

Mexican-American Artist Olivia Barrionuevo Transforms Former Hospital ICU Into Immersive Butterfly Installation

The Monarch Project: RESILIENCE is on view @ the former St. Vincent's Medical Center as part of Hospital of Emotions, a large-scale exhibit featuring 70 artists

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Artist Olivia Barrionuevo is presenting The Monarch Project: RESILIENCE, a site-specific installation using thousands of handcrafted monarch butterflies, inside the ICU unit of the former St. Vincent's Medical Center in Los Angeles. The work opened May 27, 2026, and is on view through July 31 as part of Hospital of Emotions, a large-scale exhibition that has invited 70 artists to transform 80 rooms across four floors of the decommissioned hospital into immersive artworks, each dedicated to a specific human emotion. Barrionuevo's room is dedicated to resilience.



Monarch Project: RESILIENCE Installation View

Hospital of Emotions is presented by House of Art and Dreams in collaboration with ROYVA Group and the St. Vincent Behavioral Health Campus. The building—one of the oldest medical centers in Los Angeles, which closed in 2020—has been organized into eight “departments” dedicated to emotions including joy, love, fear, anger, grief, gratitude, and resilience. The exhibition is open through July 31, 2026.

About the Installation

The Monarch Project uses the monarch butterfly's multigenerational migration—a journey spanning thousands of kilometers undertaken by successive generations that will never complete the full route individually—as a framework for exploring resilience. Barrionuevo's

installation fills the former ICU with approximately 3,000 butterflies, mirrored floors, and a blue color palette drawn from associations with healing and contemplation. Visitors view the work through glass, preserving the room's clinical architecture as part of the experience.

The project has been exhibited in multiple venues over more than a decade. Each installation is adapted to its specific location and community, and incorporates participant stories—through photography, written testimony, and video—making the work a growing archive of lived experience around themes of identity, belonging, loss, and renewal.

Artist Statement

“The monarch’s migration is individual and collective at the same time. Each butterfly makes its own journey, but the migration only exists because millions undertake it together,” said Barrionuevo.

“That tension is what this project explores—the ways our most personal experiences of hardship and recovery are also the ones we share.”

About Olivia Barrionuevo

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As an artist, I seek reflection, resilience, hope, and healing—where, like the monarch butterfly in its migration, we discover the silent courage to endure, transform, and belong.”

Olivia Barrionuevo

Olivia Barrionuevo is a Mexican-American artist and photographer based in Los Angeles. Her work draws on her bicultural upbringing in a U.S.–Mexico border city, where she lived in Mexico while attending school in the United States. She studied at the University of Guadalajara and the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, and pursued further studies in languages and art history in Europe. Her photography and installation work has been recognized by the Museum of Tolerance, the Lucie Foundation, the University of Judaism, Avenue 50 Studio,

the Consulate General of Mexico in Los Angeles, the University of Sonora, and the Neutra Institute Museum and Gallery, with exhibitions in Basel, Switzerland, and Mexico City.

About Hospital of Emotions



Olivia Barrionuevo in front of her Monarch Project installation

Hospital of Emotions is a temporary immersive exhibition presented by House of Art and Dreams in collaboration with ROYVA Group and the St. Vincent Behavioral Health Campus. The exhibition brings together 70 artists working across visual arts, installations, architecture, design, and urban art, occupying 80 rooms distributed across four floors of the former St. Vincent's Medical Center in Los Angeles. The building itself—now repurposed as a specialized mental health facility—is integrated into the artwork. The exhibition is open through July 31, 2026.

Key Facts

- What: The Monarch Project: RESILIENCE by Olivia Barrionuevo
- Part of: Hospital of Emotions, featuring 70 artists across 80 rooms
- On view: Now through July 31, 2026
- Where: 2131 W 3rd St, Los Angeles, CA 90057
- Tickets: General Admission \$55 | Student/Senior (65+) \$48 | Veterans \$42 | Child (4–12) \$45 | Under 4 Free
- Tickets and information: www.hospitalofemotions.com
- Artist website: oliviabarrionuevo.com
- Instagram: @monarchproject_ | @oliviabarrionuevo | @hospital.of.emotions

Media Contact

Contact: Olivia Barrionuevo
Email: oliviabarrionuevo.art@gmail.com
Phone: 323-397-8139

Olivia Barrionuevo
+1 323-397-8139
oliviabarrionuevo.art@gmail.com

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