art journal

SPRING 2012

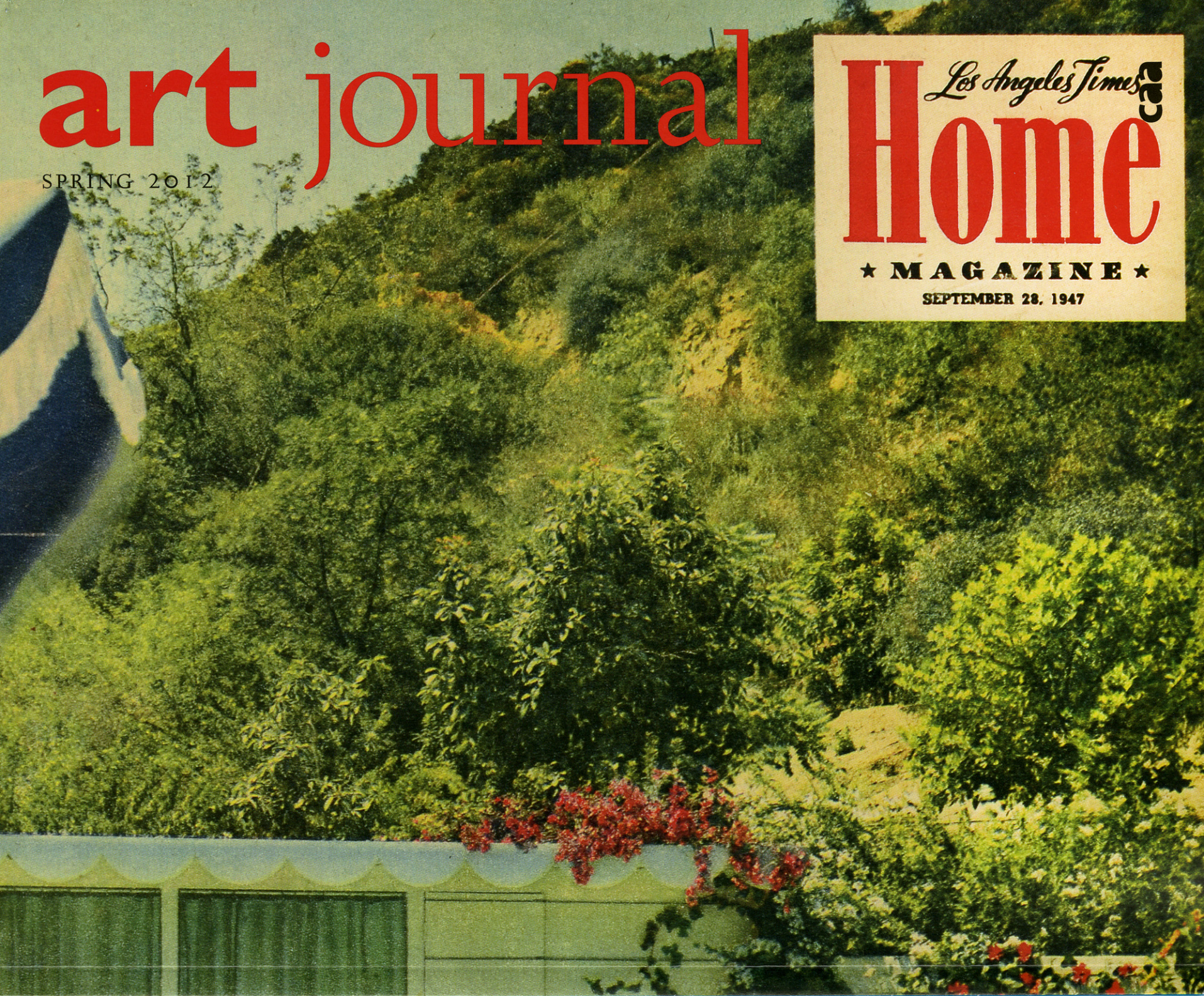
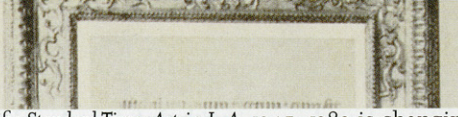


Table of Contents

Terence Patrick
O'Shea

Oscar Castillo, *Chicano Graduation Ceremony at USC, June 1979, 1979,* color photograph. Oscar Castillo Photograph Collection, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (photograph © Oscar Castillo)



Lucia Sanromán

PST Mexican American and Chicano Exhibitions Legitimize the Periphery

Undoubtedly *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980* is changing the art-historical discourse of American art, just as it set out to do ten years ago, when the Getty Research Institute began to collaborate on it with the Getty Foundation. The project has funded and coorganized—with more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California—an astonishing number of exhibitions, catalogues, and archival initiatives that address previously unwritten or ignored artists and practices with commendable seriousness of purpose and remarkable academic rigor across the board. Indeed, *PST* provides a welcome relief from the constant and unending spectacularization of contemporary art and its now openly wanton and cynical commodification and involvement with celebrity glamour. I wonder what museums in Southern California will do after *PST*, when funding continues to dwindle for the arts and the drive toward art as entertainment is rationalized as a necessity for attracting audiences unaccustomed to deeper connections. Still, one would be missing the obvious to ignore the tension between PST's ambitious scholarly reassessment and canonization of Southern California art and its packaging of that history as creative capital marketed toward a national and international positioning of L.A. as a historic cauldron of creative energy, political criticality, and egalitarianism.

PST is too heterogeneous and diverse to be reduced simply to a publicity campaign for the City of Los Angeles; nevertheless, the wider frame of its cultural politics merits attention because it bears on the art history that the entire project proposes. This is of special significance in relation to the way that *PST* works to legitimize the art practices of those groups that have historically been considered "minorities" in the United States—such as the art of Mexican American or Chicano artists, African Americans, and queer and feminist artists. Indeed, it is in these areas that *PST* stands out, particularly since it aspires not only to change the terms by which L.A. is seen in relation to mainstream American art history—which has until now been dominated by New York art history—but, more important, to bring unparalleled attention to those previously buried and even vilified narratives.

It is not coincidental, therefore, that the exhibitions, catalogues, and research initiatives of Mexican American and Chicano artists have received particular attention, and, therefore, it is specially important to analyze how this process of legitimization is negotiated by the six exhibitions of Mexican American and Chicano artists and cultural projects organized under *PST*'s patronage. The exhibitions include *Asco: Elite of the Obscure, A Retrospective, 1972–1987*, coorganized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Williams College Museum of Art, and curated by Rita Gonzalez of LACMA and C. Ondine Chavoya, associate professor of art and Latina/o studies at Williams College; and *MEX/LA: "Mexican" Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985* at the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), curated by the artist Rubén Ortiz-Torres and the documentarian, curator, and writer Jesse Lerner. In addition, four exhibitions were organized under the rubric *L.A. Xicano* and cocurated by Chon A. Noriega, professor in the UCLA department of film, television, and digital media, with the independent curators Pilar Tompkins Rivas and Terezita Romo. *L.A. Xicano* exhibitions are coorganized by UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, which Noriega directs, in collaboration

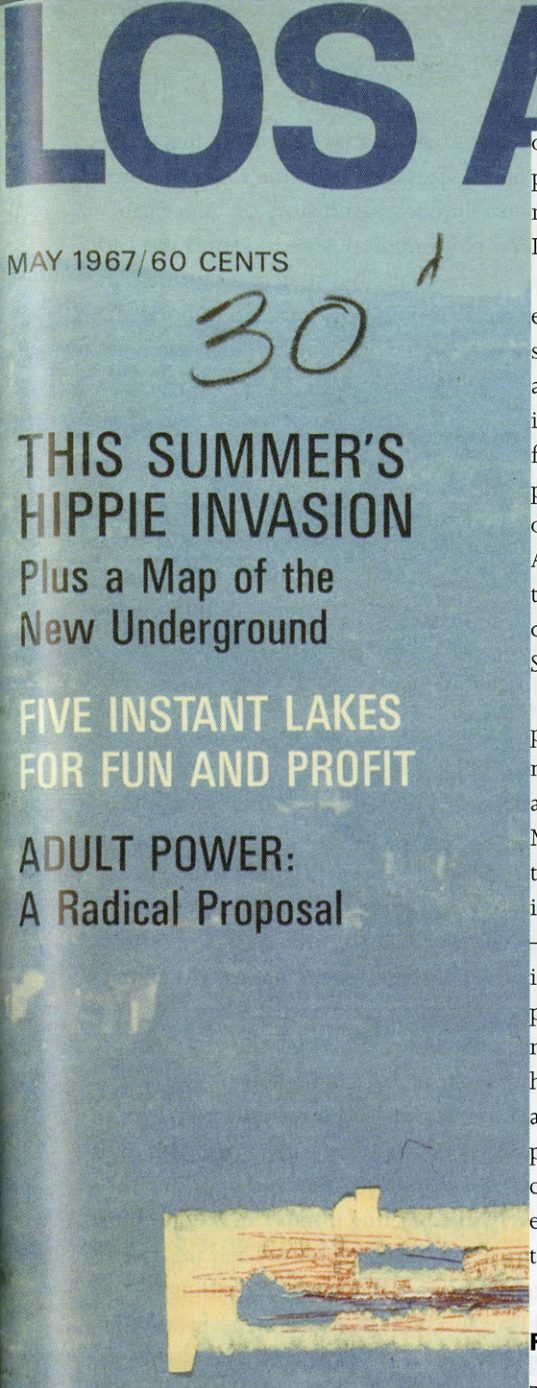
with three Los Angeles institutions: LACMA coorganized *Mural Remix: Sandra de la Loza*; the Autry National Center hosts *Art along the Hyphen: The Mexican-American Generation*; and the Fowler Museum at UCLA presents *Icons of the Invisible: Oscar Castillo* and *Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement*. Often identified with specific representational styles and iconographies derived from Social Realism via the figurative style of the Mexican muralists, the Chicano art movement has been characterized by a fractious ideological stance that restricts the types of artworks and artists considered to properly address the needs and aims of the Mexican American community. Yet, as I argue in this review, although nuanced and astute in their own right, the exhibitions and research projects are ultimately successful in direct relation to how each manages to achieve something more than legitimacy and how each advances the presentation, interpretation, and reception of these artists, movements, and moments beyond the confines of narratives about marginalization and identity that have dominated the field of Mexican American and Chicano art history until now.

Art History of the People for the People

In order to understand the internal workings of institutionalized art history, patronage, and display, it helps to recall the motivations as well as the means by which an undertaking of the scope, drive, and foresight of PST is brought to fruition. The long-term support of the Getty and the willingness of a variety of institutions, researchers, and curators to answer its call for scholarship and depth are exemplary, and one wishes that funding were more often given with such forethought and attention to rigor and learning. Yet I have some misgivings because these complex series of imbricated narratives are tied to a single source. Art history as a methodology of interpreting and cataloguing information, objects, and artists can be made in many ways, but this directive by one institution is tinged with a monopolizing impulse quite different from the rather disconnected and unsystematic evolution that has marked the development of art history in the United States, Latin America, and everywhere else, for that matter. Poststructuralism has given us the tools to overcome the essentialization of culture based on national, and in this case regional, alignments; for this reason PST feels somewhat like a return to an earlier time when at its worst—at the beginning of the Cold War period, for example—culture brazenly served ideological interests and functioned to promote this nation and help it project images of freedom and innovation onto the world by supporting the international presentation of Abstract Expressionist artists.[1] Less extreme but traversing similar territory, PST shows us art history in the making, but we also most definitely see a marketing campaign in which the city of Los Angeles, its culture and spirit of youthful insouciance, its previously consistently vilified urbanism, and even its minorities are celebrated and presented to the world for enjoyment and consumption.

In the writing of ignored or unattended art histories that PST entails, a new narrative of L.A. is being collectively imagined, one that is racier and sharper, wittier, full of attitude and political perspicuity, and far less intellectually pretentious than its New York counterpart—indeed, a recent visit to the PST website started with a cool, black-and-white video of the rapper Ice Cube, who studied architectural drafting before his fame, walking through the Topanga Canyon home

1. See Serge Guibault, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).



of Ray and Charles Eames while expressing analytical opinions on their use of prefab materials. "They was doing mashups before mashups even existed," he notes, and later concludes, "Who are these people who have a problem with L.A.?" "Maybe they just meant they don't live here."

Nothing could be farther from the way that New York's art history has evolved than PST's crafting of its own sexy mashup of high and low culture, street-cred with academic diligence, and popular entertainment with conceptual abstraction. It is an effective strategy that plays to all audiences and potential tourists. And no wonder, L.A., the city of dreams and of Hollywood fantasy, has always felt insecure about its relationship to high culture, even as it is an unashamed purveyor of popular culture. PST canonizes the bringing-together of these dichotomies and washes away the shame. As Antonio Villaraigosa, the first Mexican American mayor of Los Angeles, expressed it in a January 27, 2010, press release that announced additional funding for the project, "This initiative will certainly drive cultural tourism to our city and show the world all we have to offer. *Pacific Standard Time* reinforces Los Angeles' reputation as a major cultural destination."[2]

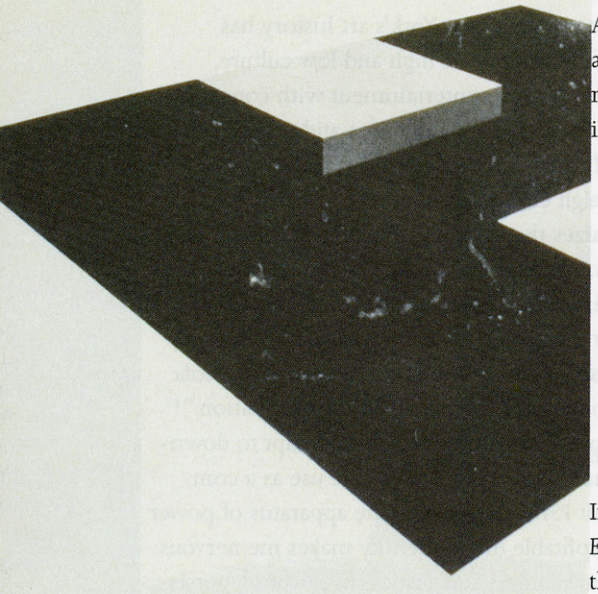
In today's art world, one would have to be either naive or corrupt to downplay the role art plays in the marketplace and its unquestionable use as a commodity with a relatively stable value. Yet PST's closeness to the apparatus of power and the mechanisms of marketing a profitable urban identity makes me nervous. Making art history is a fragile thing that requires seriousness of purpose, persistence in research, and intellectual honesty, qualities that are evident in the majority of the PST exhibitions. However, there still remains the potential of distorting —in this necessary correcting of the record—the incisive and consistent criticality of the artistic practices that developed and thrived as countercultures in the periphery, precisely because it was a periphery that allowed for ways of being and making that were idiosyncratic, politically acute, and formally inventive. What happens when those narratives are brought into the mainstream, absorbed into art history, institutionalized, and legitimized? How can their outsider spirit be preserved? Finally, what strategies, methodologies, and narratives have the artists, curators, and researchers employed to preserve the improvisational, explosive, even anarchic and anti-institutional effervescence of practices such as Asco's, or the political intentions and tensions in Chicano muralism?

From the Periphery to the Center

The historical asymmetry of power, visibility, and access that Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanos have historically suffered in the United States makes it especially important to attend to questions of agency and representation in writing narratives faithful to their critical spirit. Running through the six projects is an appropriate wish to write the history of the contributions, at times purposefully overlooked and belittled, of Mexican American and Chicano artists and their community. If PST sets out to correct the art-historical discourse, these exhibitions, catalogues, research, and collecting initiatives aim to right the political and cultural record and redress a long history of marginalization and structural racism. Legitimation is an internalized desire expressed either explicitly or implicitly in wall texts and catalogue narratives, as well as in display choices. It is evident, however, that the artists and curators of these projects are well aware of

2. "Getty Foundation Gives Additional $3.1 Million to 26 Arts Institutions across SoCal for Pacific Standard Time: Art In L.A. 1945–1980 Initiative," Getty Trust press release, January 27, 2010, online at www.getty.edu/news/press/center/pacific_standard_time_2010.html (viewed April 19, 2012).

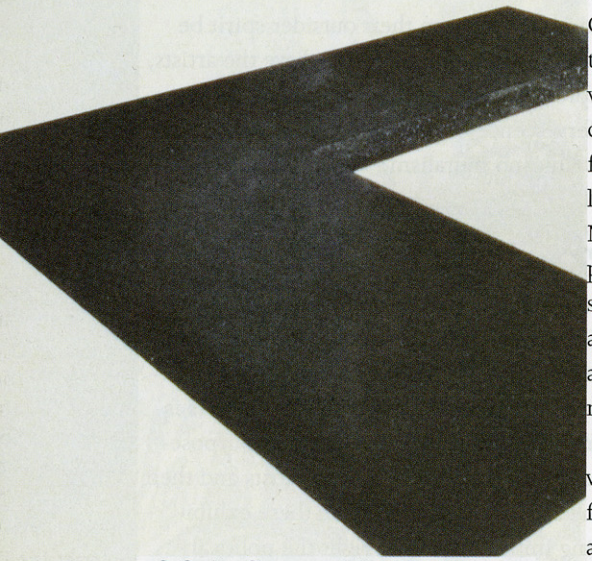
the tensions, fissures, and potential compromises that may arise from this process. Indeed, the elaboration of an appropriate language to define a relationship to hegemonic art history—such as Western European art history or "American" art history—is a fundamental political and philosophical issue in Latino and Latin American art history and critical theory. The methods and strategies by which the artists, curators, and researchers have negotiated their positions and elaborated new scholarship and language will, no doubt, inform the way in which the field is shaped in the future.



Two Ninths Grey, plastic, fiberglass, wood. (Nicholas Wilder Gallery.)

> Objectifying themselves in endless productions of self-transformation, "barrio stars" of the Eastside underground, Asco worked together to realize projects and actualize ideas. They developed an acknowledgment and criticality about their relative position, which was incorporated into themes and motifs in the work. Asco came to recognize their position in relation to the structures of power, visibility, and access (political, social, cultural, and information institutions from City Hall to Hollywood, newspapers, and museums) and work from there. As they adopted that relative location or position, it became a generative force.[3]

In this quote from the introduction to the extraordinary survey catalogue for *Asco: Elite of the Obscure*, Gonzalez and Chavoya refer to the larger question inherent in the institutionalization of the Chicano performance and conceptual art group (whose name is the Spanish word for "disgust" or "nausea"). Mining their marginality from both the Los Angeles mainstream art world and their own Chicano community, the members of Asco merged conceptual incisiveness, queer sensitivity, punk attitude, and a refreshing lack of self-consciousness that has made their collaboration resistant to the objectifying impulse of the art world. The 432-page catalogue is thrilling and thoroughly researched, approximating the variety of fragile archival material through which the four core Asco members—Harry Gamboa, Jr., Gronk, Willie Herrón, and Patssi Valdez—captured ephemeral gestures, performances, and graffiti actions. They began in the early 1970s with interventions in the streets of East L.A., alternatively appropriating and opposing the cultural symbolism of Chicano mural art, while pushing it into a new conceptual format that involved theatrical representation and street actions. Their practice later evolved into campy photographic re-creations of, among other things, "No Movies," presented as stills of fictional Chicano films that were never meant to be produced, and which included No Movie awards, No Movie stars, and No Movie scripts. Finally, in the 1980s Asco engaged in a variety of collaborations with additional, fluctuating members—Teddy Sandoval, Diane Gamboa, Sean Carrillo, and Daniel J. Martinez, among others—that took the forms of mail art, photomontage, collage, sculpture, prints, painting, film and video, and fashion.



Asco's art production was improvisational, experimental, and temporal in a way that is difficult to capture. Gonzalez and Chavoya are well aware of the difficulty of presenting the fleeting nature of Asco's practice in an exhibition format, and write at length and with insight on the ambiguous relationship between photographic documentation—often shot by Harry Gamboa—and the street performances that it captures. More complex even is the way in which No Movies function as actions made specifically for the camera but are themselves the artistic objects. "The No Movie is thus both the object and the objective," explain the

3. C. Ondine Chavoya and Rita Gonzalez, introduction to *Asco: Elite of the Obscure, A Retrospective, 1972–1987* (Ostfildern, Germany, Williamstown, MA, and Los Angeles: Hatje Cantz, Williams College Museum of Art, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), 22.

Asco, *A La Mode*, 1976, black-and-white photograph, 11 x 14 in. (27.9 x 35.6 cm). UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library, from the collection of Patssi Valdez (artwork © 1976 Asco; photograph © Harry Gamboa, Jr.)

curators. "It neither privileges the act of photography nor its output, but that interchange creates the conditions for the No Movie. These are the 'predicaments of performance art' that involve questions of evidence and meaning, questions of medium and preservation, and questions of presentation and interpretation."[4]

With hundreds of images, nineteen essays written by leading scholars and critics, and original documents rarely seen outside art-historical investigation, the catalogue is no doubt the definitive volume on Asco. It deftly expresses the group's interest in politics and the relationship of its actions to social and political issues affecting the Chicano and Anglo communities. It also documents and addresses the multiple positions and oppositions within Chicano art and successfully points to a way out of the exclusionary internal discourse of Chicano art practitioners, while connecting Asco to the wider discourse of contemporary art.

I go to length in describing the catalogue because its significant success at preserving and interpreting Asco's energy is directly related to the complications of displaying the material in the exhibition space. Presented on the second level of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum at LACMA, the exhibition suffered, in my opinion, from an excess of formal elegance that had me confused as to the nature of the photographic material on view. Asco consistently resisted objectifying its ironic "glam" projects and found in ephemerality, and in the wear and tear of time on the film and photographic record, an important catalyst for forms of

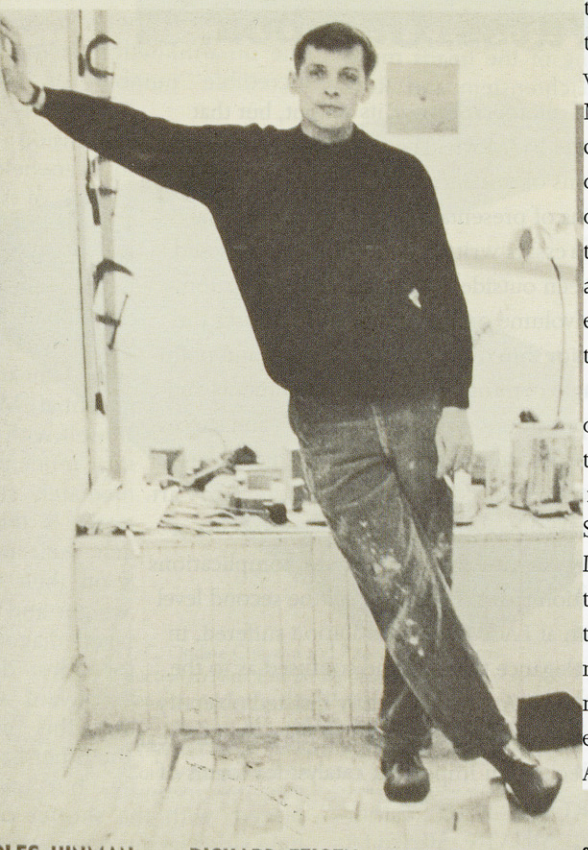
4. Ibid.

representation resistant to the market and the mainstream. Yet the exhibition seems to contradict this by deploying a formal display that unambiguously recasts Asco's photographic documents as art objects. Although certain archival material is presented in beautiful, simple vitrines, the exhibition is largely dominated by color reprints presented as a series of mostly sixteen-by-twenty-inch photographs; these are framed in black and hung at picture height around the six pristine galleries in a manner that closely parallels the traveling survey *Glenn Ligon: America* on view at the time of my visit across the way on the same level of the museum.

It is problematic to use the same strategy of display for both exhibitions because the installation design is then a feature not of the specific exhibition, or related to the appropriate presentation of the material, but of LACMA as a mechanism of legitimization that is linked to the operations of the capitalization of culture. In other words, the display and its presentation objectify the archive and consecrate Asco's powerful, anarchic, and countercultural gestures, recasting them as "contemporary art" and reducing their potency of embodying a radical alternative to accepted conventions in Chicano and Anglo society—up to and including artistic conventions. While I am not interested in suggesting that the photographs are not art, I did wish for an exhibition design that less insistently wants to answer the question for me. Perhaps the exhibition was making an argument for the entry of Asco into the contemporary art mainstream? Possibly. But then, what of making exhibitions that are true to the spirit of the group's inventive, original energy, rather than to the present desires of the institutions, artists, and curators to position their production? Nevertheless, it was exhilarating to see such a deep overview, which was presented chronologically, though not stubbornly so, thereby affording a layered, intertextual reading of Asco's many innovations, starting from its early street tableaus, moving into the cannibalization of the mural and street graffiti formats, the No Movies and *fotonovelas*, and ending with the more disparate energies of the collaborative projects in the 1980s.

My critique of the exhibition display relates to larger, more general questions concerning the presentation of archival material in art museums. This is a hotly debated topic as cultural institutions and universities begin to acquire the archives of artists of the twentieth century whose often immaterial and performative practices become enmeshed in the ontological questions about the nature of art objects and documents that the Asco exhibition makes us confront. In fact, to some extent, each of the six exhibitions provides its own answer and formal resolution to the presentation and reconsideration of documentary materials and archives.

Also at LACMA, the Los Angeles artist Sandra de la Loza addresses the history of Chicano murals of East L.A. by appropriating a variety of nearly abstract details taken from the Nancy Tovar Murals of East Los Angeles Slide Collection 1970–1980, an archive of some six hundred slides now held by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. *Mural Remix* presents all new work commissioned by the *L.A. Xicano* program for PST. It includes de la Loza's experimental documentary that addresses the cultural implications of the largely overlooked mural paintings that populate East L.A.—from political public-art projects related to Mexican muralism, to vernacular examples as indebted to hand-painted signage as to mural traditions. The documentary addresses urban planning as a strategy of ethnic segregation as well as the criminalization of graffiti and mural art in Los Angeles. The sounds of the interviews and commentary flood a gallery dominated



Sandra de la Loza, *Mural Remix*, 2011, installation view, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011–12 (artwork © Sandra de la Loza; photograph © Museum Associates/LACMA)

by the stirring multichannel installation *Raza Mural Remix*, created by de la Loza in collaboration with Joseph Santarromana, in which abstracted details of resampled murals are superimposed on the bodies of six contemporary artists; their nudity is gradually cloaked by the details from the murals in a psychedelic montage that blurs the limits between abstraction and figuration, between the racialized body's skin and the mural painting as a skin over the body of the city. In addition, the original slide archive is mobilized to push forward the customary perception of Chicano art practice of the 1970s and to expand its focus on the figure as a signifier of community to what de la Loza identifies in the catalogue as "questions of space and power within our urban landscape and contemporary art spheres."[5]

In *Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement*, at UCLA's Fowler Museum, Noriega, Tompkins, and Romo take as point of departure the construction of the unified freeway system in the 1950s, the largest public-works project in the history of Los Angeles. As Noriega and Tompkins write in the catalogue essay, "The 'unified freeway system' destroyed the city's most heterogeneous working-class communities, creating an infrastructure that promoted racially segregated communities, and provided commuters with an 'edited view' that obscured the devastating impact of urban renewal on the city's Mexican, Chicano, and African American populations."[6] Their exhibition and catalogue constitute a remapping

5. Sandra de la Loza, "Mural Remix," in *L.A. Xicano*, ed. Chon A. Noriega, Terezita Romo, and Pilar Tompkins Rivas, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2011), 190.

6. Chon A. Noriega and Pilar Tompkins Rivas, "Chicano Art in the City of Dreams: A History in Nine Movements," in *L.A. Xicano*, 72.

Don Juan/Johnny D. Gonzalez, David Botello, and Robert Arenivar, *The Goez Map Guide to the Murals of East Los Angeles*, 1975, offset printed map, first edition, 17½ x 23 in. (44.5 x 58.4 cm) (artwork © Don Juan/Johnny D. Gonzalez, David Botello, and Robert Arenivar)

of the various ways by which nine Chicano artist groups and art spaces in East L.A. from 1969 to 1977 created a series of cultural and political networks that stitched together that torn fabric. As the witty *Goez Map Guide to the Murals of East Los Angeles* (1975) states, "In Europe all roads lead to Rome, In Southern California all freeways lead to East Los Angeles."

One of the ways in which *Mapping Another L.A.* establishes new scholarship on Chicano and Mexican American art history is that it foregrounds how groups such as Goez—the first Chicano arts organization to be established in East L.A., in 1969—addressed a broad set of interests and approaches that negotiated Mexican cultural identity, involvement in community activism, and participation in the emergent aspirations and methods of self-representation of the Chicano social movement that coalesced around the figure of Cesar Chavez in the 1970s. Following the stylistic association between figurative representation and political ideology of Mexican muralism as it developed in the post-Revolutionary period in the 1920s and 1930s, Chicano art and its history have been dominated by a restrictive ideology of the types of practices and positions permitted within the movement in order to advance the rights of the community. *Mapping Another L.A.* presents a different story, one in which approaches as disparate as the emancipatory murals of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*—created by the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) under Judith Baca—and Asco are positioned as diverse but equally legitimate responses to cultural and ethnic segregation.

The exhibition proposes that the variety of interventionist strategies deployed by these artists and groups responded to an urgent need to reclaim public space in creative and multiple ways that expanded the options of what was possible and

Judith F. Baca, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, 1980, color photograph (photograph © Social and Public Art Resource Center, provided by SPARC)

SPARC artists and volunteers working on the murals-in-progress.

imaginable artistically and socially. In other words, the show opens up the definitions of what Chicano art was and can be. While these ideas are well argued in the catalogue, the exhibition felt disorganized and muddled, combining discontinuous thematic sections, such as "Reclaiming Public Space," "New Beginning," and "From Neoclassicism to Graffiti," which were difficult to coalesce into a united narrative. I wished that the curators had not attempted to fit quite so many ideas and artworks into the rather reduced gallery and had focused instead on making one or two arguments visually and experientially coherent in that space.

This was not the case with the lucid monographic exhibition *Icons of the Invisible: Oscar Castillo*, also at the Fowler and drawn from the archive of the Chicano Studies Research Center. The exhibition also took on the task of presenting the breadth and diversity of pieces by the underrecognized photographer, covering a period from 1969 to 1980. It was a key period in the Chicano movement, and the exhibition positions Castillo as a significant documentarian of its evolution. His photographs have something of the iconic in them, as each captures the transformation and emergence of a Mexican American community and yet eschews popular stereotypes.

The fourth *L.A. Xicano* exhibition, *Art Along the Hyphen: The Mexican-American Generation*, features the work of six artists of Mexican and Mexican American descent who worked in Los Angeles in the early part of the twentieth century. Of these, the expressionist work of Roberto Chavez stands out for its dark humor and painterly ease. However, if all of the *L.A. Xicano* projects are fueled by a revisionist incisiveness that seeks to shift the terms of Chicano art history and expand its definitions, this project is constrained by reliance on modernist

methodologies of art-historical investigation, description, and display. Essentially, this is the story of six modernists told in a modernist way. It is a chronological art history, heroic and woven together through a search for stylistic continuities and linkages to artistic predecessors—the Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo, among others—tied to the personal history of each artist and lightly nested in social history. The project makes an argument for associating these artists to an art-historical model based on a linear evolution that should be questioned and critiqued.

The final PST exhibition under discussion, *MEX/LA: "Mexican" Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985*, is at its best when it avoids the kind of art history exemplified by *Art along the Hyphen*; or, rather, when the discourse it does produce destabilizes the basis of conventional historical narrative. "It is a show," write the curators in their wall text introduction to the exhibition, "that recognizes that the history of art is a creation and therefore an art project itself." This is a good place to start. The exhibition is formulated around a series of delirious juxtapositions that speak of the appropriation, resistance, mutation, and recycling of Mexican art and visual culture as they are grafted onto Los Angeles, and back to Mexico again. *MEX/LA* proposes a rethinking of cultural constructions of all kinds—from the conception of the nation-state as an exclusive category, to ethnic identity recast as an unstable construction that is constantly shifting and adapting in relation to origins, transformation, and adaptation to the presumed hierarchy of authorities on both sides of the Mexico-US border.

The exhibition owes a great deal to the late and brilliant French-Mexican curator and critic Olivier Debroise, whose essay "I Am Your Past; You Are My Future: Mexico–Los Angeles" is included in the catalogue. Debroise argues that the cultural synergy of the two centers is closer to a perpetual cycle of influences without beginning or end, rather than to a story of original causes and deterministic evolution.[7] *MEX/LA* opens with the misadventures of the *América Tropical* mural by David Alfaro Siqueiros, painted in 1932 on Olvera Street, which expands the dates of this exhibition beyond PST's beginning date of 1945. That year the mural was painted and quickly censored and whitewashed, and Siqueiros was forced to leave the United States, never to be granted a visitor's visa again. It is a provocative start that expresses the complexity of the relationship between Mexico and the United States. Several delightful juxtapositions follow, in which artworks and objects that represent examples of institutional Mexican art are paired with images and videos of American mass entertainment. For example, the tempera-on-newsprint paintings of Alfredo Ramos Martínez—the émigré director of the Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes—are related to the animated Warner Brothers cartoon *Cannery Woe* (1961), featuring the heroic efforts of Speedy Gonzalez to secure cheese for his Mexican mouse compatriots. As the pairing expresses, Ramos Martínez's representation of unthreatening indigenous subjects is unquestionably linked to the stereotypical portrayal of Mexicans in the cartoon. Ironic *détournement* and vaudeville humor also play a part in the presentation of prewar Mayan-American fantasies by the British architect Robert Stacy-Judd, which predate Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis House by twenty years and are represented by his watercolor proposals for housing developments and leisure centers. In these works, a cannibalized pre-Columbian history is proposed as an image of Los Angeles's future. Today, ironically, we see these realized in elite housing complexes and tourist destinations in California and Mexico.

7. See Olivier Debroise, "I am Your Past; You Are My Future: Mexico–Los Angeles," in *MEX/LA: "Mexican" Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985*, ed. Ruben Ortiz-Torres, exh. cat. (Long Beach and Ostfildern: Museum of Latin American Art and Hatje Cantz, 2011), 16–21.

Ron Davis, "Ball Point Pin," San Francisco Museum.

GALLERIES

Robert Stacy-Judd, *Destruction of Atlantis,* 1936, watercolor. Robert Stacy-Judd Papers, Architecture and Design Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara (artwork © Estate of Robert Stacy-Judd)

Edgardo Acos
441 N. Bedfo
Modern maste
(Mon. thru Sa
276-1977

Ankrum Galle
910 N. La Cie
George Chanr
(Mon. thru Sa
655-7562

Irving Blum G
811 N. La Cie
A new series c
artist Frank S
(Tues. thru Sa
652-6171

Comara Galle
8475 Melrose
Shiro Ikegawa
Opening Mar.
(Mon. thru Sa
651-2245

ers, Ronald Searle, Johnny Frielander. Contemporary Japanese prints, opening March 16. (Daily including Sun. 12 - 4:00) 479-3281

Dalzell-Hatfield Galleries
Ambassador Hotel
Gabriele Muenter and Alexej Jawlensky
Mar. 20 - April 20.
(Mon. thru Sat. 10:00 - 6:00)
387-4034

The Egg and the Eye
5814 Wilshire Blvd.
Opening Mar. 11, craftsmen's versions of eggs and eyes from all over the world. Featuring egg drawings of Jay Rifkin and photographs of Claire Trotter.
(Tues. thru Sat. 11:00 AM - 12 midnight. Mon. eves 6:00- 12 midnight)
939-2141

Esther Robles Gallery
La Cienega Blvd.
Established since 1947. Contemporary paintings and sculpture.

Feingarten Galleries
736 N. La Cienega
Paintings of the contemporary scene by Renee Groch. Mar 11 - Mar. 30
(Tues. thru Fri. 10:00 - 5:30. Mon. eves. 8:00 - 10. Closed Sun. and Mon.)
655-4840

15: Antony Donaldson - first American showing by this British artist. Mar. 16 - April 5. Recent paintings by Tom Holland.
(Tues. thru Sat. 11:00 - 5:00) 657-6877

perception and understanding," and Washington would accept whatever their choice of artists, given the concurrence of the sponsoring museum. Tuchman was ected after submitting his er, according to local ington was put off by a fficient interest on the part ; or whether, according to es, Tuchman was the first plan later rejected on some ; or whether a competition set up between Tuchman ska Director; or whether— mises—the Nebraskan was nd Tuchman's invitation gesture of some kind, some e official art world consider that a commissioner of e must submit his artistic re getting the final nod for

plague in our own house: tisans admit that the Mu- was laggard, and many be- tever the circumstances of an all-out aggressive effort een made. Whether the de- efeated our chances, or a "herculean" effort might have secured the honor, it is impossible to determine. That posed any nt feature overriding could have hether we

the Venice trade fair ally of ar- ening with hers point seum fur- really the ore appro- n Art than Pasadena to pioneer e Met, of 966, under can per- e" through historical

ment with rse, draws the appeal s." People n the door wish to be what they temporary works, though organization takes time and effort, are more accessible. "It's pretty hard," says one museum official, "to pull together a smashing show of Roman mosaics." Still, the great museums have been

Which brings us to the beginning: the marriage of convenience between PST's scholarly aspirations and the desire of the Getty and its collaborating institutions to play to a larger national and international audience. The six exhibitions that focus on the significant contributions of Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicano artists and cultural producers in Los Angeles in the postwar period and beyond collectively move the discourse from the periphery to the center. They fulfill the implicit intentions of PST to give a more complex, perhaps even cosmopolitan interpretation of the visual arts in L.A. that places the city culturally on the global stage. For me, the success of the exhibitions is related to the complexities of generating new narratives that reinscribe the center with the critical, countercultural energy of the periphery. Some of these six projects do this better than others. My preference is for heterogeneity, multiplicity, and diversity. I don't care for hagiography and therefore favor the projects that present the unquestionable achievements of the artists tempered with a fair representation of the internal conflicts, contestations, and disagreements that engender all cultural production and are part of the growing field of Mexican American and Chicano art history itself. Such conflicts are fundamental also to the larger field of art history—both national and international, regional and universal—and it is the negotiation between these supposed opposites that creates exiting new scholarship and the evolution of art history as a whole.

Lucía Sanromán is an independent curator and writer. From 2006 to 2011, she served as associate curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. Her current focus lies in investigating aesthetics in relation to direct-action politics and public practice, particularly in the context of Latin America. Recent curatorial projects include *Political Equator 3* (2011), *Proyecto Coyote* for Encuentro Internacional de Medellín 2011 (MDE11), and *Anomalia* for the University Art Gallery at UC San Diego (2012). With Cesar Garcia she edited *Marcos Ramírez ERRE* (INBA and Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2012). Upcoming exhibitions include *Policy as Form: Learning from New Experiments in Art and Civic Engagement* (Santa Monica Museum of Art, 2014).