



PICO IMPROVEMENT ORGANIZATION Presents *PICO POP UP*,

A POP UP EVENT IN SANTA MONICA JUNE 4 – Fall 2021

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PICO POP UP CENTERS ARTISTIC STORIES OF IMMIGRANT RESILIENCE IN A RENOVATED FORMER NAIL SALON



Rosa Maria Lares, *Ella Hombre en Primavera*, 2008, Canvas, 48 x 72. Photo by Cameron Bennett.

Un Mundo Nuevo en Pico

An exhibition of the Pico Pop Up

2917 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica

Gallery Hours Thu-Sat 10am-1pm, and by appointment

As we emerge from a year of pandemic and civil unrest, resiliency has been a key trait to not only survive, but prosper. The artists in *Un Mundo Nuevo en Pico* tell stories of immigrants whose unique journeys have demanded resiliency, strong social networks, and creative ingenuity. We learn of the power of women-run cooperatives and businesses, as close as Santa Monica and as far away as Rwanda, to invent new economic models that harness the unique craftsmanship of their cultural heritage. We see DACA recipients, invisible for so long, made visible in their undeniable importance as part of the fabric of our communities. We gaze at a magical celebration of transition and the identity that emerges. Though there is a long way to go towards true social justice and equity in our society, like the bulls who participate in humane Portuguese bullfights in central California, we live to fight another day.

In many ways the stories of the artists, and their subjects, who are part of this exhibition mirror the journey of this space itself. Once an empty former nail salon, it was renovated by the Pico Improvement Organization and now starts a new life as an art gallery and eventually a Pico business.

Market Exchange, commissioned and supported by 18th Street Arts Center, is a collaboration between Santa Monica artisans and Cog•nate Collective that creates platforms for empowerment by establishing alternative economic forms of self-determination for local craftspeople and small businesses. The installation *Manos a la Obra* brings together handmade items that were created and curated by an inter-generational group of women artisans from Santa Monica. The group's work celebrates the resilience and the power of working women, whose daily social, emotional, cultural and artistic labor in our neighborhoods sustains the power, and vivacity of our community. Local Santa Monica photographer and artist **Nicola Goode** has captured another intergenerational group of women in Rwanda, and their confident, powerful postures as they pose outside their storefront speak to an incredible resiliency in the face of unspeakable violence and tragedy. **Linda Vallejo**'s dreamlike photographic collages of the homes of DACA recipients underscores how deeply interwoven our communities are, and emphasizes our common hopes about the "American Dream" while refusing to shy away from the inequities we face as a society. Santa Monica painter **Anne Carmack** maps an abstraction of color, words, and emotion in addressing the character of the neighborhood, with a melancholic reckoning with the past tempered by an irrepressible, tongue-in-cheek optimism for the future. Photographer **Jeff Gros** documents the thriving "bloodless" Portuguese bullfights of a tight-knit Central California community, underscoring both a commitment to cultural tradition and heritage, along with the resiliency and flexibility to adapt to changing times and shifting contexts -- perhaps a counternarrative to our typical notions of assimilation. And finally, the jewel-like works of **Rosa Maria Lares**, who in addition to her artistry is the matriarch of the legendary Lares Restaurant family on Pico Blvd in Santa Monica, captivating with magical realism the stunning transition of her hairdresser from a

mustachioed man to a woman with flowing blonde locks, or depicting the sensuality of a soak in a warm bath. Hope springs eternal in this lively, dream-like world.

Pico Pop Up is a project of Pico Improvement Org, who curated the exhibition. This project was made possible by Art of Recovery, an initiative of the City of Santa Monica Cultural Affairs, santamonica.gov/arts/artofrecovery.



**City of
Santa
Monica**



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Cog•nate Collective (Misael Diaz and Amy Sanchez Arteaga) are an art + research collaborative based in the Baja/Alta California borderlands whose work reflects issues of migration, border enforcement, economic displacement, and citizenship in the context of public marketplaces in Tijuana, Santa Ana and Los Angeles. **Marketplace Exchange** artisans featured include Ines Garcia, Carmela Morales, Laura Hernandez, Lily Alinaghizadeh, and Abby Juan. marketexchange.18thstreet.org, <https://18thstreet.org/exhibitions/>

Linda Vallejo



Born December 2, 1951 in Los Angeles, Linda Vallejo earned a Master of Fine Arts Degree, Printmaking, Cal State University Long Beach, California, 1978. She creates work that visualizes what it means to be a person of color in the United States. She states that these works reflect what she calls her “brown intellectual property”—the experiences, knowledge, and feelings gathered over more than four decades of study of Latino, Chicano, and American indigenous culture and communities. lindavallejo.com, [@lindavallejoart](https://www.instagram.com/lindavallejoart)

Nicola Goode



Nicola Goode was born in Los Angeles and is based in Santa Monica. Her art practice includes photography, printmaking and installation and her work often focuses on narratives overlooked or misrepresented. For over thirty years she has worked as a unit still photographer on feature and documentary film productions. Nicola approaches the surreal landscape of the film set as a curious street photographer and finds cinematic moments on her local streets and in her travels around the world. nicola@nicolagoode.com, [@nic.goode](https://www.instagram.com/nic.goode)

Anne Carmack



Anne Carmack is a Mixed race, Midwestern born, Los Angeles based self-taught screenwriter and multidisciplinary artist who incorporates text into the hectic gestures of her autobiographical mixed media work in an attempt to make sense of the true stories as they shake out around her. Determined to celebrate the ordinary beauty of everyday things as evidenced by her poetic and photographic fascination with back-alley trash and found treasures, her search for something still undefined continues. annecarmack@gmail.com, annecarmackstudio.com

Jeff Gros



Born in Los Angeles, 1973 and raised in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Northern California, Jeff was influenced by punk rock, skateboarding. and his grandfather, a photographer, who owned a camera store and gave him inexpensive point-and-shoot cameras, which fostered his interest in photography at an early age. A resident of Santa Monica, Jeff's photographs document life as it is, without cropping or enhancement. His photographs are paused moments in time that document history as it unfolds in the geometry of every day. jeff@jeffgros.com, @iamgros

Rosa Maria Lares



Rosa Maria Lares, known artistically as LMarta, is the matriarch of the Lares family, of the legendary Lares Restaurant on Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica. In 1970, she came looking for a job and started working as a waitress, and then married the owner, Jesse Lares. Since then, she is the creative soul behind the rustic decor and the folk and inspired paintings that adorn the rooms, and private homes.

ABOUT PICO IMPROVEMENT ORG



The Pico Improvement Organization (PIO) promotes the merchants that line the 3-mile stretch of Pico Boulevard from the beach up to the 10 freeway in Santa Monica. PIO celebrates the neighborhood with its colorful murals, street banners, restaurants, coffee houses, pet spas, bars, fitness studios, and so much more. Pico Pop Up is an ongoing program by the PIO to transform vacant storefronts so they rent more quickly, like this art gallery, which had been an empty, dusty former nail salon until a few months ago. It has been reimaged to showcase local artists whose cultural diversity reflects the immigrant roots of the community, and to creatively attract visitors to patronize the businesses on our vibrant street until it becomes home to a permanent new business.

Additional information : PicoPassport.com

Follow Pico Improvement Org on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/picosantamonica>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/picoblvdsm>

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#picopopup

ABOUT 18TH STREET ARTS CENTER

For over 30 years, 18th Street Arts Center has been one of the top artist residency programs in the US, and the largest in Southern California. Conceived as a radical think tank in the shape of an artist community, 18th Street supports artists from around the globe to imagine, research, and develop significant, meaningful new artworks and share them with the public. We strive to provide artists the space and time to take risks, to foster the ideal environment for artists and the public to directly engage, and to create experiences and partnerships that foster positive social change.

Additional information : 18thstreet.org

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