

wednesday, march 11, 2009

●●● My Experience as a Volunteer at the Museo Alameda

Day One: Wednesday, March 11, 2009

"Docent" Training :

Today was one of those days where one would slip on the comfy pj's, fuzzy slippers and grab a warm blanket and curl up on the sofa or bed in ones cozy home, BUT NOT ME!

Let me back track a bit. In an effort to empower myself and make myself useful while also learning about something that I am passionate about, art. I decided amidst my "between job" status I would either intern or volunteer somewhere I could gain working knowledge in my field which is Communication/Public Relations. What I really would like to do is work in Events Management, Special Events or something in that realm. So one day I picked up the phone, called the Museo Alameda, asked to speak with someone in Events, PR or Marketing, and basically just flat out asked if they needed any help with some of the up and coming events I saw on their website. Luckily for me they did. So here I am now writing a blog about it.

It turned out to be a dark gloomy, cold, wet, rainy and sloppy day. I was super excited about all the cool and amazing things I would learn at tonight's "docent" training, not to mention all the interesting people I would meet, so I got dressed and put on the trusty black velvet blazer, twisted up the scarf and slipped on the gloves as I ran out the door.

I got to the museum 10 minutes early and feeling good about myself. I walked into the kitchen, where some of the others where gathered and to my surprise there was a nice spread of goodies for us to snack on. While we waited for others to show up, some where late due to the weather conditions, we delighted in punch, cake, trail mix, cheese and crackers. Angel, the Volunteer Director, briefed us on the event, the anticipated "busy" times, the layout, where food and beverages will be housed out of and where the DJ and dancing will be situated amongst other important factors for Friday night's art opening. .

Ok so I thought "docent" training would involve someone giving us a tour of the exhibition and talking about the artist, the art work, the medium used and what the artist was trying to convey. But no, I was in for an even bigger treat! I am always up for trying something new, learning, growing, absorbing, etc. hence this volunteer job. So I was excited and delighted to find out that San Antonio native, Rita Gonzalez, from the Los Angeles county Museum of Art would be giving us a lecture and showing us a slide show on the exhibition. Which proved to be even better than a tour because it was more intimate and in depth.

Now the good stuff. This is what I learned according to the lecture by Rita Gonzalez and the FAQ sheet I was given by the Museo Alameda:

The name of this weeks art opening is called "Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement." The show originated in Los Angeles and has made way to Mexico City and now San Antonio. According to Rita Gonzales the title alone has created some exciting controversy and has raised some eyebrows in the Latin/Chicano community. Some are angry about the "After the Chicano Movement" portion of the title. Questions have been raised as to the Chicano movement. Is it over? Who said it's over? Is it still a movement? None the less people are moved either way and a relevant and worthy commotion is being made and in my opinion is just adding to the excitement, controversy and momentum of this movement or non-movement so-to-speak.

The title has a deep and important meaning. "Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement" was inspired by Harry Gamboa, an artist, political activist, solo artist, writer, photographer, film maker, performance artist and teacher who lives and works in Los Angeles. The name was resurrected out of the theory that Chicanos/ Mexicans/ Latinos had a sore of "phantom culture" because they were not represented in media or politics during the "Chicano movement."

The Chicano movement, according to the Museo Alameda FAQ sheet and lecture, "was established as a politically and culturally inspired movement during the counter-culture revolutions of the late 1960's and the early 70's, stressing the ethnic pride and political empowerment of the Chicano community." I learned that in the past Chicano art had often been "represented by paintings, murals and graphic arts." If I think about this I can say that when one mentions "Chicano art" I would almost immediately associate it with graffiti (yes I agree that this is an art form too) murals and political propoganda signage, murals of the Virgin Mary and Native American images.

Now as I have always identified myself with being a "Mexican-American", which traditionally means a Mexican who has migrated to America, I have come to the realization that because I was born here in America that "identifier" is not best suited for me and that perhaps "American-Mexican" does. According to the Museo Alameda FAQ sheet, Chicanos identify themselves as "politicized Mexican-Americans who identify with a distinct cultural nationalism over a hyphenated or assimilated identity. Chicano is a term strongly connected to political and cultural activism."

So now I think you see what I meant when I said that the title had a "deep" and "important" meaning.

Phantom Sightings showcases a "newer breed" of artists who are aw inspiring mixing a new age of multi media, hand held tangible pieces, 2-D sculpted graphic constructions just to name a few. These artist are playing with the idea of a "customized or simulated culture" according to Rita Gonzalez. Some artist focus on the recycling, re-purposing and reuse of everyday household items while others photographs deal with the absence of things in their photographs and with the act of witnessing history, according to Rita Gonzalez.

There is so much more to be said and observed about this showing. My advice would be to come out and see it for yourself at the Museo Alameda in San Antonio, Texas which is located at 101 S. Santa Rosa.

Well this is just a very small portion of what I learned today at my "docent" training class. I am very excited about Friday's opening which I will be working.

Stay tuned there's more to come!

For more information about the Museo Alameda go to www.thealameda.org

Posted by An Airplane Ride Away at [6:49 PM](#)