



Installation view of In-Between Time and In-Nature

## Self-Help Graphics and Art | Sinks: Places We Call Home

09/21/2024 – 02/15/2025 (21 weeks)

4-10 artists

6-25 artworks

1,300 sq ft

Sinks: Places We Call Home explores the environmental contamination of two Los Angeles County neighborhoods located along a historic toxic corridor that is home to predominantly low-income communities of color. The first body of work focuses on the release of hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the Athens Petroleum Tank Farm in Willowbrook, while the second addresses the extensive lead contamination affecting communities in East and Southeast Los Angeles caused by the Exide Battery Recycling Facility in Vernon. The word Sinks derives from Laura Pulido's essay "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity II," where sinks are defined as "places where pollution can be deposited. Sinks typically are land, air, or water, but racially devalued bodies can also function as 'sinks'". The artists in the exhibition encourage viewers to recognize these sinks as elements we call home, to inspire and reimagine our relationship to the land to one of reciprocity and care in a time of ecological urgency.

In collaboration with community and institutional partners and drawing from historical and scientific research led by Los Angeles-based artists Beatriz H. Jaramillo and Maru García, this exhibition is an exploration of how "relic pollutants" (decommissioned industrial sites) have harmed neighborhoods, highlighting histories of environmental racism and the repeated failures by the institutions and systems tasked to protect the

environment and our health. Their work and the related, collaborative partnerships that extend beyond the gallery walls, explore alternative solutions for healing our soil and moving towards a more sustainable future.

Jaramillo and García's works urge us to reconnect with nature, our backyards, community gardens, parks, and with each other, while also holding accountable the systems in place to protect our environment and health. This collaborative effort invites you to be part of the solution.

The exhibition also features work by Kim Abeles, Miyo Stevens-Gandara, Poli Marichal, Tara Pixley, Albert Tlatoa, Christian Salcedo Ward, Joan Zamora, poetry by Tina Calderon and zines by local Zine makers.

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## Climate Initiatives Overview

Self Help Graphics & Art has valued mindful environmental practices, and now we can take steps to assess and address our carbon footprint. The chance to engage in PST ART, with LHL Consulting's support, enables us to delve deeply into our material use. We will examine the lifecycle of our materials, from source to post-use waste, for our exhibition and accompanying workshops. We've consciously chosen to work with local artists who value climate stability practices to reduce the environmental impact of shipping and travel. However, because much of the research is rooted in community engagement, car travel was necessary by multiple partners involved in the research and implementation of this exhibition, and we will account for the carbon emissions it generates. Further, participating in this report will help our organization document and illustrate the necessary and demanding work that community engagement requires.

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## Emissions

We collected emissions data from local travel, local freight, and printing. Although we tracked additional information on waste material, artwork fabrication, and programming events, we did not have all the necessary data to calculate total emissions. Access to the climate tracker and carbon calculator made this process possible; however, gathering all the required data to obtain a complete understanding of our impact proved challenging. For example, we only received 50% of our car emissions data, and did not have access to our electricity usage data for the exhibit location. As a result, our findings may not fully represent the emissions generated by this exhibition.

### *Emissions by Category*



Travel

2.69 tCO2e

Car

## Shipping

0.03 tCO2e

## Road Freight - Local

We do not have access to energy data

## Printing

0.89 tCO2e

Catalog - Paperback, Booklet / Pamphlet, Cards

Total Emissions      3.61 tCO2e

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## Materials & Waste

Pedestal/Plinth, Vitrine/Display, Frame, Reusable Packing, Artwork/Fabrication, Walls, Wall Vinyl, Other

### *Material Sources*

*New, Reused (Internal Source), Reused (External Source), Reclaimed/Diverted*

### *Material Destinations*

*Reused, Repurposed, Recycled, Landfill*

Waste reduction strategies implemented, Designed for disassembly

We prioritized cost expenses while also considering environmental awareness in our resource selection. The wood we used is ethically sourced and can be disassembled for future programming, along with other structures in the exhibit.

An unexpected success came through the support from Angel City Lumber, who loaned us stools. We also reused previously installed walls from an earlier exhibition, which helped reduce design, construction, fabrication, and labor costs, as well as the use of new materials.

Our method for addressing waste reduction closely mirrors our approach to many exhibits, where financial limitations present a significant challenge to production. Nonetheless, increasing awareness about waste is undoubtedly a learning experience for us.

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## Catalog

There is a softbound print publication connected to this project.

Sinks: Places We Call Home is the official catalog for the 2024 exhibition curated by Marvella Muro and presented by Self Help Graphics & Art (SHG) at the Luckman Gallery at California State University, Los Angeles, as part of the Getty's Pacific Standard Time initiative, Art & Science Collide. This interdisciplinary exhibition catalog features essays by curators, scientists, and researchers on various topics, including environmental justice, community engagement and advocacy, visual arts, and mineralogy. Sinks presents research based works by artists Maru García and Beatriz H. Jaramillo that examine environmental justice through art and social practice,

Artists Maru García and Beatriz Jaramillo present new works rooted in community research. García collaborates with the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum (NHM) to conduct soil testing and lead reduction research with community scientists in East and South East Los Angeles, while Jaramillo engages with the Willowbrook Community Garden through workshops that explore nature, art and healing.

The catalog is edited by Luke Aleckson and includes essays by Marvella Muro (SHG) , Dr. Aaron Celestian (NHM), Ana Guajardo (SHG), Lila Higgins (NHM), James MacDevitt (Cerritos College), Laura Pulido (University of Oregon), and Sam Tayag (NHM), and highlights the advocacy of a multitude of community members and organizations, offering diverse perspectives on art, science, and environmental justice.

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## Engagement

*Stakeholders engaged in the Climate Impact Report:*

Curatorial, Exhibitions / Install, Artists, Fabricators, Other (describe)

### *Our Team*

Weekly check-ins were established to provide a consistent forum for artists to discuss their progress and address challenges when projects did not proceed as expected. These discussions, while sometimes difficult, played a crucial role in fostering trust between artists and the curator. Some of the topics that came up during these conversations were artistic aesthetics, cost and materials used in producing the body of work.

### *Our Community*

Between 2022-2024 several workshops were offered to the communities of Boyle Heights, Willowbrook, and parts of the Eastside of Los Angeles. Workshops were designed to identify ways of connecting with the soil and overall environment including elevating the awareness of environmental contamination.

Access to urban gardens provided opportunities for community-led learning focused on upcycling and reusing materials, food sustainability, and enhancing the connection between nature and wellness.

Conversations with professionals from the community science department of the Natural History Museum have been crucial in communicating science with the public. In addition, partnering with different grassroots organizations focused on environmental and food sustainability contributed to the overall education of these fields.

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## Reflections & Takeaways

A fresh perspective on the possibility of significantly reducing waste in exhibition production. How intentional decision-making can ultimately lead to a more sustainable and efficient approach. Documenting the physical labor and frequency required for effective community engagement is necessary, despite the carbon emissions that are not environmentally sustainable. Face-to-face interaction remains essential.

### *Credits*

The Director of Artistic, Curatorial, Education and Programs and the Facility and Operations Manager completed this report.

The highlight of the experience was the collaboration and discussions among team members, which allowed us to reflect on how our programming practices align with the organization's values and to explore ways to implement meaningful changes they don't. One challenge we faced was prioritizing time to discuss logistics and collect data.

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Installation view of Boiling Rocks Series



Reading corner; A visual story documenting community engagement and zines from community members



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This Climate Impact Report was completed as a part of the PST ART Climate Impact Program, a groundbreaking initiative integrating climate action, community building, and reporting into Getty's landmark arts event, led by LHL Consulting. More information can be found at [pst.art/climate](https://pst.art/climate).