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# *Both Sides of the Border*

*Fine Latin American and Chicano Art*

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*Carlotta's Passion Fine Art*

**2012 Colorado Boulevard**

**Los Angeles, CA 90041**

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CHAPTER 1

*Latin American Artists*

## Raul Anguiano (1915 - )

Raul Anguiano was born at Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. He started drawing Cubist pictures at the age of 5, taking as his first models movie stars, such as Mary Pickford, Pola Negri, and Charlie Chaplin. Anguiano recalls that his first artistic influence or esthetic emotion came from the *Holy Family* by Rafael Sanzio.

At the age of 12, Anguiano attended Guadalajara's Free School of Painting under the tuition of Ixca Farias. From 1928 to 1933, he studied with the Master painter José Vizcarra, the disciple of Santiago Rebull and José Salomé Piña, and organized the group "Young Painters of Jalisco" with other artists. During this period, Anguiano worked with different kinds of models: workmen, employees, and a few intellectuals like Pita Amor.

In 1934, Anguiano moved to Mexico City. He began teaching in primary schools and taught drawing and painting at La Esmeralda Academy and the UNAM School of Art.

Anguiano was a member of the Mexican Artistic Renaissance movement, which was started in the 1920's by the Mexican School of Art. This renaissance began with the San Carlos Academy movement, among whose leaders were Ignacio Asúnsolo and Jose Clemente Orozco. The movement emerged out of the students' and teachers' discontent with traditional academicism, and the close contact that the young artists had with the problems of Mexico and its people. This latter motivation explains the marked critical realism of the painters of this time, including Anguiano himself.

Anguiano received a commission to paint his first mural, *Socialist Education*, a 70-meter fresco located at A. Carrillo School in Mexico City. Other works followed, including *Mayan Rituals* (oils on canvas and wood), for the Mayan Hall in the National Museum of Anthropology, and *Trilogy of Nationality* (acrylic on canvas and wood), for the Attorney General's Office.

In 1936, Anguiano moved into his Surrealist period, which lasted almost a decade. He painted circus performers and prostitutes. The most notable among his works of the time are: *The Madame* (gouache, 1936), *The Clown's Daughter* (oil, 1940), *The Pink Circus Artist* and *The Grey Circus Artist* (oil, 1941). During this period, Anguiano also produced a series of drawings based on his dreams, with cold tones and silver-greys predominating.

In 1937, Anguiano joined the Revolutionary Writers and Artists League. Together with Alfredo Zalce and Pablo O'Higgins, he was a founding member of the Popular Graphics Workshop, where

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artists practiced a graphic style based on Mexico's folk traditions. This was due to the powerful influence of Jose Guadalupe Posada and Goya.

Raúl Anguiano belongs to the so-called “Third Generation” of post-revolutionary painters, along with Juan O’Gorman, Jorge González Camarena, José Chávez Morado, Alfredo Zalce, Jesús Guerrero Galván and Julio Castellanos, all known for being unorthodox, associated in politics and in art, while at the same time holding on to some traditional canons.

Anguiano's work and the link to his people is clear, not only in his murals but also on canvas, etchings, pencil and ink drawings, lithographs and illustrations. Without compromising his personality or ethnic roots, and at the same time not allowing them to limit him, Anguiano has vindicated and taken advantage of the principles of modern art, giving him a universal and transcending character of his boundary work.

Anguiano held his first solo exhibition, entitled “Raúl Anguiano and Máximo Pacheco” at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City, in 1935; and in 1940 he took part in his first collective exhibition “Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art”. These were followed by more than 100 shows in many countries as Cuba, Chile, Colombia, Brazil, United States, France, Italy, the former Soviet Union, Israel, Germany and Japan. His most recent exhibitions include the presentation of a series of four color lithographs, held at the Hall of Graphic Arts SAGA 88, from 1989 to 1990, in Paris; and the retrospective look at Anguiano's work in graphics (1938-1940), held at the National Print Museum in Mexico City in 1990.

Since 1982, Anguiano has been full member of Mexico City's Academy of Arts, and since 1993, he has also been Creator Emeritus of National System to the Creators of Art.

Anguiano's visual roots are firmly planted in the graphic essence that marked the early part of this century. His traditional figurative imagery has grown to embrace vivid color. A founding member of the legendary Taller de Gráfica Popular, this prolific octogenarian is one of Mexico's most beloved artists.

Source: Beatriz Vidal

### **Juan Sebastian Barbera (1964 -)**

Juan Sebastian Barbera was born in Mexico City in 1964. He studied art at the National School of Plastic Arts of the UNAM (Mexico) and industrial design at the UAM (Mexico).

Barbera's artwork has been featured in more than twenty-seven shows in Mexico, the United States, Spain, France, and India.

In 1994, Barbera worked with the Graphical Poligrafa Obra in Barcelona, Spain. He participated in the "Periolibros" and "Iberoamérica Pinta" projects in Spain between 1995 and 2000 and produced fine lithographs at the Taller de Obra Grafica de Polígrafa.

#### ***Awards***

- Concurso de "Juguete Arte Objeto", 1993.
- First prize in the "Quórum de Diseño", 1997.
- Realizó una escultura monumental "El Hombre Nuevo" en el Estado de México (Conalep Metepec) en 1999.
- Pintó el mural de la nueva librería Gandhi en el 2000.



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## **Elsa Chabaud**

Elsa Chabaud specializes in location and studio photography for government agencies, fine art institutions, and private business in the State of Mexico. In the early 1970s, Chabaud studied traditional black-and-white silver gelatin print photography at the National University of Fine Arts in Mexico City.

Chabaud's narrative portraits of forgotten objects are nostalgic and tragic, whimsical and random. Wandering through the streets after the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, she photographed what she discovered—mannequin figures, bottles, chairs, furniture, broken beams. Her imagery evokes of the magical realism of Latin American literature.

### ***Education***

1976-1982      Estudios Superiores Taller de Fotografía de la maestra Kati Horna  
Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas UNAM

### ***Professional Experience***

- Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes
- Gobierno del Estado de Veracruz
- Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo, Boston, Mass.
- Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes.
- Seibu Museum
- Universidad Autónoma de México
- Smithsonian Institution Press
- Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Acervo Histórico)
- Burmester, S.A.
- Compañía Industrial de Orizaba (C.I.D.O.S.A)
- Industrias Peñoles
- Secretaría de Educación Pública
- Teléfonos de México
- Grupo Effort
- Kodak (Division de Imágenes Profesionales)

### ***Publications featuring Elsa Chabaud***

- *Hoja 2*
- *Fernandez Editores*
- *Salvat*
- *Turmex*
- *Scripta*
- *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*
- *Folletos y Revistas Comerciales (Clientes diversos)*
- *Participación eventual en el suplemento Cultural de los periódicos La Jornada y del Uno más Uno*

### ***Expositions***

2002	Exposición Individual: Townsend Gallery
1995	Exposición Individual: Galería Focale, Nyon Suiza
1994	Exposición Individual: Photoforum Pasquart, Bienne Suiza
1993	Exposición Individual: UNAM (Centro de Estudios Extranjeros) Reflejos y Montajes (Fotoseptiembre)
1990	Exposición Colectiva: Espacios Interiores, Alianza Francesa Exposición Ambulante: Exposición de la Calle Exposición Colectiva : en La Agencia San Carlos a 150 años de la Fotografía Exposición Colectiva: Casa del Libro, UNAM Exposición Colectiva: México a un. Exposición organizada por Foto-Foro y posteriormente expuesta en Polonia Exposición presentada en Jalapa y en Puebla Exposición Colectiva “ <i>La Agencia</i> ”
1989	Exposición Colectiva: <sup>3</sup> Esas pequeñas cosas de nada <sup>2</sup> Centro Cultural de Santo Domingo
1988	Serie seleccionada para la Bienal de Fotografía: Centro Cultural de Santo Domingo

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Exposición Colectiva: Temas Mexicanos, en la Secretaría de Hacienda

Exposición Colectiva: “*Luz sobre Eros*”, Galería de el Juglar

Exposición Colectiva internacional: “*La muerte*”, Instituto Frances de América Latina (Grupo Foto-Foro)

1987

Exposición Colectiva : Artistas Mujeres: Bellas Artes

## Vladimir Cora

Vladimir Cora was born in 1951 in Acaponeta, Nayarit, Mexico. He studied at the Escuela Nacional de Pintura y Escultura “La Esmeralda,” Mexico City and the Escuela de Arte “Rey” in Tijuana, Mexico.

Cora is a painter of exuberance, subtle humor, and vitality. His works, whether painted, carved in relief or sculpted from the raw cedar he loves, are filled with images of life – primitive, bawdy and with a strange sense of peacefulness. Cora spent his childhood by the beach of Novillero on the Pacific Ocean. The kinds of people, the colors of the fruits and flowers, the delicate poetry of local artifacts- all this would later be part of the transfiguring work of interpretation.

“I believe that people are like their country...The colors I use are as brilliant as my homeland. They are colors of the fruits, the trees, the flowers, of the ocean. When it rains, all of my homeland’s colors are alive... You could say that I am an ambassador of \_expression for my country, Mexico.”  
– V. Cora

One of his key influences is Rufino Tamayo, who has filled the century with his outstanding works. Cora met Rufino Tamayo in 1978 and became his student for the next thirteen years. The result is an original \_expression quite different from other artists.

Cora is restless, he likes to work hard, with a knife, a chisel, building up layers and layers of paint, not only to tear them out, scrape them through until they reveal their original coloration, with lines and shapes pouring out of thick overlays of paint. The final result is a strange world, blunt in its ties to the world of passions and brute nature, a work of color and forms somehow mysterious and appealing, because it is so obviously itself and nothing else.

### *Some Public Collections*

- Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City
- Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City
- Museo de Arte de Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN
- Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA

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## Jose Luis Cuevas (1943 - )

José Luis Cuevas is one of the most renowned and influential living artists in Mexico. Controversial and nonconformist in character, Cuevas made his views known in *The Cactus Curtain (La Cortina del Nopal)* published in 1957, in which he fervently opposed muralism and any other form of institutionalized art that emerged from the Mexican School, arguing instead for greater freedom for Mexican art. His leadership of the Generación de Ruptura (the Rupture Generation), in the late 1950s, marked a split from the Mexican School and the beginning of a new stage in Mexican contemporary art.

José Luis Cuevas works mainly in drawing and engraving. He is a master draftsman. Paper was present in Cuevas' life from the time he was a child, having grown up on the second floor of a building that housed a paper and pencil factory. Since 1991, he has also worked as a sculptor.

In his artwork, Cuevas represents the most obscure aspects of humans. During his youth, he visited brothels, hospitals and mental institutions throughout the city of Mexico in search of models for his drawings. Cuevas deforms the human figure, creating grotesque characters through disproportion. His expressionist style resembles the satiric portraits of José Clemente Orozco (Mexico, 1883-1949) and the engravings of Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (Spain, 1746-1828). In presenting the desolation of humanity, Cuevas captures the most vulnerable moments of the human being.

The universality of Cuevas' themes is reflected in the anonymity of his characters. At the age of 21, Cuevas presented his work in an individual exhibition at the Pan American Union in Washington D.C. The success of this exhibit resulted in early international recognition. His artwork is included in important collections such as those of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C. In 1992, the Mexican government supported the funding of Museo José Luis Cuevas in Mexico City. Cuevas retrospectives have been held at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris (1976), Museum Reina Sofia in Madrid (1998), and at the Art Museum of the Millennium in China (2004).

## Ever Fonseca (1937 - )

Ever Fonseca trained at the National School for the Plastic Arts in Havana, has had solo exhibitions in Ecuador, Poland (National Museum), Mexico, as well as Cuba, and has also shown in Montreal (at Expo 67). His work is in private collections in Spain, France, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Barbados, Italy, USA, Venezuela, Canada, Bolivia, and Chile. Fonseca has been awarded first prize in painting at Salon 70, Cuba's National Museum of Fine Arts, and the National Salon of Professors and Instructors of Art in Havana. Also included among his awards are UNESCO's International Association of Plastic Artists, and the First Carlos Enriquez Salon of Painting and Sculpture.

Ever Fonseca lived for many years on a farm in the Cuban countryside, not far from the gulf. He was deeply influenced by this environment. There were many fantastic legends about fish, octopi, dolphins, and sharks. The nights were very dark, the stars shone brightly, and the vegetation stood out by the moonlight. It was customary to gather together with friends and family to tell stories. Everyone had a different anecdote to share about the world. They claimed to see ghosts and told stories of *jigües*, and spoke a lot about the muses that came down on people. When an owl used to pass by flying and shrieking, people would say that someone was going to die.

## *Partial Bibliography*

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- Atahac Ctoñkob. "Anthology of the Cuban Painting". Sofía, Bulgaria, 1983.
- Dannfelt-Haake, Birgitta. "Anthology on the Cuban plastic ". Sweden, 1980.
- Alonso, Alejandro. "The strangers creatures" in: The Bearded Cayman Not. 47, June 1971, pp 24-27.
- Trujillo, Marisol. "It is plastics of the patio". In: The Bearded Cayman, Not. 37, January 1970, pp19.
- Barnet, Miguel. "Ever Fonseca: The domain of the root". The Gazette of Cuba Not. 156, May 1977, pp 17.

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## **Ana Marini Genzon**

“My art is about people and the way they experience their lives. I intend for my artwork to reflect emotions and thoughts. While creating sculptures and paintings, I try to suggest a story, not only of the moment but also of an entire life. Not only of what we can see, but what is invisible to the eyes. Art is always a mirror. That is why it is so powerful. It speaks not only about my subject, but also speaks about my perceptions. In the process of expressing the mood of the subject's substance, I constantly go deep inside myself searching for answers about human relations in this fast and ever changing world.”

### ***Partial List of Exhibitions***

- Journeys, Burbank, California
- Capri Gallery, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.
- Waterways and Pasages, Los Feliz, California.
- Capri Art Gallery, Puerto Vallarta Jalisco, Mexico.
- Galeria de Las Naciones, Arte Internacional, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- UA Gallery, Pasadena, California.
- Hacienda, Pasadena, California.
- Queens Club, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Sociedad de Artistas, Plasticos de Lomas de Zamora, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Queen's Club, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- La Joaquina, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California.

### ***Partial List of Juried Exhibitions and Biennials***

- California Institute of Technology Juried Sculpture Biennial, Pasadena, CA
- II Latino Art Biennale, Latino Art Museum, Pomona, CA.
- Latino Art Museum, Forever Argentina Claremont, California.
- Inshallah Gallery, Artemisia Group, Los Angeles, California.
- Manhattan Beach Creative Arts Center, Manhattan Beach, California.
- III Biennial of Visual Arts Novosibirsk, Russia
- Chicago Art Center, Chicago, Illinois.

- Latin American Museum of Art, Miami, Florida
- Argentine Consulate, Los Angeles, CA.
- Film and Art Festival, Culver City, California.
- California Institute of Technology “Semana Latina”, Pasadena, California
- V National Salon of Novel Artists, Argentinean Association of Sculptors, S.A. P.Malvinas Argentinas Cultural Center, Pacifico Gallery, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



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## Wifredo Lam (1902-1982)

Wifredo Lam is a major Cuban figurative artist, responsible for introducing the expressive force of Afro-Caribbean spiritual traditions into modern painting. Lam's fascination with voodoo, trance states, and the rituals of spiritual transformation, has added a new poetic dimension to the iconography of Surrealism.

Wilfredo Lam grew up in Cuba with a grandmother who practised Voodoo rituals. He came of age in Paris, where he and Picasso became very close friends and artistic associates. In 1939, he joined the Surrealists and collaborated on a book, *Fata Morgana*, with André Breton, who wrote the text that accompanied Lam's drawings. After the Germans invaded France, Lam left Europe on the same ship as Breton and Masson, helped in part by the International Rescue Committee.

Returning to Cuba, Lam's work continued to mix Afro-Cuban and European influences. After the war, Lam travelled before finally settling in Paris, with side trips to Italy. Where Picasso and the German Expressionists turned to African art to revitalize European traditions, Lam combines these traditions not as an outsider but as a rightful possessor of both. His art offers the fantastic images of a living but alien tradition to a world needing to find a new conception of the civilized. Lam's works are to be found in many important collections of modern art including the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum and the Tate; his works have been shown at major museums and important galleries in New York, Paris, Dusseldorf, Madrid (the Reina Sofia), Barcelona (the Fondation Miró), The Art Institute (Chicago), the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Carnegie Institute (Pittsburgh), the Kassel Documenta (1959, 1960, 1965), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), the Venice Biennale (1972), the Museo de Arte Moderno (Mexico), the National Museum of Modern Art (Tokyo), and many others. Since his death, there has been an emerging consensus that Lam is one of the most important artists of the 20th century.

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General works: Maria R. Balderrama, *Wifredo Lam and his Contemporaries 1938-1952* (NY: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1992); Bronx Museum of the Arts. *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (NY: Abrams, 1988); Catherine David, *Wifredo Lam* (Paris: Galerie Lelong, 1991); Valerie Fletcher, *Crosscurrents of Modernism: Four Latin American Pioneers*. Diego Rivera, Joaquin Torres-Garcia, Wilfredo Lam, Matta (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum, 1992); Max-Pol Fouchet, *Wifredo Lam*. Trans. Kenneth Lyons and Richard-Lewis Rees. 2nd Ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 1989); Pierre Gaudibert et al, *Wifredo Lam* (Dusseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1988); Pontus Hulten, *Wifredo Lam*

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Source: Dominique Tonneau-Ryckelynck, *Wifredo Lam: Oeuvre gravé et lithographie. Catalogue raisonné*. (Gravelines: Musée de Gravelines, 1994).

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## Francisco Larios

Francisco Larios's most recent show was held at Nina Menocal Gallery, in Mexico City. It gathers works in different techniques, shown in series: a series of pencil drawings, one of digitally manipulated photographs, two videos, and paintings in medium and large formats. All of them leave us with the bone-chilling sensation of an apparently truncated infantilism, a perverse maturity, a terrible innocence.

The first and largest series includes pencil drawings with some interventions in watercolor, oil, ink or color pencil. The images are of hurt, wounded, mutilated, blindfolded children showing hematomas, some wearing rabbit masks, costumes, their underwear, playing or simply gazing at the horizon. The pain these children could be feeling is not perceived by us, since their eyes are tearless and their faces are not strained; on the contrary, their faces and gazes are tender, childish, unconnected to their wounds, alien to the horror that caused their lesions. The children — nude, in their underwear, or wearing diapers— dance happily or share their space with an animal — often a deer — or an element of the landscape, unaware that next to them a couple of conjoined adolescents wearing clown shoes are making an obscene gesture. They don't understand either why there is an adult, his back turned to us, holding a baby, while at the same time the adult figure is embraced by a terrifying skeleton.

The next series shows chromogenic impressions of children/dolls, situated in idyllic, almost caricaturesque fictional landscapes, with a worried expression in their faces, under beautiful blue skies, colorful flowers, and pink clouds. All the children carry in their hand a rosary with cross or wear it around their neck, and there is a skull at their feet. In a different aside, some horizontal digital photographs present plants and animals in a landscape that is full of light, flowers, butterflies fluttering about, and seemingly hidden there are two individuals with rifles (in one photograph) or baseball bats (in another,) involved in a fight, without indication of its cause.

Larios's videos are exhibited in two monitors that are placed on the floor without pedestal or support. Again, a beautiful fantasy landscape is portrayed with grasses and flowers in the foreground and with a pink sky in the background, showing the different lights of a sunset. The video remains practically static for two minutes, except for a few seconds when a character dressed as a guardian/hunter and carrying a rifle crosses the screen from side to side. The second video is practically identical to the first one, but the screen is traversed, in the opposite direction, by an apparently harmless deer.

Another series is comprised of oil-and-varnish-on-canvas paintings in small and large formats. They represent fable-like animals in human dress, or children in costume carrying out various feats in

outdoor settings. The standout in this series is a large-format canvas whose main figure is a bear, behind whom a deer stars ahead; both are surrounded by colors, spheres, wreaths, and other decorative elements. Two other works from this series deserve mention: two digital works painted on vinyl with barnish. A deer emerges between frets, lines, spheres, and a variety of colorful ornamental motifs, which bring to mind the iconographic freshness of the decorative painters of the Pattern & Decoration movement of the mid-1970s, but with an infographic technique and distinctively contemporary topics. In another composite painting of the same series, a child mounts a deer, like one does with a domesticated pet.

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## **Vanesa Martinelli**

Vanesa Martinelli studied privately with various artists in Argentina. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from the National University of Fine Arts in Cordoba, Argentina. Her exhibitions have appeared in Buenos Aires and Entre Rios as well as in Barcelona, Spain.. In the United States, her works have been shown at the Jonathan Club in Los Angeles and at the Moge Gallery in Laguna Beach.

Ms. Martinelli won the A.P.A.C. award in Cordoba, Argentina. She also received the Venier award in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Currently, Martinelli works out of her studio in Valley Glen, where she displays her artwork.

## **Jose Esteban Martinez**

Jose Esteban Martinez is a Mexican painter who has created a unique style in Latin American art. Martinez has been successful at taking the common elements of life and transforming them in to active magical characters that watch our complex reality with amazement. Martinez makes serious art that is fun and full of life.

Jose Esteban Martinez's technical mastery has appealed to collectors around the world and his mature self style has earned the respect of art critics in Asia, Europe and America. His most recent exhibitions were in New York and San Francisco, where he was very well received by collectors like Robin Williams, Don Johnson, Terry Gilliam, Sofia Baron and James Newton Howard. Rickie Lee Jones acquired several of his paintings and used one as the cover for her CD Flying Cowboys.

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## Roberto Matta

Roberto Sebastian Antonio Matta Echaurren was born in Santiago, Chile in 1911. He studied architecture at the Universidad Catolica in Santiago. In 1933 Matta traveled to Paris and worked for two years as a draftsman in the Paris studio of famed architect Le Corbusier. While visiting his aunt in Madrid, he met Federico Garcia Lorca and Pablo Neruda. Neruda introduced Matta to Salvador Dali and Andr- Breton. Impressed by Matta's drawings, Breton invited him to join the Surrealist group in 1937. Influenced by his association with the Surrealists and by Marcel Duchamp's theories of movement and process, Matta began to explore the realm of the subconscious and to develop an imagery of cosmic creation and destruction.

His early works, the Psychological Morphologies and the Inscape series, were organic in style and content. By 1939 the war in Europe drove Matta to exile in New York, where he was an important influence on the young New York School artists, especially in his use of automatist techniques.

In 1940 he held his first solo exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York City. A 1941 trip to Mexico with his wife and his friend Robert Motherwell intensified his interest in the pre-Columbian heritage of Latin America. In 1942 Matta was included in the New York exhibitions Artists in Exile at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and The First Papers of Surrealism at the Whitelaw-Reid Mansion. In the mid-1940s his early abstractions gave way to paintings in which mechanical and insect-like shapes float and collide in a cosmic space charged with dynamic tension. In 1948, Matta returned to Europe and broke with the Surrealist movement. He settled in Paris in 1954. During the 1960s and 1970s Matta traveled to Cuba, South America, Egypt, and Africa. Although known primarily as a painter, Matta has also explored the media of sculpture, ceramics, and tapestry.

Matta's one person exhibitions include those at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Nationalgalerie, Berlin, the Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hanover, the Hayward Gallery, London, Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Museo de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile, and. Museo Yokohama, Japan. His work has been included in The Latin-American Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1943; The Emergent Decade, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1965; Art of Latin America since Independence, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1966; Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980, Hayward Gallery, London, 1989; and Crosscurrents of Modernism: Four Latin American Pioneers Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC, 1992. A Matta retrospective was presented at the Centro Cultural Caixa in Barcelona and the Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid in 1999.

## **Carlos Merida (1891-1984)**

Carlos Merida was born in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. He was Of Maya-Quiché descent. Merida studied at the Instituto de Artes y Artesanias in Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango. From 1908 to 1914 he lived in Paris, and after traveling through Europe, he made his home in México where he became active in the Mexican mural painting school. In 1927 he abandoned his figurative style to become one of México first non-figurative artists. His later works formed a link to the Mayan world with geometric elements. He integrated into his paintings, indigenous "papel amate" (barkwood paper). Merida created numerous murals in México and Guatemala. In 1942 he taught at the North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, now University of North Texas.

The works of Carlos Merida can be found in many major international museums.

Carlos Merida is one of Latin America's pioneer modernists. Merida studied painting in Paris, where he met Picasso, Modigliani, and others of the Paris school. He initiated the first pro-Indian art movement in the Americas, seven years before the rise of Mexican Muralism. Although Merida assisted Diego Rivera on his first murals, his true artistic direction is more closely identified with Rufino Tamayo. Like Tamayo, Merida rejected large-scale narrative painting, in favor of the more intimate charms of easel painting. Both artists shared a desire to fuse European Modernism with forms and subjects specific to the Americas.

Merida's painting has three major stylistic shifts: a figurative period from 1907 to 1926, a Surrealist phase from the late 1920's until the mid 1940's (during which time he was a close friend of Andre Breton), and a geometric period from 1950 until his death in 1984 in Mexico City.

### ***Major Collections:***

- Austin University Art Museum, University of Texas
- Boston Museum of Fine Arts
- Brooklyn Art Museum
- Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University
- Caracas Museo de Bellas Artes
- Dallas Museum of Fine Arts
- Guatemala City Museo de Guatemala
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- Museo de Arte Moderno, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes



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- New York Museum of Modern Art
  - Musee National d'Art Moderne, Paris
  - Philadelphia Museum of Art
  - Phoenix Art Museum
  - Rome Galeria Nazionale de Arte Moderna
  - San Francisco Museum of Art

References: *Carlos Merida En Sus 90 Anos*, Carton y Papel de Mexico, 1981.

## **Jose Fors (1958 - )**

Jose Fors was born in Havana, Cuba on July 30, 1958. His family migrated from Cuba in 1960. They then lived in the United States for five years. In 1965, they moved to Guadalajara, Mexico, where they lived for ten years. It was during those formative years of his youth that Fors made his first contact with art, which he began to love and pursue. In 1976 Fors returned to Miami, Florida, where he studied drawing with Roberto Martinez for three years.

Jose Fors had his first solo exhibition in Miami at the Virginia Miller Galleries in 1979. Since then, Fors has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in major cities in the United States, Mexico and around the world. His works can be found in several museum collections. He assumed Mexican citizenship in 1996 and currently lives in Guadalajara.

### ***Major Collections***

- Museo Jose Guadalupe Posada, Aguascalientes, Mexico
- The Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas
- San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, Texas
- Museo del Pueblo de Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico
- The Reinhold Wurth Museum of Modern Art, Schwabisch Hall, Germany
- Museo de las Artes de la Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico
- The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Chicago, Illinois
- Museo de la Secretaria de Hacienda, Antiguo Palacio del Arzobispado, Mexico

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## Wifredo Lam (1902 - 1982)

Wilfredo Lam was the youngest of nine children and the only son of a Chinese father and an Afro-Cuban mother. He was born in 1902 in Cuba. His father adhered to Confucius and Lao Tse, his mother raised him as a Roman Catholic. Had his godmother had her way, he would have become a Santeria priest-healer. He left Havana when he was twenty-one to study art in Madrid. There he was exposed to modernism: Surrealism, Picasso and Matisse.

In 1930, Lam married a Spanish woman but a year later both his bride and their newborn son tragically succumbed to tuberculosis. He remained in Spain, fought with the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War. Injured, he was taken to a Catalan hospital where he met a German chemist, Helena Holzer. Later they were married. In 1938, after being wounded while fighting for the Republican army during the siege of Madrid, he moved to Paris, where he established a lifelong friendship with Picasso. In 1940, with World War II and the internment by the Nazis of his wife, Lam fled with her to Marseilles and in 1941, boarded a ship back to Cuba.

In the Paris years, Lam assimilated the Surrealist and Cubist vocabularies. Then, during the decade in Cuba, he fused the modernist elements with his Afro-Cuban heritage, forging his mature unique style. In 1952, having divorced Helena, he moved permanently to Paris. His international reputation began to soar. In 1960, he married a Swedish artist with whom he had three sons. He supported Fidel Castro, and he enjoyed two tributes at the Museo de Belles Artes, in Havana. He died in 1982.

- Written by Jean Ershler Schatz, artist and researcher from Laguna Woods, California. Sources: Susana Torruella Leval in *ARTnews*, Summer 1994.

## Roberto Matta (1911 - 2002)

Roberto Sebastian Matta Echaurren, usually known as Matta, is one of Chile's best-known painters. Born in Santiago on 11 November 1911, he was initially an interior decorator, but became disillusioned with this occupation and left for Europe in the mid 1930s. His travels led him to

meet artists such as René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, André Breton, and Le Corbusier. It was Breton who provided the major spur to the Chilean's direction in art, encouraging his work and introducing him to the leading members of the Paris Surrealist movement. Matta produced illustrations and articles in the Surrealist journal *Minotaure*. During this period he was introduced to the work of many prominent contemporary European artists, such as Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp.

The first true flowering of Matta's own art came in 1938, when he moved from drawing to the oil painting for which he is best known. This period coincided with his emigration to the United States, where he lived until 1948. His early paintings, such as *Invasion of the Night*, give an indication of the work he would continue, with diffuse light patterns and bold lines on a featureless background. During the 1940s and 1950s, the disturbing state of world politics found reflection in Matta's work, with the canvases becoming busy with images of electrical machinery and distressed figures. The addition of clay to Matta's paintings in the early 1960s led an added dimension to the distortions.

Matta's connections with Breton's Surrealist movement were severed when a private disagreement led to his expulsion from the group, but by this time his own name was becoming widely known. He divided his life between Europe and South America during the 1950s and 1960s, successfully combining the political and the semi-abstract in epic surreal canvases.

Matta died in Civitavecchia, Italy, on 23 November 2002.

- Source: Passeron, René (1984). *The Concise Encyclopedia of Surrealism*.  
Trans. J. Griffiths. Ware, UK: Omega Books.

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## Lucia Maya

Lucia Maya was born in 1953 on Catalina Island, California. She began her study of painting in 1971 at the School of Fine Arts of the University of Guadalajara, Jalisco. Two years later she received a scholarship to study painting and sculpture at the Allende Institute in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato. The following year she received another scholarship to study art at the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid, Spain. When she returned to Mexico in 1975, she studied lithographic engraving at the Molino de Santo Domingo in Mexico City. Since 1975 she has had solo and group exhibitions in numerous locations, including: Mexico, the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Thailand, India and the Dominican Republic. Her work has also been purchased for the permanent collections of the Museum of Latin American Art, in Long Beach, California; the Museo de Monterrey, in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon; the Museo de Arte Moderno, in Mexico City; the Museo del Pueblo in Guanajuato; and the Instituto de Cultural Puertorriqueno, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, among others.

Lucía Maya is Mexico's graphic artist par excellence. The pencil is her prime creative tool. Limiting herself only to the lithographic grease pencil, this Tapatía artist syncopates the sweeping range of lithographic tonalities—from velvet blacks to the most delicate nuances - with the expressive potential of fine white paper.

Poignant, realist illustrator, admittedly a disciple of Frida Kahlo, Maya has been strongly influenced by Carringtonian and Jungian dream structuring.

### **Gustavo Montoya (1905 - 1996)**

From Gustavo Montoya's beginnings in academic painting, he transitioned to a permanent interest in experimentation in an ongoing search to discover new and varied possibilities in artistic creation.

Montoya's explores being deeply and examines the nature of reality in his artwork. The ideas, the forms and the colors emerge in fantastic images, to which a magical or metaphysical sense is conferred.

The work of Montoya reflects his emotions, tastes, restlessness, dreams and fears.

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## **Eduardo Rocha Soto**

### ***Biography***

Eduardo Rocha Soto's artistic life began at the age of two in his father's jewelry studio. In 1989, he studied artistic jewelry at Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City. In 1990 he apprenticed for 3 years to a program graduate. In 1992, he apprenticed for six months at Tane & Entenalla Plata both artesanal design houses.

From 1995 thru 1996 Eduardo Rocha Soto was a Jewelry Arts instructor at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, teaching classes including Fabrication, Repair, Casting & Wax Design. He designed and taught indigenous jewelry arts workshops in Mexico from 1996 thru 1998. He was an artist/partner of Creativa Artesanal in Mexico City from 1992 to 1998.

In 1998, Rocha Soto came to Los Angeles and was a supervisor and gold jewelry caster for a high production manufacturer. At the Jewelry Training College, he taught during 2001-02. In 1999, he helped form S'Arte Jewelry Studio where he is an Artist/Jeweler, and in 2003 Artistas de las Americas where he is a Workshop Presenter/Curator/Researcher.

His public presentations include Aztec Collar Workshops at Plaza de la Raza, the Mexican Cultural Institute, the Southwest Museum and Galeria Artistas de las Americas @ Bohemia Books @ Mama's Hot Tamales Café, among others. He is a joint recipient of an L A Treasures Award for their Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe Workshop/Exhibition /Presentation.

### ***Education***

- 2001-02 Jewelry Training College, Stone Setting Jeweler Program
- 1989-92 Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico, MFA in Jewelry
- 1982-87 Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico BPA, MPA.

### ***Awards***

Los Angeles Treasures Award for the Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe Workshop, Exhibition, and Presentation in 2003 and 2004.

## **Francisco Toledo (1940 - )**

Throughout his career, Francisco Toledo has been dedicated to promoting and defending the arts and culture of his birthplace, Oaxaca, Mexico. From a very early age, Toledo's artistic talent and abilities were recognized. He studied art in Oaxaca during his youth and as a young man moved to Paris to continue his studies. While residing in France he traveled throughout Europe where he saw and was influenced by the work of many artists, including Paul Klee and Jean Dubuffet. However, unlike these European artists, Francisco Toledo's work never became completely abstract.

After a five-year stint in Paris, Toledo returned to Mexico with many lessons under his belt. Following his stay abroad, Toledo was able to draw upon his European experiences and encounters in his artistic production while simultaneously imbuing his work with his Mexican heritage and life.

This combination of influences resulted in the development of a unique ideological and aesthetic perspective in his art.

Upon his return to Mexico, Francisco Toledo began promoting and protecting the arts and crafts of Oaxaca with an intense vigor. He was very concerned about social and cultural state of his birthplace and this became evident in his body of work. Toledo's artistic production manifested itself in a number of media, including pottery, sculpture, weaving, graphic arts and painting. Throughout his production, Toledo consciously imbued his art with symbols and references to Mexican heritage, history and mythology.

From early on in his career, Francisco Toledo was considered an independent painter. He did not involve himself with the nationalistic themes that were so pervasive among the artists of the Mexican School (i.e. Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros). Rather, Toledo was associated with the group known as *la Ruptura*. *La Ruptura* was a movement in Mexican art in the late 1950s and 1960s in which painters and sculptors broke away from depicting the bright, folkloric scenes or subjects tied to Mexican history and the Mexican Revolution. Although he was associated with this group, Francisco Toledo has always maintained his fundamental character as an autonomous painter.

One of the most pervasive themes in Toledo's paintings is animals. He presents animals as part of a symbiotic relationship between the painter and the rural indigenous world. He believes in a world where all men, like the flora and fauna that surrounds them, are fundamental to the understanding of the universe. Many of the animals that he has painted appear mythical and appear to have come from prehistoric worlds. In reality, his images have their origin in the experiences of his youth in



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Oaxaca. As a result of the relationship between his canvases and his homeland, Toledo's compositions often adopt a tonality similar to that of the arid landscape of Oaxaca. "Mujer-Caballo" and "Mujer-Pajaro" are both definitive examples of these phenomena in Toledo's oeuvre.

Source: Gretchen Van Camp

## Francisco Zuniga (1912 - 1998)

Francisco Zuniga was a Mexican sculptor, printmaker, draughtsman and teacher of Costa Rican birth. He studied sculpture under his father, Manuel María Zúñiga, in San José, Costa Rica, and after his arrival in Mexico City in 1936 at the Escuela de Talla Directa under the direction of Guillermo Ruíz (1895–1964) and Oliverio Martínez.

Martínez, together with the painter Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, helped motivate his concept of form. Other lasting influences came from his encounter with Aztec sculpture and from the work of other sculptors, such as Auguste Rodin, Aristide Maillol and even Henry Moore, whose work, like his, was based primarily on the human body. Throughout his career Zúñiga was especially devoted to the female form, naked or clothed.

The monumental character of Zúñiga's sculpture is evident not only in public commissioned works, such as the stone reliefs of the Allegory of the Earth and Communications (1953–4) at the Secretaría de Comunicaciones in Mexico City, but also in sculptures conceived for more private and intimate settings, for example "Seated Woman from Juchitán" (bronze, 1974; Washington, DC, Hirshhorn).

In 1959, in works such as "Standing Women" (bronze; Mexico City, Mus. A. Mod.), he moved from the non-academic naturalism of his early style, which was still linked to the 19th century, to a more realistic idiom, taking as his models the indigenous women of south-eastern Mexico, whom he represented standing or seated, singly, in pairs or in a group. They are women with large bodies, both heavily built and scrawny, all seemingly caught in a violent transition from youth to old age. They inhabit a dramatic silence in which there is no communication, and occasionally they appear with the ancestral dignity of their race, as in "Woman from Yalalag" (bronze, 1975; Monclova, Bib. Pape). Only in exceptional cases do men appear.

He availed himself of a variety of methods and materials, modelling in clay and plaster and also working in Carrara marble, alabaster and other kinds of stone; his preferred medium was cast bronze.

Drawing served Zúñiga as an essential basis for his sculpture and for his prolific production as a lithographer. His prints, some printed in black and others in colour, presented the same subject-matter as his sculptures, with an equivalent emphasis on the volumetric treatment of female figures.

Zúñiga, who as a teacher trained many outstanding Mexican sculptors, became a naturalized Mexican citizen in 1986.

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Sources:

*Francisco Zúñiga*, by Ali Chumacero, Misrachi Editions, México 1969

*Francisco Zúñiga*, by Carlos Echeverria, Misrachi Art Gallery Editions, México 1980

*Catalogue Raisone Volume I: Sculpture (1923-1993)*, Sinc, S.A. de C.V./Albedrío, México, 1999

*Catalogue Raisone Volume II: Oil paintings, Prints & Reproductions (1927-1986)*, Sinc, S.A. de C.V./Albedrío, México, 2003



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CHAPTER 2

*Chicana/Chicano Artists*

## Joe Bravo

### *Artist Statement*

The ability to create art is a gift. A gift is meant to bring joy to the person who receives it. If a gift is shared with others, it becomes more enriching and satisfying. That is the approach I use in making my art. While it is my personal expression, I want to share my art by reflecting the hopes, thoughts, emotions and concerns of the community-at-large through the use of socially relevant themes.

Always in constant evolution and experimentation, I try to bring a freshness to my art with it's own life and character in each new painting. The concept is the starting point of my art. It dictates the style, medium and content of the artwork I create. I convey my artistic concept on an intellectual, emotional and spiritual level to the viewer.

My art is the sum of my life's experiences, creativity, abilities and skills. My experience has been as a Chicano growing up in California, primarily Los Angeles. Although I paint from this cultural perspective, I try to paint about universal themes of love, hope, and desire to which all people can relate.

While my influences have been varied, I paint in the figurative style of the Renaissance masters and incorporate contemporary social issues and themes. I paint about today's political and societal challenges to inspire dialogue and communication amongst various viewpoints. My work depicts issues such as spirituality, crime, immigration, war and other current events. I believe art can provide an impetus for social change in our world.

I consider myself a people's artist whose work the common layperson can understand, interpret, and appreciate without having to be educated in art history or theory. I believe art should be of the people and for the people. If we look at history, we learn about past cultures and civilizations mostly through the art they created.

In one of my recent paintings titled *Juarez Porque*, I express my sorrow and outrage over a decade-long string of serial murders in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where every single victim is female, and most are sweatshop workers. An estimated 300-400 women have been reported murdered, with another 400-1000 missing. The painting has a female figure laid out in a cross formation as most victims are found. A red cloth symbolizing a violent death is draped over her in a question mark

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("Porque" means "Why" in Spanish). Angel wings in the background indicate that these innocent women are now angels in heaven.

I believe all people have the gift of creativity and the ability to appreciate it in one form or another. The bible states that we are all created in God's image. To me, this means that God, as the creator of the universe and the first artist, has bestowed His creativity in each one of us.

## ***Biography***

I was born in San Jose, California in 1950. My father was from the state of Michoacan, Mexico and my mother's family is from Mexicali, Baja California. Growing up in the border town of Calexico, California, I began my art career by making clay figures, drawing, constructing wood swords, slingshots, and other projects.

My family moved to Los Angeles County in the early 1960s, where I attended school in Wilmington, CA. I won several art awards in high school including outstanding senior for Banning High School's art department. I attended college at California State University at Northridge, where I served as graphic artist for the Chicano newspaper, *El Popo*. I also studied for one summer in Mexico City at the Taller de Arte Grafica Popular. Graduating with a B.A. in graphic design, I began my career as a graphic artist. My career has been varied, working as Art Director for *Lowrider Magazine*, *Celebrando Magazine* and *Where Magazine*. I also worked as Art Director for American Golf Corporation and several ad agencies. For a while I painted murals and received grants from the California Arts Council and the Citywide Mural Project. I currently work as a freelance graphic designer on the MacIntosh computer.

I recently did a series of Tortilla Art paintings. Having eaten tortillas all my life I thought it was appropriate and cultural to combine my food with my art. For the subject matter on my tortilla paintings I use traditional as well as contemporary themes. I try to depict the Latino experience using recognizable imagery and icons that are part of the Hispanic consciousness. It is my desire for all people to visually taste the beauty and richness of the Latino culture through my art.

- Joe Bravo

## **Olivia Sanchez-Brown**

Olivia Sanchez Brown has been active in the visual arts community for over twenty-five years and has exhibited, curated, and organized art exhibitions in the greater Los Angeles area. Her artwork has been widely exhibited in both the United States and Europe.

“My figurative work is an exploration in myth and metaphors. I push myself to think of images that are inclusive, but still an expression of who I am.

My cloud and landscape paintings and altered books (I use books as an artistic surface and create 3D objects of art with a message), are more meditative.

The questions that I pose in my artistic expression are “What do we all have in common? What do we all need as humans?”

As in my cloud paintings, we humans need to pause, calm ourselves and muse over the simple beauty that is available to all!”



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## **Yareli Cobian**

### ***Biography***

Yareli Cobian, an emerging Southern California Artist, was born in the city of Orange. She is currently pursuing her fine arts degree at Laguna College of Art and Design in Laguna Beach, Ca.

### ***Artist Statement***

As a Chicana artist, I draw images that portray the agonies and the glories that make woman of my culture more virtuous upon the eyes of God. In this exhibit I have presented a self portrait that represents the young courageous Latina woman "Seeking Solace", or a place of refuge to overcome the vanities and pressures that the world inflicts on her. Her efforts of "Seeking Solace" give way to the triumph of virtue and nobility over vanity. My second piece is about men sacrificing themselves and leaving home to "Seek Paradise". His paradise will be found with the

sweat and fruits of his labor. The reward is a woman who will make his dark nights turn into lustrous days.

"I have also been intensely inspired by the Baroque artist, Caravaggio.

### ***Exhibitions***

- Laguna College of Art & Design Gallery
- Laguna Culinary of Arts School
- Arte Diseno, Monrovia, Ca.
- Peter and Masha Plotkin Exhibition, Ca.
- Da Gallery, Pomona, Ca.
- Cantera Home Furnishings, Santa Ana, CA.

## **Jerry de la Cruz**

Jerry de la Cruz was born in 1948 in Denver, CO. He is listed as one of 36 most influential Colorado artists of the 20th century by the *Denver Post*. De la Cruz was the first contemporary Chicano artist whose artwork was purchased by Denver Art Museum for their permanent collection. In 2003, Jerry de la Cruz's work hit the highest hammer price at the International Latino Art Auction at Arizona State University. In 2000, he was a Colorado Council on the Arts painting fellow.

### ***Major Collections***

- Denver Art Museum
- Arizona State University
- University of Colorado
- The Hearst Corporation
- Deloitte Touche
- Fujitsu, Ltd.
- Kinder Morgan
- Qwest Communications
- Safeco
- Travelers Insurance

### ***Major Publications***

- *Contemporary Chicana & Chicano Art* (Bilingual Press)
- *They Magazine* (They Publications)
- *Digital Photography and Design* (Yaffa Publications)
- *Visual Arts Trends* (Colonial Communications)

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## Diane Gamboa

Diane Gamboa has been creating and exhibiting art in Los Angeles for more than 20 years. A multi-media artist, Gamboa is also known for her early photographs documenting punk rock music in the Hollywood-East LA scene, along with her disposable site-specific “Hit and Run” paper fashion sculptures.

In the last decade, asserting her own style, she produced over 300 ink drawings on vellum as part of the “Pin Up” series, which later developed into “Endangered Species”, a three-dimensional series based on some of the same figures and ideas. Presently, Gamboa has been developing the art of tattooing, and exploring the use of other media including glass, metal, and assemblage.

Diane Gamboa has had both solo and group exhibitions, internationally and across the country including the Mexican Cultural Institute in New York, NY; the UCLA Fowler Museum in Los Angeles, CA and the San Francisco Art Museum in San Francisco, CA.

Gamboa's work is currently touring with the five-year, 15-city *Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge* show, as well as in the historic and contemporary “*Chicano Art for Our Millennium*” exhibition at the Mesa Southwest Museum in Arizona through September 19, 2004.

Gamboa has also been the recipient of the California Community Foundation's Visual Arts Fellowship award.

## ***Publications***

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- “Diane Gamboa.” *Saludos Hispanos*: 88.
- Littlefield, Kinney. “Exhibit covers half-century of Hispanic art.” *The Orange County Register*, 13 September 1991: P25.
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- Snow, Shauna. “Diane Gamboa's Messages in Many Media for L.A. Festival.” *Los Angeles Times*, 1 July 1990: Calendar Sec.
- McKenna, Kristine. “Wildly Colorful Latino Designs in Self-Help Graphics Show.” *Los Angeles Times*, 25 November 1989: F13.

- Alarcón, Alicia. "Diane Gamboa perfecciona sus 'muñecas de papel'." *La Opinion*, 20 October 1989.
- Dubin, Zan. "Gamboa: Reflections of an Urban Environment." *Los Angeles Times*, 10 May 1987: Calendar Sec.
- Bush, Natalie. "Diane Gamboa." *ARTnews*, May 1987: Vol. 86, No. 5, p. 52.
- Bell, Sharon. "No Host Art." *L.A. Weekly*, 12-18 December 1986.
- Snoeden, Don. "Maverick Visions—When Life IS Art." *Los Angeles Times*, 20 July 1986: Calendar Sec.
- Burnham, Linda and Steven Durland. "Diane Gamboa." *High Performance*, 1986: #35, Vol. 9, No. 3.

Source: Tere Romo

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## Margaret Garcia

Margaret García studied at California State University, Northridge, Los Angeles City College and the University of Southern California, where she received her MFA in 1992. Her work has been exhibited in group shows throughout Southern California as well as in Texas and Mexico. García has taught and lectured extensively on art in different cultures.

In her paintings and mural projects, Margaret García attempts to define herself in relation to her community, and vice-versa. “I define Chicano art by making it,” she has said, and indeed for Garcia being part of a community is part of being human. Oil paintings such as *El Mar* (2000) and *Janine at 39, with Twins*, (2000) evoke Gauguin's *Tabiti*, but their saturated, wildly expressive palette and flat compositional space are firmly rooted in the tradition of Mexican folk art.

### ***Major Collections***

- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- Laguna Art Museum
- Cheech Marin

### ***Awards and Fellowships***

- Louis Comfort Tiffany Award in Visual Arts (1993)
- Feitelson Lundeborg Award
- Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery Brody Fellowship in Visual Arts (1989)

Source: Tere Romo

## Sergio Hernandez

Sergio Hernandez was born and raised in South Los Angeles and attended schools in the area. While in high school he received an art scholarship and attended Otis Art Institute for the summer. This was one of the defining events of his life. His experience at Otis was an eye opener and he knew this was what he wanted to do with his life. While in Junior college he was asked to participate with three other artist in one of the first Chicano Murals at UCLA.

Sergio went on to California State University at Northridge, where he majored in Chicano Studies and minored in Art. While in college Sergio was asked to illustrate for the ground breaking magazine, "*Con Safos, Reflections of Life in the Barrio.*" That was the next great defining moment of his life and he developed a social and political consciousness working on the magazine that stays with him today. For over thirty three years he has continued to create in different mediums. His paintings reflect his love of Mestizo culture and his experiences as a Chicano in the southwest. Sergio's cartoons on the other hand are his political statements against racism and bigotry. However, some of his cartoons are just done for the fun of it and point out the irony and sometimes the silliness of life.

Sergio Hernandez has the following to say about his life and work:

"I was born and raised in the southeast area of Los Angeles know as Florencia. In 1965, the Watts Riots came to Florencia in the form of a machine gun nest and soldiers of the California National Guard on the corner of my street. The soldiers filled their canteens with our garden hose while smoke billowed from fires set by rioters on Florence Ave. In the evening, Sheriff Deputies, four abreast with shotguns protruding from the windows of blacked out police cars roamed our peaceful neighborhood. The riots both scared me and awakened a curiosity about what was happening in our neighborhood and in our country. There was a great civil rights movement going on in this country and I wanted to know more about it.

I attended East Los Angeles Junior College where I met the men that would give life to Con Safos Magazine. I worked on the magazine as an illustrator and later developed a cartoon strip called Arnie & Porfi. The Con Safos group encouraged me to continue with my education and I went to California State University Northridge (CSUN) in the San Fernando Valley. While at CSUN I met my future Wife, partner, and encouragement... Diane Velarde. As a Student at CSUN I became involved in the Chicano Student Movement and developed a social consciousness. The experience at ELA, Con Safos, and CSUN helped to define my artistic expression.

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Thirty plus years later I still comment on social and political issues with my Art. I do political commentary with my cartoons and I paint the images of life in the Southwest. Some of the works featured on this web site are illustrations from my student movement days while others are contemporary pieces. I hope you enjoy them.”

### ***Education***

- Otis Art Institute Summer arts program
- East Los Angeles College
- California State University Northridge - BA in Chicano Studies, Minor in Art

### ***Experience and Expositions***

- Illustrator and Cartoonist for *Con Safos Magazine*, *Reflection of Life in the Barrio*, from 1968 to 1970, and again from 1994 to 1996 when it was republished.
- 1970: Painted one of the first Chicano Murals at UCLA, Campbell Hall with Saul Solache, Ed Carrillo & Ramses Noriega.
- 1971: Painted mural at CSUN in the E.O.P. office
- Vanguard News - political cartoonist
- My painting, *Ghost Dance* was chosen by State Senator Richard Alarcon to hang in the member's lounge of the State Capitol in Sacramento from May 2001 - May 2002
- Two of my works, *Night Crossing* and *Police State* are published in the *National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights* journal, “*From the Borderline to the Colorline*.” This publication was prepared for the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001, held in Durban, South Africa.
- Six of my political cartoons are included on the web site, EditorialCartoons.net, along with the work of other political cartoonists from throughout the world.
- My illustration of *El Barrio, Love It or Leave It-Si Puedes* is published in “Barrio Logos” by Prof. Raul Villa.
- Featured on the web site: AmericanLynching.com. Documentary Filmmaker Gode Davis is researching for his documentary *American Lynching, Strange and Bitter Fruit*.
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art

## Leo Limon

Leo Limón was born and still resides in East Los Angeles. Called the “Alley River Cat Artist” by former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, Limón is known for the cat faces he paints on the cement walls channeling the Los Angeles River. Limón’s work on paper deals mostly with the indigenous ideals of “corazón” and uses many Aztec symbols.

Limón considers himself a cultural worker and an arts ambassador for East Los Angeles and the Chicano community.

While he was in high school, Limón was influenced by and involved with the pioneers called Los Four, especially with Carlos Almaráz. During his time with Self Help Graphics, Limón helped develop the Annual Celebration of Día de Los Muertos and the Atelier Printmaking Program. Additionally, Limón helped establish the Aztlan Cultural Arts Foundation, Inc. to pursue his commitment to youth in his community. Limón has also worked with the MeChicano Art Center and the Centro de Arte Público.

## *Collections*

- Blanche and Norman C. Francis Collection, Xavier University
- The Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego
- Cheech Marin
- Mary and Armando Duron

Source: Tere Romo



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## **Gilbert “Magu” Lujan**

Gilbert Lujan was born near French Camp, Calif., a migrant farm workers village, and moved to East Los Angeles around the beginning of World War II. Lujan first began doing murals in East Los Angeles in the early 1970s. In 1973, he joined Frank Romero, Carlos Almaráz and Roberto de la Rocha in founding a local art collective known as Los Four. Los Four collaborated on numerous murals and on other public art installations throughout California during the next 10 years, making a major influence on defining Chicano art. Lujan has exhibited his paintings and sculptures in numerous solo and group shows in the U.S. and abroad.

Source: Tere Romo

## **Eleazar Martinez**

"I was born in Durango, Mexico. As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be an artist and I always excelled in art. When I was able to afford Art School, I enrolled in one of the few Art Schools of my home city of Durango.

When I came to this country, I enrolled in several community colleges taking advantage of the great art and graphic design classes the schools offered. I took advanced classes in anatomy, portrait, and head studies at Pasadena Art School.

My experience in art is very broad. My areas of expertise include calligraphy, graphic design, silk screen, sculpture, murals, illustration, and professional portraiture. My personal creations have been exhibited at many art galleries.

### ***Awards and Commissions***

- " El Arte Que Nos Mueve" (" The Art That Moves Us"), a highly competitive exhibition sponsored by Jeep Chrysler.
- Best of the Show", Downey City Fair.
- PIASC annual reading campaign award with the art piece "Los Ninos y Sus Libros" ("The Children and Their Books"), sponsored by the Los Angeles Times, Borders Books, Scholastic, Rotary Club and the Los Angeles County Office of Education.
- The California Migrant Program of Education commissioned me for a fund raising campaign with the art pieces "Three Generations" and "My Two Histories".
- Commissioned by Mr.Ruben Martinez for a book cover entitled "The Wisdom Tree". The book is to promote reading in the Hispanic community.

### ***Partial list of Collections***

- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- TELACU CEO David Lizarraga
- California Assemblyman Richard Polanco
- Ruben Martinez, Martinez Bookstore
- San Juan Capistrano Cathedral
- Mayor George Cole, City of Bell
- Mexican-American singer Graciela Beltran

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- Mexican-American singer Lupillo Rivera and family.
  - Currently, I am working on a commission for the City of Bell to sculpt two life-size bronze sculptures: "The Catch" made of five sculptured kids and "Family Time" consisting of five people, and a mural for the City Auditorium. Also in the works are two book projects, and for the summer of 2006, I've been invited to teach a landscape

## Xavier Montes

Xavier Raul Montes was born and raised in Santa Paula, California. After two years at Moorpark College, Xavier transferred to the University of California at Santa Barbara, where he received his B.A. in studio art, as well as a teaching credential. In the two decades since that time, his profession and vocation as an artist has manifested in several overlapping areas, namely as a practicing visual artist, as an educator and community activist, and as a musician (folk harp, guitar, and vocals).

Xavier, known affectionately by his nickname, Big X, for both his size and talents, has paintings and murals throughout Ventura County. During the late 1990s, he and area youth created a colorful mural lauding education at Chino's Market on 12th Street in Santa Paula. Xavier has a deep interest and commitment to youth and the benefits they can derive through art and musical expression.

Xavier has exhibited throughout Ventura and Santa Barbara counties for years and has also exhibited in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles. From 1984-87, Xavier received an artist-in-residence grant from the California Arts Council in Sacramento.

Xavier has traveled throughout Mexico and Cuba, and most recently traveled cross-country to New York City by train. He says he needs to see and feel much of what he paints.

In 1998, Xavier received the First Place Judges Award in the 61st Santa Paula Art and Photography Exhibition (300 entrees) for “*Going Home*”, a portrait of a contemporary Mexican revolutionary. In 1999, Xavier was honored by El Concilio del Condado de Ventura when they bestowed upon him the Cultural Arts Latino Leadership Award.

In 2003, Xavier became a member of ARTINO Arts Group of Los Angeles. ARTINO members work in a variety of media and have styles that vary from traditional to contemporary, with an emphasis on Latino cultural roots.

Xavier is also a musician and vocalist. He is an accomplished guitarist and harpist. He has released two CDs: *Xavier Montes Goes Instrumental* and *Xavier Montes Again! Noche Tropical*.

Xavier's professional affiliations include:

- Committee for the Street Murals Project in Santa Paula
- Santa Paula Society of the Arts, Chair, Scholarship Committee
- Focus on the Masters

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- InnerSpark, California State Summer School for the Arts, Mentor
  - Latino Arts Network, (founding member)
  - ARTINO Arts Group of Los Angeles, member artist

## **Glugio Gronk Nicandro (1954 - )**

Glugio Gronk Nicandro has always used his middle name, Gronk, a Brazilian Indian word that means “to fly.” He first came to the attention of the art world at 16 when, along with Harry Gamboa, Jr., Willy Herron and Patssi Valdez, he became one of the founders of ASCO (asco means nausea in Spanish). The Los Angeles-based Chicano artists’ collaborative was among the first to incorporate political activism into its aesthetic.

Today, while Gronk sympathizes with many Chicano political and social causes, he doesn't use them as the basis of his art. Since the 1970s, Gronk's work has been represented in numerous private and museum collections across the country, and he has been the subject of many one-person exhibitions.

### ***Partial List of Museum Collections***

- San Diego Museum of Art
- The Carnegie Art Museum
- University of Southern California Fisher Gallery
- Cheech Marin

Source: Tere Romo

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## **James Osorio**

A painter for over twenty-five years, James Osorio studied with Mario Rueda and Karl Dempwolf. James was awarded a one man show from the Orange County Center For Contemporary Art and has exhibited at the Newport Art Museum, as well as numerous galleries in California. His work hangs in private collections in California and New York.

## Felix Perez

Felix Perez was born in Los Angeles, raised in San Fernando, and attended San Fernando High School where he excelled in art. After high school graduation, he went to the Army and was stationed in Germany. While in Germany, Felix had the opportunity to visit some of the great museums of Europe. He visited these museums and was able to see the works of the old masters and was inspired to hone his craft. When he finished his hitch in the Army, he married his sweetheart Helen Hernandez of Pacoima and looked for work in the art field. He found a job in production art and excelled due to his speed. Not only was Felix fast but also was good and his skill was sought after in the movie industry. He painted sets and paintings for movies such as “*Ghost Busters*.” Feeling the financial pinch and wanting to buy a house, he left the art world and took a job at General Motors. His artistic talents were soon discovered and he was taken off the line and asked to paint murals inside the plant. Felix took an early retirement from General Motors when they closed and moved their operation. The plant in Van Nuys is gone now but the murals were taken down and stored to put up at a later date.

Sexual abuse, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, gang lifestyle, child abuse and abortion are issues that have always been on Felix's mind. He had seen these social ills destroy families in the barrio and has felt compelled to discuss these things. Felix has exorcised these social demons in the only way he knows; he uses these issues as subjects for his paintings. Felix painted these images but he kept these painting very private, unwilling to offend anyone with the images. They were very personal paintings he called his, “*Private Insanity*.” Friends urged Felix to share these dramatic but hard and brutal images, he reluctantly showed them in a San Diego gallery several years ago. His work was well received and critically acclaimed; he showed them for a second time at San Fernando High School, his alma mater. This time he made himself available to speak to students about the work in case they had questions about the paintings. Teachers had the students reflect on the work and they were required to write down their impressions. Jim Velarde, a documentary filmmaker thought the work was important enough that it had to be seen by all. Jim Velarde has completed a documentary film, called “*Private Insanity*,” about Felix' body of work. The film will be released soon.



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## Ramon Ramirez

### *Biography*

Ramon Ramirez was born and raised in East Los Angeles, where he displayed signs of artistic talent, as demonstrated by his chalkboard murals that could be found in classrooms throughout his high school campus. However, it was not until he attended U.C. Berkeley, where he majored in Architecture, that he was able to formally explore painting. In his freshman year, he took an art class taught by Yolanda M. Lopez, which allowed him to understand that painting could be both cultural and formal. As an undergraduate, his artistic development paralleled his personal and political development in that his paintings reflected his emerging identity as a Chicano.

Ramon draws his inspiration from a variety of sources—Mexican muralists, American abstract expressionists, Chicano and Mesoamerican art. Music, from the energetic sounds of the Mars Volta to the eclectic tapestries of Manu Chao, also inspires Ramon's visual exploration.

An undeniable influence that informs Ramon's art is architecture. Upon analyzing his paintings, the contamination of architecture is evident, as confirmed by the two-dimensionality of his compositions and the aggressive presence of the built environment. His architecture, conversely, has also been informed by his painting. The 'URBANsubURBAN House', his residence, reflects playful fields of color, which seem to echo his art.

Ramon continues to be an active painter in Southern California where he also practices and teaches architectural design.

### *Artist Statement*

Painting is not the static replication of everyday life, not a passive naturalistic depiction of reality, and not a means that can be applied only to perceiving that reality, but a powerful tool for exerting a creative influence on the world, a tool for the active reconstruction of life.

- The Society of Moscow Artists

The thesis of art as a social catalyst is best epitomized by the social realists of the 1920s and 30s. They were active in the Soviet Union and Mexico, where the common factor for both was revolution and social change. The art produced during that era was a symbiotic instrument for the forces that brought about that change. Today, headlines and news flashes bring to light a similar

need for social reform in the United States, where I believe art can provide a major impact towards this change.

I have been painting since the early 90's and have come to the conclusion that art's potential as "a tool for the active reconstruction of life" is a necessary vehicle for social reform. The correlation that existed between the visual images of such artists as the Mexican Muralists and OMKh should be closely examined, along with the social implications they generated, so as to learn what can be applied to today's contemporary issues.

Not only do we need to become more aware of the political climate that surrounds us and the injustices that arise from it, but we also need to find strength within ourselves to defend against these attacks. I feel that art can aid us in closely re-examining our culture, to make us aware of the beauty and strength that exist within us. Through the use of the visual image we can shed light on those issues that usually go unexamined and reinforce a sense of self-awareness. The most powerful weapons we can arm ourselves with are those of pride and resistance.

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## Sergio Rebia

"I was born in San Francisco, but I have lived most of my life in Southern California. In May 2004 I obtained my Bachelor in Fine Arts from the Laguna College of Art and Design. I prepare my work in a technique according to the tradition of the Old Masters in order to execute my realism. I look to the past to get inspiration. As a representational painter I cannot forget the past and those who did it first, arguably those who did it best. For painting style and realism I look to the Spanish Master, Diego Velasquez. Furthermore, To pass on a message with power I look to the great Mexican Muralist Diego Rivera. I realize that every artist has an individual style and a way of painting, and I essentially try to minimize my "mark" as much as possible so that the viewers will not be distracted when they look at my pieces, but rather they may better feel and understand the message passed on.

The life of an artist is a hard one to lead. Honestly, I would not have it any other way. I know in my heart of hearts that this is what I was meant to do. It is a labor of love that consumes me to the last drop. Most people that know me will tell you that I ultimately paint for the people. I feel I have something important to share with them that is not self-seeking. This gift I attribute to God, and I do not take personal credit for it. I am but His humble instrument and it is a real honor and joy to use this gift in order to one day touch someone in a way that words cannot. But with this gift comes an immense responsibility to be prudent as to what I will portray and how I should portray it.

Most of my work consists of portraiture and genre. Its aim is to record the present urban life, people, and issues that concern us. Within, I incorporate my Chicano culture and my faith - both inseparable components of my identity, in my opinion. These themes are very personal and deeply felt. They have formed me as a person. My paintings allude to a wonderful balance and synergy of nature versus nurture. I attempt to pass on a story about the dignity of persons, what they are meant to be, and what they have become as a result of their circumstances, environment and experiences. My aim, however, is not to pass judgment. Moreover, it is to help the viewer understand the whole context of a situation and possibly transmit compassion and respect for that individual and never take the dignity of any person for granted as it sometimes is the case in our culture and society. I feel the purpose of my work is to attempt to instruct rather than destruct. It is to send a message using a language that communicates directly to the soul, which often times could be understood clearer within the people of my culture and environment. More importantly, it is a language expressing the human condition that is open and could be felt by all without borders or boundaries."

Sergio Rebia received his BFA (Magna Cum Laude) from Laguna College of Art and Design, Laguna Beach, CA.

### ***Exhibitions***

- Orange County Student Exhibition, John Wayne
- Airport Art Show, Santa Ana
- “Color it Orange“, South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa
- “1st Impressions“, Garden Grove Park, Garden Grove
- “42nd Annual Congressional Art Show“, Washington D.C. State Capital Gallery
- Laguna College of Art and Design Gallery
- Dennis Ekstrom Studio, Laguna Beach, Ca
- Forum Gallery at LCAD
- Gallery 1951, Laguna Beach, Ca
- Pure Color Gallery, Laguna Beach, Ca
- Muckenthaler Gallery, Fullerton, Ca
- Phoenix Gallery, Burlington, VT
- Festival of Arts, Laguna Beach, Ca
- E Gallery, Pomona, Ca
- Arte Diseno, Monrovia, Ca
- Millard Sheets Gallery, Pomona, Ca
- Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles, Ca
- Da Gallery, Pomona, Ca

### ***Awards***

- 42nd Annual Congressional Art Show, 1st Place & Best in Show
- Student Scholarship, Laguna College of Art and Design
- Congressional Recognition For Achievement in Art Award

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## Frank Romero

Frank Romero was born and raised in Los Angeles. He studied art at Otis College of Art and Design and California State College (now California State University, Los Angeles). In 1973, Romero, Roberto de la Rocha, Gilbert Lujan and Carlos Almaráz formed an art collective called Los Four, whose collaborations brought Chicano street art to the attention of the mainstream art community of Los Angeles. The University of California at Irvine, presented an exhibition of the group in 1974, which subsequently was shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Oakland Museum.

Romero worked as a designer for Charles Eames and A&M Records, and was the design director of the community redevelopment agency when he designed the first section of the Broadway Sidewalk Project. Set between Third and Eighth streets on one of the downtown L.A.'s densest pedestrian traffic areas, the Broadway Sidewalk Project is a series of three murals that incorporate cultural images from many ethnic groups that shop on Broadway.

In 1981, he curated the highly regarded exhibition *The Murals of Aztlan* at the Craft and Folk Art Museum. Although he is known foremost as a muralist, Romero is now primarily a studio artist. His work has been exhibited in many solo and group shows, including the national exhibitions *Contemporary Hispanic Art in the U.S.* and *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation 1965-1985*.

Source: Tere Romo

## The Royal Chicano Air Force

The Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF) is an artistic collective based in Sacramento. Initially named the Rebel Chicano Art Front, the RCAF was founded in 1969 to express the goals of the Chicano civil rights and labor organizing movement of the United Farm Workers. Its mission was to make available to the Chicano community a bilingual/bicultural arts center where artists could come together, exchange ideas, provide mutual support, and make available to the public artistic, cultural, and educational programs and events.

The founding members of the RCAF include José Montoya, Esteban Villa, Juanishi V. Orosco, Ricardo Favela, and Rudy Cuellar. Montoya and Villa knew of each other through their involvement in the Mexican American Liberation Art Front and the California College of Arts and Crafts. During the early years of the Chicano Movement, students pressured colleges and universities to diversify their faculties. As a result, Montoya and Villa were hired as professors of art at California State University, Sacramento. Their academic positions gave them the creative freedom to initiate programmatic exchanges between the university and the barrio community. Through this effort they initiated many programs including the Barrio Art Program, which required university students to go out into the community including senior centers to teach art courses.

The RCAF created the not-for-profit Centro De Artistas Chicanos in 1972. This community based organization became the spring-board for all types of Sacramento community programs, such as La Nueva Raza Bookstore (with its Galería Posada), Aeronaves de Aztlán (Automotive Repair Garage), RCAF Danzantes (Cultural Dance venue), Barrio Art Program, and the RCAF Graphics and Design Center. By 1977, the Centro de Artistas Chicanos and Breakfast for Niños Program (a community non-profit program that fed children before school) joined forces to create the Cultural Affairs Project, which further funded their many community services.

The RCAF is best known for its mural paintings, poster art production, and individual artistic contributions. The artists of the Centro have produced murals and exhibitions from San Diego to Seattle. RCAF is significant as a collective that has maintained a twenty-five year history of engaging communities to express their Chicano culture, history and struggle for equal rights.

While the “RCAF” originally stood for the Rebel Chicano Art Front, people confused the letters with the acronym for the Royal Canadian Air Force. Montoya and his fellow officers capitalized on the misunderstanding, and in good humor adopted the name Royal Chicano Air Force. This new identity found its way into their wardrobe, as well as their highly successful silk screen poster program, which began to disseminate the World War I aviator and barnstorming bi-winged planes

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as icons. The RCAF gained a well-deserved reputation for outrageous humor, fine art posters, murals, and community activism. Their pioneering spirit throughout the 1970s and early 1980s was well-known in the California Chicano community, and continues to the present.

## Hector Silva

Hector Silva is a self-taught artist based in Los Angeles who has been producing work for more than twenty years. Born in Ocotlan, Jalisco, in Mexico, he moved to the United States at the age of 17. He began drawing in his late 20s when he discovered his own talent. Today,

Hector's work is collected internationally, and he has received acclaim in the United States and abroad.

Hector explores themes of cultural identity, eroticism and beauty. His mastery of light and shadow on skin is captured on paper with pencil. He draws from photographic stills. Hector is available for portraiture, originals, prints, and other commissioned work.

### ***Recent Exhibitions:***

- "Frida on Paper", Avenue 50 Studio
- "Just Happy to See You", I-5 Gallery at the Brewery
- "Hombre", Gallery 727, Downtown Los Angeles
- "Tabu", Amaru Gallery, San Francisco's
- Solo exhibition, Gallery 665, West Hollywood

Silva's work is featured in the 2005 edition of *Triumphs of Our Communities: 4 Decades of Mexican American Art*, published by the Hispanic Research Center at Arizona State University.



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## RuthAnne Tarletz de Molina (Baruj Braja de Molina)

### *Biography*

Baruj Braja, which is Hebrew for Blessed to be a Blessing, is the artistic name used by RuthAnne Tarletz de Molina. She has been an artist all her life working in various media. The only formal training she received was in grammar and high school and summer art programs in Cleveland, OH. For about three years she owned an arts and crafts supply store in Phoenix, AZ and taught stained glass design, landscape weaving, fuzzy animals (creating 3-d animal forms from macramé cord) and dip and drape (which is a form of paper maché).

Braja began creating jewelry in the kitchen with Eduardo Rocha Soto, her mentor. In 2001 they enrolled in the Jewelry Training College in downtown Los Angeles, CA where she completed the Original Model Jeweler Program. In 2002 they opened an art studio in downtown Los Angeles in the same building so that they could work at the school and create in their studio. She creates artistic symbolic, cultural jewelry, representing many aspects of Mexican culture, mainly Aztec / Maya / Sefardic / Catholic / Christian symbols, in silver, copper and/or gold and precious and semi-precious stones such as amber, Herkimer diamonds, amethyst and obsidian, natural and polished minerals, crystals, shells and beads, both natural and hand-made. She has a line of small prints of spiritual symbols. Many of these were original renderings for jewelry that she has created.

Not only does she create and sell artistic jewelry, but with Eduardo she also teaches workshops at various venues. For their work in this area they earned an L A Treasures Awards in both 2003 and 2004 for their workshop/ exhibition for El Dia de Nuestra Senora La Virgen de Guadalupe which was held at Galeria Artistas de las Americas @ Mama's Hot Tamales Café and at the Southwest Museum in a different format at !Mercado! 2004 and at Plaza Mexico at 4\* Encuentro de Jaraneros in 2005.

### *Artist's Statement*

My name is RuthAnne Tarletz, but artistically I go by the name Baruj Braja, which means Blessed to be a Blessing in Hebrew. I have been an artist all my life working in various media. The only formal training I received was in grammar and high school and summer art programs in Cleveland, Ohio. For about three years I owned an arts and crafts supply store in Phoenix, AZ and taught stained glass design, landscape weaving, fuzzy animals (creating 3-D animal forms from macramé cord) and dip and drape (which is a form of paper maché).

Today I have an art studio in downtown Los Angeles with Eduardo Rocha Soto where we create artistic symbolic, cultural jewelry, mainly Aztec / Maya / Jewish / Catholic / Christian symbols, in silver, copper and/or gold and precious and semi-precious stones such as amber, quartz crystals, amethyst and obsidian.

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## Patssi Valdez

Patssi Valdez's artistic life was launched by her participation in the Chicano/Chicana political art movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Activism became a path to social empowerment and brought the artists to the attention of the larger community. The multi-talented Valdez participated in performance art, installations, photography, and the graphic arts, as well as costume, theater and stage design; experiences that account for her agility in organizing space. Ultimately, it was painting that allowed her to express her most compelling self-realizations.

She continued to be imbued with a sense of civic responsibility, but a consciousness of self became central to her visions. Although ethnic symbols and myths remained integral to her being, her paintings derived more from private experiences, the nature of which was distinctively painful and feminist.

Imbued with an emotive spirit reminiscent of the magic-realists, her edgy interiors were metaphorical visions of the home as a dangerous, anxiety ridden place. Floors crack and swirl and spike-legged chairs fly through the air, as if the rooms are inhabited by demonic poltergeists. The animated objects are further intensified by the vibrancy of bright primary colors and dizzying perspectives.

In her recent paintings, the unsettling dynamism has been toned down. Although still eschewing an economy of means in regard to patterns and colors, interiors convey a more serene, self-reflective state of mind. Gone are agitated, Van Gogh-like intensities. Vivid reds have been replaced with calming peach tones and deep hunter greens. The more subdued palette reflects a transitional self-realized state of calm. Considering the vibrancy of her past paintings, however, subdued becomes a relative term. Her concentration of hues still maintain an immediacy that communicates emotion.

The transitional force of nature is a recurring metaphor for Valdez's evolving emotional states. Surrounded by ocean vistas while at a vacation house in Playas de Tijuana, Mexico, the environment was integral to fresh perspectives. Eventually, it become the catalyst for internal shifts.

Ocean and sky stretched endlessly. Waves crashed and dolphins pranced playfully within her view. Doors and windows are thrown open, recalling the indoor-outdoor spaces of Matisse. Leaves waft in, the turbulence of the outer world continuing to encroach upon the inner world. The thresholds between the two remain fragile.

That nature has regenerative, healing powers is expressed in *The Dream*. Here she evokes the serene state she achieved during her stay at Playas. It depicts a dream she had of floating on the ocean in a

four poster bed. Red bedclothes set off deep ocean blues. A bright full moon illuminates a glittering sea as she blissfully drifts into a private cosmic journey.

A series of paintings depicting birthday parties relate to the pathos of never being given one because her birthday falls on New Years Eve. The setting is the Playas house, where she has created a calm atmosphere for guests. Tables are set with colorful red cloths and bright blue dishes. Glasses are filled and birthday cakes have lit candles in anticipation of arrivals. Floors are steady and chairs are not flying. The baroque, tilted perspectives invite viewers directly into the paintings. It's safe to come to the party. But in spite of the celebratory glow, chairs remain empty.

Previously Valdez found the pain evinced in much Catholic art resonant of her own torments. The mystical aura evinced in *Contemplation* bears a closer connection to her current spiritual timbre. An altar table is laden with mystical globes, a picture of a Buddha, a metal hand, and an Art Nouveau lamp. Perhaps iconic objects represent healing qualities, a conscious effort to keep lingering anxieties at bay.

Source: Elenore Welles, ArtScene Writer

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## **Benjamin Venegas**

Benjamin Venegas uses painting, collage, and ceramic sculpture in complex visual commentaries referencing colonialism and its impact on Mexican and Native American populations.

Venegas was born in the Rio Grande Valley of Mexican immigrant parents and raised in Southern California. He studied fine art at the University of California at Los Angeles and was a founding member of Mechicano Art Center in East Los Angeles in 1968. During the 1970's, he was an active member of the Galeria de la Raza in San Francisco.

Venegas's work has been exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Art.

## Israel F. Valenzuela

“Currently, my art work can be seen at the Coast Gallery in Laguna Beach, the art mecca. Other galleries in the greater Los Angeles that have sold my artwork are Azteca Art Gallery in Montebello and Art One Gallery in Santa Monica. In the New Orleans French Quarter, Margaret's Art Gallery has carried my artwork.

I am currently working on a mural that consists of seven panels. I was commissioned by Lillian's Tamales in East Los Angeles. They will be completed after February, 2006. At the beginning of the 2005, I was commissioned by Miller Beer Company to do fifteen murals inside markets and liquor stores.

My art education has expanded over many years. My formal education in studio and fine arts come from having attended California State University of Los Angeles. I learned anatomy drawing at the University of California at Los Angeles. In my early years, I received private training and was an apprentice to a master painter and professor of Mexico City.”

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## **Mark Vallen**

### ***Biography***

Born in Los Angeles California in 1953, Vallen has been creating images for as long as he can remember. He studied art at the prestigious Otis Parsons Art Institute of Los Angeles in the early 1970's, where he was influenced by the great African American social realist, Charles White. But despite his schooling Vallen considers himself to be largely self taught. He derived inspiration from the rich heritage of artists working as social critics and documentarians, and his influences range from Goya and Daumier, to the German Expressionists and the Mexican Muralists. Vallen forged a unique style shaped not so much by how others painted, but what they painted.

Vallen has created illustrations for *Slash Magazine*, the *L.A. Weekly*, *L.A. Reader*, *California Magazine*, *The Progressive*, *Mother Jones*, *South End Press*, and *Rattle/Curbstone Press*. In January 2000, two of Vallen's prints were included in an exhibition of posters at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City. Vallen's poster work was included in the traveling exhibit, "Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California," which was organized by the University Art Museum - University of California - Santa Barbara. The artist's first solo exhibit was held in Los Angeles during July - August 2004 at the A Shenere Velt Gallery. The showing was also a retrospective exhibition that encompassed 30 years of work. Today Vallen focuses on easel painting, and he's a main proponent of social and figurative realism in art. To view more of his works, visit: [www.markvallen.com](http://www.markvallen.com)

### ***Artist's Statement***

"I am a realist artist, that is my predisposition when it comes to how I create artworks, but it also describes my world view. Historically the artist has always played the role of town crier, visionary, activist, and social critic - a role more important today than at any other time in history. If you want to know what's going on in the world, don't go to the politicians, seek out the artists. We have the unique ability to not only truthfully reveal the world as it is - we present the world as it could be. I fully embrace the idea of the artist as a socially engaged citizen, and reject the notion of the artist as an isolated and self-absorbed bohemian. I'm an advocate of a new social realism in art, an aesthetic that is based upon social observation, empathy for common people, and a desire to change the world."

