

CHICANO(A): Refers to people of Mexican heritage who live in the U.S. This label of self-identification emerged in the 1960s in relation to the civil rights movement and as a form of self-determination.

CHICANO(A) ART: Art movement that emerged from the larger political movement. It is often political in nature and engages Chicano(a) values or images.

CHOLO/CHOLA: Originally an ethnic slur used to identify a person of indigenous or mestizo heritage, it is now associated with Mexican-American gang culture in the U.S.

CONTEXT: Events that make up the setting within which something exists or takes place. This exhibition focuses on the social and political context of the art featured in it.

CULTURE: A set of beliefs, customs and artistic activities shared by a group of people. This exhibition explores a shift in culture in Los Angeles through the interaction of U.S. born and Mexican artists.

LOCATION: A specific place. The location in question in this exhibition is Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (L.A.): The second most populated city in the U.S., Los Angeles was founded by settlers from Mexico (formerly “New Spain”) in 1781 as El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río de Porciúncula (The Town of Our Lady, Queen of the Angels of the Porciúncula River). It became a part of Mexico in 1821 after the War of Independence from Spain and was occupied and later purchased by the U.S. via the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This exhibition takes into account Los Angeles proper and its extended urban area.

LOWRIDER: Originating in the Chicano community, a lowrider is a car that sits low to the ground. An auto may have its frame altered, or have customized hydraulics which makes the car appear to “dance” by bouncing up and down. Lowriders are used for car shows or to slowly “cruise” up and down a street as a social ritual.

MESTIZAJE: Of mixed descent or heritage. Mestizaje can refer to “mestizos,” people of mixed race in Latin America, or a hybrid cultural expression that mixes a variety of traditions.

MEXICANISM: A perception of what is “Mexican” as embodied by objects, styles or cultural forms. Murals and folk art are often identified as representative of “Mexicanism.”

MODERNISM: An international movement from the late 19th to early 20th century, known for a departure from tradition and a search for or invention of the “new.” In this exhibition, the curators question the conventional definition of modernism. For them, modernism refers to reinvention, transformation and experimentation which may not be completely separated from the past or from popular culture, but could be connected to both.

MOVEMENT: A coordinated group action that can focus on a political or social issue. In art, it refers to a style that is followed by a group of artists.

PACHUCO: A youth subculture that emerged in the South-western U.S. in the 1940s and was absorbed into the Chicano culture. Pachuco youth used their personal style as a form of defiance and cultural resistance.

PERFORMANCE: Art created since the late 1960s, in which artists use their own body, actions or words, or a situation where he/she invites others to act with their bodies, actions or words. Performances can happen at any place and at any time. This exhibition shows past performances in photographs and videos.

POPULAR CULTURE: In a modern context, popular culture is associated with mass produced culture and objects created for a wide audience. For some of the artists in this exhibition, popular culture also blends with certain folk traditions and forms of expression.

SOCIOPOLITICAL: Having to do with political and social subjects. This exhibition includes works of art related to political events and social movements.

ZOOT SUIT: A suit made up of high-waisted, pegged trousers worn with a long coat that featured padded shoulders and wide lapels. Worn by African-Americans and Pachucos, zoot suits were considered a frivolous waste of fabric during World War II. Wearing a zoot suit became a symbol of rebellion.

COVER IMAGE:

GRACIELA ITURBIDE (Mexico City, b. 1942)
East Los Angeles, from the series *White Fence, East L.A.*, 1986
 Gelatin silver print
 Courtesy of the artist and ROSEGALLERY, Santa Monica, CA
 © Graciela Iturbide

THIS EDUCATION BROCHURE IS FUNDED BY VERIZON



MEX/LA: “Mexican” Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985 focuses on how nationalism and internationalism are modernist constructions which are complementary and fundamental in the formation of Mexican, American, Chicano art and the art of the City. *MEX/LA* is organized by the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) and is curated by Rubén Ortiz-Torres in association with Jesse Lerner.

The exhibition *MEX/LA: “Mexican” Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930-1985* is presented by The Getty Foundation, The Walt Disney Company, and Wells House Hospice. Additional support is provided by the Robert Gumbiner Foundation, Arts Council for Long Beach, City of Long Beach, Verizon Wireless, and MOLAA’s Annual Exhibition Fund. *MEX/LA: “Mexican” Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930-1985* is part of *Pacific Standard Time* which is an unprecedented collaboration of more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California, which are coming together to tell the story of the birth of the LA art scene. Initiated through grants from The Getty Foundation, *Pacific Standard Time* will take place for six months beginning October 2011. *Pacific Standard Time* is presented by The Getty Foundation and Bank of America.



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MEX/L.A.
**“MEXICAN” MODERNISM(S)
 IN LOS ANGELES, 1930-1985**
- ACTIVITY GUIDE -



To find out more about what was happening in L.A. between 1930 and 1985, scan the code or visit <http://bit.ly/nqkZkh>

THE 1847 TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO PLACED LOS ANGELES, THEN A PART OF NORTHERN MEXICO, IN THE HANDS OF THE UNITED STATES. It deprived Mexicans of their rights and most of their land, but they resisted. This resistance has been an important part in the development of Southern California culture.

MEX/LA: “Mexican” Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930-1985 examines an often overlooked history of **LOS ANGELES**. Encounters between Mexican, American and **CHICANO** artists shaped the art in L.A. that later impacted New York, Mexico and elsewhere.



Through **MODERNISM**, artists broke away from tradition to create **MOVEMENTS** or art forms in stark contrast to the past. They embraced innovation to reject established ideas.

MODERNISM in **LOS ANGELES** involved reinvention, but sometimes it remained connected to the past or engaged **POPULAR CULTURE**. Like **MESTIZAJE**, modernism in Los Angeles mixes the old with the new. It creates dynamic art forms that defy strict boundaries between what we consider high or low art, Mexican or American.

THIS CONTROVERSIAL WORK BY SIQUEIROS USED INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM THE TRADITIONAL MURAL.

THINK ABOUT IT: What is a tradition that you share with friends or family? Over the years, has it remained the same? Does it change depending on who participates or who is planning it?

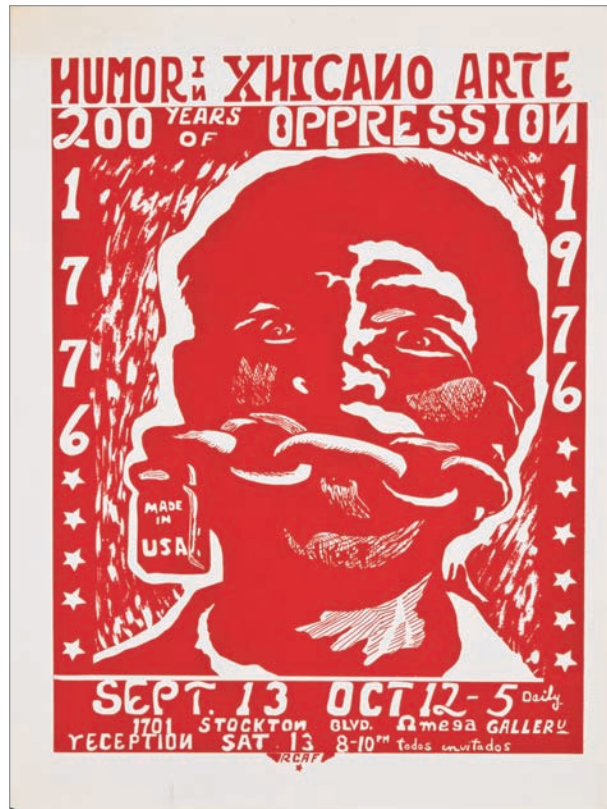
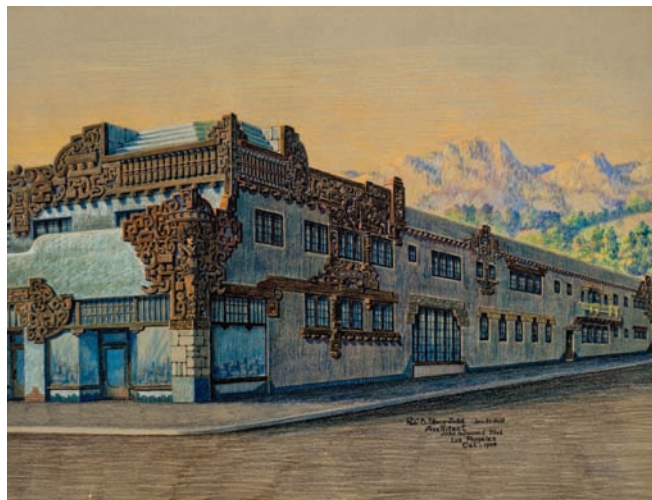
Inspired by the experiences of their travels, artists are able to constantly reinvent themselves. Two **MODERNIST** artists whose work changed drastically while working between **LOS ANGELES** and Mexico are the architect Frank Lloyd Wright (U.S.) and painter David Alfaro Siqueiros (Mexico). They experimented with new processes to connect with the past (Wright) and the future (Siqueiros). Their art forms are innovative and dynamic.



To explore how artists reinvented themselves while working between **LOS ANGELES** and Mexico, scan the code or visit <http://bit.ly/qxdPUj>

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS
(Chihuahua, Mexico, 1896–Cuernavaca, Mexico, 1974)
Miitn en la calle / Street Meeting, 1932
Archivo CENIDAP/INBA

ROBERT STACY JUDD
The Aztec Hotel / El hotel Azteca, 1924-25
Courtesy Robert Stacy-Judd Papers, Architecture and Design Collection
University Art Museum, UC Santa Barbara



RODOLFO "RUDY" CUELLAR (Auburn, California, b.1950)
Humor in Xhicano Arte / Humor en arte Xhicano, 1976
Offset Lithograph,
Center for the Study of Political Graphics Collection, Los Angeles

Much of the art in this exhibition deals with the **SOCIOPOLITICAL** issues that emerged during times of change in **LOS ANGELES** and Mexico. The occupation of northern Mexico (California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado) by the U.S. resulted in tensions between groups. Mexican residents were stripped of their language, culture and land.

The Mexican Revolution brought an additional mass migration of Mexicans into the U.S. in the early 20th century. Mexicans were absorbed into the fluctuating American economy and then rejected. Youth rebelled against this treatment through their clothing styles. The Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial (1942) and the **ZOOT SUIT** Riots (1943) are a result of this conflict.

The Cold War and Red Scare led to the persecution of artists and intellectuals. The 1960s brought about the **CHICANO MOVEMENT** as César Chávez and the United Farm Workers organized field laborers.

Artists supported events within the **MOVEMENT** by producing **CHICANO(A)** art. Murals and graphic arts allowed them to reach a wide audience.

THINK ABOUT IT: The current crisis of the U.S. economy has recently provoked resentment between various groups. What types of events, policies or attitudes have resulted from the economic crisis?



HARRY GAMBOA JR. (Los Angeles, b.1951)
Arrested/Detested / Arrestado/detestado, 1979
Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of the artist

ANALYZE THE PHOTOGRAPH: This photograph by Harry Gamboa, Jr. shows a man being arrested by **LOS ANGELES** police officers. Think about the title. What is going on here? How does the artist show support for the man being arrested?



To learn more about how Chicano(a) artists took sociopolitical issues to the streets, scan the code or visit <http://bit.ly/p3oGpu>

As the main **LOCATION** where films and television shows are made, **LOS ANGELES** has been considered the capital of **POPULAR CULTURE**. It makes its way into everyone's lives, including artists. **POPULAR CULTURE** is also affected by art. We see this in **MEX/LA** through the inclusion of "**MEXICANIST**" art styles and surrealism in Hollywood films and iconic cartoons.

A definition of **POPULAR CULTURE** and what is considered "high" or "low" art is complicated by issues of class, ethnicity and gender. Representations of certain groups of people have been defined by the way they are portrayed in **POPULAR CULTURE**. Artists have often questioned these representations. Some of the artists in this exhibition respond not just to **POPULAR CULTURE**; they include folk forms and expressions in their art.



CHARLES AND RAY EAMES
(St. Louis, 1907–St. Louis, 1978; Sacramento, 1912–Los Angeles, 1988)
Research photographic material for Day of the Dead / Día de los Muertos, ca. 1957
Inkjet prints on cotton paper from Kodachrome slides
Courtesy of Eames Office, LLC

This photograph was used by designers Charles and Ray Eames as research material for their film about Mexican folk traditions: *Day of the Dead*.

THINK ABOUT IT: How are Mexicans or **CHICANOS** portrayed on television and in films? Do you know anyone of Mexican descent whose personality or actions challenge what you see in **POPULAR CULTURE**? What does this say about how different groups are defined by the media?



MARTÍN RAMÍREZ (Tepatlán, Mexico, 1895–Auburn, California, 1963)
086 Untitled, (Man Riding Yellow Donkey)/086 Sin título, (Hombre montado un burro amarillo, ca. 1960–63 (detail)
Gouache, colored pencil, and graphite on paper
Collection of the Estate of Martín Ramírez and the Family of Dr. Max Dunievitz

ACTIVITY: Martín Ramírez is known for mixing different elements in his art. He uses a folk art style, modernist strategies and images from **POPULAR CULTURE**. Who is in the center of this image? Where do you think Ramírez saw this figure? Draw in a character that you see in **POPULAR CULTURE** in the space on the right. Who is this? Why did you choose him/her? What does he/she represent?

Now that you have seen this exhibition, can you see how the art and culture in **LOS ANGELES** has been influenced by both Mexicans and Americans? The next time someone refers to a person, song, artwork or activity as "so L.A.," think about what that means. How did it come to be "L.A.?" Who do you think influenced it?



Has Los Angeles changed since 1985? To learn more about what is going on in L.A. today, scan the code or visit <http://bit.ly/ou1t6L>