

UCSD Visual Arts Department

VA 128D Chicano Art In The Border Region

Peterson Hall 102 - Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:50AM

Instructor: Victor Ochoa / office H&SS 1145D

Office Hours: 10-11am Tuesday

The four basic components of **Chicano Art in the Border Region** will be:

- 1) A working Chicano artist perspective - Victor Ochoa
- 2) Chicano Art & Resistance (CARA) exhibition catalog
- 3) Guest lecturers, film, video and slide presentations
- 4) Group art project

The class will provide a basic overview from Pre-Colombian art to Contemporary Chicano art. This course will specifically focus on the Pachuco period of the 1940's on through the 1960's and 70's with the civil rights and Chicano movements, and to the present with current border issues, the Quincentennial celebration and topics in Chicana art.

CLASS SCHEDULE(subject to change)

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| Tuesday March 31 | - | First day, introduction & strategy |
| Thursday April 2 | - | Slide overview - Text review |
| Tuesday April 7 | - | Guest lecturer: Herman Baca - immigration & Chicano rights |
| Thursday April 9 | - | Chicano issues - slides |
| Tuesday April 14 | - | CARA roundtable video & Public Art video |
| Thursday April 16 | - | Larry Baza, Centro Cultural de la Raza & Hugh Davies, Museum of Contemporary Art |
| Tuesday April 21 | - | to be announced |
| Thursday April 23 | - | Chicano Park video |

VA 128D(cont.)

- Saturday April 25 - Chicano Park Day - required field trip
- Tuesday April 28 - Issac Artenstein - "Mi Otro Yo" & video potpourri
- Thursday April 30 - Ireina Cervantes: personal work, Chicanas & Frida (Midterm due)
- Tuesday May 5 - David Avalos & BAW/TAF the formative years
- Thursday May 7 - to be announced
- Saturday May 9 - Tijuana art tour (required fieldtrip)
- Tuesday May 12 - Robert Pincus & Oscar Garza - critical view
- Thursday May 14 - James Luna - Indigenous/Contemporary view
- Tuesday May 19 - Juanita Purner - Chicana artists
- Thursday May 21 - Counter Colón-ialismo - "1492 Revisited" (video premier)
- Tuesday May 26 - Jose Montoya, Pachuco y los arts
- Thursday May 28 - On hands workshop
- Tuesday June 2 - Guillermo Aranda, pre-columbian ideology & symbols
- Thursday June 4 - On hands project. Last day of class

CHICANO ART: RESISTANCE AND AFFIRMATION, 1965 - 1985

EDUCATION PACKET

CARA TIMELINE

THE CONTEXTS OF CHICANO ART AND CULTURE
A SELECTED TIMELINE

Essential to the Chicano art movement has been an understanding and expression of the history and cultural heritage of the Chicano people. Because the European (Spanish and French) conquest and domination have been so destructive of the indigenous legacy of the Chicano people, Chicano activists of the 1960s focused primarily on reclaiming their pre-Columbian, native American, and Mexican cultural identities. This activity has led to an increased understanding of the Chicano in a historical, binational, and bicultural context.

This timeline selectively presents the development of Chicano cultural identity over time and of the American hemispheric and international context that surrounds that evolution. It presents key events in the unfolding struggle of Chicanos to recover their past as Mexicans in the United States and of Americans of Mexican descent, as well as to affirm various aspects of their cultural legacy, including the pre-Columbian and Mexican national tradition.

Because Chicanos reside in the United States, this timeline of events focuses on the interactions between Chicanos and the rest of U.S. society. It also chronicles the bicultural, binational contexts of Chicanos as Americans, at one with the peoples of the Americas, that is, of the western hemisphere. This is not a typical immigrant story of the United States. Many Chicanos are and have been native residents with roots that extend to times long before any European set foot on the North American continent. This is a migrant story that tells of cultures without borders and of a unique experience of cultural survival.

1345-1699

Pre-Columbian American and Aztlán

The peoples of the Americas first encountered Europeans in 1492 when Columbus inadvertently landed on this continent and believed he had discovered a "new" world.

This world was new only to the Europeans, because for almost 3500 years indigenous peoples of this territory had constructed complex cosmopolitan societies governed by sophisticated political and social organization. These societies (including the Olmeca, the Tolteca, the Maya, and others) had established long-distance trade routes and stable government structures. They also made significant advances in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, religion, architecture, and the arts.

In 1345, at a time when Europeans were emerging from the Middle Ages, the Aztecs founded their capital city of Tenochtitlán (present-day Mexico City) in the central plateau of the Valley of the Anáhuac. The Aztecs were a migrant people who came from the north to settle in this area, a move which according to tradition had been determined by their vision of an eagle perched on a cactus with a serpent in its beak. (This image is recreated on the modern Mexican flag.) They described their homeland through references to a territory of origin in the "lands to the North," called Aztlán. The place of origin of the Aztecs is not certain, but Chicanos have taken Aztlán to be what we now call the Southwest. Following the Aztec lead, Chicanos took Aztlán to mean their place of origin as a Chicano people.

In 1521, the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés and his soldiers, in alliance with discontented subjects of the Aztecs, began their campaign to destroy the indigenous language, religion, and culture. The result was a racially and culturally diverse society in the central valley of Mexico.

A diverse *mestizo* race was created through the children born of the Spanish conquerors and the native peoples of the area. In this colonial world "pure" European blood was a primary measure of worth in society. Consequently, the mestizos were considered of little value except as workers and slaves, and their culture was appreciated only to the extent that it brought wealth to Spain. Yet, hierarchies of inequality had plagued both indigenous and colonial societies. Chicanos have chosen to resist the policies of subjugation found within most societies and to affirm the positive artistic and cultural achievements of their native predecessors.

NAUAKALLI

LA LLORONA

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ABSTRACT

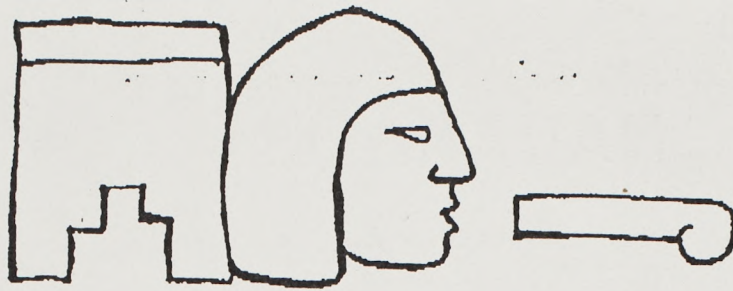
It was an omen, a sign of the impending arrival of the Spaniards in Mexico, the beginning of a descent into the darkness of a genocide that went beyond the physical. Today the grief and sorrow of her cry we still hear in the signs of las abuelitas that see los nietos caught in an all too familiar web of poverty and discrimination. La Llorona screams with every battered spouse in the barrio, she weeps with every mother who loses a son or a daughter to senseless barrio warfare and she dies a little bit more every time the barrio is relocated, exploited, and polluted.

Back then, they said she appeared openly and was heard to cry for the souls of her children, drowned in the river. Or was it that we saw and heard more clearly then? But now she is without rest for five hundred years, a wandering mythic testament to search of LA RAZA for its roots, the foundation of personal and community identity.

Today sociologists use the term amythia to describe the loss of the social coherence that allows for the development of personal wholeness, the loss of the shared centralizing psychological force that the mythic paradigm provides. For the West, it is related to a problem of the plausibility of the Judeo-Christian orientation in intellectual terms. For Mexicano/Chicano, as a captive, a psychological hostage of the Spanish colonization of Mexico, there is another, indigenous, dimension.

She was a wife, a mother. The father is absent from the legend, to return again at the given time after the challenge has been met and overcome. She places the children in the river, not out of madness nor malice, but out of love. It is their very survival that she intends, not their death. In the first generation after the invasion by the Spaniards, the population of central Mexico has decreased from twenty million to less than one million. Those that survive are forced into the Hispanic norm of behavior in order to survive. We adopt the language, religion and become a sub-caste of the expanding Spanish empire, This is the river where we nearly drown, the river of the course of European history in our hemisphere, the Amerindian continent. And our mother? If we look over our shoulder into our true past as a people, do we see only shadow?

La Llorona, la madre cultura india that gave birth to our identity and history in this hemisphere waits for us to return. If we listen we will hear her, if we search we will find her, and in her teachings and wisdom we can together save our souls.



NIUHUETLAKATLATOA

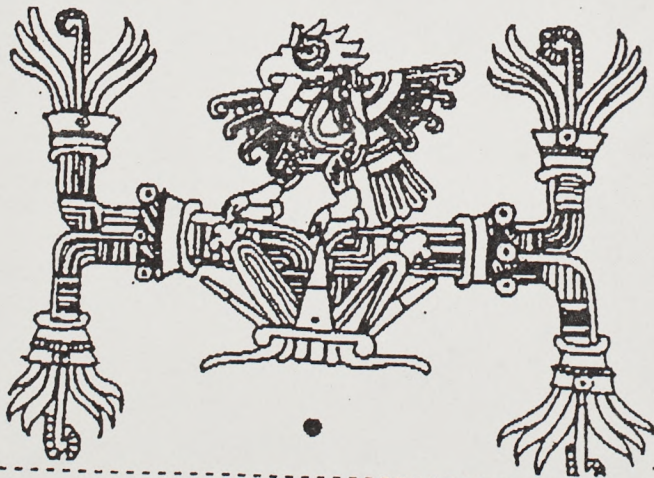
According to the traditional Indigenous accounts, when the Spanish conquistadores first heard the sound of the Mexican language being spoken, they turned to their interpreters and questioned them as to the name of the language. "IN NAHUATLATOLLI, MEXIKATL" was the reply, which translated is "the harmonious sounding language, Mexican". NAHUATL is an adjective, but also a metaphor that denotes the verb "smoke" which in position horizontally adjacent to the figure of a speaker, becomes the verb TLATOA: to speak. With the additional phonetic element of the color turquoise, XIUHITL, a metaphor for "that which is precious", the term becomes XIUHLATOA. Translated this is "the precious speech", - the turquoise smoke.

Today, the Nahuatl language is spoken by some two million persons within the Republic of Mexico, and the language family of which it is a part, the Uto-Aztecan, is still in use from Oregon to El Salvador. The destruction of the thousands of Nahuatl AMOXTIN (book, libros) during the first phase of the Spanish invasion of the continent had a devastating impact not only in terms of loss of the knowledge that was preserved in the extensive Meso-American libraries, but also in that it led to the decline of the language itself. This has been especially the case in terms of the knowledge of the written form, the literature that was the repository of the history and sciences of the culture. A cycle was set in motion that was to last nearly five hundred years.

We are today at the beginning of another cycle. The relationship between the Indigenous nations of the continent and that of the non-Indigenous societies of the hemisphere is straining to achieve a balance that will allow for the perpetuation of the aboriginal peoples' identity and culture on an equal basis. The historic Encuentro Continental of Indigenous People, held in Quito, Ecuador in July '90, concretely dealt with this subject in the Commission on Education. As we approach the five hundredth anniversary of the voyage of Columbus to this hemisphere, a great juncture presents itself. Perhaps this time, in 1992, the true America will begin to be heard. Perhaps, this time, the true America will finally begin to be discovered.

XINACHTLI, "seed" in NAHUATL, is a pilot project to develop this concept.

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128D - Chicano Art in the Border Region

Course will be graded accordingly:

15% - Attendance & class participation - on hands project completion.

35% - Midterm topic paper. 5 page minimum due April 30th on any subject covered in CARA essay beginning on p.83 or p.141.

15% - Field trip to artist studios & galleries in Tijuana and Chicano Park Day celebration.

35% - Final paper. 5 page minimum on any subject covered in CARA essay beginning on p.97 or p.131 or on other subject upon approval by professor.