Deanna Ledezma

Regarding Family Photography in Contemporary Latinx Art

An Affiliative Look

While staying in the guest room of my mother-in-law's house last summer, I noticed a pixelated copy of a wedding portrait of her Tejano parents tucked between the frame and the mirror of the dresser. The portrait copy, made from a photograph kept by my mother-in-law's older sister, retains the uneven edges of the original hand-tinted print, cut to fit inside a niche-shaped frame. It shows the solemn groom, wearing a black suit with a white flower pinned to his lapel, clasping the gloved hand of the bride, who stands next to him. The details of her long-sleeved, floor-length wedding gown disappeared in the process of making the duplicate. White fabric envelops her body in indistinguishable layers; only the silhouette of the garment remains. Her dark hair merges into the undefined space behind her. With the background similarly abstracted, the setting of the portrait is difficult to discern.

This wedding portrait, in which visual quality is set aside in favor of ownership and display, demonstrates some of the material practices of family photography in my relatives' homes and the centrality of photography in constructing Latinx familial histories and sustaining transgenerational narratives. This family photograph and the domestic space it inhabits have only been seen by relatives and close friends. In other words, the portrait has not yet circulated among a public—whether comprised of social media users, audience members at a conference, or readers of an essay. *If seen here now, what kind of response might this Latinx family photograph prompt? What preconceptions influence how one relates to a Latinx family photograph that is not one's own?*

This essay first considers the implications of Latinx family photographs traversing and troubling the dichotomous private and public spheres, and then examines how three contemporary Latinx artists—Laura Aguilar, Kathy Vargas, and Guadalupe Rosales—intercede notions of the universal Latinx family through their respective making, reusing, and archiving of family photography. In selecting Latinx artists with distinctive modes of engaging with family photographs, this essay foregrounds how practices, rather than image content exclusively, constitute "family photography," as Gillian Rose has argued. "Family photos are particular sorts of images embedded in specific practices," Rose contends, "and it is the specificity of those *practices* that define a photograph as a family photo as much as, if not more than, what it pictures."[1] Aware of the political potentiality of family photographs both inside and outside the home, these artists exemplify ways of anticipating and negotiating an affiliative look when family photographs are moved into the public spaces of social media, the museum, or the gallery. In using the prepositional form of "regard" in my title, I am intentionally invoking the definition of regard as it pertains to sight—to look, to observe, to scrutinize—as well as the modification of the verb with a particular feeling or attitude—to regard with tenderness, to regard with affection, to regard with suspicion.[2] When detached, whether deliberately or involuntarily, from their domestic context and relocated into the public realm, family photographs are subject to a multitude of ways of looking and feeling. An individual's encounter with a family photograph often relies on an affective mode of engagement, an immediate

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1. Gillian Rose, *Doing Family Photography: The Domestic, the Public, and the Politics of Sentiment* (London: Routledge, 2010), 14 (original emphasis).
2. *OED Online*, s.v. "regard, v.," accessed December 2018. The title of this essay also alludes to Susan Sontag's conceptualization of "regard" as a form of witnessing suffering and the ethical matters of beholding photographs and other images that circulate as art and in visual culture. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003).

response to whatever aspect of the photograph resonates personally, regardless of the historical or cultural distance that separates the viewer's notions of family from those of the photographic subjects.

Central to my investigation of how Latinx family photographs are seen and felt is Marianne Hirsch's conceptualization of an "affiliative look" in *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*.[3] Denoting kinship and the formation of an association with a specific person or group, the term "affiliative" can also refer to the desire to connect with others.[4] Hirsch, defining an affiliative look as a sense of identification, writes: "Recognizing an image as *familial* elicits . . . a specific kind of readerly or spectatorial look, an *affiliative look* through which we are sutured into the image and through which we adopt the image into our own familial narrative."[5] Yet the photography historian Shawn Michelle Smith warns in "Feeling Family Photography: A Cautionary Note" that while "an affiliative look can create an *imagined* space of shared understanding, . . . it can also function as a *colonial gesture* through which a viewer presumes to comprehend more than she can know."[6] To be sure, the ubiquity and aesthetic conventions of family photographs, such as their subject matter, recurrent poses, and material forms, make them prone to feelings of familiarity. However, Smith's apt characterization of an affiliative look as a colonial gesture speaks to how it can produce a false sense of intimacy, resulting in the affective appropriation of an image that suppresses and obscures the historical context and sociocultural significance of a once-private family photograph.

Whether presented in an intimate photograph or one produced by mass media, the Latinx family is made a public site for projecting desires and differences, longings and fears. The construction of a monolithic, ahistorical image of the Latinx family was propelled by early social scientists, including Oscar Lewis and William Madsen, whose studies pathologized Mexican and Mexican American families as socially isolated and dominated by *machismo* beliefs as a means of substantiating their supposed inferiority and backwardness.[7] Likewise, the multigenerational households of Mexican immigrants were criticized as creating overcrowded environments with poor sleeping arrangements and as hindering the cultural assimilation of older family members.[8] In the current political climate of the United States, in which the expanding population of Latinx families is perceived as a threat to white supremacy, nativist anxieties fixate on the "hyperfertility" of Latinx women and the birthright citizenship status of children born to undocumented immigrants.[9] When the Latin American family is defended in debates centering on the separation and detainment of migrant families at the United States–Mexico border and demands for their reunification, conservative rhetoric draws on "a highly gendered, racialized, and monolithic portrayal of the ideal US Latino family unit (as a heteropatriarchal nuclear family) to the exclusion of the many relationships forged in the context of transnational migration," as the ethnographer Alex E. Chávez argues.[10] Neither the stereotyping nor the romanticization of the Latinx family reflects the myriad configurations, biologically based and otherwise, that make up Latinx families.

While acknowledging critiques of the conflation of "Latina/o issues with family issues," the visual and cultural studies scholar Richard T. Rodríguez asserts:

3. Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 93.
4. *OED Online*, s.v., "affiliate, v.," accessed December 2018.
5. Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 93.
6. Shawn Michelle Smith, "Feeling Family Photography: A Cautionary Note," *Photography and Culture* 10, no. 2 (July 2017): 166 (emphasis added).
7. Richard T. Rodríguez, "Family," in *Keywords for Latina/o Studies*, ed. Deborah R. Vargas, Nancy Raquel Mirabal, and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 61.
8. Norman Daymond Humphrey, "The Housing and Household Practices of Detroit Mexicans," *Social Forces* 24, no. 4 (May 1946): 433–34.
9. See Leo R. Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); and Elena R. Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).
10. Alex E. Chávez, "Intimacy at Stake: Transnational Migration and the Separation of Family," *Latino Studies* 15, no. 1 (April 2017): 51.

> Despite calls by white queer theorists to forget the family (a call that evidences an unfamiliarity with or disrespect of a decades-long history of writing emphasizing the vital meanings of familial ties for queers of color), the family will persist as a means to subvert racism, homophobia, sexism, and class discrepancies, while always running the risk of reproducing those very inequalities in its uncritical adaptations.[11]

The Latinx family remains a strategic framework for combating injustices and discrimination. In Latinx homes family photographs and domestic photographic arrangements have long functioned as a means of countering stereotypical representations, establishing a sense of belonging, bringing together kin dispersed by transnational migration, and honoring alternative kinship formations. When this type of private family photograph is made public it is made vulnerable to an affiliative look that can undermine its personal value and political potency for the Latinx family. Yet it is a risk worth taking, as Aguilar, Vargas, and Rosales demonstrate.

A comparison of these three artists—their affinities and points of divergence—elucidates how Latinx contemporary artists mediate an affiliative look and its presumption of intimacy and similitude. With Aguilar, the queer subjects of her *Plush Pony* series resist an affiliative look by circumventing normative ideas of gender, sexuality, and biological family; with Vargas, material manipulation of family snapshots in her photographic montages disrupts the tendency to regard these kinds of photos with an affiliative look; and with Rosales, the building of a collective archive brings attention to underrepresented personal histories and "chosen families." In the following analysis of the discrete artistic practices of these three artists, the convergence of looking and feeling is brought into the foreground to address key concerns and questions raised by scholars working in photography studies as to how approaches to viewing and using family photographs contribute to the perpetuation and expansion of notions of family.[12]

Laura Aguilar: The *Plush Pony* Series

Founded in the El Sereno neighborhood of Los Angeles in the 1960s, the Plush Pony was a butch and femme bar that catered to gay women of color.[13] Recalling her first visit to the Plush Pony, the memoirist Pat Alderete described the scene as she walked through its front doors, which were emblazoned with paintings of stallions: "The jukebox was blaring Linda Ronstadt, singing 'When Will I Be Loved.' The cigarette smoke hung thick from the low ceiling, rickety stools were shoved against the bar, with Chicana lesbians slouched on, against or near them."[14] It was in the back of this bar in the early 1990s that Laura Aguilar, a queer Chicana photographer, improvised a studio where regulars posed for portraits. Having completed her *Latina Lesbians* series in the late 1980s, Aguilar made an intentional shift in her subsequent series in the socioeconomic status of the people and communities she wanted to represent.

Her entry into the queer social space of the Plush Pony was not without its challenges. In a letter to a friend, the photographer Joyce Tenneson, Aguilar confided her need to keep her distance when she first began interacting with the

11. Rodríguez, "Family," 64.
12. See Elspeth H. Brown and Thy Phu, introduction to *Feeling Photography*, ed. Elspeth H. Brown and Thy Phu (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 1–25; Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and Diaspora in Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Erina Duganne, "Family Folktales: Carrie Mae Weems, Allan Sekula, and the Critique of Documentary Photography," *English Language Notes* 49, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2011): 41–52; Jennifer Orpana and Sarah Parsons, "Editorial: Seeing Family," *Photography and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2017): 95–98; Thy Phu, "Diasporic Vietnamese Family Photographs, Orphan Images, and the Art of Recollection," *Photography and Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (Fall 2014), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0005.10; Shawn Michelle Smith, "Race and Reproduction in *Camera Lucida*," in *At the Edge of Sight: Photography and the Unseen* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); and "About," The Family Camera Network, http://familycameranetwork.org.
13. Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay LA: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 92–93. Faderman and Timmons retain the language of their informants and use the term *gay* in reference to homosexual men, lesbians, bisexual individuals, and transgender people; ibid., 5.
14. Pat Alderete, "The Plush Pony," in *Love, West Hollywood: Reflections of Los Angeles*, ed. Chris Freeman and James J. Berg (New York: Alyson Books, 2008), 87. For another account of the Plush Pony by a Chicana lesbian, see Marie Cartier, *Baby, You Are My Religion: Women, Gay Bars, and Theology Before Stonewall* (Bristol, CT: Acumen, 2013).

women at the Plush Pony, some of whom had served jail time on drug charges.[15] In an analysis of this letter, the literary critic James Estrella explains that Aguilar associated drinking with her brother's alcoholism, and while she was engaged in photographing the regulars of Plush Pony, she nonetheless felt detached from their community.[16] Aguilar initially offered to pay the participants five dollars a photograph, but they were skeptical of the monetary transaction, as their consent would have allowed Aguilar not only to take their pictures but also circulate the portraits beyond the Plush Pony community. A more satisfying agreement was reached, with Aguilar giving each participant five-by-eight-inch black-and-white prints in exchange for signing a release form.[17] This system enabled Aguilar and her subjects in the *Plush Pony* series to avoid the financial arrangements of traditional portrait studios.

The resulting photographic series, named after the Plush Pony bar (which became a casualty of gentrification in the early 2000s) and titled numerically, functions as a queer archive attesting to what Elspeth H. Brown and Sarah Davidmann describe as photography's "instrumental, affective capacity . . . to produce connection and belonging—feelings that can be considered queer in relationship to normative family formations."[18] In the photographs of the *Plush Pony* series unnamed patrons pose in a variety of configurations that express affection, resistance, or joy. In *Plush Pony #15* two queer Chicanas embrace—one woman wrapping her arms around the waist of the other, whose manicured hands softly grasp the polo-shirt-clad shoulders of her companion, as if they are slow dancing together. The exuberance and playfulness of the trio in *Plush Pony #7* is heightened by the diagonal orientation of the composition, which parallels the line of one woman's flirtatiously extended leg. Behind them, the edges of the backdrop and the cords that tether the cloth in place are clearly visible. The trio cannot be contained within the perimeters of the studio backdrop or the aesthetic and capitalistic boundaries of traditional studio portraiture.[19] Aguilar and her participants unsettle the reputation of photographic studio portraiture as an instrument for the white, middle-class aspirations of the nuclear family, reclaiming it as a medium for self-representation and the portrait studio itself as a space for making queer Latinx family formations visible.

Kathy Vargas: The *Innocent Age* Series

Arguably, snapshot photography is most susceptible to an affiliative look because of its omnipresence and its supposed artlessness and evidentiary value. The snapshooter's "purity of vision," notes Catherine Zuromskis in her analysis of snapshot photography, is perceived as "unequaled in any other photographic genre."[20] Born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1950, the Chicana artist Kathy Vargas initially took photographs of her city, neighborhood, and family before transitioning to making hand-colored photographic montages in the 1980s.[21] In her *Innocent Age* series (ca. 2001–4), Vargas interrogates not only the presumption of innocence as it pertains to family snapshots but also the sanctity and idealization of childhood. *Innocent Age*, according to Vargas, is a "visual reconsideration of childhood" that uses snapshots of children whose identities and biographies remain largely anonymous to viewers, underscoring how little a viewer can comprehend about a stranger's upbringing based on a family photograph alone.[22]

15. "I enjoy photography the women but had a hard time staying out of there life's for me the people who I photography I usualy get to know them better after I take there picture but here for my own good I really had to learn to keep my distance a lot of these women have be in and out of jail mostly for dealing drugs there women life are toff and I don't need to try to save them this also was hard for me cause some I want to try but new it was a game in some part to see what there could get out of me" (original spelling maintained); Laura Aguilar to Joyce Tenneson, February 22, 1993, box 1, folder 10 (folder title: Joyce Tenneson, 1993–1995), Laura Aguilar Papers; quoted in James Estrella, "The Plush Pony Series: An Untold Story of Hope and Despair," in *Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell*, ed. Rebecca Epstein and Sybil Venegas (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press and Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College, 2017), 61.

16. Estrella, "The Plush Pony Series," 62.

17. Macarena Gómez-Barris, "The Plush View: Makeshift Sexualities and Laura Aguilar's Forbidden Archives," in *Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A.*, ed. C. Ondine Chavoya and David Evans Frantz (Los Angeles: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at USC Libraries, 2017), 324.

18. See "Queering the Trans* Family Album: Elspeth H. Brown and Sarah Davidmann, in Conversation," *Radical History Review* 122 (May 1, 2015): 190.

19. Deborah R. Vargas—in her essay "Ruminations of *Lo Sucio* as a Latino Queer Analytic," *American Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (September 2014): 715–26—uses *lo sucio*, as shaped by José Esteban Muñoz's conceptualization of *chusemería*, "to theorize the performative tactics that genderqueer feminine sexualities enact to remain the magnificent refuse of surplus while in refusal of vanishing" (724). She describes the subjects of Aguilar's *Plush Pony* series as "exemplifying the particular class and racialized gender productions addressed by the analytic of *lo sucio*" (717) and cites José Esteban Muñoz's *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 182.

20. Catherine Zuromskis, *Snapshot Photography: The Lives of Images* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 9.

21. Lucy R. Lippard, "Concrete Sorrows, Transparent Joys," in *Kathy Vargas: Photographs, 1971–2000*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard and MaLin Wilson-Powell (San Antonio, TX: Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, 2000), 15.

22. Kathy Vargas, "Artist Statement: *Innocent Age*," in *Voices in Concert: In the Spirit of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Tina Fuentes, Delilah Montoya, and Kathy Vargas*, ed. Mark Cervenka and Grace Zuñiga (Houston: Arte Publico Press, University of Houston, 2015), n.p. Vargas explains that she personally knew some but not all of the photographic subjects, but she does not elaborate on how she procured these photographs. As of 2015 the series included sixty works.

Laura Aguilar, *Plush Pony #15,* 1992, *left*, gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 in. (35.6 x 27.2 cm) (artwork © Laura Aguilar Trust of 2016, used with permission)

Laura Aguilar, *Plush Pony #7,* 1992, *above*, gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 in. (27.2 x 35.6 cm) (artwork © Laura Aguilar Trust of 2016, used with permission)

Kathy Vargas, *Piñata Party,* from the series *Innocent Age,* ca. 2001–4, hand-colored gelatin silver print (artwork provided by the artist)

Kathy Vargas, *Gloria (Spanish Dancer),* from the series *Innocent Age,* ca. 2001–4, hand-colored gelatin silver print (artwork provided by the artist)

Kathy Vargas, *Dígale a Jesusita*, from the series *Innocent Age,* ca. 2001–4, hand-colored gelatin silver print (artwork provided by the artist)

In her twenty-by-twenty-four–inch hand-colored gelatin silver prints, Vargas layers early and midcentury snapshots depicting scenes associated with American childhood, such as boys and girls posing in costumes, playing at an amusement park, riding a miniature pony, or attending a party. A panel of red hearts reminiscent of wallpaper or giftwrap visually links the montages in the series. Vargas's titling of the photographs—*Piñata Party, Gloria (Spanish Dancer), Dígale a Jesusita*—alludes to a Southwestern culture and vocabulary shared by Anglos and Tejanos living in San Antonio, but her gestures of abstraction hinder the simplistic feelings of nostalgia the snapshots might otherwise provoke. By embedding these snapshots among patterned paper, cut flowers, and a backdrop marked with irregular lines and then rephotographing them, Vargas creates a visual and affective distance between the family photographs and the viewer. Her collaging of the snapshots implies that the photographs—and, more significantly, their subjects—have undergone more than we can decipher through the viewing of a single image.

Like a diver's spotlight illuminating only parts of a shipwreck, the snapshots are made murky within the montages, remaining out of easy affiliative reach.

An Affiliative Look in the Age of Social Media: Guadalupe Rosales's *Veteranas & Rucas*

The queer Latinx artist Guadalupe Rosales's projects *Veteranas & Rucas* and *Map Pointz* (founded in 2015 and 2016) circulate primarily but not exclusively in the digital realm of the photo-sharing social network Instagram.[23] Seeking to counter the male-centric culture of Chicano Los Angeles as well as monolithic representations of Latinx histories, Rosales established *Veteranas & Rucas* (@veteranas_and_rucas) as a crowdsourced photo archive of Latina youth culture in 1990s Southern California.[24] *Veteranas & Rucas* is a "subaltern counterpublic," to use Nancy Fraser's term, that functions as a digital arena in which "members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs."[25] With more than 252,000 followers and over 4,614 posts as of May 2020, *Veteranas & Rucas* has grown more chronologically expansive in its featured submissions and now presents multiple generations of Latinx family snapshots, glamour shots from mall photography studios, photo souvenirs from California theme parks, high school dance portraits, and photo-booth strips.[26] In her role as archivist-curator, Rosales emphasizes how the making of this digital and physical archive depends on participants "dusting off their own archives," through which action their photographs and histories acquire greater value.[27]

Standing in front of a pastoral mural painted on a cinderblock wall, a young woman in a white dress and a mustached man in a turquoise plaid, button-down shirt assume the pose of a couple at a dance. The caption of this photograph, submitted by a woman named Reena, explains that the picture of her mother, Belinda, and her father was taken in 1980 at a California state prison during her father's incarceration. Another snapshot shows a high school graduate named Alma in her ruby-colored cap and gown. In the background, guests of the graduation ceremony carrying bunches of balloons pack the tan metal bleachers. Alma holds on her hip her one-year-old son, Alex, who fussily reaches toward someone or something beyond the camera. For Alma, graduating from high school was an accomplishment achieved at a time when "many believed [she] would drop out."[28] Participants' choice to share their photographs and stories on Instagram requires a willingness to make themselves, as well as their friends and relatives, vulnerable to spectators' judgments about taste, standards of female beauty, and what counts as "family." More personal details, such as the circumstances of Reena's father's imprisonment or the stigma Alma may have faced as a teenage mother, are not addressed in the captions. Rosales has emphasized that the trauma of her cousin Ever Sanchez's gang-related murder "provided the impetus to reconnect with the culture and the home that she'd left" after moving from Los Angeles to New York.[29]

Exceeding mere documentation of the clothing or fashion of previous decades, Rosales's work underscores the significance of the anecdotes told in the image captions and the conversations (and occasional reunions) that take place within the comment threads. "The archive is not just photographs," she

23. Rosales's recent museum exhibitions include *Guadalupe Rosales: Echoes of a Collective Memory* at the Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angles College, in Monterey Park, California (September 15, 2018–March 23, 2019) and *Guadalupe Rosales: Legends Never Die, A Collective Memory* at Aperture in New York (September 20–October 20, 2018). The *Map Pointz* archive, Instagram profile, and book focus on photographs and ephemera of party crews, raves, and teenagers' bedrooms of the 1990s. *Map Pointz* began as Rosales's master's thesis. See Guadalupe Esquivel Rosales, "Map Points" (MFA thesis, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2016); Guadalupe Rosales, *Map Pointz: A Collective Memory* (Los Angeles: Little Big Man, 2018).
24. Guadalupe Rosales, "Uncanon Artist Talk with Guadalupe Rosales," an artist's talk cohosted by LATINXS UNIDXS and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Student Government, April 24, 2019.
25. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 67.
26. *Veteranas & Rucas* (@veteranas_and_rucas), https://www.instagram.com/veteranas_and_rucas/.
27. Rosales, "Uncanon Artist Talk with Guadalupe Rosales."
28. Alma, email message to the author, February 2020.
29. Melissa Smith, "Lens: The Veteranas of Chicana Youth Culture in Los Angeles," *New York Times*, September 27, 2018.

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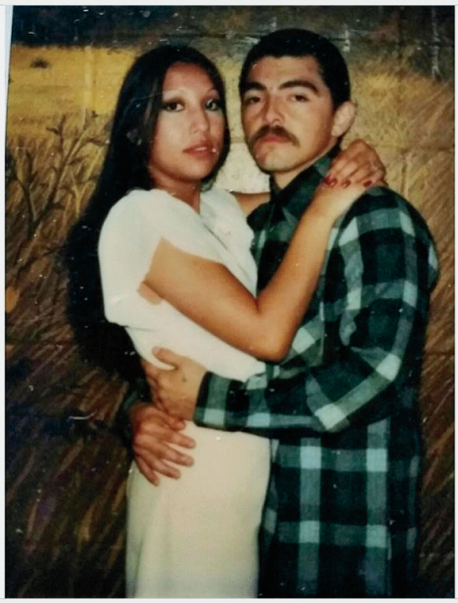

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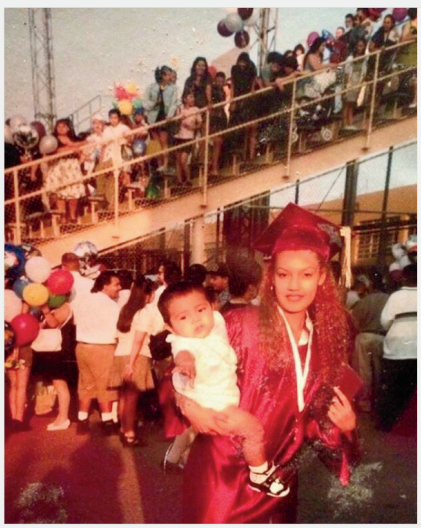

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roxiealvarez @luvmy924s But she did it!!! My hat goes off to her!! What a wonderful example to young mother's!! I LOVE it!!

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Guadalupe Rosales (@veteranas_and _rucas), "This photo was taken in 1980 at a state prison back when inmates were allowed to wear flannel shirts. (Unfortunately we don't know which prison this was taken at) Both from Norwalk CA. Thank you Reena for submitting this photo of your parents. — Guadalupe," *Instagram* photo, February 1, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BtWY6lunt8y/ (screenshot by the author with permission of @lovelifejustdance)

Guadalupe Rosales (@veteranas_and _rucas), "Alma at her graduation with her 1 year old son, Alex. Class of 1997, Bell Gardens High School, Thanks for sharing this photo @luvmy924s," *Instagram* photo, July 3, 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bkx2PVUlMP3/ (screenshot by the author with permission of @luvmy924s)

explains, "it's archiving language and the way we relate to a photograph."[30] Rosales's use of the pronoun *we* raises a question: How does an artist-run social-media community, which builds a sense of belonging and community through the public sharing of private photographs, negotiate an affiliative look? In their historical and cultural specificity, the stories told in the *Veteranas & Rucas* captions—however brief—hinder an affiliative look, insisting that viewers appreciate familial and kinship arrangements that thrive outside of heteronormative, white, middle-class values.

Recognizing the sociopolitical potential of visibility, contributors to the *Veteranas & Rucas* archive make public otherwise peripheral representations of family and kinship. The undertaking of *Veteranas & Rucas* brings to mind Michel-Rolph Trouillot's diagnosis of history and how "the production of historical narratives involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such production."[31] *Veteranas & Rucas* well illustrates how snapshot photography and social media have pluralized modes of historical production and supported reassessments of which histories are deemed worthy of archival preservation. Just as *Veteranas & Rucas* is situated at the juncture of the archive and modes of affiliative looking, so too are Aguilar's and Vargas's practices. Aguilar's *Plush Pony* portraits and Vargas's *Innocent Age* series show, respectively, how the collaborative making and the artistic reappraisal of photographic archives can address the ways that Latinx family photography is seen and felt.

Deanna Ledezma is a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago completing her dissertation, "The Fecundity of Family Photography." Recent collaborations with artists include the Santa Fe Art Institute Residency and an installation in *Re: Working Labor*. Green Lantern Press and Walls Divide Press have published her creative nonfiction writing.

30. Smith, "Lens."
31. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), xxiii.