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**Los Angeles Public Library Explores Impact of Freeways on Cityscape
and Communities**

***New Exhibition at Central Library Connects Historic Cartography, Oral Histories,
and Contemporary Art***

LOS ANGELES (June 2, 2025)—The Los Angeles Public Library presents *UnMapping LA: Concrete Landscapes and Reimagined Futures*, a thought-provoking exhibition from artist and researcher Debra Scacco, that explores the human and environmental costs of freeway development through the lens of historic maps and contemporary artworks.

The exhibition will be on view June 7-September 21, in Central Library's Annenberg Gallery, 630 W. Fifth Street, Los Angeles.

To examine and reimagine the city's buried landscapes, *UnMapping LA* juxtaposes historic cartographic materials and newly commissioned contemporary artworks by interdisciplinary artist Debra Scacco. Through Sanborn fire insurance maps, documentation of changing river courses, maps of Indigenous village sites and freeway outlines, the exhibit traces the transformations of Los Angeles' ecological and cultural topographies. Archival materials reveal how policies such as redlining, freeway construction, and water diversion continue to impact communities today. *UnMapping LA* illuminates the systemic forces that have dictated the city's form, forces that have elevated infrastructure and economic development over the health of ecosystems and communities.

Developed as an evolution of the artist's 2019 project *Compass Rose*, *UnMapping LA* draws on years of research and collaboration. The exhibition builds upon partnerships with Oxy Arts, the Institute for the Study of Los Angeles, Occidental College Special Collections and College Archives, the Sanborn Map Collection at the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at CSUN, and the Los Angeles Public Library. The project is also a key contributor to (NE)LA Stories, an oral history archive focused on documenting lived experiences in the city's northeast neighborhoods.

“We hope that *UnMapping LA* will spark conversations about how our city’s past continues to shape its present,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “This exhibition is part of Los Angeles Public Library’s mission to share stories that reflect the lives of Angelenos and to support civic engagement by providing access to history and culture.”

For a preview of the exhibition, the public are invited to join artist Debra Scacco on a walkthrough of *UnMapping LA* on Saturday, Sept. 20, at 12 p.m. in the Annenberg Gallery.

Central Library Director Kren Malone, said “By creatively connecting historical archives with personal stories from members of the community, *UnMapping LA* offers a powerful new way of seeing Los Angeles,” said

Scacco has previously presented aspects of this work at Oxy Arts, Third Street Promenade, and in site-based installations throughout Highland Park and Long Beach. Her writing and scholarship on the Sanborn Collection and transportation policy have appeared in *UCLA Critical Planning*, the *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers*, and as part of her co-lecturing at Occidental College.

UnMapping LA is part of the Los Angeles Public Library’s commitment to presenting exhibitions that foster dialogue and deepen understanding of the city’s complex history.

To learn more, visit www.lapl.org/exhibits.

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services—the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than eight million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at lapl.org, and thousands of public programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.

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