What We Do

In today’s tense political climate, “Latino” has become a polarizing term. For some, the Latino is a scapegoat—a villain responsible for the country’s problems. For others, the Latino is a posterchild—a victim of the wayward political process. Both interpretations are damaging to our dignity as an equal part of the American citizenry.

The stories contained in this issue provide versions of the Latino experience in America and at OSU. The goal of the issue is to illustrate the diversity of Latinidad—its richness of ideas, talents, experiences, and modes of expression—not to reignite trenchant political disputes or antagonist the public along traditional racial divides. As Jessica Granger explains, for example, the recent reopening of Cuban-American borders after 55 years of embargo necessitates bipartisan assessment of Hispanic and American racial politics. Professor Tanya Saunders’s book, Cuban Underground Hip Hop, similarly uncovers the need for both Americans and Cubans to take responsibility for the breakdown of race relations.

Daniel Flores shares his learning about “colored consciousness” and the potential utility it presents to our society in which poor education is a persistent problem. Nicolas Fernandez credits university programs for helping him to find community on campus and OSU study abroad programs for allowing him to serve underfunded regions of Colombia. Daniel Moussa uncovers inequities in the Guatemalan healthcare system, while also crediting OSU’s study abroad programs for allowing him to better understand the intersection of local culture with contemporary medical practices. Echoing these sentiments, Daniel Gomez-Ramos shares his personal journey to becoming a doctor who serves Hispanic and African American neighborhoods of the Midwest, where better understanding of those local communities is essential to enhancing care.

As performance artist, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, affirms, art has the capacity to create “utopian spaces” for social change. For example, Federico Cuatalcuatl combines Mesoamerican and contemporary design elements to engage the public in social activism and conversations about transculturation. The Chilean street art of Mono González, similarly blends art with activism while also democratizing the processes of creation and dissemination among the public. The black and white print photography of Jose Gálvez, meanwhile, documents Latino life in America while inviting viewers to focus on content rather than color. Finally, the unconventional artwork of Axel Cuevas Santamaria, also known as VJ axx, invites empathy with an unexpected organism—slime mould—as a way to reexamine the experience of legal aliens in America.

Credit for this issue is especially owed to the dedicated staff: Managing Director, Yolanda Zepeda, Assistant Editor, Leticia Wiggins, and Art Director Assistant, Luisa Talamas. Special acknowledgement is also owed to Art Director, Jacinda Walker, for her inspired design for this issue, her last with this publication. We heartily thank Jacinda for her valued service these past three years.

With great enthusiasm, I present to you this special issue of ¿Qué Pasa, OSU?, a countermeasure against national divisions and collective effort toward progress. I hope that it will inspire bipartisan conversations and continued reflection of the state of Latinidad in America.

Con cariño,

Victoria
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The escalation of racial tension has been moving in waves throughout American history with the current color strain leaving citizens once again on the brink of crisis. This peak of genetic-based social conflict has created a lot of questions for our nation as we look to the future. Why doesn’t anyone care about the Latin American community left to straddle the line between white and black? This question is left without an answer because we, as Latin Americans, are sometimes slow to respond to problems with race relations. We sometimes become complacent, as we watch both sides pick each other apart.

Cuban-Americans and more specifically, Afro-Cuban Americans, live the lives of circus performers. Should we identify as Cuban, white, black, or mulatto? This is a question that I’ve often asked myself growing up in the United States. Moreover, it has been an ongoing issue for those of Cuban descent who have resided in both America and Cuba.

Even before Fidel Castro managed to muscle his way into office, many Cubans seeking refuge in the United States found as much persecution as those who would arrive after the establishment of the new regime. America was the land of hopes and dreams—unless you were black. Mainland America was mired in segregation and, unfortunately for many Afro-Cubans, it seemed impossible to self-identify as black and plan to survive.

Soon after, the 1961 trade embargo with Cuba managed to effectively divide a once unified people into colors of their own. White Cubans rode the coattails of the white, privileged Americans while Afro-Cubans were left to stymie under hardship and systematic oppression. Now, 55 years later, the embargo has been lifted and a positive relationship between the United States and Cuba is underway. Cubans and Cuban-Americans are re-discovering each other for the first time. Will the current racial tension travel from America to Cuba? How will Cubans react to a polarizing figure like Ted Cruz whose political ads proliferate with all-white faces? Will Cubans see a version of their own experience in the plight of Black Americans facing systematic targeting by police?

Racism in Cuba, however, is said to be different. As they regularly admit, light-skinned and dark-skinned Cubans do not necessarily associate with each other, but this does not change the fact that they are all equally Cuban. Racism is alive and well in Cuba, but it has not exactly caused a crisis of identification for the nation. When you are born in Cuba, you are either listed as a “white Cuban” or “black Cuban” and that is simply how you must see yourself. Ultimately, the label that matters most is Cuban.

Regardless of one’s place of birth, there are social contracts, passed on between generations that Cuban and Cuban-American children must follow. For example, there is an unwritten law that a white Cuban and a black Cuban cannot marry because that would tarnish the family pedigree with mulatto children. I personally tested the hard boundaries of this unspoken social contract by marrying a black Trinidadian, who was not only non-Cuban, but also non-white like me. This grave offense cost me my relationship with my father, who could not accept that I chose love over tradition. Still, I do not regret my choice, because I love who I am, and I love my people, but I cannot live a full life by seeing love in color gradients.

Will Cubans and Cuban-Americans ever escape endemic racial divides? Who will teach us and the world that we are something other than black or white? As the borders re-open it becomes clear that this dilemma is bigger than any one of us. How we juggle the reunion of Cubans and Cuban-Americans on a national level and how we effect that transition on an individual level will undoubtedly change the politics of racial identification. At this watershed moment of reconciliation for the nation, I hope that we will also learn to love and accept each other as we already are: perfect.
Blackness in a Mestizo Nation: Tanya Saunders on Cuban Underground Hip Hop
By Leticia Wiggins, PhD Candidate, History

On January 20th, 2016, Dr. Tanya Saunders presented the research from her new book, Cuban Underground Hip Hop: Black Thoughts, Black Revolution, Black Modernity (University of Texas, 2015) with a group of faculty and students as part of the Diversity and Identity Studies Collective (DISCO) Research & Creative Activity Series. Saunders is an Assistant Professor in the Department of African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University.

Saunders cites a childhood conversation with her uncle at a McDonald’s in Baltimore, Maryland — when she was eight and he sixteen — as a major impetus for her career’s focus on Cuba. Originally from North Carolina and well versed in the philosophies undergirding the Black power movement, her uncle told her that “Cuba is the best place on earth. They [the United States government] hate Cuba so much because it’s a black-country run by a black man.” This assertion stuck with Saunders as she continued her education. She knew that Fidel was not a black man, but wondered if there was something more to her uncle’s claim that Cuba was a “black nation.”

As she launched her academic career, Saunders navigated a tough political climate during a time of strained Cuban-American relations. In order to remain in Cuba, Saunders secured a letter of permission from the Cuban state and gathered an informal network of artists willing to share their life experiences. Cuban Underground Hip Hop: Black Thoughts, Black Revolution, Black Modernity focuses on a group of young, revolutionary artists who challenged both endemic racism and Cuba’s colonial legacy. In a state where the government is deeply involved in mainstream culture, these artists pushed against the state-subsidized music industry with a message that critiqued rather than touted Cuba. These Cuban musicians, many of whom were hip-hop artists, used their work to bring issues of race back into the fore of national conversations.

For over a decade, Saunders spoke with artists and recorded their oral histories. She took these musicians seriously as political actors leading a social movement. From 1996 to 2006, they sought to end Cuba’s long colonial history mired in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, which pitted Africans as inferior. In Underground Hip Hop, Saunders profiles the life and death of a movement — which she acknowledges as predominantly middle class and elite — in order to understand how race, in conjunction with gender and queerness, play into the cultural conversation. The book puts blackness into a global context and offers an illustrative case-study that blackness is not solely an “American phenomenon.”

Saunders found the Cuban social climate different from what her uncle had suggested. The understanding of Cuba as a “mestizo” or “mixed race” society (which is held by the United States and in some ways maintained by the Cuban government) paints the nation as “ethnic” but also as “white.” Blackness is impossible in Cuba; when the country claims to be “mestizo” it argues for a type of color-blindness. The issues that Saunders broaches in her discussion of black revolution and modernity seem especially prescient in today’s cultural climate. More than ever Americans are compelled to reconsider how past transgressions against minorities have had a hand in creating today’s tense racial climate. The positive reception engendered by this important book spurred at least this attendee to add Cuban Underground Hip Hop to her reading list.
This past Autumn 2015, artist Federico Cuatlacuatl joined Ohio State’s community as a Visiting Assistant Professor. His research explores possibilities for animation to be re-contextualized and applied to praxis, thereby exploring, unfolding, and disseminating information about contemporary sociopolitical issues.

Born in Cholula, Puebla, Mexico, Federico immigrated to Indiana in 1999, and grew up as an undocumented immigrant. He received his bachelor’s degree in fine arts at Ball State University in 2013 with a major in computer animation. In May 2015, Federico received his master’s degree in fine arts at Bowling Green State University specializing in digital arts.

The technical direction of his work strives to weave unconventional processes for time-based productions such as the use of 3D computer animation, 2D computer animation, stop-motion, live action, motion capture, and compositing. He is also interested in using digital art
tools to develop a visual language representative of the transculturation and diaspora of an immigrant’s cultural identity by morphing together both Mesoamerican and contemporary design elements. Federico cultivates artistic processes that take his practice out of the studio and into the community, producing work with, for, and about the Hispanic immigrant community in social movements, workshops, presentations, lectures, and events.

Federico’s work thus reflects on the current realities of Hispanic immigrant diasporas in the United States and strives to bring forth awareness, change, and cultural sustainability. His research is primarily concerned with the current social, political, and cultural issues that Hispanic immigrants face in the United States. He has participated in numerous exhibitions including his 2015 solo show, “Between Existence,” at Crossroads for Contemporary Art of Notre Dame University and the 2014 National Wet Paint MFA Biennial at the Zhou B. Art Center in Chicago. Federico’s most recent independent short animation film, “Fin De,” has been screened in various national and international film festivals including Columbus, Ohio; Bemidji, Minnesota; Athens, Greece; Paris, France; Delph, United Kingdom; Lucknow, India; Canada and Finland.

Currently, Federico’s been primarily working with short animated films. However, as he explained, “I would ideally like to reach a point in my career when I can produce and direct feature-length animation films. This will also allow me to expand on works that can ultimately have a stronger impact on the global community, creating awareness, change, and advancement for the issues explored in my work. I’m also interested in developing pedagogical nuances in the way animation is taught in classroom settings as well as developing collaborative community-engaged courses for animation.” Federico’s most recent project is an artist residency that he will be launching in Mexico in June 2016. This is an ambitious project in his career that strives to bridge transnational artistic endeavors and culture.

This semester, he taught a computer animation course at Ohio State in collaboration with local community organization, Transit Arts. Transit Arts provides free workshops and training in the arts for youth ages 12 to 21 through sponsorship by The Ohio Arts Council and other Ohio community organizations and individual donors. Federico is excited to work with Transit Arts, thereby to bridge relationships and foster dialogue between the students in the animation course and the Transit Arts youth. This course helped students in the Department of Art to become more aware of the needs of the local communities outside of campus. Students produced animations that highlight the valuable community service provided by Transit Arts. The course was not only unprecedented in the Department of Art, but also in the larger context of higher education; as he explains, “it may be the first college course that re-contextualizes computer animation outside of a classroom setting for socially engaged productions.”
Chilean Muralist, Mono González produces a form of democratic street art utilizing basic house-painting tools. On display in the poor areas of Chile and especially in the capital of Santiago, Mono’s art engages critically with the legacy of the Pinochet dictatorship.
In an event remembering the bloody military coup in Chile in 1973, iconic Chilean muralist and printmaker, Alejandro “Mono” González visited OSU campus on September 10th and 11th, 2015 to deliver a workshop on printmaking techniques and discuss his career as a social activist. Mono is a co-founder of the muralist collective, Brigada Ramona Parra, which worked on the successful presidential campaign of Salvador Allende during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Allende later died during the violent military coup lead by Augusto Pinochet. Mono González has continued to paint murals throughout Chile and abroad, becoming one of the most important public and community artists in Latin America. During his visit, Mono kindly sat down with me to discuss his art and its role in local and global activism.

As we sip cafecitos at the Heirloom Café in the Wexner Center, Mono relates his positive impression of Columbus and the welcoming community at The Ohio State University. He reflects warmly on his experience teaching printmaking to the participants in his well-attended morning workshop. “We created t-shirt designs in less than an hour,” he explains. “I thought that it was going to take the whole morning, but in an hour everyone had understood what was involved.” When questioned why he opted to use t-shirts as a medium for teaching artistic expression, Mono explained that the “t-shirt is like a wall that circulates...Every t-shirt is a form for communication on the street. The t-shirt circulates so that it will be seen. The image must circulate, and thus it becomes a democratic act. In this way, the work of the individual can also be collective.”

This type of democratic street art is something that Mono also greatly values in his primary work with murals. Mono’s murals form part of the fabric of local neighborhoods in the poor areas of Chile and especially around the urban sectors of the city of Santiago, the capital. The materials that Mono selects reflect the quotidian experience of the local communities and are the same materials used in everyday construction work. He paints with the same brushes that are used to paint houses. When speaking of his *gráfica callejera* (street art), Mono explains that street murals have the capacity to involve the local community in defining culture. “In order to see a mural,” Mono remarks, “the people don’t need to pay. This is a type of art that has to do with the public perception.” Street art is similar to propaganda in that it is part of the living fabric of a city and is designed to be consumed by the populace. In this sense, Mono considers his work as an alternative response to the propaganda that decorated the streets of Chile’s populated areas during the Pinochet dictatorship.

In a nation that has a history of repression and censorship, Mono’s art plays an important role within a movement of street art designed for and by

(continued on page 8)
Education and Latino Consciousness
By Daniel Flores, Freshman, Biology

Ever since grade school I’ve been taught to view race as a color. Lately, however, pairing daily readings pertaining to the Latino community with historical studies on the Latino condition has given me a better sense of how to push for equality for my population. One book that stands out is, *Color Conscious* by K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann. Before reading this book, I connected being Latino with a particular pigmentation of the skin. Now, however, I understand that “Latino” is a reflection of a particular mental attitude and personal power.

During a recent Ohio leadership seminar featuring the mentor mogul David Brown, I further learned that “consciousness is the realization by the man in need, to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation, and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude.” This is essentially the definition of colored consciousness. By understanding oneself, and how one’s race is regarded by society, it is possible to free oneself of the shackles of racial prejudice.

A person ignorant of the difficulties faced by Latinos in America may unknowingly reinforce oppressive forces. Transferring the curriculum to a culturally and historically informative way of teaching, is when we will start to see a change in the way people view us and how we view ourselves. We need to integrate and further fund educational programs providing Latino studies as an undergraduate major at Ohio State and other institutions. The community should also further fund Latino student associations and other programming that brings awareness about the Latino community among all American universities. We as Latinos are at the start of an immense revolution that will significantly enhance the quality of Latino studies. Education on the plight of people of color would help to counteract endemic prejudice.

Mono explains that particular elements of the culture and history of Chile have created force behind the art of street graffiti. *Un arte provocador* (art of provocation), murals require high involvement by the spectator. As the mural forms part of the ephemeral culture of the neighborhood, it must naturally evolve. Mono never imagines that his art will last forever. Other people in the community will engage with it. They may decide to add to it or paint over it. It is a living art that belongs to the people and to a specific community, which is itself alive and ever-changing. 

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“Un patrimonio” continued

the public. The growth of street art, Mono says, is a particular legacy of Pinochet’s dictatorship. It has the capacity to return agency to the disenfranchised. Graffiti as a form is generally a transgressive act. Individual citizens decorate the walls of their communities, generally without the permission of a local authority. “But something will always be illegal,” Mono notes, “in a society where one is unable to express himself.”

In addition to producing his street murals, which are on display across Chile, and especially in Santiago, Mono also teaches film at the university level. He remarks that his expertise with film, which involves the messages conveyed through visual elements presented in a single frame, has helped him to think critically about the effect that his murals have on the spectator. His work is always grounded in a desire for his art to elicit a response from the Chilean public. As he remarks, “history always has to do with the conquerers. This art is from the position of the conquered. This is art of the dictatorship, of the marginalized, of the impoverished, and of those who don’t have a voice.”

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According to Guillermo Gómez-Peña, “audiences want to see and hear ideas that are beyond the deadening hum of white noise that we call entertainment and news.” The deadening hum of white noise to which Gómez-Peña refers can take on a particularly bland flavor here in Ohio, especially during major elections season. The line between entertainment and news is so blurred today that apathy becomes an enticing remedy for all the noisy commotion.

Sometimes a shock is precisely the prescription needed in order to disorient the all-too-passive audience member into recognizing the spectacle of politics in the United States and beyond. Sometimes what is necessary is a kind of live theatrical performance that intimately involves audience members as witnesses to the unfolding of the theater of the world in which we live. Since the early 1990s, Gómez-Peña and the interdisciplinary arts troupe, La Pocha Nostra, has traveled the world enacting such live performance art that directly engages spectators with the social, political, and cultural issues of our times.

Gómez-Peña gained international attention for his duet performance act with Coco Fusco, also a performance artist, called “The Couple in the Cage.” The performance showcased the performance artists as “native” peoples offering their bodies up to audience members to poke and prod, drawing attention to the ongoing effects of colonialism. Known throughout much of the world and especially this hemisphere, Gómez-Peña is a self-described “reverse anthropologist, radical pedagogue, deviant shaman, and post-national Mexican gone rogue.” Born in Mexico City, he moved to the United States in 1978. He is now based in San Francisco. A prolific writer, Gómez-Peña has published over 10 books, as well as countless articles about cultural differences, borders, and the tensions between the United States and Mexico.

Last October, in the Performance Hall of the Ohio Union, Gómez-Peña performed “Imaginary Activism: The Role of the Artist Beyond the Art World.” Gómez-Peña tested brand new material dealing with radical citizenship and what he terms “imaginary activism,” which combed live art, literature, theory, and pedagogy in a marvelously strange mix. One highlight included Gómez-Peña reciting— with a twist of tequila— verses from songs and poems calling attention to the dehumanizing effects of the U.S.-Mexico border. According to Gómez-Peña, not one solo performance is ever the same—nor should it be. Gómez-Peña has spent many years developing his unique solo style, which he says is “a combination of embodied poetry, performance activism and theatricalizations of postcolonial theory.” In addition to his solo performance, Gómez-Peña and Saul Garcia Lopez of La Pocha Nostra led undergraduates, graduate students, and Columbus community members in a workshop.

In the midst of the inevitable, oncoming political messages in the months to come, Gómez-Peña and La Pocha Nostra’s embodied practices and live performances remind us that the world is always in flux and capable of change. Gómez-Peña and his troupe create “utopian spaces” of possibility for those in attendance to act as witnesses to their surroundings and do something about it.

Audiences want to see and hear ideas that are beyond the deadening hum of white noise that we call entertainment and news.
Photographing Latino/a Life: A Visit by José Galvez

By Victoria Muñoz, Doctoral Fellow, English

On Wednesday, September 16th, Ohio State had the honor of welcoming José Galvez, an award-winning photographer whose life’s work explores the lived experience of Latinos in America. Attendees were treated to a slide show highlighting some of Galvez’s work, followed by a photography workshop in which Galvez lent his keen photographer’s eye to critique student work. In the midst of his busy schedule, Galvez sat down with me to discuss his personal history and his motivations as a photographer.

Galvez discovered the field of photojournalism at the tender age of 10 when he one day decided to carry his shoeshine box into the headquarters of the Arizona Daily Star. From that day, he was a familiar fixture in the newsroom. He bought his first camera at a pawn shop when he was in high school. With the encouragement of mentors at the Arizona Daily Star, he later completed a bachelor’s degree in journalism at the University of Arizona. After graduation, Galvez became a staff photographer at the Arizona Daily Star. Although assigned to photograph diverse topics and general interest pieces, he found particular purpose in documenting the history of his people. The focus of his photography began to shift, particularly as he became more involved in the Chicano Movement in Arizona. Galvez celebrated his first professional exhibition at the age of 22.

Soon Galvez moved on to the Los Angeles Times where he earned distinction as the first Mexican-American photographer on staff. In 1984, he formed part of a team of reporters and photographers that won a Pulitzer Prize for their series on Latino life in southern California. He and his colleagues were the first Chicanos to win the Pulitzer Prize. After an illustrious career at the Los Angeles Times, where he won numerous other awards for his photographs of Latino communities in the southern United States, he eventually left the Times to pursue a career as an independent photographer. His work focuses on Latino communities of the American South, naturalization ceremonies, and other features of the daily life of Latinos in America.

Although the mission of Galvez’s life’s work has not changed, the subject of his photography has broadened. Whereas he originally focused on the barrios of the American Southwest, he now seeks to document the Latino experience wherever he may find it. The subjects of his photography are generally found during his travels; even on roads that Galvez travels regularly, he is always finding new subjects to photograph. As he related, for example, during this particular trip to Columbus, Galvez photographed an elderly nun that he observed in the midst of her food-shopping at the local mercado. On his way to campus, he photographed a Mexican food truck. When asked about his approach, Galvez readily admits that the process of finding his subjects is not an exact science. His work reflects Latino life as he encounters it—when and where he encounters it—and he doesn’t burden himself to make the art speak for all Latinos everywhere. As he affirms, no single photographer could document every Latino person or group’s lived experience, but that really shouldn’t be the goal anyway.

Galvez’s photographs possess a quality of spontaneity that is achieved through his unique methodological approach, which he takes very seriously. He never knows when he may come across something or someone that he will want to photograph. Therefore, as his travels across the United States, Galvez always keeps his trusted Nikon camera with him. He never carries too much film with him, however, because he relishes the onus that this places on him to think carefully about what he is photographing and why it matters. The ephemeral nature of the lived experiences that he documents are carried into his technique. Because
he works with print photography, he never knows how his photographs will turn out until he finally processes them—months later—in his dark room in his home in North Carolina. Some photographs inevitably fail to turn out as he imagined. Although it is never a satisfying experience to discover that a particular photograph has not turned out well, this approach has made Galvez a more careful observer of his world. This is one major benefit that Galvez identifies in print photography. Every shot matters.

As his life’s work shows, Galvez appreciates the dignity of human experience. He knows that not every moment can be captured on film. Some moments, no matter how precious or fascinating to the observer, are lost to posterity. Those moments are only lived. “And that is okay,” Galvez says.
Time encroaches upon the present moment in unprecedented high speed. When did the high-pitched scream of my dial-up modem transform into the muted vibrations of the smartphone in my pocket? When did my practice of recording low-resolution Handycam videos shift into my current practice of VJing and projection mapping for large formats? In the old days, I used to record scenes from Nintendo 64’s Goldeneye video game on VHS. Now, my female avatar in Second Life chats with vampires at the Dance Island while my ever-surveilling smartphone twitches...
in my pocket. Giovanni Sartori in *Homo videns: La sociedad teledirigida* (1997), describes the arrival of television and other multimedia technologies as absolutely inevitable, but I do not believe that we should blindly accept them. These transformations have been too fast and furious. The same tools that dizzy and disorient us are blindly incorporated into consumers’ daily lives.

My constant need for speed and storage space is continuously and radically transforming my audiovisual digestive system. My own thoughts—like RAM—evolve to keep up with society’s insatiable appetite for immediate consumption. My cyberspace interactions push me to seek new playgrounds in the form of virtual reality societies, the next frontier of global technology’s mass-evolution. My symbiotic relation with the technium—the interconnected technological system vibrating around us, which writer Kevin Kelly dubbed “the seventh kingdom of life on Earth”—disconnects me from Pacha Mamma, shaping the formal structure of my current approach to Art. My synthetic imagination places contemporary shapes and forms at the Noosphere—the evolutionary stage of consciousness and thought defined in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin—accessible to anyone who dares to imagine the future.

In between this line of thought and my own search for self-definition, I arrived at Ohio State’s Master in Fine Arts program in Art and Technology in Autumn 2015. Early in my academic career, I began researching what would become my bio-exploration project entitled “first_contact.” I reached out to the Plant Pathology Department on the hunt for a path of inquiry. My idea was to find a plant or mushroom that would re-connect me with my creative energy and identity. In the process, I was introduced to a very particular creature that is neither plant nor fungus, but rather something in between.

As I peered upon the peculiar slime mould, *Physarum polycephalum*, on a petri dish, I found the sentiment of empathy reflected in the microscopic flow of nutrients within the veins of this protist organism. *first_contact* is based on microscopic digital recordings of fluids flowing over the protoplasmic tubes, or veins of this fungal animal, which together resemble planetary surfaces. The digital recordings are treated and run into a software patch of Max MSP for analysis and audio sonification. Virtual synthesizers create the sound for this exploration interpreting the number, size and behavior of the microscopic particles. The final output of this exploration was an immersive audiovisual art installation, on exhibit at BioPresence exhibition during December 2015, and the MFA show “Does This Work For Everyone?” at Hopkins Hall Gallery during February 2016.

My current work in progress is a bio-exploration based on time-lapse recordings of true slime mould, *Physarum polycephalum*, overcoming the labyrinths I constructed on petri dishes as a study of primitive intelligence connecting paths between food sources. Labyrinths are meditation sanctuaries intended for walking. The purpose of these time-lapse bio recordings is to bring them into a large-scale audiovisual installation. The decisions made by this organism will make us think about our personal borders and social freedom, issues that I have been contemplating lately. My empathy for this peculiar organism, commonly referred to as the “black sheep of the mycological world”, reflects what I perceive to be a shared status with this microorganism as legal alien visitors of a foreign planetary system. This belief lies at the heart of these bio-art explorations that bend the boundaries among science, technology and Art.
Latino Engineers Para Adelante:
My Time at Ohio State

By Nicolas Fernandez, Junior, Electrical and Computer Engineering

My family emigrated from Colombia to Miami, FL in 2011. During my senior year of high school the prospect of applying to college became more stressful than I previously thought. The fact that I was not completely fluent in English added to my stress. I was unsure of whether my SAT reading and writing scores would be sufficiently high to allow me to reach my goals. Regardless of my doubts, I had a desire to succeed and salir para adelante. My parents raised me according to the philosophy that one cannot thrive without giving back to others. I was always taught to think about how we can succeed as a group and not as an individual. I did not fully realize the importance of this concept until I entered college.

I had never visited Ohio State before the day of my orientation. I had no idea of how large the campus would be or of how much football culture would matter to the community. All that I knew was that Ohio State had an excellent engineering program. I was ready to take on the challenge of moving to another state where I would be completely unknown. I developed a sense of belonging, however, when I became involved with student organizations on campus such as the College of Engineering Ambassadors, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), the Latino Student Association (LSA), and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). Additionally, diversity scholar groups such as the Latino & Latin American Space for Enrichment and Research (LASER) and Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) helped me to develop my professional and personal goals. I have learned the importance of giving back to the OSU community, which is where I’ve made some of my strongest friendships. With these groups, I have also collaborated in STEM events for K-12 students and their families to inform them about the opportunities offered in higher education. I have contributed to the Hispanic familia and brought awareness on campus through cultural presentations and public events.

Through my minor in humanitarian engineering I became informed of the many study abroad programs that Ohio State has to offer. My first service learning trip was to Honduras. I traveled with a group of undergraduate engineering students to Montaña de Luz, an orphanage for kids with HIV and AIDS. Together we built sustainable/low cost projects such as an aquaponics system and wind turbine. Most importantly, we learned from the kids that, no matter the situation, we should always live life with big smiles on our faces. My second study abroad experience took place during my fourth semester. It occurred through the Ohio State–Colombia Collaboration. Following a similar model to that of my first study abroad, I traveled to South America to give workshops to middle school students on electricity and how to build low cost LED flashlights. There were two main reasons that made this trip special: it was the first time that I had returned to Colombia since I moved to the States, and I was traveling with my older sister, Estefania. I wasn’t able to visit the city where I grew up, but being back where my roots sprouted made me rethink all the sacrifices my family made for us to attend OSU, and the goals I’ve set for my future.

During my time at Ohio State I have worked in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department as a student assistant and as an undergraduate teaching assistant for the first-year engineering courses. Although I learned much from these jobs, I still longed for more practical experience...
through internships related to my area of focus in electrical engineering power systems. My first experience with “the real world” was working as an associate engineer or electrical intern for ArcelorMittal in its Burns Harbor, Indiana plant. Working with union members, contractors, and engineers on a daily basis gave me a broad exposure to the atmosphere of engineering management at a large manufacturing facility. I’m currently away from Ohio on an engineering Co-Op working as an electrical intern for Eaton’s South Milwaukee engineering high voltage lab. I focus on overcurrent protection equipment. While away from Ohio this semester I was awarded a scholarship to attend the 2015 meeting of Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) in Miami, FL where, unfortunately, I was the only student representing The Ohio State University. As I’ve become acquainted with the problem of poor representation, I have established a personal goal of communicating information about these opportunities on campus so that other students may network with minority groups from all around the country and participate in personal/professional workshops.

Through my diverse experiences on and off campus, I have had the opportunity to meet many people who share my professional goals and deeply felt desire for minorities to have a greater voice in today’s society. We must never forget where we come from and those who have helped us to achieve our goals. To reiterate the lesson that my parents taught me, “Al que mucho se le dio, mucho se le exigirá.”
Environmental History in the Ottoman Empire: My Research Abroad
By Isacar Bolaños, PhD Candidate, History

During the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years, I had the opportunity to conduct archival research in Turkey, the United Kingdom, and France in connection with my dissertation on the environmental history of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. As an approach to the study of history, environmental history is most easily defined as the study of the history of human interactions with the environment. For this reason, much of my archival research abroad was focused on reading familiar archival records with a different set of questions that can provide insights into the history of Ottoman interactions with the environment. Specifically, my archival research focused on reading archival records for evidence of the Ottoman government’s management of the Tigris-Euphrates river system, the environmental origins of water-borne diseases such as cholera in Baghdad and Basra (modern-day Iraq), and natural resource management during the nineteenth century. Ultimately, my study attempts to understand patterns of modern state formation through the methodologies of environmental history.

The principal archive that I consulted in Turkey was the Prime Ministry’s Ottoman Archives, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), which is located in Istanbul and houses documents concerning the administrative affairs of the Ottoman Empire. I supplemented my archival research at the BOA with manuscript sources located at the Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi (the Rare Works Library) at Istanbul University. In the United Kingdom, I carried out archival research at The National Archives and the British Library’s India Office Records, both of which are located in the London area. In France, I carried out archival research at the archives of the French Foreign Ministry in Paris and Nantes. Carrying out research in these foreign repositories required a familiarity with foreign languages such as Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. In preparation for such research, I was fortunate to be able to obtain the necessary training in these languages during my academic career at The Ohio State University through the U.S. Department of Education’s Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship program.

My reason for conducting archival research in these archives was that my interests in Ottoman history are primarily in the history of the Ottoman Empire’s Arab provinces during the nineteenth century. In the case of the majority-Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire that comprise modern-day Iraq, on-site research is not currently possible. Nevertheless, the combination of archival sources in Turkey, the United
Kingdom, and France (all countries which had an important presence in Baghdad and Basra during the Ottoman period), along with published manuscript sources in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, provide sufficient documentary evidence to begin to understand the environmental history of Ottoman Iraq during the nineteenth century.

My dissertation research was funded by both external and internal sources. One source was a multi-country dissertation research fellowship from The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), which receives funding from the U.S. State Department through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). Subsequent grants from the Office of International Affairs, the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, and the Department of History at The Ohio State University enabled me to carry out a second round of research in Turkey and the United Kingdom during the 2015-2016 academic year.

One preliminary conclusion at which I have arrived is that the profile of nineteenth-century Ottoman hydraulic projects in the Tigris-Euphrates river system was much more diverse than previous studies have suggested. This conclusion is very important: to the extent that scholars have studied nineteenth-century Ottoman hydraulic works in Ottoman Iraq, they have done so primarily by focusing on the problems posed by the Hindiyya Canal, which caused the Euphrates to change its natural course by drawing off excessive amounts of water. However, some water management projects, such as the Cezayir Dam in Basra, were meant to control flood levels so as to prevent the creation of an environment in which water-borne diseases could emerge. Other hydraulic works, such as the Duceyle Canal on the lower Tigris, were meant to irrigate lands that became part of the Ottoman sultan’s private estate during the late nineteenth-century. Therefore, a chapter of my dissertation will focus on the diversity of Ottoman water management projects in Ottoman Iraq.

Having finished my dissertation research, I am now focused on the tasks of writing and sharing the results of my research with the broader academic community. In October 2015, for example, I delivered a paper entitled, “Irrigating the Sultan’s Lands: The Duceyle Canal and the Politics of Irrigation in Ottoman Iraq, 1883-1896” at the 11th annual Workshop for the History of the Environment, Agriculture, Technology, and Science (WHEATS) held at the University of Colorado, Boulder. In April 2016, I presented a paper entitled “Bubonic Plague in India and the Ottoman Response: The View from Basra and the Gulf, 1896-1899” at the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine (AAHM) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In September 2016, I will also present this paper at McGill University’s conference on “Disease Dispersion and Impact in the Indian Ocean World.” I hope to turn both of these papers into articles that can be published in academic journals, and I hope to begin the process of turning my dissertation into a full-length monograph that can be published by an academic press upon finishing my doctoral studies at The Ohio State University. 📖
Landscape, Culture, Reality—
Guatemala is painted with fertile lands and picture-perfect views. From Pacaya to Panajachel, the roads are surrounded by crop fields of green and brown, with shadows of mountains in the background. The air is rich with the aroma of burning sugarcane. The scenes within certain regional hospitals, however, were less picturesque. At different public hospitals on “empty” days, there were infants in mother’s arms sitting on the floor waiting to be called on. I never came across a cancer unit. There were halls in the hospitals dedicated to tuberculosis, and while simple practices such as maintaining airflow and sunlight were followed, basic disease prevention methods such as UV disinfection were not always observed. There was so little room in some hospitals that all respiratory diseases were quarantined together, leading to increased rates of co-infection and morbidity; asthma, COPD, and tuberculosis shared the same room. I observed patients putting on their N95 respirators, whose proper use provides the easiest and most effective method of curbing transmission, only after noticing visitors.

At Escuintla Regional Hospital the emergency room has an overflow unit where the dying linger, waiting an indeterminate amount of time to be seen by a medical practitioner. In this overflow unit, I learned that the Guatemalan culture pertaining to death differs greatly from American attitudes. In Guatemala, death is celebrated and there is little mourning, suggesting that life is valued differently. There is a general distrust of public systems in Guatemala. This problem is connected to government corruption and tensions between imported Spanish colonial culture and the indigenous Mayan culture. As I learned from my travel, some Mayans believe that nothing good is free. Thus, the idea of an entirely free public health system is potientially discordant with Mayan culture. Mayans find themselves practicing different aspects of multiple religions, and I witnessed this when visiting Laguna Chicabal, where natives were chanting evangelical Christian hymns while performing rituals that thank different deities, called nahuales.

Stereotypes and Realities: My Experience of the Guatemalan Healthcare System
By Daniel Moussa, Junior, Biomedical Science

Background—The biomedical science major has helped me to better understand the difficulties that other countries and our own face with the diseases typical of developing countries. During my recent study abroad trip to Guatemala this past winter break, I further witnessed the struggles that developing countries face in order to provide quality healthcare. The cause of these problems is not always clear. Two thirds of Guatemalans are under the poverty line, which means that workers are making less than $1.25 per day. Nonetheless, Guatemala has the highest GDP in Central America. After speaking to a few healthcare workers at different hospitals and clinics, I learned that some workers have not been paid in over nine months. Public healthcare is free in Guatemala, I was told that the healthcare system has been chronically stressed. Very often, physicians and other healthcare workers in Guatemala essentially work pro bono, motivated by both empathy for the poor and the vague hope of future compensation.
The Burden on Youth—Mayan youth are also affected, as I learned while visiting El Hospicio de San Jose, a non-profit orphanage and resource center for HIV-positive regional youth and adults. As part of the program, we visited this orphanage and brought stuffed animals and sports equipment. As I played hide and seek with some toddlers, I grew interested in a group of teenage girls who had detached themselves from the group and appeared to be avoiding any interaction with us. I asked them if they wanted to practice English, since English was part of the orphanage curriculum. We began to discuss career options. No one wanted to be a doctor “because all the patients die.” No one wanted to be a teacher “because all the students die.”

Every single patient that we encountered in Guatemala was “underserved” according to American standards. Nonetheless, the people working at the front lines give all of themselves to the cause of healthcare.
From Kissimmee to MD-to-Be: My Path to Medical School

By Daniel Gomez-Ramos, OSU Alumnus

I was not a “top” student in high school. I commend those who excel early, but that was not my path as a very young man from Kissimmee, Florida. I did not come from a privileged background, and neither did any of my friends. It was my education beyond high school that most motivated me to succeed. Determined but by no means perfect, I gradually learned to work my hardest. As my time in higher education has shown, this diligence ultimately paid off. During the summer of 2014, I studied abroad in Denmark and later backpacked throughout Western Europe, with the help of a DIS scholarship. As a student at The Ohio State University (OSU), I became a national leader of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), and I am now in the third year of the leadership term. I attended Valencia College in Florida and also recently graduated with a degree in Molecular Neuroscience from OSU.

While in college, I continued to take advantage of various opportunities to help me to succeed. Doing so has led me to some of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have volunteered for over a thousand hours at various organizations in the country such as Shepherds Free Health Clinic, Boston Urban Outreach, and American Red Cross. I have worked on neuroimmunology and oncology research, and I have served on the board of various student organizations at both Valencia College and Ohio State.

Thus far, I have earned admittance to one medical school and I have received five interview invitations from other MD and DO medical schools across the country. I will officially start medical school this summer. Specific sites of interest are Chicago, Illinois and Cleveland, Ohio—two cities with a high population of Hispanics and African Americans. My interest in studying at these locations speaks to my goal of becoming a physician who serves urban Hispanic and African American communities. These communities are in need of care from physicians who can both relate to their experiences and understand their needs. While working with these populations, I also hope to lead global health projects in disease prevention and epidemiology in the larger realm of international medicine and public health.

There is no single success story, but many individual stories that make up the collective experience of the Latino community. Continuing to maintain one’s identity while achieving personal success not only advances our personal goals, but also helps to build that community.
I decided to attend OSU while I was as a student and researcher in Chile; I had the privilege of meeting some of the university’s professors who fully embodied the institution’s excellent reputation. OSU is an ideal place to cultivate my passions, which are diverse and constantly evolving. I originally completed my bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Engineering, but I have more recently gravitated toward Regional Science. I now consider myself an Applied Regional Economist.

My thesis is about natural disasters. These are complex events, and their causes, consequences and lessons are abundant. The key contribution of my research is that I use big earthquakes to study the resilience of the inhabitants of affected regions. Traditionally, social scientists have focused on the economic consequences of these events, particularly concentrating on the financial burden of damages, migration, and reconstruction. However, interesting questions emerge when we focus on people. Recent availability of high quality data has opened the possibility for researchers to study what happens to people and places when natural disasters occur.

Are affected individuals more vulnerable to falling below the poverty line following a natural disaster? Are they able to seek and maintain employment before and after the event? Do firms grow or employ more people in the most affected areas? In order to explore these questions, my thesis takes the 2010 Earthquake in Chile as a case study. The 2010 quake was a devastating event that affected six highly populated regions in Chile. My data come from a population survey from 2009, which was later repeated after the 2010 quake. Assessing survey data from before and after the earthquake helps us to understand the event’s social and economic impact on everyday people. I also use administrative tax data to look at the effects on firms within the last decade, which I compare with U.S. Geological Survey maps pertaining to the shock.

My econometric models show that the most affected regions were not necessarily those with increased vulnerability to poverty; in fact, some regions actually performed better than expected while others did not. Not all people were able to retain their jobs in highly affected areas, but their wages were surprisingly resilient to disturbance in the short term. Most interesting, more firms were created than closed in the short and medium term following the event, but this phenomenon did not necessarily translate into more jobs or higher wages.

The results of my thesis show that individuals, firms, and regions tend to be very resilient to adversity, but socioeconomic impacts are sometimes different across regions that are geographically close. Understanding the spatial and social heterogeneity of natural disasters is critical for informing policies for relief and reconstruction, and for preventing foreseeable social impacts of natural disasters in the future. My research methodology has important applications for policymakers in not only Chile, but also other countries with less extensive data on natural disasters. My dream would be to secure funding to collect similar data in other countries that are impacted by natural disasters; I thereby hope to further understand how these nations’ most vulnerable populations recover from these events.
Recognizing Excellence at OSU

**Awards**

---. Edward J. Ray Travel Award for Scholarship and Service.
---. 2015 Museums panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mariantonieta Gutierrez Soto was top 15 at the 29th annual Edward F. Hayes Graduate Research Forum (2015) poster competition.
• was a finalist on the the Technical Paper and Poster Competition at the 2014 National Conference of Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE).

Miguel Valerio, Spanish & Portuguese, was awarded an Ohio State University Presidential Fellowship for his dissertation, “Kings of the Kongo, Slaves of the Virgin Mary: Religious Confraternities Performing Afro-Latin American Identity in Colonial Mexico and Brazil.”

Victoria Muñoz, English, won an Arts & Humanities Small Research Grant for research in residence at the British Library in London, U.K.
---. Finalist, First inaugural 3-Minute Thesis Competition, sponsored by the Graduate School.

Daniel Moussa, Junior, Biomedical Science, won 3rd Place in the Denman Undergraduate Research Forum, Health Professions: Laboratory/Cellular Research.

**Publications and Presentations**


SPPO Graduate Student
Wins Presidential Fellowship

This year, PhD Candidate, Miguel Valerio, Department of Spanish & Portuguese, was awarded the Presidential Fellowship, the most competitive and prestigious scholarly recognition provided by The Ohio State University Graduate School. The award will support Miguel as he completes his dissertation, "Kings of the Kongo, Slaves of the Virgin Mary: Religious Confraternities Performing Afro-Latin American Identity in Colonial Mexico and Brazil," which focuses on the African diaspora in colonial Latin America. Here Miguel describes the award-winning project and its contribution to the larger fields of Latin American studies.

"People of African descent have historically been ignored by Latin American literary and cultural studies. Consequently, there is a lacuna in the field when it comes to the black experience in Latin America. Recently, however, scholars of both colonial and modern Latin America are shedding light on black Latin Americans’ rightful place in the history and social development of the region, showing how people of African descent made important contributions to the social and cultural development of the region that went beyond the bounds of slavery. My dissertation contributes to this research by bringing to light new archival evidence and reexamining printed texts that show what agency and forms of self-representation blacks exercised and performed through the creation of religious confraternities and the celebration of Christian feast days.

Specifically, my dissertation will demonstrate, through the analysis of printed texts and archival sources, how people of African descent availed themselves of religious confraternities in order to negotiate their social standing and to preserve their African cultural heritage within a Christian context in sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Mexico and Brazil. These texts, written by or about black confraternities, show how blacks saw and wanted to present themselves, especially before colonial authorities. They also reveal how colonial Afro-Latin Americans maintained and adapted their ancestral cultural heritage through festive performances on Christian feast days.

My dissertation will fill a gap in the field of Latin American literary and cultural studies by focusing on Afro-descendants as social actors rather than passive victims of the institution of slavery. It will also compare, for the first time, the same cultural phenomenon in two different contexts that are not normally studied together: colonial Mexico and Brazil. My dissertation shows that blacks participated in religious confraternities for similar reasons throughout colonial Latin America. As it will demonstrate, the study of colonial Brazil, which had the largest Afro-descendent population of the Americas and thus the most confraternities, is essential to illuminate black agency and identity in other areas of colonial Latin America."
Autumn 2015 Graduates

**Associates**
- Alex Miguel Lopez, AA, Social Work
- Lurinda Stephanie Rivera-Graham, AA, Social Work
- Richelle Sosa Saldana, AA, Political Science

**Bachelors**
- Evan Leonard Abraham, BA, English
- Alexis Nicole Acosta, BA, Korean
- Pia S. Aguilar, BS, Microbiology
- Brian Patrick Aguirre, BS, Information Systems
- Mitchell Lawrence Anderskow, BS, Chemical Engineering
- Jared David Arelano, BS, Welding Engineering
- Eric Arturo Avelar, BA, Economics
- Carlos Alexander Avendano, BA, English
- Sam Elliot Bailosky, BS, Education - Sport Industry
- Pamela Andrea Barahona, BS, Biochemistry
- Marina Esther Barboza, BA, Psychology
- Damieon X Barrientos, BS, Mechanical Engineering
- James Thomas Barron, BS, Environmental Engineering
- Jake Ryan Bartlett, BS, Education - Sport Industry
- Luis Felipe Bautista, BS, Biochemistry
- Alexander Bosque, BA, Criminology
- Sabina Braciak, BS, Marketing
- Brandy Elvene Burgos, BS, Biology
- Luis David Cabrera, BA, Jazz Studies
- Daniela Elizabeth Campbell, BS, Psychology
- Salvatore Antonio Caradonna, BA, International Studies
- Jessica Leigh Cardenas, BS, Finance
- Gianfranco Aldo Casassa, BA, Geography
- Miranda Leesette Cochran, BS, Neuroscience

- Christopher John Core, BS, Economics
- Alexander Ashley Cueto, BS, Computer Science and Engineering
- Kristen Monique Cuevas, BS, Biology
- Liane Tamara Davila-Martin, BS, Biology
- Jennifer Diaz, BA, Political Science
- Alexandria Ann Dillhoff, BS, Food, Agricultural & Biological Engineering
- Kevin Patrick Dunphy, BS, Computer Science and Engineering
- Andrea Nicole Duval, BS, Human Development and Family Science
- Aaron Scott Ebbinghaus, BS, Computer Science and Engineering
- Dylan Justin Eismaulge, BA, Economics
- Dezoray Ivette Esparza, BA, Criminology
- Jessica Esquer, BS, Animal Sciences
- Renan Frota Carvalho, BS, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Luis Franco Galilei, BS, Marketing
- Derek Taylor Garcia, BS, Agricultural Systems Management
- Alejandra Margarita Garcia Fuentes, BS, Chemical Engineering
- Sophia Alejandra Garcia, BA, Political Science
- Rosa Maria Giese, BS, Marketing
- Kristina Renee Gonzales, BS, Education-Early Childhood Education
- Kristina Renee Gonzales, BS, Human Development and Family Science
- Luisa Fernanda Guzman, BS, Microbiology
- Marissa Christine Harned, BA, Psychology
- Alena Marie Hayden, BA, Communication
- Sally Marie Herman, BS, Special Education
- Rhayssa Galvao Hinkle, BS, Marketing
- Sarah Christine Karow, BS, Microbiology
- Brittany Kay Krause, BA, English
- Kurt Lang, BS, Welding Engineering
- Marissa K Lanker, BA, International Studies
- Clay William Lanker, BS, Agribusiness and Applied Economics
- Jared Alan Lautar, BS, Accounting
- Daniel Liberto, BS, Agribusiness and Applied Economics
- Terrence Michael Aranez Litam, BS, Biology
- Vanessa Giselle Lopez, BS, Environment, Economy, Development, and Sustainability
- Luis Alberto Marchant Franz, BS, Environmental Engineering
- Austin Lepage Hughes Marrero, BS, Human Development and Family Science
- India McNeil, BA, Political Science
- Devon Michelle Milkovich, BS, Marketing
- Andrew Philip Minarik, BS, Welding Engineering
- Gabriela Montes, BS, Hospitality Management
- Nelsy Danery Morrobel, BS, Biology
- Elizabeth Ashley Murry, BA, Zoology
- Sajadah Jamal Museitif, BS, Accounting
- Daniel Andrew Naples, BS, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Ivan E Otero Chavez, BS, Mathematics
- Alyssa Marie Palko, BS, Accounting
- Ryan David Pena, BA, Social Sciences Air Transportation
- Carmen Cristina Pi Caride Matos, BA, German
- Ki Jose Rodriguez, BFA, Art
- Lauren Alise Saavedra, BA, Communication
- Natalie Grace Sabath, BS, Industrial and Systems Engineering
- Nervard Andre Sanchez, BS, Agribusiness and Applied Economics
- Jorge Javier Santana, BS, Animal Sciences
Thelma Velez, Environmental Social Science, was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for her dissertation, “Climate change: psychological distance, literacy, and cognitive tools for behavioral change”: Converging evidence from climate science research agree that human-induced climate change is occurring and warrants immediate attention. Current research on how to best engage the public and encourage lasting behavioral change is limited. With climate change considered a psychologically distant risk, the need to make climate change personally relevant to the public is especially important for changing attitudes. The objective of this research is to develop community outreach presentations intended to increase public scientific literacy. It will also work to activate moral intuition to address social norms linked to individual behaviors that impact climate change. The results of this study will provide novel understanding on how to best communicate the risk of climate change and resource degradation to the general public. The results will also determine whether encouraging moral cognition can change individual behaviors driven by social norms.
Visiting professor and artist, Federico Cuatlacuatl uses digital tools to develop a visual language representative of the immigrant experience in America.