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PST Review: Mural Remix: Sandra de la Loza

Posted By: Leilah Bernstein · 1/19/2012 9:21:00 AM

Show: Mural Remix: Sandra de la Loza

Location: Los Angeles County Museum of Art

What to expect: This multimedia installation explores Mexican American and Chicano muralism in Los Angeles during the 1970s. It's tucked into a tiny space in the museum's Ahmanson Building, fusing video and sound and archival material. It's a social commentary as much as it is a lesson on urban art.

In one corner are three large hanging lightboxes that burst with color and kaleidoscopic patterns; if you look closely, the images are details from 1970s-era murals that contemporary artist Sandra de la Loza manipulated in 2010. "My goal is to create new imagery that reanimates and refigures the past," she explains.

Her words accompanying a 14-minute video that gives an overview of the city's mural movement express frustration with how "the mural has been overlooked, if not altogether dismissed.... Conservation efforts have been minimal, and the city recently issued a moratorium on mural creation while spending millions on graffiti abatement programs." Onscreen we learn how murals started popping up on the walls of Eastside housing projects, with themes reflecting the natural world and the immigrant experience. Artists Judy Baca, Norma Montoya, Judithe Hernández, Ernesto de la Loza, and others tell their stories.

Impossible to miss is the massive wall onto which are projected three rapidly shifting images of men and women "painting" murals on their faces, arms, and naked chests. It's a floor-to-ceiling video piece in collaboration with Joseph Santarromana-dramatic, captivating, and set to street noise (screeching traffic, children's voices). The mural is conceived by the human form; the human form becomes the mural.

The show ends this Sunday.

And while you're there ...: Check out the LACMA Shop and two related books: The Pocho Research Society Field Guide to L.A.: Monuments and Murals of Erased and Invisible Histories, by Sandra de la Loza; and L.A. Xicano, which examines the contributions of Mexican American and Chicano artists.





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