

In Solidarity with Latin America: An art exhibition on Elon's campus

By Juan Leal-Ugalde, faculty | November 6, 2023

This exhibition consists of thirteen posters created by artists Calixto Robles (Guatemala, born 1957) and René Castro (Chile, born 1943).

The Department of World Languages and Cultures (WLC), in partnership with Latin American Studies (LAS) and Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS), is delighted to invite Elon's community to visit the art exhibition "In Solidarity with Latin America: Posters and Historical Memory" at Carlton Commons, which will be open until the summer of 2024.

This exhibition consists of thirteen posters created by artists Calixto Robles (Guatemala, born 1957) and René Castro (Chile, born 1943). The images concern an artistic initiative called Mission Gráfica based in San Francisco, which has produced graphic art since the late seventies until today.

These artworks have been created in solidarity with Latin American and Latinx communities. They cover diverse topics of historical memory and racial justice, including the representation of indigenous identities and cosmivision, the defense of human rights during dictatorships and civil wars in the 20th century, and calls by social organizations to stop the United States' support of Latin American violent regimes.

The images have been exhibited in museums such as the Smithsonian Museum of National Art and published in the edited book *Mission Gráfica: Reflecting a Community in Print* (Art Hazelwood, Pacific View Press, 2022). The posters currently on display on Elon's campus are reprints from original artworks held at the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, which preserves a rich collection of images produced by the Mission Gráfica's project and other brigades and collectives that expressed solidarity with Latin America through political art.

During the opening of the art exhibition on Oct. 26, faculty, students, and staff shared in a reception at Carlton Commons after attending the 2023 Fall Semester Latin American Studies Research Series. This semester, Hannah Gill addressed the keynote conference at El Centro. Gill is the Associate Director of the Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC-Chapel Hill and the Director of the Latino Migration Project. She is the author of *North Carolina and the Latino Migration Experience: New Roots in the Old North State*. *Nuevas Raíces* (UNC Press, 2018).

In Gill's presentation at Elon, "Migration, settlement, and integration: Perspectives from North Carolina leaders," attendees were encouraged to reflect on the causes and current policies concerning the migratory phenomenon as well as on the challenges faced by immigrant populations in the state. Gill presented a unique research project that advocates for social justice for Mexican and Central American populations in North Carolina, as well as shared multiple local opportunities for undergraduates and Elon's community to support these communities.

The LAS Research Series and the opening of the art exhibition were significant instances of promoting diversity and social justice through campus cultural events. The events explored Latin American history and culture from a global perspective and fostered civic engagement with local issues. They also enriched student's learning experience beyond the classroom thanks to the support of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL). Elon's programs' collaboration motivated a campus reflection with a transdisciplinary focus on Latin American art and immigration issues in the United States. The events were sponsored by WLC, LAS, PCS, El Centro, CATL, International and Global Studies, the Isabella Cannon Global Education Center, and Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies.

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