Los Angeles—The Fowler Museum presents *The Map and the Territory: 100 Years of Collecting at UCLA*, a collaborative exhibition organized in partnership with the Hammer Museum and the UCLA Library, and featuring works gathered from 13 collections across campus. Originally conceived in celebration of UCLA’s 2020 Centennial, the exhibition’s opening was delayed by 15 months because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UCLA is a repository for an astounding range of over 21 million objects and this exhibition highlights the role of its collections in the pursuit of knowledge. The juxtaposition of rare books and manuscripts, historic prints, contemporary paintings and drawings, animations, ceramics, musical instruments, avian specimens, meteorites, and more offers visitors opportunities to reflect on the past, broaden their perspectives, and gain fresh insights into the new meanings and connections created by bringing these collections together.

Curators and custodians of UCLA’s diverse collections worked together to identify common themes for *The Map and the Territory*. The approximately 200 objects in the exhibition represent these shared ideas and just some of the varied disciplines of the campus’s academic programs, as well as geographic regions, eras, and modes of reckoning with human experiences.

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The exhibition’s title was inspired by a 1946 short story by Argentinian author Jorge Luis Borges, which describes an empire so obsessed with maps that it creates one that matches the actual size of its territory; this scale, of course, makes the map useless. Like maps, collections document and represent knowledge through aggregations of objects. The Fowler exhibition strives to represent the richness of UCLA’s holdings in ways that are evocative and enlightening, while also acknowledging their inevitable incompleteness.

“The Map and the Territory offers an unprecedented and unparalleled opportunity to celebrate the remarkable resources that have contributed to UCLA’s distinction,” said Marla C. Berns, Shirley & Ralph Shapiro Director. “It also makes visible what is often the invisible work of the university in its pursuit of knowledge in our global society.”

About the Exhibition
The exhibition is organized into three thematic sections: Borders and Boundaries, Home and the Built Environment, and The Beyond. These narrative threads invite visitors to trace their personal experiences onto objects that frame, inspire, and often challenge our ability to make sense of the world around us.

Borders and Boundaries
The objects in this section explore how borders—real and imagined—affect relationships among individuals, communities, and places. It begins with an installation by contemporary artist Mercedes Dorame, who graduated from UCLA in 2003. Dorame, a member of the Gabrielino-Tongva tribe, maps the history of the original inhabitants of Tovaangar—what we now call Los Angeles County—by carefully selecting objects found at regional archaeological sites and preserved at the Fowler. Contextualized by a set of Dorame’s photographs from the Hammer Museum, the objects and images provide an individual mediation on cultural and familial memory and loss. “I am interested in the problematics of living in a place that once belonged to my ancestors, a place I feel connected to, yet have lost access to,” said Dorame. “Each time I create an installation, I create another puncture or pinpoint back to the earth. Although temporary, these spaces of creation become my territory again, even if just for a blink of an eye. And without permanent land/place/space/home I can always look upward and occupy the imagined vertical space of the sky.”

Displayed nearby is a 1852 diseño (sketch map) of the “Rancho de Buenos Ayres,” now held in UCLA Library Special Collections. An early image of the lands that would become the UCLA campus, it serves as a reminder of the displacement and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples, changes of land ownership, and the development of land-grant universities in California and the United States. Similar conflicting interests emerge in other maps and documents, some of which depict recognizable geographies, while others exist only in the imaginations of their makers. A line on a map may seem like an abstraction, but its consequences are very real for those separated by it: in Dividing Line by the Indian-born artist Zarina, a jagged gash traverses a cream page, evoking the partition of India in 1947, which displaced her family among many others.
Other objects speak to the impulse to cross boundaries: the Arctic tern—from the Donald R. Dickey Collection of Birds and Mammals—traverses the globe in an annual migration. Objects depicting ships, motorcycles, and planes from the Fowler further evoke the desire to travel. Meanwhile, passports, photographic albums, and other souvenirs of voyages document the experiences of travelers and emigrants who faced various social and political challenges. Historic photographs of the US–Mexico border from the Los Angeles Times Archive show how that contested space has changed, with walls standing where once there were gates.

Home and the Built Environment
Our day-to-day experiences are defined not only by the lands we live on, but by the structures that surround us. Approaches to housing and built environments are geographically and culturally specific; the objects shown in this section reflect this global diversity. Some depict actual buildings, others imaginary ones, still others—something in-between. They include Southern Californian mid-century architectural drawings and models, such as Lloyd Wright’s 1930 unbuilt proposal for the Los Angeles Cathedral; Ruth Shellhorn’s 1955 landscaping and magnificent vistas designed for Disney’s iconic Fantasyland; and Richard Neutra’s and A. Quincy Jones’ models for schools and post-war private residences. Images of doors by contemporary artists Robert Overby, Frances Stark, and Rachel Whiteread conjure up personal experiences and memories. Images of homeless encampments demonstrate the trauma of losing the structures—both actual and social—that shape our most intimate experiences.

A group of works from UCLA Library Special Collections capture views from both inside and outside the Japanese internment camps during World War II. Estelle Ishigo’s delicate 1942 watercolor of domestic life at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming hangs alongside a 1943 gelatin silver print Entrance to Manzanar by Ansel Adams.
The Beyond

People around the world have long created objects to gain insights into the mysteries of existence and the forces that help us survive. Such unseen entities are often embodied as containers, be they ceramic receptacles employed by Nigerian healers to hold spirits, carved wooden figures of “otherworld spouses” used by the Baule of Côte d’Ivoire, or television shows that express a culture’s anxieties and hopes about an uncertain future. Gathered in this section are images of first-century Chumash petroglyphs, aerial illustrations made from a hot air balloon in 1786, and contemporary artist Vija Celmins’ pinpricks of white stars against the black night sky: objects that share the urge to grasp places out of reach. A UCLA banner that traveled to space with astronaut and alumna Anna Fischer reflects the human drive to explore and transcend new frontiers. Science fiction books and films show how creative minds work to envision unfamiliar worlds, including the drafting of the opening monologue for Star Trek. Natural specimens from the UCLA Meteorite Gallery—such as a rare example from Argentina estimated to be 4.5 billion years old—bring these faraway realms closer to us.

The exhibition ends with a meditative installation by artist River Garza, an Angeleno of Tongva descent, who has curated a selection of archival materials from the Fowler’s Archaeology Collections that speak to how these repositories of knowledge are built and experienced. In a statement accompanying the work, Garza says, “During this process, I have come to understand and acknowledge that the stewardship of these items is a difficult and an evolving process that demands an ongoing relationship and dialogue between tribal communities and institutions of knowledge.”

Credits

The Map and the Territory: 100 Years of Collecting at UCLA has been organized by the Fowler Museum in partnership with the Hammer Museum and the UCLA Library. The exhibition is made possible by major funding from the Office of the Centennial | UCLA External Affairs. Additional support is provided by donors to the Fowler’s UCLA Spark crowdfunding campaign.
UCLA exhibition organizers acknowledge our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples.

The exhibition features objects from the following campus collections:

Fowler Museum at UCLA
Archaeology Collection | Fowler Museum at UCLA
UCLA Hammer Museum
UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts
UCLA Library Special Collections
UCLA Library Film and Television Archive
William Andrews Clark Memorial Library
UCLA Meteorite Collection
UCLA Benjamin and Gladys Thomas Air Photo Archive
UCLA Rock Art Archive
UCLA Donald R. Dickey Collection of Birds and Mammals
UCLA World Musical Instrument Collection
UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive

About the Fowler Museum
The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores global arts and cultures with an emphasis on Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Indigenous Americas—past and present. The Fowler enhances understanding of world cultures through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and public programs, informed by interdisciplinary approaches and the perspectives of the cultures represented. The work of international contemporary artists is presented within complex frameworks of politics, culture, and social action.

Museum Information
308 Charles E Young Dr N | Los Angeles, CA 90024 | fowler.ucla.edu

New Hours: Thu–Sun 12–5pm
Admission to the Fowler is free
Complete guidelines are listed on fowler.ucla.edu/visit

Parking in UCLA Lot 4: 198 Westwood Plaza at Sunset Blvd ($3/hr). Visitor drop-off: 305 Royce Drive. The turnaround area for drivers is directly behind the Fowler. Follow the sidewalk that wraps around the building to reach to the front entrance.
CAPTIONS

PAGE 1 (L–R)
Grayson Perry (b. 1960, Chelmsford, England); Map of Nowhere, 2008; Color etching; UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Hammer Museum. Purchased with funds provided by the Helga K. and Walter Oppenheimer Acquisition Fund

E. McD. Johnstone (b. mid-19th century, United States; d. 1895); The Unique Map of California, ca. 1885; Lithograph; UCLA Library Special Collections

PAGE 3 (L–R)
Zarina (b. 1937, Aligarh, India; d. 2020, London, England); Bangkok 1958-1961, from the series Homes I Made / A Life in Nine Lines, 1997; Etching on paper; UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Hammer Museum. Purchased with funds provided by the Helga K. and Walter Oppenheimer Acquisition Fund

Ansel Adams (b. 1902, San Francisco, California; d. 1984, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California); Entrance to Manzanar, 1943; Gelatin silver print; UCLA Library Special Collections, Ansel Adams Papers

PAGE 4 (L–R)
Artist unknown (Baule peoples, Côte d'Ivoire); Otherworld husband (blolo bian) and wife (blolo bla), 20th century; Wood, paint; Fowler Museum at UCLA, X94.17.2 and x94.18.2; Anonymous gift

Sample of the Esquel Meteorite; Stony iron pallasite (PMG-an); 4 1/2 billion years old; Collected in Esquel, Chubut, Argentina, in 1951; 187 grams (original mass 755 kilograms); UCLA Meteorite Collection 2646