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[L.A. Artist Remixes Lost and Iconic Eastside Murals](http://www.kcet.org/updaily/socal_focus/commentary/movie-miento/la-artist-remixes-lost-and-iconic-eastside-murals.html)

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by [Adolfo Guzman-Lopez \(http://www.kcet.org/user/profile/aqlopez\)](http://www.kcet.org/user/profile/aqlopez)

on November 1, 2011 2:00 PM

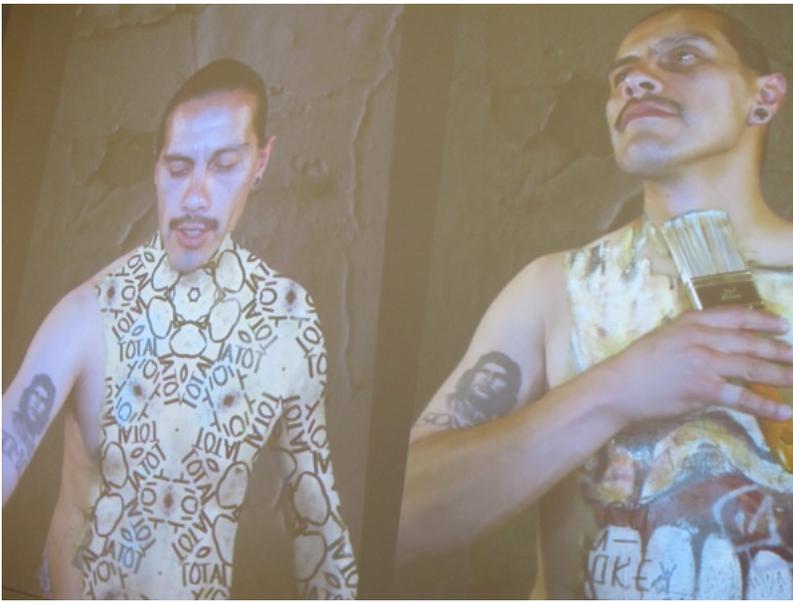


It was another one of those wine and cheese art openings, the ones I keep dragging myself to and keep writing about. At this one though, 20-foot Chicanos erased themselves and in the same act replaced the various shades of their brown skins with reproductions of iconic and lost East L.A. murals.

My name was on the L.A. County Museum of Art check in table. I walked in the gallery glass door. There's Tomas Carrasco of the 20-year-old sketch group Chicano Secret Service, there's Chicana rocker Lysa Flores, there's poet Reina Prado who's written one of the essays for the Latino portion of the [Pacific Standard Time \(http://www.kcet.org/socal/checklist/exhibition/pacific-standard-time-explained.html\)](http://www.kcet.org/socal/checklist/exhibition/pacific-standard-time-explained.html) catalogues. Adrian Rivas of g727 gallery sees me and gives me a strong hand shake.

And there's Michael Govan, official title: LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director chatting with Rita Gonzalez, one of the museum's curator who's played a bit role in [the current ASCO exhibit \(http://www.kcet.org/updaily/socal_focus/commentary/movie-miento/1970s-la-chicano-conceptual-art-group-gets-its-due.html\)](http://www.kcet.org/updaily/socal_focus/commentary/movie-miento/1970s-la-chicano-conceptual-art-group-gets-its-due.html) and other Latino-related shows.

I did not want to eat cheese, I did not want to drink wine. Que güeva. Socializing is harder than looking at art. I went straight for the art. This is a Pacific Standard Time opening for "Mural Remix" by Sandra de la Loza. She knows eastside murals. Her older brother painted quite a few of them four decades ago. Thinking she knew many of the iconic murals in the area, she was shocked when a scholar showed her a box of pictures with lots of murals long lost to layers of paint and time. De la Loza used a kaleidoscope effect to reproduce some of the murals onto a light box. She's also included two videos about the lost murals.



The exhibit's strongest part is the projection of several videos of half a dozen topless men and women in various stages of painting their chests and faces with wide paintbrushes. The bodies filled most of a 20-foot high wall. Three projected at a time. One is a homeboy, with the word FLATS -- presumably the Primera Flats gang - tattooed from one rib cage to the other. The F and the S in the word, the beginning and the end, had not been completely inked in. He takes the paintbrush, which creates a blue-screen effect that de la Loza then fills in with mural images, and begins painting his torso, his neck and his face. He covers the Che Guevara tattoo on his arm.

The women use the same kind of paintbrushes. On one woman's chest a black background appears after each brushstroke revealing asterisks and simple clover shapes hugging the curves of both breasts and reaching the woman's Adam's Apple and chin. The murals change shapes, split like tectonic plates and fold into each other.

It's [a heady time for murals](http://www.kcet.org/socal/departures/landofsunshine/arts/murals/rush-to-mural-judgement.html) in Los Angeles, Sandra de la Loza tells (and as KCET's Departures [has been following](http://www.kcet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-search.cgi?tag=mural%20policy&limit=20)). For several years the City of L.A. has forbid new murals. There's lots more money spent by public agencies these days on graffiti abatement and not enough on mural restoration and fostering muralism as public art, she says. L.A. City Hall is in the process of rewriting its murals ordinance. There's a group of muralists at the opening angry, she tells me, who are angry that city officials have not included them in the discussions about a new mural permitting policy. This rethinking of murals past and present, she says, is her contribution to that discussion.

Poet and Journalist Adolfo Guzman-Lopez writes his column [Movie Miento](http://www.kcet.org/updaily/socal_focus/commentary/movie-miento/) every week on KCET's SoCal Focus blog. It is a poetic exploration of Los Angeles history, Latino culture and the overall sense of place, darting across LA's physical and psychic borders.

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