherein they hosted a risograph printing workshop the students participated in.

Professors Boran and Honeycutt brought their risograph printing machine, a Japanese printer that is a combination of screen printing, printmaking, and xerox printing that is known for its eco-friendly inks and affordable materials.

Students and professors from both Edinburg and Brownsville campuses came to this workshop, which attracted more than 150 participants including community members. Together, this workshop helped create art together and became the highest attended event of the year in the Visual Arts Building that was collaborative and create in generating new artworks for future projects.

Students were able to experience risograph printing, and they were assisted by these Texas A&M professors, who shared their expertise in creating designs and posters. This workshop not only nurtured a sense of community by creating artworks together, but it also gave students unique experiences with a piece of art technology they would otherwise have no access or interaction with.





The Center for Latin American Arts Invites you to a

RISO GRAPH

WORKSHOP

Friday March 27th @ 12:00 PM

with Guest Instructors



John Boran
Professors of Design, Texas A&M University College Station



Jill Honeycutt
Professors of Design, Texas A&M University College Station

Location:
UTRGV Edinburg Visual Arts Building Room 1.125

In Collaboration with




TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
VISUALIZATION

www.UTRGV.edu/CLAA

FOUR EPISODES IN CURATING LATIN AMERICAN ART

A LECTURE BY DR. KRISTOPHER DRIGGERS FROM THE SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS
APRIL 8, 2026

The CLAA hosted a roundtable led by Dr. Kristopher Driggers, curator of Latin American Art, at the San Antonio Museum of Art (SAMA). Dr. Driggers recently completed a series of curatorial projects, including Readymade Remix, Maya Blue, and the African Masquerades exhibition at the SAMA. He spoke about these and his upcoming exhibition of Peruvian and Mexican arte popular works and the research that was essential for these exhibitions.

During his talk at the CLAA, he shared his expertise with students and offered important professional development and career advice. His in-depth narratives and analysis of the arts of Indigenous visual cultures from Africa to the Americas provided important insights into the expression of ancient and present-day artists' practices. His recent projects included Maya Blue: Ancient Color, New Visions, Cumbi: Textiles, Society, and Memory in Andean South America, and The Popol Vuh and the Maya Art of Storytelling.

Dr. Driggers also completed projects created in collaboration with contemporary artists Sandy Rodriguez, Patrick Martinez, Clarissa Tossin, Rolando

Briseño, Justin Favela, Carolina Aranibar Fernandez, Miguel Arzabe, Carolyn Castaño, and Perla Segovia.



The Center for Latin American Arts Invites you to

FOUR EPISODES IN CURATING LATIN AMERICAN ART

A Lecture by Kristopher Driggers

Associate Curator of Latin American Art, San Antonio Museum of Art



San Antonio
Museum
of Art

Wednesday April 8th, 2026

Center for Latin American Arts , UTRGV Library, 2nd Floor, ELIBR 2.114



www.UTRGV.edu/CLAA



VIZ-A-GOGO SYMPOSIUM & SCREENING

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
APRIL 30-MAY 3, 2026

The CLAA Risograph print workshop inspired new collaborations with our students and faculty. Shortly after this event, artists and professors at Texas A&M College Station, invited our faculty and students to be a part of the Vizagogo 33 symposium to network with other artists and scholars and discuss future research projects and collaborations.

Assistant Professor Elizabeth McCormack-Whittemore accompanied 3 graduate students to Texas A&M College Station for the Vizagogo 33 symposium and series of workshops, which is also presented a design showcase. Professors Jill Honeycutt and John Boran, who recently visited UTRGV, led our students and faculty to collaborate with other designers at this event.

UTRGV students and their faculty mentors benefited from this collaboration by building professional relationships, and because their work is so heavily research based, future publications are also poised to be produced from these networking opportunities. Many of our students and Professor McCormack-Whittemore are deeply interested in contemporary Latin American arts-based research, and the intellectual contributions that they can share will provide unique opportunities for future projects to represent the culture and identity of the Rio Grande Valley in art exhibitions and design publications.





EVENTS HOSTED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS

MFA SHOWCASE FOR CREATIVE WRITING & 7TH ANNUAL LATINO THEATRE FESTIVAL

UTRGV
Creative Writing

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR
SPRING 2026 GRADUATES

MFA SHOWCASE & HOODING CEREMONY

Krista Olivarez
Poetry

Eloisa Perales
Fiction

Karyna Saucedo
YA Fiction

MAY 13, 2026

6-8PM **UTRGV Library, 2nd
Floor (ELIBR 2.114)**

Food & refreshments will be provided. Open to the public.

For more information and/or accommodations, please contact emmy.perez@utrgv.edu

UTRGV Theatre

UTRGV DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE Y LATINO THEATRE INITIATIVES PRESENTAN

7^{mo} FESTIVAL ANUAL INTERNACIONAL DE TEATRO LATINO

1RO Y 2DO DE MAYO DEL 2026

UTRGV
ALBERT L. JEFFERS THEATRE,
MARIAN MONTA STUDIO THEATRE,
1201 W UNIVERSITY DR.
EDINBURG, TX

1RO DE MAYO

- 5:45PM ● APERTURA DEL FESTIVAL
- 6:00PM ● Americano y asustado
Drama. (Edinburg, Texas; 15 min.)
- 6:30PM ● Aprendiendo español
del valle
Obra interactiva. (Edinburg, Texas; 30min.)
- 7:20PM ● Patricio el Penitente
Drama. (Pharr, Texas; 60 min.)
- 8:30PM ● El día que la gente pez
salió del mar
Drama. (Reynosa, México; 60 min.)

2 DE MAYO

- 1:45PM ● APERTURA DEL FESTIVAL - DÍA 2
- 2:00PM ● Bocón
Obra familiar. (Edinburg, Texas; 50min.)
- 3:00PM ● Mágica luz de luna
Obra de títeres. (Mission, Texas; 60min.)
- 4:15PM ● Time of Sleeping
Monólogo clown. (Torreón, México; 55min.)
- 5:30PM ● Charla y sesión de preguntas - Laurent Berger
Invitado especial. (Paris, Francia; 50 min.)
- 6:30PM ● Musica en vivo y refrigerios
(60 min.)
- 7:45PM ● La pesadilla
Teatro social experimental. (Edinburg, Texas; 25 min.)
- 8:30PM ● 404 Not Found
Estreno internacional. (Monterrey, México; 60 min.)

¡GRATIS!

f @lti_utrgv

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN
LLAME AL (956) 665-3581

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS CONFERENCE GRADUATE RESEARCH PRESENTATION

MCALLEN, TEXAS
APRIL 20-22, 2026

After the resounding success of the Thoma Foundation exhibition at the IMAS, graduate students Emma Creps-Pena and Noah Melendez applied to present a panel discussion at the Texas Association of Museums conference. This presentation was related to their research and creative design work that made the CLAA exhibition and roundtable a success, attracting more than 12,000 visitors to the IMAS. This presentation also served as an opportunity to advance their professional development as artists and academics.



Reflections on: Paintings from SPANISH

This research utilizes a qualitative, reflective design grounded in experiential learning and community-based engagement. The setting spans multiple sites, including the International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS) and the Center for Latin American Arts (CLAA) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The study population consists of graduate students actively participating in the Thoma Exhibition through academic and community-facing roles.

METHODS OF COLLECTION: This research utilizes a qualitative, reflective design grounded in experiential learning and community-based engagement. The setting spans multiple sites, including the International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS) and the Center for Latin American Arts (CLAA) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The study population consists of graduate students actively participating in the Thoma Exhibition through community-facing and academic roles.

Outcome measures focus on evaluating scholarly accessibility, defined as the extent to which academic knowledge becomes approachable and participatory for broader audiences. Key indicators include levels of student engagement, opportunities for reciprocal dialogue, exposure to non-traditional learning environments, and the integration of creative production with scholarly discourse. This also considers how collaborative and open-access initiatives contribute to bridging academic and public spheres.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS: Findings indicate that community-based engagement significantly enhances scholarly accessibility by fostering active participation and collaborative knowledge exchange. Participation in behind-the-scenes processes demystified academic labor, allowing students to engage with scholarship beyond traditional classroom settings. Challenges included navigating varying levels of familiarity with academic discourse among participants and the logistical demands of coordinating multi-site, collaborative events.



To Watch
This
Roundtable
on the CLAA
Youtube
Channel
Scan Here!

AMERICA

(1600-1800) FROM THE THOMA COLLECTION



STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

My experience at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) allowed me to see how Hispanic, Latin American, and multicultural identities are expressed in many different ways through art. It showed me that culture, personal experiences, and background all play an important role in shaping artistic voice. Through exhibitions, conversations, and sessions like Clay Conexión, I was able to reflect on my own identity and think more intentionally about what I want my work to communicate. Overall, NCECA inspired me to embrace my background, continue growing as an artist, and create work that is more meaningful and connected to who I am.

--Kristen Torres--

Attending the most recent NCECA conference marked a significant moment in my development as both an artist and a representative of the Rio Grande Valley. My primary role as a wheel throwing demonstrator for the Chinese ceramics company Bao TaoHui provided a unique opportunity to engage with a national audience while actively participating in a global dialogue surrounding ceramic practice. Demonstrating for an international company not only positioned my work within a broader professional context, but also allowed me to highlight the level of skill and dedication emerging from the Rio Grande Valley on a national stage.

Throughout the conference, I found myself in constant exchange with artists from a wide range of backgrounds, many of whom I now consider friends and future collaborators. These interactions extended beyond casual conversation and became meaningful moments of shared knowledge, technique, and perspective. The

environment fostered by NCECA encourages openness, and within that space, relationships are built through a mutual respect for process and material. Being surrounded by artists who are equally committed to their craft reaffirmed my own direction and strengthened my sense of belonging within the field of ceramics.

A particularly impactful aspect of this experience was the clear presence of cross-cultural dialogue, especially between Mexico and Asia. As someone whose work draws from both Mexican context and East Asian ceramic traditions, I became increasingly aware of how these influences are not separate, but instead capable of forming a new precedent through intentional exchange. Demonstrating alongside a Chinese company while carrying my own cultural and regional identity created a space where these histories intersected in a tangible way. It highlighted the possibility of building a ceramic language that acknowledges lineage while remaining open to transformation.

These exchanges also opened the door to future opportunities, particularly in Jingdezhen, a historic center of ceramic production in China. Conversations with artists and representatives at the conference introduced the possibility of engaging directly with this environment, where centuries of ceramic knowledge continue to shape contemporary practice. The prospect of working in Jingdezhen represents more than travel; it offers an immersive experience that would deepen my understanding of material, technique, and cultural context while further strengthening the dialogue between Mexican and Asian ceramics that informs my work. My experience reinforced my commitment to contributing to a broader conversation that bridges geographic and cultural boundaries. It also emphasized the importance of

representation, particularly for artists working within regions that are often underrepresented in national and international contexts. By bringing the Rio Grande Valley into this space, I aim to help establish a foundation that future artists from the region can build upon.

Ultimately, my time at NCECA was not only a professional milestone, but also a moment of reflection on the role of ceramics as a vehicle for connection. Through demonstration, dialogue, and shared experience, I was reminded that clay has the capacity to carry multiple histories at once while creating new pathways forward.

--Andres A. Rangel--

Being able to go attend Viz-A-GoGo at Texas A&M was truly an amazing experience. From the environment and welcoming culture to the collaborative and diverse design works displayed, Viz-A-GoGo was a unique and inspiring experience.

After exploration and being informed by the lovely staff at A&M, I've been inspired to want to pursue another MFA in design and continue my academic journey. The community and environment A&M creates is such a powerful and inspiring experience that I've never felt before. I enjoyed their showing of students works and seeing the unity the students have at this institution, it was truly a great opportunity to see.

--Kat Rodriguez--

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

The Houston trip was pivotal to my conceptual practice as an MFA student. Being face-to-face with Frida Kahlo's work and personal belongings, especially her orthopedic shoes and clothing was something I never imagined would be possible. Growing up as a huge Frida fan, I didn't think I would have the opportunity to visit Casa Azul in Mexico, so experiencing this exhibition was incredibly meaningful. As a disabled Latina, seeing these deeply personal objects connected me to Frida's life in a way that went beyond the paintings. It reaffirmed how disability, identity, and lived experience can exist at the center of an artistic practice. The exhibition also included contemporary artists whose work was shown alongside Frida's, which reminded me of the lasting impact her legacy continues to have across generations. Seeing their work in conversation with hers was inspiring and reinforced the importance of creating work that speaks to both personal experience and broader cultural narratives.

Our visit to the Menil Collection offered a different but equally important perspective. Encountering Yves Klein's *Anthropometries* challenged me to think differently about the body as both subject and material. Seeing that work pushed me to look at my own practice differently, especially as I continue developing a body of work centered on perceptions of womanhood and its consequences.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to experience these collections firsthand. The trip strengthened my research, expanded my conceptual thinking, and affirmed the direction of my work as an artist.

--Siria Carrasco--

The Center for Latin American Arts has provided me with opportunities that have enhanced my graduate experience, especially through experiences such as the MFA Houston art trip. As a graphic designer, I spend much of my time focused on visual communication, so visiting museums and seeing these works in person offered a different perspective. Seeing works by artists such as Mark Rothko, Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Cy Twombly outside of a textbook or computer screen gave me a greater appreciation for how scale, texture, and the overall materiality of a work influence the way it is experienced. The trip also led to thoughtful conversations with classmates and faculty, allowing me to consider different perspectives. I appreciate the opportunities the CLAA provides to engage with art firsthand. Experiences like this continue to expand my creative references and have influenced the way I approach my own work as a graphic designer.

--Adrian Ortega--

In March I participated in the CLAA facilitated trip to the Houston Museum of Fine Art as well as the Menil Gallery and other associated galleries in the Houston Museum District. I want to first focus on the experiences of visiting the Museum of Fine Art and the various galleries in relationship to my own work. There are two artists in particular that were the most memorable for me, James Turrell and Mark Rothko. Turrell's work *The Light Inside* exemplifies for me the interaction of light and space for sensory effect. Along with his *"Mapping of the Roden Crater"*, there is a physicality to the work that is compelling. Rothko's Color Field work in the Rothko Chapel creates a strong emotional presence that resonates. While the content and the technicality of the work

predominate, the most significant aspect, for me, is the scale of the installation. The sheer mass of the works creates an essence of physicality that seems to draw you into the depths of the work. Along these same lines the most memorable aspects of the museum and gallery visits have to be the scale of the installations. There is a sensory physicality that is produced by the scale that exists only because of the scale of the artworks. This is the very effect that I am trying to produce in my work.

Overall, this concept is what drives my work, and I found the discussion of installation to be the most significant aspect of this experience. Along this same line, the visiting artists who visited my studio, all had similar discussion about the nature of my work. The focus was more on ideas for installations, lighting, and scale for dramatic sensory effect as opposed to changes in concept or content. I feel that overall, this provided a significant boost to the development of my current process.

--Jacinto Zambrano--

FACULTY & COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS

Throughout my years at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, I have had the privilege of collaborating closely with the Center for Latin American Arts (CLAA). From my very first semester as a faculty member, I have consistently supported and participated in the Center's initiatives because I genuinely believe the CLAA represents one of the College of Fine Arts' greatest academic and cultural assets.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, I had the opportunity to collaborate directly on several CLAA initiatives, including the Penny De Los Santos event and the research and educational trips to Austin and Houston for Graduate Candidates. These experiences provided our undergraduate students and graduate candidates with opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom. They encouraged meaningful critical dialogue, direct engagement with artists, curators, collections, and cultural institutions, while fostering intellectual curiosity and professional growth in ways that are difficult to fully express in words.

As a faculty member based on the Brownsville campus, I have also made every effort to encourage and accompany students to CLAA events, whether held in Edinburg or virtually, because I firmly believe these experiences are an essential part of their academic and artistic education. The CLAA has consistently demonstrated that its highest priority is the success of our students while simultaneously enriching faculty, the School of Art and Design, the College

of Fine Arts, and the entire UTRGV community.

Under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Katherine McAllen, with the exceptional dedication of Emma Creps-Peña and Noah Melendez, the Center has cultivated an environment of collaboration, scholarship, inclusivity, and artistic excellence. Their commitment to creating meaningful programming, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and research opportunities has significantly strengthened our academic community and expanded opportunities for both students and faculty.

I offer my sincere congratulations to the entire CLAA team for another remarkable year of programming and achievement. I remain fully committed to supporting the Center's future initiatives and look forward to continuing our collaboration in advancing the mission of the CLAA and enriching the educational experience of our students for years to come.

-Romeo Di Loreto
Professor, School of Art and Design

The Center for Latin American Arts (CLAA) provides support to students and faculty in their moment of need. As a faculty member in the School of Art and Design, I can rely on CLAA to produce events that enrich my students' engagement with both contemporary and historical topics through Latin American perspectives. For example, my Spring ARTS 1304 students attended the guest speaker event featuring Dr. Kristopher Driggers, Curator of Latin

American Art at the San Antonio Museum of Art for his talk "Four Episodes in Curating Latin American Art." His work included contemporary Latina/o artists who are informed by indigenous art heritage. He also provided practical advice to students interested in pursuing careers in museums.

For the past two years, The CLAA has supported my study abroad program "Brazil: Architectural Ecologies," an exploration of the intersection of art, architecture and nature unique to Brazilian Modernism. This year my program was in jeopardy, causing anxiety over the loss of all the work I had invested over the previous two semesters. In the 11th hour, I turned to Dr. McAllen and the CLAA for help, and within 30 minutes of sharing my dilemma, they found a resolution, thanks in part to the support of the Rae Charitable Trust and other sources. Their support resolved the gap in the program funding and solidified my student excursion. Education abroad is beneficial to our students in the Valley who want to pursue a deeper understanding of the meaning of Latin American art but often lack resources to travel for learning exercises in the field. It makes a difference.

-Dr. Adam Boggs
Professor, School of Art and Design

Thanks to the generous support of the Center for Latin American Arts, I was able to accompany the UTRGV Clay Club to the 2026 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference. Together, our students explored exhibitions, artist demonstrations, panel discussions, and performances by internationally recognized ceramic artists, educators, and innovators. The conference immersed students in the breadth of contemporary ceramics while also highlighting the important contributions of Latin American artists and perspectives within the field.

One of the most meaningful experiences was attending programs that centered on art as a tool for social engagement and cultural expression. Our group heard artists discuss community-based practice, education, and the role of ceramics in addressing social issues, including presentations by Puerto Rican artist Roberto Lugo. We also experienced powerful performances by UTRGV MFA alumna Leticia Garcilazo and artist-musician Vianney Lopez, whose work explored themes of identity, history, healing, and Indigenous ceramic traditions. These experiences sparked conversations among our students about the many ways ceramics can communicate ideas beyond the studio.

Beyond the scheduled events, the conference created invaluable opportunities for mentorship, networking, and professional growth. Our students connected with artists, graduate programs, galleries, and peers from across the

country while gaining firsthand insight into career pathways in the ceramic arts. The experience also strengthened my own research and teaching by introducing new ideas, techniques, and perspectives that will be incorporated into future coursework and creative practice. The Center for Latin American Arts' support made this shared learning experience possible and significantly enriched the educational opportunities available to our students.

-Coleton Lunt
Professor, School of Art and Design

The CLAA has offered valuable support to my scholarly endeavors as one of the few scholars of Central American music in the U.S.A. The journal of Central American literary and cultural studies *Istmo* recently published a special issue on music and sound I co-edited with two Central American colleagues.

The issue entitled "Texturas Aurales del Istmo" (published in 2025, backdated to 2024) includes original oral history interviews conducted by the team co-editors supported by a publication grant from the CLAA, whose logo appears at the end of each video interview. <https://istmo.denison.edu/n49/dossier/index.html>. In March 2025, the CLAA also supported my research on popular music in Guatemala by funding my trip to an international conference on music in urban contexts hosted at the University of Houston.

The CLAA support was essential to my participation, as I had already exhausted other travel funds to attend two national conferences earlier that year. I'm grateful that UTRGV is emerging as an important center for the study and promotion of Latin American arts thanks to the efforts of the CLAA.

-Andrés Amado
Professor, School of Music

The Center for Latin American Arts at UTRGV (CLAA) is an exceptional educational resource and convener. CLAA brings expertise on and off the UTRGV campus together with students and community members to experience a wide array of art forms expressing the distinctiveness and traditions of Latin American culture. Under the leadership of Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen, Associate Professor in the School of Art and Design, the CLAA's programming introduces UTRGV and community audiences to groundbreaking artists and cutting-edge art media through multisensory performances, thought-provoking lectures and roundtables, and immersive films and exhibitions. While CLAA's homebase is on the UTRGV campus, the Center excels at engaging the broader community through outreach programming and applied learning opportunities for students through internships and courses using exhibitions, museum collections, and field study.

-Ann Fortescue
Executive Director, International Museum of Art and Science

CENTER LEADERSHIP

DEAN. COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS



Dr. Jeffrey Ward is the Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). The College, made up of the School of Art and Design, School of Music, Department of Theatre, Department of Dance, and Department of Creative Writing, is committed to connecting the students of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond to high-quality teaching, research, and creative activity; partnerships with Arts organizations and Industry; and global citizenship rooted in improving communities.

Prior to his role at UTRGV, Dr. Ward served as the Director of the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, and Professor of Music Education at Kansas State University and as the Associate Dean in the College of Fine Arts and Communication and the Associate Director of the School of Music at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. Dr. Ward received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Education (Conducting) from Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, VA; his Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from East Carolina University; and his Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Rollins College in Winter Park, FL.

Dr. Ward's research focuses on assessment, community music, and music teacher education. Dr. Ward is Past Chair of the Assessment Special Research Interest Group of the National Association for Music Education and a reviewer for the International Symposium for Assessment in Music Education. As a conductor, Dr. Ward has served as the Artistic Director of the Manhattan (KS) Masterworks Chorale and the Greenville (NC) Choral Society, as well as in conducting positions at First United Methodist Church of Manhattan, St. James United Methodist Church of Greenville, and Monumental United Methodist Church of Portsmouth (VA).



Dr. Jeffrey Ward
Dean, College of Fine Arts

Fall 2023-Present

CENTER LEADERSHIP

DIRECTOR. CENTER FOR LATIN
AMERICAN ARTS



Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen has been the Director of the Center for Latin American Arts since 2019, and she is an Associate Professor of Art History in the School of Art & Design at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She received her PhD in from Harvard University, her M.A. from the University of Texas, Austin and her B.A from Trinity University. Her research has been supported by the Fulbright and the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation as the 2019-2020 Marilyn Thoma Post-Doctoral Fellow. Her work at the UTRGV Center for Latin American Arts has been supported by the Raul Tijerina, Jr. Foundation, the Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation, the Rea Charitable Trust, and the Brown Foundation.

Her publications on the history of art and architecture and cultural exchange in colonial Perú and México include essays in the anthology *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), an essay in *Circa 1718* from Trinity University Press (2018), an essay in the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* (2019), three essays in the *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* journal (2021 and 2022), and a recent essay in the *Colonial Latin American Review* (2024). Together with Verónica Muñoz-Nájara, she also co-edited a two-volume publication with a collection of essays in Spanish and English titled *The Thoma Dialogues* in the *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* journal (volume 3.3 and 3.4). As guest editors, Katherine and Verónica published two essays together and edited twelve other essays by leading scholars in the field examining the visual culture of Latin America and museum studies from the colonial to the contemporary periods. Her most recent curatorial work as Director of the Center for Latin American Arts includes organizing the exhibition *Uncovered Spaces* with artists such as Maria Magdalena Campos Pons, Margarita Cabrera, and Wendy Red Star in a collaboration with Raheleh Filsoofi of Vanderbilt University. All the CLAA events can be seen on the CLAA website and the CLAA YouTube channel. She is also the Maryalice Shary Shivers Endowed Chair of Fine Arts at UTRGV.



Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen
Director, Center for Latin American Arts and
Associate Professor of Art History

FACULTY LEADERSHIP

AND CLAA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Dr. Andrés Amado is a Professor of Ethnomusicology in the School of Music, as well as a member of the CLAA Executive Committee.



Rigoberto Gonzalez is a Lecturer at the School of Art & Design, as well as a member of the CLAA Executive Committee.



Dr. Eric Wiley is a Professor in the Department of Theatre, the Director of the Latino Theatre Initiatives, as well as a member of the CLAA Executive Committee.



Miguel Peña is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Dance, Director of the UTRGV Ballet Folklórico program, as well as a member of the CLAA Executive Committee.



Dr. Virginia Davis is a Professor of Music Education in the School of Music, as well as a member of the CLAA Executive Committee.

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN ARTS STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM



Emma Creps-Pena
Graduate MFA Researcher
College of Fine Arts

Emma Creps-Pena is a Current MFA candidate with a concentration in 3D studio. Her work in addiction studies influences her community-based humanist art practice.



Shandon Jalomo
Undergraduate Intern
College of Fine Arts

Shandon Jalomo is an undergraduate film student who has completed an internship with the Center for Latin American Arts.



Noah Melendez
Graduate MFA Designer
College of Fine Arts

Noah Melendez is a Current MFA candidate with a concentration in 3D studio. He works as an interdisciplinary artist and designer with a passion for publication.



Joseph Hernandez
Undergraduate Design Intern
College of Fine Arts

Joseph Hernandez is an undergraduate graphic design student. He has recently completed an internship with the IMAS.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN SUPPORT



Jessica Loreno Treviño
Administrative Coordinator,
Office of the Dean,
College of Fine Arts

Jessica Treviño is the Administrative Coordinator to the Dean's Office at the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Originally from McAllen, Texas, Jessica graduated with a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Computer Information Systems from the University of Texas Pan American. She brings years of business experience in purchasing, accounting, project management, coordination, finance, analytics, social media, and technology. With excellent communication and leadership abilities, Jessica thrives in cross-functional teams, coordinating resources and ensuring seamless collaboration. Known for problem-solving skills, and ability to mitigate risks, Jessica consistently drive successful project outcomes.

WHO WE ARE



THE CENTER IS LED BY:

Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen

Associate Professor of Art History
Director of the Center for Latin American Arts

Dr. Jeffrey Ward

Dean of the College of Fine Arts

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Dr. Andrés Amado

Professor of Ethnomusicology

Dr. Virginia Davis

Professor of Music Education

Miguel Peña

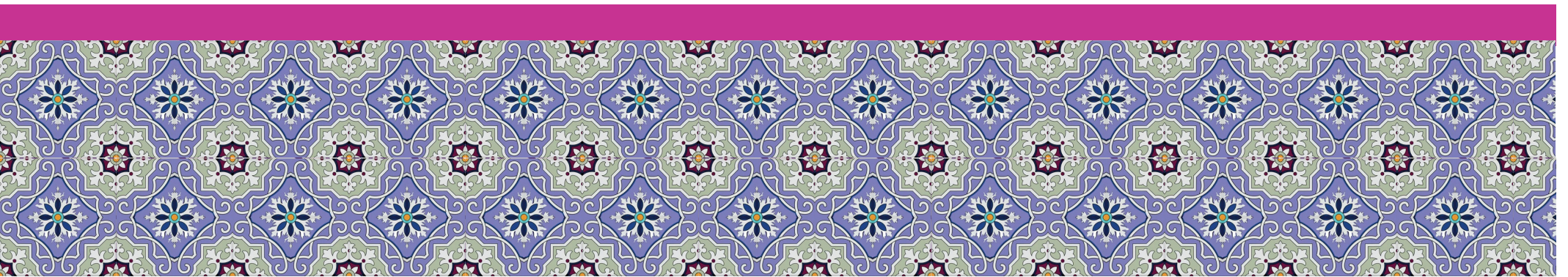
Assistant Professor of Dance
Director of the UTRGV Ballet Folklórico

Dr. Eric Wiley

Professor of Theatre
Director of the Latino Theatre Initiatives

Rigoberto Gonzalez

Lecturer of Studio Art with an emphasis
on Painting





Center for
Latin American Arts



WHERE WE ARE

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Edinburg Library on the 2nd Floor: ELIBR
2.114

Brownsville in the UTRGV Music, Science
& Learning Center: BMSLC 2.210



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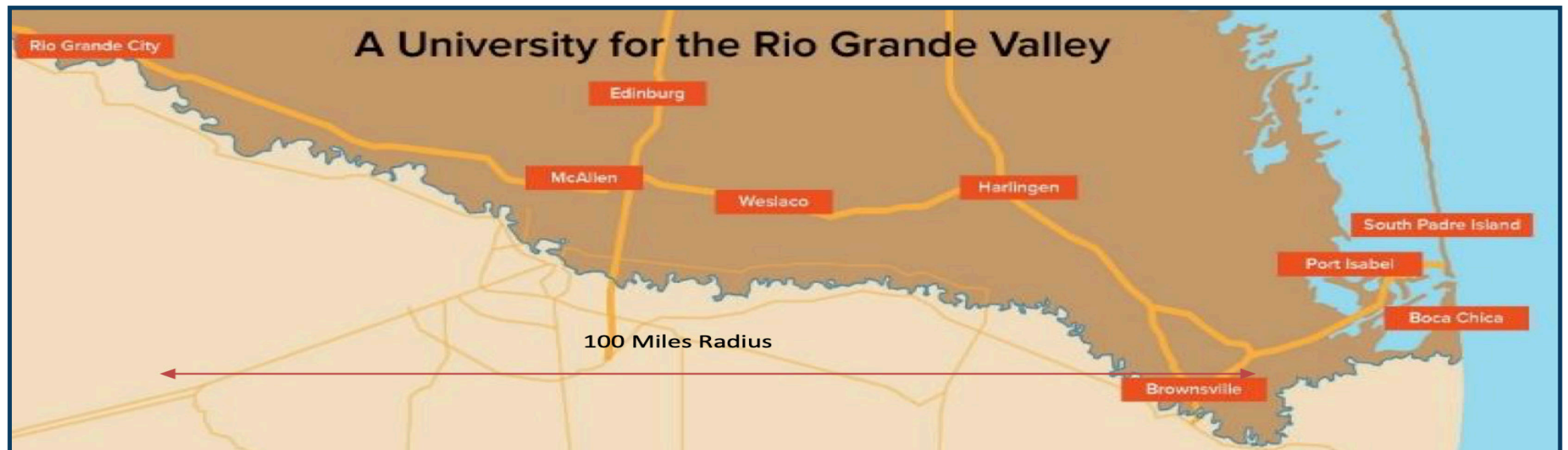
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