# Review: US Latina Writers

**Kelley Kreitz**[1]

**[1]Pace University**

**Project**

US Latina Writers

**Project Directors**

Monika Dabrowska, International University of La Rioja

Gabriela Baeza Ventura, University of Houston, Arte Publico Press and The US Latino Digital Humanities Center (USLDH)

Carolina Villaroel, University of Houston, Arte Publico Press and The US Latino Digital Humanities Center (USLDH)

**Project URL**

https://dhcast.github.io/US-Latina/

**Project Reviewer**

Kelley Kreitz, Pace University

---

# Project Overview

**Monika Dabrowska**

US Latina Writers published by Arte Público Press / Escritoras latinas de EE.UU. publicadas por Arte Público Press is a digital exhibit that facilitates research on the content, themes, and the contemporary reception of texts authored by US Latinas and published by Arte Público Press over the last forty years (1984–2024). The project seeks to highlight the literary legacy of US Latinas and focuses on books originally printed by Arte Público Press, a publishing house that, since its founding in 1979, has compiled an extensive bibliography of documents related to Hispanic culture in the U.S. The exhibit features 141 literary works by 76 Chicana/Latina writers, spanning both fiction and nonfiction across a range of genres, including narrative, poetry, drama, essays, interviews, and albums. By providing valuable online resources, the project offers insights into the contemporary Latino/x literary landscape of the U.S. Southwest. It also promotes a deeper understanding of the history of Latinos in the United States, their values, struggles, family dynamics, connections to indigenous heritage, power relations, interactions with nature, and their contributions to U.S. literature.

The corpus encompasses authors from diverse backgrounds, including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican, and reflects a wide range of races, ethnicities, ages, beliefs, and social classes. It recovers stories, experiences, and voices of individuals committed to diversity, community-building, and print culture. The commitment to inclusion and diversity is evident not only in the content of the texts but also built into the entire process of digital content creation, data curation, and portal design, as seen in the use of tags and metadata labels.

The digital portal is built using CollectionBuilder, an open-source tool based on static web technology that is fully optimized for mobile devices. This tool allows for the integration of textual content with visual elements (images in JPEG or PNG) and MP3 audio files. Users can navigate various visualization options — including maps, timelines, infographics, and word clouds — to examine key terms and themes. The platform also allows users to search and filter content by author names, keywords, and genres. In the case of novels and nonfiction, they can identify the geolocations of the places where the plot of the story unfolds. The project aims to serve as a valuable resource for researchers, scholars, educators, librarians, community members interested in exploring Chicana/Latina writing through the lenses of women's studies, gender, race/ethnicity, and cultural studies.

The goal of the project is not only to make visible this cultural heritage in digital format but also to generate well-documented knowledge of U.S. Hispanic literature. It fosters data visualization, encourages new research questions, uncovers potential connections, continuity of certain motifs or themes, and promotes the study of these authors. The platform serves as a starting point for research in U.S. Latino studies, Chicana feminist history, decolonialism, and critical race theories. Ultimately, the project seeks to expand the scope of scholarly inquiry and reflection, inviting the community, educators, students, and literary critics to engage deeply with these subjects.

## Project Review

**Kelley Kreitz**

US Latina Writers is a digital exhibit developed by Monika Dabrowska, Gabriela Baeza Ventura, and Carolina Villaroel and published by Arte Público Press. Through the use of the Collection Builder platform and an integrated exhibit, map, timeline, and dataset, it showcases Latina writers published by Arte Público Press since its founding in 1979. Featuring 141 literary works by 76 Chicana/Latina writers across multiple genres — including narrative, poetry, drama, essays, interviews, and albums — the US Latina Writers website is designed for scholars, educators, librarians, and community members interested in Latino/a/x literary studies, Chicana feminist history, and decolonial perspectives.

One of the project's most valuable contributions is its effort to consolidate information on Latina writers in an accessible, publicly available format. The site's visualization tools, including maps, timelines, and word clouds, offer users multiple entry points for exploring Chicana and Latina literature and situating it within the broader context of U.S. and transnational literary history. Especially given Arte Público's significance as a groundbreaking publishing press dedicated to expanding recognition of and access to Latino/a literature, the data and visualizations included in the US Latina Writers site offer an illuminating window on Latina publishing in the U.S. The site could be further expanded with scholarly essays or additional interactive elements, such as interactive timelines. As the authors point out, however, the site is designed as a starting point for further research that might build on the data and insights made available through the project to

formulate new research questions and facilitate new digital humanities projects dedicated to expanding knowledge of Latina literature. The use of metadata tags and thematic categorizations enhances the project's value to researchers seeking to uncover patterns and connections between texts.

US Latina Writers aligns with ongoing efforts in digital humanities to recover and amplify marginalized and suppressed voices, exemplified by the work of the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project — which was launched by Nicolás Kanellos following his founding of Arte Público Press and is led by Baeza Ventura and Villaroel. The project's focus on a curated corpus from Arte Público Press contributes to the growing body of digital scholarship dedicated to Chicana and Latina literary studies. Technologically, it effectively leverages metadata for visualization and exploration. Its open-access nature supports broad adoption, and the site offers detailed documentation on both its purpose and on how it was created. The project was supported by the Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Project's US Latino Digital Humanities Center at the University of Houston in collaboration with the Universidad Internacional de la Rioja (UNIR). It was supported by a research grant from the Spanish Ministry of Universities (MUNI) through the "José Castillejo" mobility program.

US Latina Writers is a valuable contribution to digital Latinx literary studies, making visible a significant body of work through interactive and accessible means. By leveraging digital tools for content exploration, the project fosters new research avenues while advocating for the inclusion of Latina voices in American literary history.