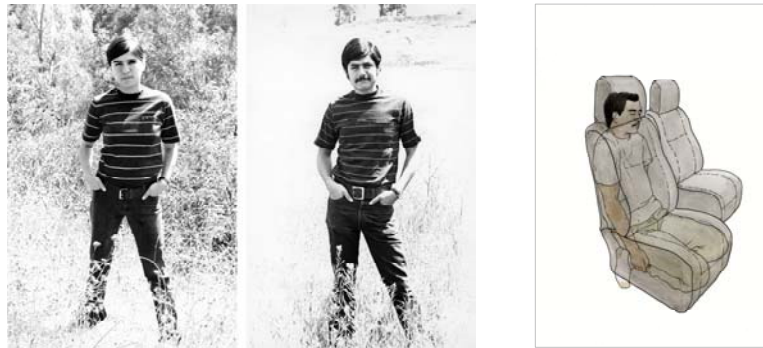


**LACMA EXHIBITION SHOWCASES PROVOCATIVE ARTWORKS
CREATED AFTER THE CHICANO MOVEMENT**

**Groundbreaking works by Sandra de la Loza, Margarita Cabrera, Rubén Ortiz-Torres, and
others on view**

April 6 through September 1, 2008



(Left) Carlee Fernandez, *Self Portrait: Portrait of My Father, Manuel Fernandez*, 2006, C-print, 2 prints, each 18 x 12 in. (45.7 x 30.5 cm), courtesy of the artist and Acuna-Hansen Gallery, Los Angeles, © Carlee Fernandez, Photo courtesy of Acuna-Hansen Gallery, Los Angeles

(Right) Julio Cesar Morales, *Undocumented Intervention #6* (detail), 2005, watercolor on paper, 34 x 42 in. (86.4 x 106.7 cm), courtesy of the artist, © Julio Cesar Morales

Los Angeles—*Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement*, on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) April 6, is the first major consideration of the legacy of Chicano art in almost two decades. Unlike most exhibitions of Chicano art that have preceded it, *Phantom Sightings* moves away from efforts to define a distinct identity or style and instead focuses attention on conceptual strategies that artists use to intervene in public spaces or debates. *Phantom Sightings* traces these tendencies to the late 1960s, adding a new dimension to our understanding of Chicano art history and notions of ethnic identity, cultural politics, and artistic practice.

As the exhibition's title, inspired by artist and commentator Harry Gamboa Jr., suggests, Chicanos have historically constituted a "phantom culture" within American society—largely unperceived, unrecognized, and uncredited by the mainstream. In contrast, Chicano art was established as a politically and culturally inspired movement during the late 1960s and early '70s, stressing ethnic pride and political empowerment. Although Chicano art was primarily represented by the traditions of painting, muralism, and graphic arts, there has always existed a simultaneous, if less historicized, experimental and

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conceptual tendency whose art forms encompass performance, video, photography, film, and unsanctioned “guerilla” interventions into daily urban activity. This direction has proved to be of particular interest to many Chicano artists coming of age in the 1990s and beyond.

While attentive to this historical context, *Phantom Sightings* places an emphasis on a newer generation of emerging artists from across the United States, many who do not work under the label of “Chicano art.” These artists engage local and global politics, mix high and low cultures, and sample legitimate and bootlegged sources—but they do so within a conceptual framework. “The artists in this show consciously position themselves within the broadest developments of contemporary art,” explains Michael Govan, CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director at LACMA. “And now, with contemporary offerings in both *Phantom Sightings* and the Broad Contemporary Art Museum, LACMA is presenting a diverse overview of cutting edge art of the last forty years.” This exhibition also plays a groundbreaking role in LACMA’s Latino Arts Initiative, which ensures that Chicano and Latino art are a consistent focus within the museum’s program.

Phantom Sightings seeks to explore the ways in which these artists situate their work at the crossroads of local struggles over urban space, transnational flows of culture, and global art practices. Some artists’ work functions as an intervention that “haunts” public spaces with evidence of other, sometimes hidden, meanings and agendas.

- Sandra de la Loza (Los Angeles) engages publicly dedicated sites, such as the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial in downtown Los Angeles, conceptually “re-dedicating” it in a video projection in which the terra cotta figures of the frieze are animated so that they relate a more complete—perhaps less idealized—account of the very history the monument commemorates.
- Alejandro Diaz (New York), dressed in a white suit and looking like the perfect dandy, stood by the front door of Tiffany & Co. on Fifth Avenue selling hand-scrawled cardboard signs with messages such as “Mexican wallpaper” or “Looking for Upper East side Lady with nice clean apt. (must have cable).”

Other artists, whose work is more studio-based, repurpose and transform familiar objects or artistic styles into unexpected new ones, often with provocative effect. These artists explore the intersection of divergent experiences, perceptions, traditions, and value systems.

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- Shizu Saldamando (Los Angeles) appropriates *pañño arte* (a genre of prison art in which inmates draw stylized ballpoint pen portraits of family members and girlfriends on cotton handkerchiefs) to make portraits of alternative music stars, such as in *Morrissey* (2005).
- Margarita Cabrera (El Paso) engages issues of the Mexican-American border in her *Cacti* sculptures, which at first glance appear to be varieties of potted succulents but on closer inspection reveal themselves to be simulations, made of fabric recycled from actual uniforms of United States Border Patrol agents.
- In *The Breaks* (2000), Juan Capistran (Los Angeles) made photographs of himself break dancing on what appears to be a Carl Andre minimalist floor sculpture, subsuming the object's "high art" pedigree to Capistran's own engagement of a vernacular art form.

Another prominent strategy among the artists in the show involves the creation of improbable hybrids or objects whose identity is forever shifting and in flux, drawing upon diverse, sometimes divergent, cultural sources.

- Rubén Ortiz-Torres's (Los Angeles) high-finish paintings made with Kameleon Kolors™—an iridescent paint popular among custom car enthusiasts—actually appear to change color as the viewer moves by them; his camouflage paintings continue the theme of uncertain or indeterminate identity.
- In *One and the Same* (2005), Adrian Esparza (El Paso) unravels the woven yarn of a traditional Mexican serape and reforms part of it as an abstract composition reminiscent of conceptual artist Sol Lewitt's wall drawings; the resulting object has a dual nature, rooted equally in highly divergent cultural sources.
- A more psychological orientation informs the hybridizing art of Carlee Fernandez (Los Angeles), who poses herself together with photographs of men who have been intellectually or emotionally formative in her own personal history—artists, writers, her father—positioning their images so that she appears to be merging with them.

Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement will feature thirty-one artists and 120 works, including paintings, sculpture, installation, video, performance, and photo-based art, and intermedia

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works that incorporate film, digital imagery, and sound—a number of them newly commissioned for the show. This presentation is accompanied by a 240-page catalogue featuring principle essays by the exhibition's three curators, individual artist entries, and a quasi-satiric “alternative” chronology of Chicano history by exhibition artist Rubén Ortiz-Torres and filmmaker Jim Mendiola. After *Phantom Sighting's* premiere showing at LACMA, a tour is tentatively planned to the Tamayo Museum of Contemporary Art, Mexico City (October–December 2008), El Museo del Barrio and The Americas Society, New York (March–May 2009), and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (summer 2009).

Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement is organized by LACMA in conjunction with the Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) at University of California, Los Angeles. Curators for the exhibition are Rita Gonzalez, Assistant Curator for Special Exhibitions, Howard N. Fox, Curator of Contemporary Art, and Chon A. Noriega, Adjunct Curator of Chicano and Latino Art and Director, CSRC.

Credit

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and was made possible in part by the Peter Norton Family Foundation and LACMA's Art Museum Council. Additional support was provided by the Contemporary Projects Endowment Fund. Contributors to the fund include Mr. and Mrs. Eric Lidow, Ronnie and Vidal Sassoon, Steve Martin, The Broad Art Foundation, Bob Crewe, Tony and Gail Ganz, Ansley I. Graham Trust, Peter Norton Family Foundation, Barry and Julie Smooke, and Sandra and Jacob Y. Turner.

About LACMA

LACMA—the largest encyclopedic museum in the Western United States—is the only museum of its kind to make contemporary art a principal area of activity with the opening of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM). The Renzo Piano-designed BCAM is a cornerstone of the museum's ten-year project to dramatically renovate and expand LACMA's twenty-acre campus. This evolving contemporary collection, coupled with the museum's robust permanent collection of more than 100,000 works spanning the history of art and extensive free public programming, make LACMA the definitive cultural town square for the city of Los Angeles and its visitors.

General Information: LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or log on to lacma.org.

Museum Hours and Admission: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon–8 pm; Friday, noon–9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am–8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month, and every evening after 5 pm.

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