

UCLA Chicana/o Studies & Art History
Protest and Praxis in Mexican and Chicana/o Art

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Course Description

Taught by a Chicana art historian and a Chicana cultural critic, this writing-intensive cross-disciplinary course investigates protest art and the praxis of arts activism in Mexican and Chicana/o culture from the 1930s to the present. Examining several case studies, we will address such questions as: How can art raise consciousness and effect political change? What does it mean to be an artist and an activist in the context of the Americas? How have socially engaged art practices in Mexico, the border, and the Southwest changed with the spread of postmodernism, transnationalism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism? The course will also teach you the praxis of “critical seeing” through image analysis, art historical analysis, argumentation, and cultural critique. You will learn the rhetorical skills necessary to write logical, ethical, and emotional arguments and produce four position papers; you will also engage the UCLA in LA philosophy by visiting museums, seeing exhibitions of activist art, and doing field research on a cultural center or community organization in the arts. In addition to your position papers (a total of 1,000 words), you will also submit a 1000-1500 word (or 4-6 pages) evaluative report based on your field research, and a 2000-2500 word (or 8-10 page) final paper.

As a class, we will be visiting the Fowler Museum on campus, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in the Miracle Mile on Wilshire, and the Getty-restored *América Tropical* mural of David Alfaro Siqueiros in Placita Olvera, downtown. Students will be expected to do field research in one other museum, cultural center, or site of activist art in Los Angeles, and to provide your own transportation to these sites. Class will be scheduled once a week for four hours to accommodate our museum visits.

Evaluation

Participation and attendance	15%
Position Papers (due biweekly)	20% (total of 4; 5% each)
Summit Presentation (week 10)	35%
o fieldwork, 10%	
o written report, 15%	
o oral report, 10%	
Final Paper (Finals week)	30%

Required Texts

1. Gaspar de Alba, Alicia, and Alma Lopez, eds. 2011. *Our Lady of Controversy: Alma López's Irreverent Apparition*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
2. Karp, Ivan, and Steven D. Lavine, eds. 1991. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
3. Heinrichs, Jay. 2007. *Thank You For Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion*. New York: Crown.

Recommended Writing Text

Fogarty, Mignon. 2008. *Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students*. New York: Henry Holt.

Participation & attendance (15%)

Since this class will meet only once a week, for only ten class meetings, it is imperative that you attend every session. Aside from lectures and class discussions, your participation grade will include class activities such as meeting with your research team, peer editing, and meeting the class for field trips at museum sites. Although we cannot provide transportation for the entire class for these field trips, we will factor in your attendance and transportation to these sites as part of this grade.

Position Papers (total of 4; 5% each, or 20% of course grade)

For the purposes of this class, a position paper is a personal essay that expresses your opinion on a specific issue. By “personal essay,” we mean the essay is written in the first person, locating the speaker of the opinion in the “I” voice. Position papers are typically argumentative, which means they pose a specific argument that is supported by evidence (research) and that acknowledges, but ultimately refutes, the counter-argument. Each assignment will ask you to take a position on the topic of the week, and to develop a short essay in which you support your position with evidence from the texts we will be reading and the art we will be viewing. The best position papers utilize rhetorical devices for persuasion, exposition, and comparison. You will learn several rhetorical devices and how to integrate them into your position papers. For general information about how to structure a position paper, check out this page: <http://www.studygs.net/wrtstr9.htm>.

Summit Presentation (35%)

In Week 10, the class will host a mock summit on the question: *What is the state of protest art or the practice of arts activism in Latino/a Los Angeles?* To participate in the summit, each student will be presenting a 5-7 minute oral presentation on one of the cultural centers, community theaters, or activist art organizations in Los Angeles (see below for a list of approved sites) that shows how this site is contributing to the praxis of activist art. We will pass around a sign-up sheet in Week One for you to select which site you want to visit (you may suggest an alternative site to the ones on the list, but you must send us a short rationale for your suggestion). The purpose of your visits will be to familiarize yourself with the space and discover the activist goals of the organization.

Homeboy Industries

Self-Help Graphics

Center for the Study of Political Graphics

The Great Wall

Cornerstone Theater

Highways Performance Space

The ONE Archives

SPARC

June Mazer Archives

CASA 0101 and/or Little Casa

Avenue 50

Teatro Sinergia

Note: Alternative sites must be pre-approved by the professors.

Some questions that you might want to consider covering in your evaluation include: What is the philosophy of activist art by which this organization operates? What kind of art is produced there? How long has this organization been in existence? What is the demographic that this organization represents or seeks to bring together? Has this organization ever been denied funding because of its activist platform? Have the organization’s goals or community interests changed from when it first started? Is activist art still viable outside of a civil rights or social movement context?

Although each student will create her/his own 5-7 minute PowerPoint or Prezi presentation for the summit, you will be presenting as part of a panel of other students who have selected the same site as you. You may work individually on this project, but we will give extra credit points for pooling your efforts and working as a TEAM with a coherent panel presentation. Teams will submit a portfolio containing a) a collective outline of your team’s presentation, b) individual 4-page reports from the field from each member of the team, and c) a combined bibliography. Individuals not presenting on teams will submit the

same materials pertaining only to their own presentations. Whether you work alone or in a team, you should practice your presentation at least twice to make sure no individual report goes over 7 minutes, as we will cut you off, even if you haven't finished. We highly encourage you (and/or your team) to come and speak with us by at least midterms so that we can provide you with more guidance on this project.

The fieldwork will count for 10% of this grade. The 4-page written report will count for 15%, and the oral presentation will count for 10%.

Alternative Summit Assignment (35%)

If you are unable to go out into the community, for whatever reason, or feel daunted by the idea of doing fieldwork in a community space for activist art, we do have an alternative assignment for your presentation and summit report: the **Exhibition Overview**. For this project, you need to locate the exhibition catalog of 3 of the following exhibitions of Chicana/o and Mexican art, all of which were exhibited in one of our local museums. Note that the paper required for this assignment will be a little longer, 6 pages instead of 4.

- Griswold del Castillo, Richard *et al.* 1991. *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation 1965-1985 (CARA)*. Los Angeles: UCLA Wight Gallery.
- González, Rita *et al.* 2008. *Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
- Durán, Yolanda, and René H. Arceo-Frutos. 1993. *Art of the Other Mexico: Sources and Meanings*. Chicago: Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum.
- Fields, Virginia M., and Victor Zamudio-Taylor. 2001. *The Road to Aztlán: Art from a Mythic Homeland*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
- Noriega, Chon, and Holly Barnet-Sánchez. 2001. *Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California*. Santa Barbara: University Art Museum.

* Single-artist exhibition catalogs must be approved by the professors.

In your summit report and oral presentation, you will still be responding to the same summit question: *What is the state of protest art or the practice of arts activism in Latino/a Los Angeles?* However, your response to this question will focus not on how protest/activist art is currently being produced in Los Angeles, but rather, how protest/activist art has been represented in these 3 exhibitions.

You will need to summarize the goals of each exhibition, explain something about who organized it and for what purpose, briefly examine the historical/political context in which the exhibition opened or toured, including museum politics that may have arisen in the process of organizing or hosting any of these shows. Did these museums change in any way because of organizing or hosting these shows? To better answer this last question, we highly encourage you to speak with a curator or other museum professional responsible for bringing a particular show to the museum. You must also summarize the content of each catalog. Which essays in each catalog did you find most helpful? Which images best evoked the spirit of resistance/activism (you should speak to one image from each exhibition)? What artists did you find most or least represented? How did these catalogs and these three exhibitions expand your understanding of protest/activist art?

You may work individually on this project, but we will give extra credit points for pooling your efforts and working as a TEAM with a coherent panel presentation. Teams will submit a portfolio containing a) a collective outline of your team's presentation, and b) individual 6-page comparative reviews from each member of the team, with their own bibliographies. Individuals not presenting on teams will submit the same materials pertaining only to their own presentations. Whether you work alone or in a team, you should practice your presentation at least twice to make sure no individual report goes over 7 minutes, as we will cut you off, even if you haven't finished. Please come and speak with us by at least midterms so that we can provide you with more guidance on this project.

This alternative assignment is also worth 35% of your grade: 10% for research and bibliography, 15% for the written report (6 pages), and 10% for the oral presentation.

Final Paper (30%)

This will be an 8-10-page page (or 2000-2500 word, double-spaced) paper in which you respond to the question: WHAT IS THE VALUE OF SOCIALLY-ENGAGED ART? In your response, please discuss what you learned about the spirit of protest and resistance in Mexican and Chicana/o art by talking about which specific essays we read, exhibitions and museums we visited or examined, and art/artists we studied most raised your consciousness about the "protest and praxis" of activist art. We will expect you to discuss **five essays** drawn from our readings across the quarter, at least **two exhibitions**, and **three specific images or artists**. Of the exhibitions you choose to write about, explain something about who organized each show and for what purpose, and briefly examine the historical/political context in which each exhibition opened or toured.

Think of this as an extended position paper, similar to the four short position papers you wrote throughout the quarter but with more in-depth analysis of the work, support drawn from course texts and outside research, and a correctly formatted bibliography. You should state your response to the prompt in the "I" voice in the first paragraph, and this will serve as the thesis statement of your paper. Be sure to retain the "I" voice throughout your essay.

To jumpstart your writing, you might want to consider some or all of the following questions:

- Which essays did you find most interesting/illuminating/useful?
- Which images best evoked the spirit of resistance/activism?
- How did this exhibition or image expand your understanding of protest art?
- How did any of the artists we studied particularly challenge your beliefs and values?

For more guidance and assistance on this final assignment, we encourage you to visit Professor Gaspar de Alba and/or Professor Villaseñor Black during office hours to discuss your ideas and questions.

The paper is due on Wednesday of Finals Week by 2pm. No late papers accepted.

Extra Credit Opportunities

There will be several extra credit opportunities that come up in Spring quarter, such as exhibitions, films, or performances that speak to the theme of the class, and we will let you know when they arise.

Individually, you may earn up to 2 extra credit points that will be added to your participation grade.

Teams may also earn extra credit points for blogging about our class visits to the different museums and other sites we visit as a class. Every five blog posts will earn your team 1 extra credit point. Each team may earn up to 3 extra credit points for your team's overall grade on the summit presentation. More about the Team Blogs when classes begin.

SYLLABUS

Note: About half of the readings are in our course texts (*Our Lady of Controversy* and *Exhibiting Cultures*); the rest can be viewed and downloaded from the course website, under their respective weeks. All readings will be discussed on the day they are scheduled on the syllabus. You will be expected to have done all the readings scheduled on the days of our field trips prior to the museum visit as these readings are meant to make you a more aware and informed museum visitor. Also, expect pop quizzes.

Week One: Theorizing Activist Art

4/5 What is Activist Art? What is the difference between protest art, art of resistance, and oppositional art? How does this type of art effect social change and social justice?

Case Study: The UCLA Clothesline Project

Reading: Under Week 1 on course website

Please read before coming to first day of class. We will be writing on these.

- McCaughan, Edward J. 2002. "Gender, Sexuality, and Nation in the Art of Mexican Social Movements." *Nepantla: Views from the South* 3.1: 99-143. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nepantla/v003/3.1mccaughan.html>
- Pincus, Robert L. 1995. "The Invisible Town Square: Artists' Collaborations and Media Dramas in America's Biggest Border Town." In *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin, 31-49. Seattle: Bay Press.
- Raizada, Kristen. 2007. "An Interview with the Guerrilla Girls, Dyke Action Machine (DAM!), and the Toxic Titties." *NWSA Journal* 19.1: 39-58. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nwsa_journal/v019/19.1raizada.html
- From *Thank You For Arguing (TYFA)*: Ch. 1, "Open Your Eyes"

Sign-Up for Field Research Site or Exhibition

In-class Writing Activity

Week Two: Controversy and the Virgin of Guadalupe

4/12 Case Study: "Our Lady of Controversy"

Reading: The following chapters from *Our Lady of Controversy* (course text):

- Nunn, Tey Marianna. "It's Not about the Art in the Folk, but about the Folks in the Art: A Curator's Tale," Ch. 2, 17-42.
- Jones, Kathleen Fitzcallaghan. "The War of the Roses: Guadalupe, Alma Lopez, and Santa Fe," Ch. 2, 43-68.
- Calvo, Luz. "Art Comes for the Archbishop: The Semiotics of Contemporary Chicana Feminism and the Work of Alma Lopez," Ch. 5, 96-120.
- Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. "Devil in a Rose Bikini: The Second Coming of Our Lady in Santa Fe," Ch. 10, 212-248.
- Lopez, Alma. "It's Not about The Santa in My Fe, but about the Fe in My Santa," Ch. 11, 249-292.

Also, From *TYFA*: Chapters 2-4

- **Position Paper 1 due: Deliberative Argument**
- **Watch: “I Love Lupe” video**
- **Meet your Field Research Team (exchange contact info & set up weekly meetings)**

Week Three: Field Trip

4/19 Class visit to Fowler Museum (meet at the entrance)

Reading: The following chapters from *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics Of Museum Display*

Read before coming to the museum.

- Alpers, Svetlana. “The Museum as a Way of Seeing,” Ch. 1, 25-32.
- Baxandall, Michael. “Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects,” Ch. 2, 33-41.
- Vogel, Susan. “Always True to the Object, In Our Fashion,” Ch. 12, 191-204.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. “Objects of Ethnography,” Ch. 20, 386-443.

Also, From *TYFA*: Chapter 14 (the seven deadly sins in logic)

Online Writing Assignment: Post your observations of the Fowler to your Team Blog

Week Four: Multicultural Art in the Age of Discovery

4/26 Case Study: *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985* Exhibition

Reading:

- Livingston, Jane, and John Beardsley. 1991. “The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective.” In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics Of Museum Display*, Ch. 7, 104-120.
- Ybarra-Frausto, Tomás. 1991. “The Chicano Movement/The Movement of Chicano Art.” In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics Of Museum Display*, Ch. 9, 128-150.
- González, Alicia, and Edith A. Tonelli. 1992. “Compañeros and Partners: The CARA Project.” In *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, ed. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Lavine, Ch. 10, 262-286. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. 1998. *Chicano Art Inside/Outside the Master’s House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition*, Ch. 2, “Through Serpent and Eagle Eyes: Intercultural Collaboration,” 91-117. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Also, from *TYFA*: Chapters 5-7

- **Position Paper 2 due: Eminem, Lincoln, or Belushi Approach to Argument**
- Meet with your Team: set up site visit schedule & discuss interview questions
- In class writing activity

Week Five: Field Trip

5/3 Class visit to the Siqueiros mural in Placita Olvera
Meet in front of building promptly at 10:15

Guest speaker: Rebecca Zamora

Reading (under week 5 on course website):

- Goldman, Shifra M. 1981. *Contemporary Mexican Painting in a Time of Change*, Ch. 1, "The Mexican Mural Movement," 3-14. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Goldman, Shifra M. 1974. "Siqueiros and Three Early Murals in Los Angeles." *Art Journal* 33:4 (Summer): 321-27.
- Schrenk, Sarah. 2010. "Public Art at the Global Crossroads: The Politics of Place in 1930s Los Angeles." *Journal of Social History* 44:2 (Winter): 435-57.
- Rainer, Leslie. 2010. "Conserving and Presenting Siqueiros's *América Tropical*." *American Art* 26:1 (Spring): 14-17.
- SPARC Visual Presentation of *América Tropical*: Siqueiros @ Walt Disney Concert Hall, Judy Baca, Steve Loza, José Luis Valenzuela, and the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra (video: <http://vimeo.com/12808128>); and Judy Baca. "The Art of the Mural." *American Family: Journey of Dreams* (<http://www.pbs.org/americanfamily/mural.html>)

Also, From *TYFA*: Chapters 8-10

Online Writing Assignment: Post your observations of *América Tropical* to your Team Blog

Week Six: Pain as Protest

5/10 Case Study: Frida Kahlo

Reading:

- Lindauer, Margaret. 1999. *Devouring Frida: The Art History and Popular Celebrity of Frida Kahlo*, Ch. 2, "Frida of the Blood-Covered Paint Brush," 54-85. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan/University Press of New England.
- Zetterman, Eva. 2006. "Frida Kahlo's Abortions: With Reflections from a Gender Perspective on Sexual Education in Mexico" *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 75:4: 230-43.
- Borsa, Joan. 1990. "Frida Kahlo: Marginalization and the Critical Female Subject." *Third Text* 12 (Autumn): 21-40.

Also, From *TYFA*: Chapters 11-13, and 15

- **Position Paper 3 due: Call to Action Piece**
- **Meet with your team: compare field notes, structure your argument**
- **In-class Writing Activity**

Week Seven: Field Trip

5/17 Class visit to LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

Reading: The following chapters from *Exhibiting Cultures* (course text)

Read before coming to the museum.

- Greenblatt, Stephen. “Resonance and Wonder,” Ch. 3, 42-56.
- Duncan, Carol. “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship,” Ch. 6, 88-103.
- Marzio, Peter C. “Minorities and Fine-Arts Museums in the United States,” Ch. 8, 121-127.
- Gurian, Elaine Heumann. “Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities,” Ch. 11, 176-190.

Also, From *TYFA*: Chapters 16-17

Online Writing Activity: Post your observations of LACMA to your Team Blog

Week Eight: The Political Art of the Poster

5/24 Overview of poster art from Posada, to the Taller de Gráfica Popular in Mexico, to UFW poster art, and the stencil/street art in Oaxaca, 2006

Guest speaker: Terezita Romo

Reading:

- Goldman, Shifra. 1984. “A Public Voice: Fifteen Years of Chicano Posters.” *Art Journal* 44:1 (Spring): 50-57.
- Tschabrun, Susan. 2003. “Off the Wall and into a Drawer: Managing a Research Collection of Political Posters.” *The American Archivist* 66:2 (Fall): 303-24.
- Noriega, Chon. 2001. “Postmodernism: Or Why This Is Just Another Poster.” In *Just Another Poster?: Chicano Graphic Arts in California*, Introduction, 19-23.
- Romo, Tere. 2001. “Points of Convergence: The Iconography of the Chicano Poster.” In *Just Another Poster?: Chicano Graphic Arts in California*, 91-115.

Also, from *TYFA*: Chapters 18-20

- **First Draft of Field Report due**
- **Meet with your team: fine-tune your argument, structure your presentation**
- **Writing Activity**

Week Nine: Las Hijas de Juárez: Protesting Gender Violence on the Border

5/31 Visual, musical, literary, installation, and performance art representations of the Juárez femicides

Guest speaker: Rigo Maldonado or Victoria Delgadillo

Reading: (under Week 9 on course website):

- Maldonado, Rigo. 2011. “Las Hijas de Juárez: Not an Urban Legend.” In *Making a Killing: Femicide, Free Trade, and La Frontera*, ed. Alicia Gaspar de Alba with Georgina Guzmán, Ch. 12, 269-277. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Livingston, Jessica. 2004. “Murder in Juárez: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Global Assembly Line.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies*, vol. 25.1: 59-76. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/frontiers/v025/25.1livingston.html>

- Mata, Irene. 2010. "Writing on the Walls: Deciphering Violence and Industrialization in Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood*." *MELUS (Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States)*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Fall): 15-40.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/melus/v035/35.3.mata.html>
- Driver, Alice. 2010. "Feminicide and the Disintegration of the Family Fabric in Juárez: An Interview with Lourdes Portillo." *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, vol. 30: 215-225.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/studies_in_latin_american_popular_culture/v030/30.driver.html
- Ortega, Denise S., and Mariana Ortega. 2012. "Juárez, Presente y Futuro: A Children's City Drawn." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring): 309-321.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_youth_and_childhood/v005/5.2.ortega.html

Also, from *TYFA*: Chapters 21-22

- **Position Paper 4 due**
- **Meet with your team: share & peer edit first drafts of your field reports**

Week Ten: Summit on Activist Art

6/7 Oral presentations (schedule of reports to be announced)
To help you prepare a powerful argument and deliver a persuasive talk for your Summit Report, Read: *TYFA*: chapters 23-25.

- **Final Draft of Field Reports due (must include outline of presentation, individual paper, and bibliography). You or your team will present your panel presentation(s) in PowerPoint or Prezi. No more than 7 minutes per presenter.**
- **Note: You MUST send us the PowerPoint or link to your Prezi by no later than 8pm Thursday evening (6/6/13), so that I can post it to the course website for easy access during the summit.**

Week Eleven: Finals Week

Your Final Paper is due on Wednesday by 2pm. Please deliver to our TA's office. Remember: **NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED.**