

Politics and art merge at LACMA

MUSEUM EVENT FEATURES LATINO ARTISTS
EXPLORING CULTURAL ISSUES, PROBLEMS

By Natalie Banach

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The fine line between art and politics constantly wobbles, and while the result is an intersection of the two realms, some may question whether that's a positive result.

That relationship between art, politics and its nuances will be discussed at an event held by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and moderated by Chon Noriega, UCLA professor of film, television and digital media and director of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

The event, titled "From Ike to Iraq: Conversations with Latino Artists on Six Decades of Art and Politics," will feature nine prominent Latina and Latino artists talking about the effects of postwar American art on political movements and cultural and societal values.

"Some people think politics is where you put your body. Others feel art can play a role that can bring out change in society," Noriega said.

A range of artists will congregate at the museum, some coming from their homes in Puerto Rico and Cuba, and some living in Los Angeles. These artists say their diverse backgrounds and experiences have been critical components of their self-expression.

Among the artists scheduled to present ideas on the topic of art and politics will be Celia Alvarez Muñoz, a prominent Latina artist whose work involves drawing what gets lost in translation.

Among other media, Muñoz said she utilizes street signs to reveal what happens when Spanish is used to name streets and other places here in the States. Muñoz further said that she tries to show the result of mispronun-

ciation and misunderstandings.

An example of the collision between the two languages can even be found across the street from the museum at the La Brea Tar Pits.

"La Brea means tar pits in Spanish. So essentially, it's really called the Tar Pits Tar Pits," Noriega said.

Such cultural dichotomy speaks to the socially-conscious nature of the discussions scheduled to take place. Other topics of conversation will include community activism, the civil rights movement, and the issue of capital punishment.

A local Latino artist, Gronk, has done work on a wide range of media, and will attend the event. His latest project is designed for the interior of a local planetarium.

As connections are constantly made between the two spheres of art and politics, Gronk said that most art is political.

"Artists are influenced by the things that are always taking place. Sometimes we produce some-

thing that is not for our time," Gronk said.

Another of the more senior artists who will present his ideas is Raphael Montañez Ortiz, who in the 1950s held large concerts where he performed with an axe.

"It was world-renowned at that time. He was known for being part of an avant-garde movement for using destruction as the basis for art," Noriega said.

The nine artists who will speak at the event will also be featured in a forthcoming book devoted to Latina and Latino artists, entitled "A Ver: Revisioning Art History."

The event, scheduled from 4 to 6 p.m. today, will be held at the Dorothy Collins Brown Auditorium at LACMA.

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Artist and speaker at LACMA event
