

The Autry Presents the Mexican-American Generation of Artists

PRINT



Eduardo Carrillo - "Las Tropicanas", 1972-3 - Oil on canvas - 84" x 132" - Courtesy of the Crocker Art Museum. On view at the Autry in Los Angeles in "Art Along the Hyphen: The Mexican-American Generation" from October 14th until January 8th 2012.

Los Angeles, CA.- The Autry in Griffith Park is proud to present "Art Along the Hyphen: The Mexican-American Generation" on view from October 14th through January 8th 2012. "Art Along the Hyphen" is part of a unique four-exhibition project called L.A. Xicano organized by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center in partnership with the Autry National Center, the Fowler Museum at UCLA, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Other concurrent exhibitions include "Icons of the Invisible: Oscar Castillo" (Fowler); "Mapping Another L.A.; The Chicano Art Movement" (Fowler); and "Mural Remix: Sandra de la Loza" (LACMA).

This series of exhibitions is itself part of "Pacific Standard Time", an unprecedented collaboration of cultural institutions across Southern California coming together to celebrate the birth of the L.A. art scene. Beginning October 2011, over 60 cultural institutions will make their contributions to this region-wide initiative encompassing every major L.A. art movement from 1945 to 1980. Celebrate the era that continues to inspire the world.

Between 1945 and 1965, Mexican American artists contributed to the emerging California iconography and its connections to the national imagery, whether as part of the American West, Spanish California, or Hollywood. Documenting an overlooked yet significant tributary within the emergence of modern art in Los Angeles, the exhibition combines the work of Hernando Villa (1881–1952), Alberto Valdés (1918–1998), Domingo Ulloa (1919–1997), Roberto Chavez (born 1932), Dora De Larios (born 1933), and Eduardo Carrillo (1937–1997) to explore each artist's dialogue with various art movements of the twentieth century as refracted through cultural heritage, artistic influences, and social commentary. The exhibition also documents the fluid transition by some artists into the Chicano art movement activism of the 1970s. Prior to the Chicano civil rights movement, which began in 1965 and brought national visibility to the community, artists of Mexican descent such as Villa forged paths that followed traditional artistic trajectories, yet countered stylistic conventions with their "bicultural aesthetic synthesis."

The majority of these Mexican American artists have, however, been neglected by the mainstream art canon, ignored by art institutions, and absent from the art school curricula. Against the backdrop of post-WWII social and political change in Los Angeles, from the Zoot suit riots to "white flight" and freeway construction, Mexican American artists created work that responded to aesthetic developments in New York as well as artistic and cultural influences from their Mexican heritage. This marks the beginning of a synthesis that would define them as artists and provide a foundation for the emergent Chicano art movement of the late 1960s. The careers of Carrillo, Chavez, De Larios, Ulloa, Valdés, and Villa constitute individual stories of struggle and achievement, and together illustrate the multiplicity of aesthetic responses present within the Mexican American community.

Hernando Villa was a successful illustrator and art instructor who specialized in rail travel and worked for various publications including Pacific Outlook, Town Talk, West Coast Magazine, and Westways. Consistent with popular expectations of commercial tourist imagery, Native Americans constituted a major iconographic source for Villa's art. Villa taught at the Los Angeles School of Art and Design, and painted a number of L.A. murals including one for Tally's New Broadway Theater in Los Angeles in 1916; one on the dome of the New Rialto Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1921; and a multipaneled mural, "The Pioneers", at Citizens Trust and Savings Bank in Los Angeles in 1926. It was Villa's creation of the iconic emblem "The Chief" for the Santa Fe Railway that brought him national recognition that lasted over four decades.



Dora de Larios
"Seated Woman", 1960's
Glazed stoneware - 26" x 12"
Private collection. - At the
Autry in Griffith Park, LA



Domingo Ulloa - "Braceros", 1960 - Oil on masonite - 36" x 49" - Private collection.
On view at the Autry in Griffith Park, Los Angeles until January 8th 2012.

Alberto Valdés was a commercial artist specializing in magazine advertisements, outdoor billboards, and orange crate labels. His career was interrupted by his service in the Army during World War II. On his return, he found a position at MGM Studios as an art designer until he retired in his forties. The end of Valdés's commercial career marked the beginning of his artistic productivity, which would span four decades and encompass a wide range of styles, from pure abstraction to enigmatic forms. A consummate experimenter, Valdés worked in series, painting several paintings at the same time until he was ready to move on to another artistic style or genre. Evocative of pre-Columbian stone effigies, Valdés's work is often both stately and menacing, and is replete with artistic expression in the gradual shifts of hues, the subtle handling of interlocking forms to shape the figure, and the play of light that accentuates its mysterious, otherworldly qualities. Before the civil rights movement in the 1960s, there were artists committed to promoting social justice through their artwork.

One of the most accomplished yet under-recognized social realists during the 1940s and '50s was Domingo Ulloa. Using the G.I. Bill to take classes at the Jepson Art Institute, he studied with prominent expressionist Italian painter Rico Lebrun. Both felt a moral commitment to depict the horrors of war and created art that was both courageous and outside the dominant stylistic realm of abstraction. Ulloa developed deep respect for the figure, acute

observation skills, and the technical abilities of a superb draughtsman. This combination of academic training and political instructors generated a singular aesthetic that is evident in works such as "Painters on Strike" (1948), "Racism/Incident at Little Rock" (1957), and his iconic work, "Braceros" (1960). In 1993, the California State Assembly proclaimed Ulloa the "Father of Chicano Art." Dora De Larios decided to become an artist after a trip to Mexico City where she was exposed to the ceramic art of the Maya, Aztec, and West Mexico civilizations. When De Larios enrolled in USC, she was the only Mexican student studying with foremost clay artists and instructors. Influenced by the Bauhaus movement and Japanese pottery, her first exhibition in San Francisco's Gump's Gallery sold out. As a professor at USC and UCLA, she maintained her dedication and passion for exploring cultural styles as evident in her haniwa and pre-Columbian-influenced Queen and King sculptures. In 1977, De Larios created a cobalt-blue glaze-over-porcelain dinnerware set for the White House which was then displayed at the Smithsonian. In 1963, De Larios was invited by Millard Sheets to create new designs for tile manufacturer Interpace, and in 1966, she was commissioned by Walt Disney at Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida. When creating public art, De Larios ensured that each commission was integrated as an organic component of the overall plan.

Roberto Chavez was born to parents who came to Los Angeles after the Mexican Revolution. Chavez showed an early fascination with drawing, mainly cartoons and caricatures. He also loved to create sculptures from metal scraps, recycling materials into toys. He enrolled in Los Angeles City College's commercial art program and transferred to UCLA following military service. Painted in 1957, "Masks" shows how Chavez synthesized his love of the figure with his appreciation of abstract art and reflects his preference for a loose, playful painting style over realistic portrayal. He later taught at East Los Angeles College (ELAC) and UCLA where he reconnected with Eduardo Carrillo. Together they founded Ceeje Gallery, where a distinct L.A. style was developed. Chavez's painting "Ladies Art Class, Sawtelle" (1967) exhibits the artistic characteristics that came to constitute his singular style. In 1974, Chavez painted "The Path to Knowledge and the False University" (1975) mural at ELAC. Citing poor conditions, ELAC's new president ordered the mural whitewashed in 1979. Chavez resigned his teaching position at ELAC in 1981 and moved to northern California.



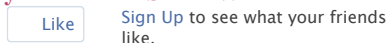
Hernando G. Villa - "Spanish Holiday", 1940 - Oil on canvas - 30" x 40"
 Courtesy of Don and Joanne Heath. - At the Autry in Griffith Park, LA

Eduardo Carrillo's first memory of paintings, stained glass, and sculpture was in churches while attending Catholic schools in Los Angeles. In 1956, Carrillo transferred to UCLA, and in 1960 he traveled to Spain to study at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid. It was the Spanish artist's emphasis on color and light that would allow Carrillo to craft a unique painting style. Spanish Still Life (1961) was a transitional piece in the development of Carrillo's signature artistic and cultural synthesis. His background and influences are combined in this painting that references the mestizo altar traditions of Mexico and European vanitasymbolism as well as Mexico's indigenous roots and Spanish conquest. He moved to Baja California along with his wife Sheila to establish the Centro de Arte Regional in La Paz. In 1976, he received tenure at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and taught until his death in 1997.

The Autry National Center of the American West is an intercultural center and museum in Los Angeles, California that celebrates the diversity and history of the American West through three important institutions: the Southwest Museum of the American Indian, the Museum of the American West, and the Institute for the Study of the American West. The Autry's mission is to explore the experiences and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past with the present to inform our shared future. All of the exhibitions, public programs, K-12 educational services and publications are designed to further this mission. Located at the Museum of the American West, the Wells Fargo Theater is also part of the center. The Southwest Museum's 238,000-piece collection of Native American art is one of the most significant and representative of its kind in the United States, second only to the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian. Comprising 14,000 paintings, 10,000 ceramic items, 6,300 textiles and weavings, and more than 1,100 pieces of jewelry, the collection represents indigenous peoples from Alaska to South America, with an emphasis on cultures from California and the Southwestern United States. The Southwest Museum was founded in 1907 and is the oldest museum in Los Angeles. The

Museum of the American West was established in 1988 by Gene Autry (as "Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum") to explore and share the comprehensive story of the American West and the multiple cultures, perspectives, traditions, and experiences—real and imagined—that make the West significant. Its collection is composed of 21,000 paintings, sculptures, costumes, textiles, firearms, tools, toys, musical instruments, and other objects. The Institute for the Study of the American West is a research and publishing enterprise that produces and supports scholarly work in Western history and the arts. In 2002, the Women of the West Museum of Colorado merged with the Institute, infusing the Autry's focus with a scholarly and educational emphasis on gender issues and women's experiences in the American West. **Visit the center's website at ... <http://theautry.org>**

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