

Visual Arts

MFAH Set to Launch Titanic Latin American and Latino Art Archive...and It's Free

By [Steve Jansen](#) Wed., Jan. 4 2012 at 11:00 AM

Like many ideas that are actually executed, the [Museum of Fine Arts, Houston](#) didn't exactly anticipate the International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA) having the legs that it does.

"This is the only center of its kind in the world," says Dr. Mari Carmen Ramirez, Wortham Curator of Latin American Art and ICAA Director. On January 19, the ICAA, a research institute of MFAH, will [launch its extensive digital archive](#) that contains unearthed art documents in the fields of 20th-century Latin American and Latino art.

The ICAA, initially created as a think tank on the genre, spent millions of dollars and a decade to get to this point. Since 2004, documentation teams in Santiago, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Lima, Bogota, Caracas, Mexico City and multiple U.S. cities "were responsible for recovering documents written by artists, critics and curators of the 20th century," says Ramirez.

The result, the *Documents Project*, is a free digital database that can be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection. The online archive of 10,000 documents and 80,000 images showcases works such as forgotten-about exhibition promo posters as well as the relatively unknown writings of Carlos Merida.

Ramirez says that a 13-volume book series called *Critical Documents of 20th-century Latin American and Latino Art* will be published to accompany the digital archive. The first, *Resisting Categories: Latin American and/or Latino?*, can be previewed at the MFAH during an event on January 19.

The ICAA digital archive launch and book preview is scheduled to take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, January 19, at the MFAH's Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, January 20, the MFAH will host the international symposium "Mining the Archive: New Paths for Latin American/Latino Art Research." Both shindigs require registration. For more information, check out the [event page on the MFAH website](#).

http://blogs.houstonpress.com/artattack/2012/01/mfah_latin_american_art_latino.php