

Chicana Art

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This is where you can write your introduction.

The impact of the Chicano Movement on Chicana Art

The **Chicano Movement** was one of the most important Civil Rights movements in American History (beginning in the early 1960s and growing until the mid-1970s). The movement advocated for equal access to education, housing, healthcare, and fair treatment in areas of employment. The movement also brought together hundreds of thousands of students and individuals that identified as Mexican and Mexican-American. The identity category of “Chicano” allowed for greater inclusion of populations classified as Mexican/Mexican-American in such states as California, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona—as well as other areas of the U.S.

The movement had a number of leaders; the best known leaders of the movement were “Corky” Gonzales, Reyes Tijerina, Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez. All of these leaders were engaging in work that ensured Civil Rights in voting, education, labor, land rights, water rights and did so by engaging in peaceful protests and demonstrations.

Images from the Chicano Movement



César Chávez visits César Chávez school in 1974, a year after school opened. He was there to show his support for the new school that was named in his honor.

– the links below provide a deeper look into the Chicano Movement

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La Marcha por la Justicia, a 1971 rally protesting police brutality, in Los Angeles' Belvedere Park. Courtesy Luis C. Garza/UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

United Farm Worker protest, c. 1970. Photo by Patricia López-Boron

Media Attributions

- Cesar Chavez with demonstrators by Movimiento © CC BY (Attribution)

The concept of Aztlan within Chicana Art

One of the most important ideas to emerge within the Chicano Movement was the concept of Aztlan. The myth of Aztlan was based on the historical assessment that those that identified as “Chicanos” were the descendants of indigenous populations that have populated the U.S. West and South West for over 12,000 years. The myth of Aztlan brought attention to the historical process of colonization and detribalization; both contributed to the displacement of Chicanos and made Chicanos second class citizens while living on their ancestral homeland.

The poem by “Corky” Gonzales captures the concept of Aztlan.



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Chicano and Chicana Artists have often utilized the myth of Aztlan as a theme within their artistic expressions. The concept of Aztlan can be found represented in the murals that adorn Chicano neighborhoods in L.A and other parts of California.

Chicano art murals

For Chicana artists (women artists that are influenced by the Chicano movement), the myth of Aztlan can be seen in the references to ancient Aztec women and goddesses in their art.



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<https://ucf.pb.unizin.org/chicanaart/?p=24>*

Expressions of intersectionality within Chicana Art

Chicana Art and Acts of Decolonization

Chicana Art Theory



Dolores
Huerta
Mural by
Yreina
Cervántez

Concept 1

Rasquache is a concept within Chicana art is based on the valuing of cultural production and cultural expression that is 'devalued' by the dominant society. The idea is that to embrace and produce what dominant culture would define as kitch art is to enact a form of decolonization that counters the pressure to assimilate to the hegemonic/dominant society. It is also to take part in community building and in "marking cultural space" that is not yet gentrified, occupied, or commodified.



Ester Hernandez, *La Ofrenda*, from the National Chicano Screenprint Taller, 1988-1989, 1988, screenprint, Smithsonian American Art Museum, © 1988.

Examples of producing art that is within the logic of *Rasquache* include (Chicano/Mexican American 'low riders': cars that are adorned to meet the aesthetic values of the community; public art and public murals that depict historical figures and events important to the community; and the adornment of homes—the placement of culturally significant decorations within one's home that support cultural identity (vs. decorating as per a mainstream magazine's recommendations); adornment of the body (the use of clothing, jewelry, tatoos, and makeup that is culturally significant vs. the assimilation of these forms of personal adornment within the dominant society).



Mural in Chicano Park, San Diego depicting Virgin of Guadalupe among people

Concept 2

‘In’Laketch (Nahuatl language, translation in English: You Are My Other Me)

View the poem by Luiz Valdez

The Chicana scholar Laura Perez has argued that ChicanaX Art is a form of ‘spirit work’ that displays the attempt of the artists to inspire or provoke greater balance between who we appear to be (the public “face” we wear) and who we long to (what is truly in our “heart”). Chicana art invites the artist and the viewer to perceive and imagine differently, and promotes the idea that seeing is a learned, revealed, ever-changing, and transformative process, whether we do so through the mind, the eyes, the heart, or the spirit. Perez argues that the work of two generations of Chicana artists are centering the concept of “In’Laketch” in visible and subtle ways with the aim of contributing a greater and more healing understanding of ourselves and of each other; to view Chicana art is to encounter the ‘self’—and for some this self is ‘known’ (those who identify as Chicana) for others that self is ‘unknown’ (Those that may have heard the word for the first time this semester or have seldom engaged with the history of colonization

of the U.S. South West and the American West in general.

Question(s) for Thoughtful Response

Identify one other cultural/historical group, and their artistic expression, that you are familiar with, and that remind you of the Chicana Art covered in this section of the class?

Note: Name **one** aspect of the cultural group you selected that is **similar**, and **one** aspect that is **different/distinct**.

Media Attributions

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- Virgin of Guadalupe mural in Chicano Park by Rpotance © CC BY-SA (Attribution ShareAlike)

This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.