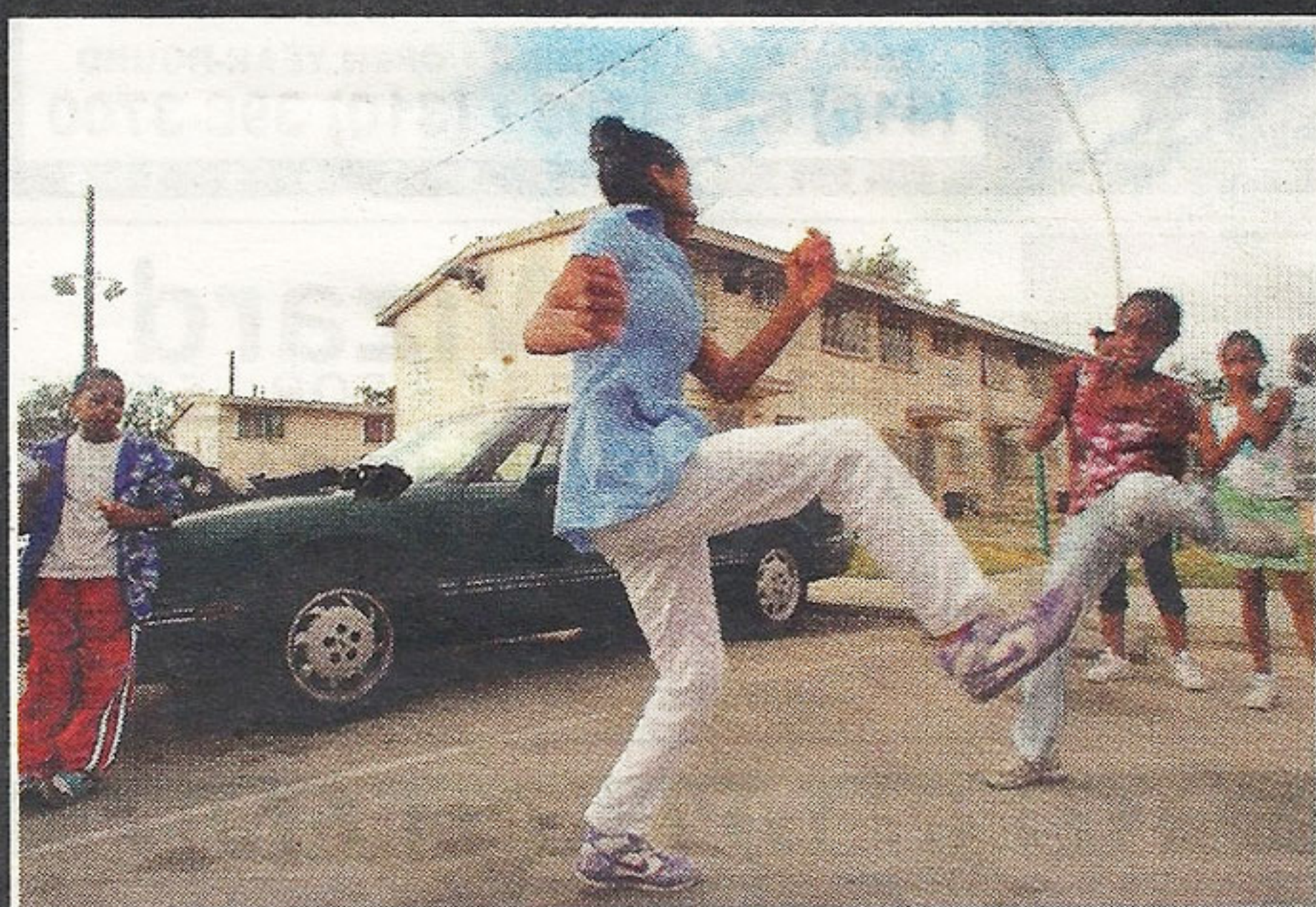


The Argonaut



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"PICTURING HEALTH" at VENICE ARTS

Images by youth photographers (from the top) Arlene Flores, 16, Andrew Gutter, 13, and Khaliq Farthing, 14, from Southern and Central California communities, will be included in the documentary photography exhibit.

WHAT'S IN

Venice Arts Gallery to present youth photography exhibit exploring various community issues



ARTURO RAMIREZ, 14, captured this image of a woman in Salinas that is among the documentary photographs to be displayed in the *Picturing Health* exhibit at the Venice Arts Gallery.

Picturing Health: Photography by Youth Across Southern and Central California, an exhibit of documentary images by teenagers that explore a range of issues facing their communities, will be on view at the Venice Arts Gallery from March 12 through April 30.

The opening reception is scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m. March 12 at the Venice Arts Gallery, 1702 Lincoln Blvd., Venice.

The various photographs taken by teens from eight Southern and Central California communities tell stories of challenge such as teen pregnancy; foreclosures; gangs; uncollected trash; as well as limited access to fresh foods and, in the Central Valley, clean drinking water.

Other subjects include strength: with women in Southern Kern who walk the parks to keep them safe; youth clubs and community centers that provide a safe place for kids after-school; a new health clinic in Coachella;

and the farmer's market in Merced.

The 50 images in the exhibit represent only a small selection of hundreds of photographs from Venice Arts' project "Picturing Health" which, in 2009 and 2010, taught documentary photography to 80 teens living in impoverished neighborhoods of Southern and Central California including Boyle Heights, the Coachella Valley, the Figueroa Corridor, Long Beach, Merced, East Salinas, Santa Ana, and Southern Kern.

"The photos that these kids took are really very powerful. They offer the viewer a way in; a way to see and feel both the beauty and the challenge in their

lives," said Giselle Macfarlane, the lead photographer on the project. "I have learned so much from working with these extraordinary kids."

Some of the youth participants said they also found that taking photographs offered them a new way to see and reflect on their lives and their communities.

Venice Arts created Picturing Health for The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative, which seeks to make meaningful change in 14 low-income communities across California.

Information, (310) 392-0846, or www.venice-arts.org.