

The Pete and Susan Barrett Art Gallery
1310 11th St, Santa Monica, CA 90401

For Immediate Release
July 2025

Press Contact Erika Hirugami, MA. MAAB. MPhil.
Academic Curator and Professor at SMC
424.223.8830 • Hirugami_Erika@smc.edu

Concrete Hope
On view Fall 2025 - Spring 2026
Exhibition Opening Reception Oct 14 5-8 PM



Fuck You Know? (detail), 2019 By William Camargo, MFA.

CONCRETE HOPE | ESPERANZA CONCRETA

The works that collide within Concrete Hope speak to the intricacies and complexities of belonging to a community of individuals united aesthetically by culture, transcending national boundaries. Concrete Hope features equal parts piñatas, abuelitas, cholos, tatuajes, virgencitas, mercados, rosarios, metates, petates, buganvillas, escapularios, veladoras, primas, primos, letreros, gente de nuestra comunidad, gallos, emblemas nacionales, ventanales, ladrillos, sobadores, pirámides, manteles, familia y fotografías.

Concrete Hope's aesthetic axis is the celebration of all things Brown, Mexican-American, Nepantlera, Mestiza, Indigenous, Chicanx, Mexican-Irish, Afro-Mexicana, Chicano, Latine, Undocumented, Oaxaqueño, Yaqui, Migrant, Guatemalan-Mexican, Salvadoran, Mexipino (Mexican-Filipino), Chapin, Immigrant, Undoc+, and Jaxican (Japanese-Mexican), et. al., which stands as a reflection of self-affirmation of the lived experiences of the complex brown community in Southern California. Concrete Hope brings together thirty-eight emergent photographers and lens-based artists from Southern California who explore an assortment of installation media as materiality for the photographic depictions.

Curated by Erika Hirugami, MA. MAAB. MPhil. Academic Curator and Professor at SMC.

CONCRETE HOPE ESPERANZA CONCRETA

In the new political reality of the United States, brown bodies are demonized. Today, immigrants, migrants, undoc+ individuals, and citizens of Chicanx and Latine ancestries alike are being deported with no due process.[1] Meanwhile, the president of this very nation sends the National Guard to our city and (presumably) the Department of Homeland Security to sequester undoc+ immigrants, as people protest downtown. In the back of my mind ring Elizabeth Ferrer's words from a time, unlike today,

"As the political landscape changed in the 1980s and 1990s, a more emblematic form of image making arose, exemplified by imagery that reflected a deep desire to affirm our presence, particularly in a time when Latinx people remained largely invisible and excluded from the broader social discourse of the United States.[2]

In today's reality, Latines are hyper-visualized in the media and utilized as political scapegoats for the various faults of this nation; it is here where photography becomes militant about unapologetically celebrating, honoring, and acknowledging Latinidad for all its complex authenticity while still reflecting a **Concrete Hope** and deep desire to affirm our presence in this nation.

[1] This project centers Latinidad as an ethnorace and seeks to linguistically acknowledge that Latine and Chicanx are loaded projects that weigh heavily upon our communities. We will, therefore, make space for every single complicated linguistic identifier of each of the members in this community, which includes but is not limited to: Brown, Mexican-American, Nepantlera, Mestiza, Indigenous, Chicanx, Mexican-Irish, Afro-Mexicana, Chicano, Latine, Undocumented, Oaxaqueñe, Yaqui, Migrant, Guatemalan-Mexican, Salvadoran, Mexican-Filipino (Mexipino), Chapin, Immigrant, undoc+, and Japanese-Mexican (Jaxican). The language provided here is by no means comprehensive of the plethora of positionalities that make up the brown community, nor does it seek to erase any of the races found in this community. Still, it does begin to highlight the complexity of a community of people bound together by shared cultural experiences. I am writing in January 2025.

[2] Elizabeth Ferrer, *Latinx Photography in The United States: A Visual History* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2020), 199. Thank you, Elizabeth; your publication is foundational to the curatorial theorizing of the constellation of exhibitions that is FotoSoCal.

CONCRETE HOPE

On view Fall 2025 - Spring 2026

Exhibition Opening Reception Oct 14 5-8 PM

The Pete and Susan Barrett Art Gallery

1310 11th St, Santa Monica, CA 90401

PARTICIPATING PHOTOGRAPHERS & LENS-BASED ARTISTS

Hugo A. Amarales	@hugo.a.amarales
Mónica Arreola	@monica_arreola_
Isabel Avila	@isabelavila.photo
Jamil Baldwin	@juh_mile
Deanna Barahona	@deannabarahona
William Camargo	@billythecamera
Jackie Castillo	@caminadas
Damon Casarez	@damon_c
Aldo Cervantes	@_aldocervantes
Amina Cruz	@aminacruz.studio
Nube Cruz	@cybernubex
Raylene De La Torre	@94rayray
Lizeth Fedella	@fedellalizeth
Humberto Flores	@trusthashooter
Devyn Galindo	@devyngalindo
Iris Huerta	@iris.hue.photo
Erick Iñiguez	@erickphotolenz
Katherine Juarez	@katheicc
Alejandra Martinez	@alejandraa_m.c
Arlene Mejorado	@ari.mejorado
Yulissa Mendoza	@yu.lis.sa
Star Montana	@starmontana
Rodrigo Morales	@dumptruckwizard
Raylene B. Olalde	@ihatecamera
Diego Olivares	@gottagodiego
Lizette Olivas	@iediaries
Aydinaneth Ortiz	@aydinanethortiz
Moe Penders Ramos	@quijolemano
Antonio Perez	@cadillactony
Ryan Perez	@ryanperez.info
Felix Quintana	@felixfquintana
Alkaid Ramirez	@tatesthewizard
Alexa Ramirez Posada	@arxmirez
Michelle Salinas	@msalinaswamungu
Juan Manuel Valenzuela	@juanmanuelvalenzuela1
Maria Villanueva	@_isabelita.19
Patricia Zambrano	@ninapati
Amy Zapata	@BarrioNerd

Concrete Hope at SMC's Barrett Gallery is the axis exhibition of **FotoSoCal**, a constellation of exhibitions that brings together over twenty community college galleries and affiliated spaces across Southern California, including Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, and Orange counties, featuring the work of emerging Latine/x photographers and lens-based artists. The project will take place from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026. Erika Hirugami, MA. MAAB. MPhil., SMC's History of Photography Professor and Academic Curator is **FotoSoCal's** Curatorial Director.