

## PRESS RELEASE FOR MEDIA:

### **A Post-Election Gathering for Undocumented Voices: Karla Cornejo Villavicencio in Conversation with José Antonio Vargas**

*For Immediate Release*

**Event Title:** MACLA presents, *Undocumented Americans: A Conversation with Karla Cornejo Villavicencio*, moderated by José Antonio Vargas

**Date & Time:** November 14, 2024 | 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

**Location:** San José City Hall Rotunda

**Tickets:** Free, registration required

In the wake of the 2024 U.S. elections, which have seen a renewed wave of anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies, this conversation is a crucial gathering space for undocumented individuals, mixed-status families, and allies. On November 14, 2024, Karla Cornejo Villavicencio and José Antonio Vargas—two of the most prominent and unapologetic voices in the undocumented immigrant rights movement—will hold a timely, post-election conversation about the future of immigrant rights in America. This evening is designed to bring the undocumented community together, to process, reflect, and find strength in collective resilience.

At San José's City Hall Rotunda, we invite you to join us for an honest, intimate discussion on what it means to navigate a political landscape that has become increasingly hostile to immigrants. As the country faces uncertain political outcomes, this event offers a rare opportunity for the undocumented community to come together, share stories, and hold space for the emotions and questions that follow the election. This is more than just a conversation—it's a gathering that acknowledges the lived realities of the immigrant experience in today's America.

#### **Why this event matters now:**

**The 2024 election cycle has amplified anti-immigrant sentiment, fueling policies and rhetoric that threaten to further marginalize millions of undocumented people.** This event arrives at a pivotal time, serving as a refuge and a platform for the community to discuss what comes next. With both Karla and José sharing their deeply personal stories of navigating life undocumented in a country that continually questions their right to exist, the conversation will offer solidarity and a vision for the future of immigrant rights, no matter the outcome of the election.

This event aims to galvanize the undocumented community, centering the narratives of those directly impacted by America's immigration system. With the nation divided on immigration policies, this gathering creates a necessary space for people to connect, reflect, and build strength through shared experiences.

#### **About the Speakers:**

*Karla Cornejo Villavicencio* is an Ecuadorian-born author and a National Book Award finalist for *The Undocumented Americans*. She is one of the first undocumented immigrants to graduate from Harvard and is widely recognized for her bold and unfiltered writing about the complexities of living undocumented in America. Her latest novel *Catalina* confronts themes of belonging, identity, and survival, mirroring the harsh realities faced by many immigrants today.

*José Antonio Vargas* is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Emmy-nominated filmmaker, and one of the most prominent voices advocating for the rights of undocumented individuals. His memoir *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* is a rallying cry for the undocumented community, and his non-profit organization, Define American, works to shift the narrative around immigration in the U.S. With the political stakes high and

the climate more charged than ever, José's work continues to resonate, offering both critique and hope in the fight for immigrant justice.

### What media outlets can expect:

This event offers rich coverage potential for media outlets focused on politics, human rights, and the immigrant experience. The conversation will directly address the emotional and political fallout from the 2024 elections and offer a window into how the undocumented community is bracing for—and reacting to—the outcomes. Coverage can explore the political stakes for immigrants, amplify the voices of those most impacted, and spotlight Karla and José as key figures in the broader struggle for immigrant rights.

This is not just another post-election event—it's a moment of reckoning for undocumented Americans and their allies. Media outlets have the opportunity to document this critical gathering as it captures the raw and real emotions of a community that continues to fight for dignity and recognition in the face of hostility.

Join us on November 14 as Karla Cornejo Villavicencio and José Antonio Vargas lead an urgent and necessary conversation about the future of undocumented Americans, creating space to reflect, unite, and rise stronger together.

**Press attendance is encouraged.** For press inquiries or to request interviews, please contact Yosimar Reyes at [yosimar@maclaarte.org](mailto:yosimar@maclaarte.org) or (408) 998-2783 x111.

### About MACLA:

MACLA is an inclusive contemporary arts space grounded in the Chicano/Latino experience that incubates new visual, literary and performance art in order to engage people in civic dialogue and community transformation.

Founded in 1989, MACLA emerged from a broad community mobilization in San José and across the nation advocating for multicultural arts. Since its inception, MACLA has envisioned arts programming as a powerful vehicle for civic dialogue and social equity serving over 38,000 people annually and produces 50 programs each year in three core program tracts: visual arts; performance and literary arts; and youth arts education.

MACLA is located at 510 South First Street, San José, CA 95113. For more information, additional photos and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.maclaarte.org](http://www.maclaarte.org), email [info@maclaarte.org](mailto:info@maclaarte.org) or call (408) 998-ARTE.

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