

'Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement'

David Mervin, Juan Cisneros and Rubin Ortiz Take a look at their work, the show and what it means to be a Chicano artist

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DELANA MONTANA

Born in East Waukegan, 1959

Lives and works in Houston

and Albuquerque

As a teenager in Chicago, I remember going to my high school teacher and very defiantly telling her, "I'm a Chicano artist!" She looked at me and said, "I mean to sound strong." But I was going to prove to her that she was wrong. I came about a month into the academic world and that's how Chicano art, I was coming up really angry. I found that we were in the presence of something incredible. So my art took off as it was the self-assertion, a part of the Chicano Movement.

I always feel that I'm still emerging. The art just bubbles out of the pain sometimes. It has to do with the way creatively works. You always have to question yourself and the things around you. It keeps you on the edge of always trying to understand.

What is coming now is that we're getting this new generation generation that is bringing more things, the artists. They're bringing on. It's not only on paper work that is coming to join us. That means the culture is always changing. It's a living culture.

JUAN CISNEROS

Born in Guadalajara, 1978

Lives and works in Los Angeles

Spaniards have never called myself Chicano, which to me was like a double term. It seemed to be something that happened to the Mexican. This has always been something to do with me because of where I was growing up. I think I grew up. I just understood something in many ways. I grew up in South California, mostly middle-class Mexican-American, and I had an identity. I would think about an aspect of my own culture. My parents are a traditional Mexican family, but I gravitated toward other cultural parts to find my place there.

A lot of my work references possible forms of music, and individuals that I learned music. I'm also a DJ, but I'm interested in the art of meaning or appropriation. The music allows me to have these multiple points of view, where I'm not tied down to one singular identity. I think of myself as the bridge.

Being in this show is like a homecoming. I've had more success outside of L.A., so it's always good to be part of a big historical show in your hometown.

RUBIN ORTIZ TORRES

Born in Mexico City, 1984

Lives and works in Los Angeles

My biggest inspiration again because there seems to be this binary world where you have, on the one hand, intellectual globalized art and, on the other, a regional specific culture of what art and culture could be. Artists have been forced to choose one or the other. Either you participate in the art world and show in fancy galleries, or you show in the community and apartment where you're coming from. But there's a new generation of artists who refuse to play that game. They want to have it both ways. We want to be international but we want to be local as well.

'Art After the Chicano Movement' is not really the Chicano movement. It defines it, but it wants to engage those ideas with the notion of art of today. We're not trying to distance between one generation or the other, but sometimes emphasize between both.

This show makes the best part of a home. I've never been accepted to be in a show with a bunch of my students. My hope is that I can make some suggestions about the possibilities and limitations of artists of color, in particular Mexican and Mexican-American artists.

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Agencia Ochoa

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