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The MEX/LA Art Show: Five Things to Know

3:31 PM PST 12/4/2011 by Degen Pener

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Ruben Guevara

THR talks to singer Ruben Guevara - who has curated a listening station on Chicano rock for the Museum of Latin American Art - about the arts institution's new MEX/LA art exhibit and its Hollywood connections.

The great Mexican muralists **Jose Clemente Orozco** and **David Alfaro Siqueiros**, Chicano artists **Harry Gamboa, Jr.** and **John Valadez**, Disney films and low-rider culture come together in the recently opened exhibit *MEX/LA* at the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) in Long Beach.

OUR EDITOR RECOMMENDS



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The show pulls together the ways in which Mexican culture and the L.A. scene interacted to influence a new generation of artists, both Mexicans who made art in the city and Chicano artists who here.

spoke to singer **Ruben Guevara** about the exhibit -- full e: MEX/LA: "Mexican" Modernism(s) in Los Angeles 1930-. In the 70s, Guevara was the lead singer of doo-wop/R&B/rock 'n' roll band Ruben and the Jets which toured with **Frank Zappa** (who also produced one of their albums.) This year, the singer released his first album in 30 years, *The Tao of Funkahuatl*, a spoken word and conceptual music work that he is performing in full today at a free concert at MOLAA (628 Alamitos

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Avenue, Long Beach).

Here are five things to know:



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THE SHOW: It's a multi-media exhibit that weaves together art, design, movies and more, looking not just at Chicano artists in L.A. but at the many ways other artists were influenced by them, from Disney to abstract expressionist painter **Philip Guston**. "I think the most important element for me as a Chicano, it's the first time that we've had an exhibition of Mexican masters like Orozco and Siqueiros right alongside Chicano artists. I think it's unprecedented," says Guevara, who collects two artists represented in the show, Valadez and Gamboa, Jr.

THE LISTENING STATION: Guevara put together a playlist for a listening station at the exhibit of 23 songs called "Los Angeles Chicano Rock n' Roll: 1948 to 1985". It goes from artists like **Don Tosti** and **Lalo Guerrero**, the originators of a style called Pachuco Boogie in the 40s and **Richie Valens** in the 50s up to **Los Lobos**.

THE HOLLYWOOD CONNECTION: "The curator is a very cool, smart hip guy who knows a lot about Chicano culture and Hollywood influences, like how Walt Disney was influenced by Mexican and Chicano culture," says Guevara. The exhibit looks at how Disney incorporated Mexican influences into such films as the 1944 animated feature *The Three Caballeros* and the creation of the character Speedy Gonzales. Other movie references seen in the show: In the 1950 film *In a Lonely Place*, Mexican art decorates the apartment inhabited by **Humphrey Bogart**, while Italian artist **Rico Lebrun**, who worked on *Bambi*, was influenced by Orozco.

DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE: The shows also looks at influences on designers and architects including **Ray** and **Charles Eames** -- their *Day of the Dead* video is on view -- and British-born architect **Robert B. Stacy-Judd** who was inspired by Mayan art.

OTHER EXHIBITS: Guevara recommends getting out to three other exhibits. UCLA's Fowler Museum is showing *Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement* through Feb. 26. MOCA's sprawling *Under The Big Black Sun*, through Feb. 13, includes work by Chicano artists. And LACMA's *Asco: Elite of the Obscure, A Retrospective, 1972-1987* looks at the Asco performance art collective. But hurry: it closes today at 8 pm.

MEX/LA: "Mexican" Modernism(s) in Los Angeles 1930-1985 runs through Feb. 5 at the Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Avenue, Long Beach.

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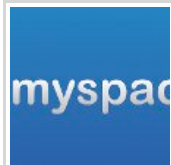
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