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DENVER AND THE WEST

## Denver Latinas inspired educator

Metro's Richard T. Castro visiting artist focuses her bridge-building on Latinas.

By Victoria Barbatelli  
*The Denver Post*

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Every year, Metropolitan State College of Denver honors Richard T. Castro's dedication to social change through a visiting professorship.

This year's visitor is Delilah Montoya, a pioneer artist and educator at the University of Houston.

Castro, who died in 1991, was seen as a Denver bridge builder, uniting disparate communities through conversations about human rights, social justice and equality.

Montoya builds bridges, too, but focuses her efforts on the Latina community.

She emphasizes the importance of looking inward and understanding where you come from to know who you are.

"When I was 17, after-school programs were just developing, programs teaching us how to think about ourselves and think about art as a Chicana were all very new," Montoya says.

She promised herself she would be a Chicana artist and create work for a community that could understand and see themselves represented in the art.

While growing up in Omaha, Montoya says, she remembers "looking toward Denver's murals and the poetry coming out of Denver."

In the 1970s, Montoya says, "Denver was producing the thinkers, the poets, the artists of the movement. It was a mecca and for the first time colleges began looking at Latina, Hispanica and Chicana as relevant to U.S. history. We had a place and formed a legacy."

At the forefront of this movement was Castro, an early instructor in what would become the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department at Metro, who also served five terms in the Colorado legislature.

"Denver was a hotbed," and that enthusiasm rippled all the way to Omaha, Montoya says, recalling the first time she visited the city. "I found a total Mexican value, where you could walk into stores and never hear English."

Montoya describes her art as reaffirming an identity that might not know how to articulate itself.

"How many times do you look in the mirror to reaffirm who you are?" Montoya says. "But, if you've never had that mirror, how do you know who you are? If the mirror has huge sections broken off, you'll never understand the complete picture or vision."

Montoya says she is motivated by Latina groups that approach her to say they have never been told about themselves.

Through her prints, Montoya wants to show Latina groups that they have a voice, a place and a face.

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### Free, open to the public

Delilah Montoya's visiting professorship continues through Wednesday at Metro State with events that are free

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Metropolitan State College Visiting Professor Delilah Montoya, a photographer from Houston who explores the role of Latinas, stands with her "La Llorona in Lilith's Garden," on display at the Institute for Women's Studies and Services on the Denver campus. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

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4. Homosexuality on display (about 2 hours ago)
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and open to the public:

### Today

**10-11:15 a.m.:** Tivoli Student Union 440, Richard T. Castro Symposium, with a panel of associates who worked with him on his legacy of social change

**1 p.m.:** Tivoli 440, Montoya lectures on "Reflections on Continuing a Legacy of Social Change"

### Wednesday

**11:30 a.m. -12:45 p.m.:** Tivoli 320, brown-bag lecture. Montoya will discuss her research and writing on Luis Jimenez's controversial "Blue Mustang" at Denver International Airport.

**3-5 p.m.:** Closing Reception/Despedida-Institute for Women's Studies and Services, 1033 Ninth St. Parkway, highlighting Montoya's art piece "La Llorona in Lilith's Garden" in the new More Than Muses Feminist Art Gallery.

**Info:** [mscd.edu/news/castro](http://mscd.edu/news/castro)

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### Post Poll - Phoenix Rising?

Casey Affleck recently revealed that the erratic behavior of Joaquin Phoenix over the last few years including his attempt to launch a rap career and a bizarre appearance on Letterman was all an act as part of a film project. **(Read article.)** What do you think of Joaquin's latest act?

- Love it. As a hoax it was hilarious and well executed.
- Hate it. He tarnished a once promising career and embarrassed a lot of people.
- I'm indifferent.

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