Narrated Photo Essay: Gil Lopez on Continuing the Struggle for Social Justice Today

By Carren Jao and Michael Naeimollah, April 4, 2018

Artbound "La Raza" is a KCETLink production in association with the Autry Museum of the American West and UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

In the 1960s and 70s, a group of young idealists-activists came together to work on a community newspaper called La Raza that became the voice for the Chicano Movement. With only the barest resources, but a generous amount of dedication, these young men and women changed their world and produced an archive of over 25,000 photographs. Hear their thoughts on the times and its relevance today, while perusing through some photographs not seen in public for decades in this series of narrated slideshows.

Man speaks to a crowd at Chicano Moratorium anniversary | Patricia Borjon Lopez, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
Man, possibly Nacho Uribe, speaks to a crowd at Chicano Moratorium anniversary | Patricia Borjon Lopez, La Razaphotograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

La Raza Unida delegation march during the Mexican Independence Day parade in East Los Angeles | Patricia BorjonLopez, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Man holds sign during Centro de Accion Social Autonomo (CASA) march in front of the California State Building | Pedro Arias, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Man holds sign at the immigration march against Dixon-Arnett Act | Pedro Arias, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Women carry coffins during the memorial march for Guillermo and Gildardo Sanchez, who were killed by LAPD officers  | Patricia Borjon Lopez, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Two protesters with a sign at an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in front of L.A. City Hall | La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Anti-Vietnam War demonstration on Wilshire Boulevard | La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Protesters at the San Francisco Peach March | Raul Ruiz, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
People march at Fresno Moratorium | Raul Ruiz, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
Women march at Fresno Moratorium | Raul Ruiz, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
People march at Fresno Moratorium | Pedro Arias, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
People march at Fresno Moratorium | Pedro Arias, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Person lying on stage during a performance at Fresno Moratorium | Pedro Arias, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
People march at Fresno Moratorium | Daniel Zapata, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
Rosalio Muñoz speaks at the San Fernando Moratorium | Raul Ruiz, La Raza photograph collection.

From the La Raza Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the UCLA CHICANO STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER.

Rosalio Muñoz speaks at the San Fernando Moratorium | Raul Ruiz, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
From the La Raza Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

Young men protest in front of Parker Center, the headquarters of the LAPD. | Raul Ruiz, La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
Rosalio Muñoz exits the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station | La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Protesters at Roosevelt High School strike | La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Rally to free the L.A. 13 at La Placita | La Raza photograph collection. Courtesy of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

My name is Gilbert Lopez. I was active with La Raza magazine/newspaper thereafter La Raza Unida, and at the time, I was also a student at Roosevelt High School. Probably one of the most enlightening experiences I had at La Raza was becoming a photographer. I think the photos tell a story of what were the conditions at the time. Many demonstrations, pickets and union organizing and things that we did, we show how things — tough at the time — that still exist today. If people can translate those photos and say, "What's changed?" not to be sarcastic or cynical about it, but to say, "Wait
a minute. If those guys had to put their foot in the door and they were improving things for us to have these positions, we should put our foot in the door and we should continue those types of struggles.

Hear more from the other photographers here.