Celebratory Yet Unsettling:
Studies on Early 1970s Chicano Student Murals in UCLA and UH

by
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A thesis submitted to the School of Art, Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in Art History

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University of Houston
May 2021

DEDICATION/EPIGRAPH

To the ancestors, may our stories never go unheard, unseen, untold.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my chair advisor, Roberto Tejada, for his insights on directing this project. Dr. Tejada's support has made the completion of this project possible from helping me step into a discursive field with different ways to encode and decode reality to helping me in accessing funding to make the lengthy research possible. I'm grateful for his moral support in my continuation with this project regardless of wrong turns, closed doors, and COVID-19. I owe much as well to the other members of my committee. Rex Koontz has been an insightful professor and motivational force. The two programs he initiated, the Digital Humanities and Object-Based Learning at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Pre-Columbian Art in México City have been foundational to this project. Monica Perales's direction has greatly improved this project. Her referral to Yolanda Chávez Leyva, Director of the Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas at El Paso, made one of the core components for this research possible. I'm also thankful for Sandra Zalman's encouragement. Judith Steinhoff impressed my thinking about method and practice during her course on medieval western art. The mentorship from Dorota Biczel illuminated ways to think about revolutionary art forms, discourses, and practices. Her insight into archival research prepared me ahead of this difficult process. Much appreciation goes to the rest of the Art History faculty and staff including the William R. Jenkins Architecture, Design, & Art Library at the University of Houston, by providing a secondary home in the library and contribution of several volumes to my thesis.

Special thanks to Chon Noriega and Xaviera Flores at the Chicano Studies Research Center Library at the University of California in Los Angeles for hosting me as a visiting scholar during the summer of 2019. I'm thankful as well for Josh T. Franco in facilitating the archives of Eduardo Carrillo at the Smithsonian Institute *Archives of American Art*.

Funding for this project was made possible in part from several grants by the School of Art and the English Department. I am grateful to the School of Art for the various competitive scholarships, grants and fellowships that helped me in affording my graduate degree. Special thanks also to Paul R. Davis for his mentorship during my internship as the University of Houston-Menil Curatorial Fellowship.

I did not realize that by searching for the target population of the murals of this study and the events of the near-past I was going to come full circle in writing a thesis while completing a Graduate Fellowship at the Center for Mexican American Studies. During my services I learned important knowledge and met crucial individuals for the Houston mural whose testimonies are presented in this research. Pamela Quiroz, Maira Alvarez, Allison Saenz, Sandra Poblano, and Marisela Martinez, it has been my pleasure to be a part of this community for research and teaching. The generous funding of the center has no comparison to the experiences I've gained. I can only hope to have left with you as much as I am taking with me.

I'm grateful for the generosity of Ingrid Sayeb Associate Conservator of Objects and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, for her valuable insights in conservation and preservation of materiality and public memory.

Many thanks to Leah Clancy for rescuing my application from the shuffle at the Pasadena Museum of California Art making possible the serendipity of this moment and the experience from working with Sarah Mitchell, Susana Bautista-Hayes, and Natalie Moreno-Cason.

I am forever indebted to Gayle Seymour, Reinaldo Morales Jr., and Melissa Quesenbery from the Art History department at the University of Central Arkansas.

To Shawn Goicoechea and Sandra Leyva and the community members from La Lucha Space for their moral and financial support during my undergraduate, *más amor!*

This project owes the support from Sergio and Diane Hernández, Ruben Reyna, Mario Gonzales, Leopoldo and Jeanne Tanguma, Oscar Castillo, Carlos Manuel Haro, Rosalio Muñoz, Miguel Roura, and Tatcho Mindiola, their *confianza* and generous time in sharing their stories and documents during our meetings. This project was difficult in parts because it was about telling their story, I hope my mistakes don't shallow your voices.

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the documentation of two historic murals that are exceptional in their relationships to the rising of the Chicano consciousness insofar as their stories will become an integral part of the historical record. Based on the presumption that both murals compared in this study are works of art, this thesis proposes to elevate the art historical value of *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student Mural* (UH, 1973), legitimizing their condition as historical monuments of cultural heritage that must be displayed, protected and conserved. As works of art, both murals are ideal for studies in early Chicano visual expressions of resistance via *form* and *content* during the first phase of the Chicano community mural movement from 1965 to 1974. Also, each mural is a visual record of their populations and by proxy each are deposits of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution.

This thesis argues that both murals function as symbolic monuments that merit conservation and proper display. The people who influenced their making reflected their own auto-determination by indicting the systems and institutions oppressing them through strategies of direct action, civil disobedience, community organizing and participation in a civic consciousness. These social movements brought about social change in the political, legal and—the focus of this thesis—the educational system. Furthermore, the material and visual form of the murals are embedded with the struggles and strategies for representation and re-signifying of public spaces at the University of California in Los Angeles, and at the University of Houston in Texas by reclaiming of the newly occupied spaces by the rising of the Chicano consciousness.

Using both field and archival research, this thesis is the first historical undertaking of examining materials related to the murals to explicate the planning and making of two regionally-specific and historical murals. Documentation about the planning and making of the murals is scarce and difficult to access. Before this research project, knowledge of the making of these artworks existed only in the memories of a few whose testimonies have been recorded in oral interviews conducted by the author. Digital humanities is a possible way of democratizing this information and empowering our communities and their youth.

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Introduction[1]

People's historian Howard Zinn reminds the reader that one cannot remain "neutral on a moving train" and that one tends to tip the balance -- so to speak -- to incline it towards our subjectivities, including the writers of histories. In taking a stance, I incline towards elevating the art historical value of the two early Chicano murals of study in this thesis. My main purpose is to elevate their value against the values of the US western art canon that, by means of systemic racism, devalues the art of other-than the white status quo. I will further discuss this main argument in Chapter 3. But first, let's get on the train.

In 2017, the Getty launched *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, Latin American and Latino Art in LA,* a widespread initiative of museum exhibitions focusing on Latino art across Southern California. Through this initiative, in 2018, and while I was serving an internship as research assistant and working as docent at the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA), the mural *Chicano History* was installed in the gallery.[2] I had not yet applied to graduate school when my search had already begun: the search for a mural with a fraught history and the search of the population of the mural.

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[1] Part of this research includes material from my paper "Considerations on the *Chicano History* Mural" presented at the 36th Art History Graduate Symposium at Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, published by Florida State University journal *Athanor* no 37, December 6 2019. https://journals.flvc.org/athanor

[2] With efforts initiated by Betsy Andersen, Executive Director of Museo Eduardo Carrillo and collaboration with Susana Bautista-Hayes, Executive Director of the Pasadena Museum of California Art, Isabel Rojas-Williams Executive Director of the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles; Jessica Hough, Director of Exhibitions California Historical Society; Erin Curtis, Senior Curator of Exhibitions and Education, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes. Amongst others like artist Sergio Hernández, UCLA-CSRC Director Profesor Chon Noriega and postdoctoral scholar in residency Carlos Manuel Haro.

Based on the presumption that both murals compared in this study are works of art, this thesis proposes to elevate the art historical value of *Chicano History* (1970) and *The Chicano Student Mural* (1973), legitimizing their condition as historical monuments of cultural heritage that must be displayed, protected and conserved. As works of art, both murals are ideal for studies in early Chicano[3] visual expressions of resistance via *form* and *content* during the first phase of the Chicano community mural movement from 1965 to 1974.[4] Also, each mural is a "visual record"[5] of their populations and by proxy each are "deposits"[6] of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution.

The methodology of this thesis takes in part from Michael Baxandall's studies on visual culture in fifteenth century Italy, who asserts that pictures are documents embedded in social histories. Based on field and archival research, this thesis offers a reconstruction of the social history around the murals in order to better understand the social relationships invested in the production of these two monuments. Following Baxandall, this thesis argues that both murals are "deposits" of social revolutionary relationships because their social history is "concretely embodied" in these historic

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[3] In this thesis, *chicano* is used within the although-dated historic context during the early Chicano Civil Rights period, specifically between the years 1970 and 1974, which are the years that correspond to the completion of each mural. When possible, the term *chicanx* is used in support of the contemporary debate against colonially imposed gender categories imbedded in language by carving out the gender binary from the word and literally removing the two syllables that indicate binary gender which is a social construct from a "colonized imaginary" in words of historian Emma Pérez.

[4] Barnet-Sánchez, Holy, and Timothy W. Drescher, *Give Me Life: Iconography and Identity in East LA Murals*, foreword by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2016., xvii.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Drawing on the idea that "paintings are among other things fossils of economic life" from Michael Baxandall, who published in 1972 about Fifteenth Century Italy's social history in *Painting and Experience In Fifteenth Century Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, (2).

monuments. The "social relationships" that influenced their form indicates a revolutionary period that coincides with similar simultaneous social movements to mobilize against contemporary struggles, such as Vietnam War protests and Civil Rights marches. These two murals evidence a cultural rebirth in their form and content for the "Chicano art period."[7] The people who influenced their making reflected their own auto-determination by indicting the systems and institutions oppressing them through strategies of direct action, civil disobedience, community organizing and participation in a "civic consciousness." These social movements brought about social change in the political, legal and—the focus of this thesis—the educational system. Furthermore, the material and visual form of the murals *Chicano History* and *The Chicano Student Mural* are embedded with the struggles and strategies for representation and reclamation of public spaces. The production of these murals evidences the re-signifying of the newly occupied spaces by the generation that identified themselves with the rising of the Chicano consciousness.

The theoretical framework for the thesis case study follows the work of scholars Holly Barnet-Sánchez and Timothy Drescher from their 2016 book on East Los Angeles chicanx muralism, *Give Me Life*. In the "Foreword" of the book, pioneering scholar in Chicano art and history Tomás Ybarra-Frausto encourages to use their framework as a template to analyze the "thousands of Chicano murals throughout the country as a

[7] Shifra Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto in their early contributions to the field proposed a model for the artistic developments of "Chicano art" in order to localize the arrival of the "Chicano Period." A cultural Rebirth taking place somewhere between 1965 and 1981. In Goldman, Shifra M., and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto. *Arte Chicano: a comprehensive annotated bibliography of Chicano art, 1965-1981*. Berkeley: Chicano Studies Library Publications Unit, University of California. 1985. (16).

specific genre in contemporary American art."[8] By following their "new approach," the thesis contributes to the dearth of scholarship "seriously investigating these monumental public phenomena as murals, investigating the implications of the medium along with its content" in order to consider murals "seriously as art" and not reducing them as illustrations or academic frameworks for other larger ideas.[9]

Scholar Guisella Latorre in *Walls of Empowerment*, writes that:

> The rehabilitation of indigenous history and culture became a crucial component in the growing politicization that saturated Chicana/o political thought with the onset of the Chicano movement, or *El Movimiento* the state; colonial; expansionist, and postindustrial history that directly informed the indigenist subject matter of these wall paintings.[10]

She adds that murals are:

> responses to the history of displacement and marginalization traditionally suffered by Mexican and Chicana/o populations as a means to reclaim the spaces historically denied to them… by re-appropriating these spaces, Chicana/o muralists [continue] seeking to physically restore the Aztec homeland of Aztlán on U.S. soil.[11]

Historian Emma Pérez discursive category of the decolonial imaginary is a political project to "write a history that decolonizes otherness." This category functions to

[8] Ybarra-Frausto, Tomás, Foreword to Barnet-Sánchez, Holy and Trim Drescher, *Give Me Life: Iconography and Identity in East LA Murals*, foreword by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2016., xv.
[9] Barnet-Sánchez, Holy and Trim Drescher, *Give Me Life*, 2016., xvii – xxiii.
[10] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of empowerment: Chicana/o indigenist murals of California*. Austin: University of Texas Press. 2008.
[11] Ibid., 31.

"think of the past as a colonial imaginary" which is a kind of consciousness that "still determines many of our efforts to write history in the United States."[12]

The decolonial imaginary functions to disrupt the western canonical consciousness from the silences or interstitial gaps in history that "makes Chicana/o agency transformative." The category of the decolonial imaginary is a helpful discursive category as it opens up the space for interpreting how the artists, as belonging to a group of aggrieved peoples in their particular struggles created the murals as part of the institution and in opposition to the institution that had failed them. As such, the murals of study are "countersymbols" [13] that function as alternatives against the hegemony of the US western canon—being all of the cultural productions abiding by the colonial imagination in creating stereotypes that are detrimental for our populations.

This thesis describes the documentation of two historic murals that are exceptional in their relationships to the rising of the Chicano consciousness insofar as their stories will become an integral part of the historical record. In order to better understand the visual language of the murals, the thesis establishes a dialectical relationship and puts into dialogue the UCLA mural with the UH mural. The comparison is in order to show the historical importance of the murals painted at each public institution to celebrate these major changes in the higher education system.

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[12] Pérez, Emma, "Sexing the Colonial Imaginary: (En)gendering Chicano History, Theory, and Consiousness," in *The Decolonial Imaginary.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, (4-7).
[13] Barnet-Sánchez, Holy and Trim Drescher, *Give Me Life.* (xvii).

The following chapters explain relationships of difference and similarity between the two murals, highlighting their condition as two of the earliest[14] surviving, and among the most well preserved "Chicano-themed murals,"[15] painted at public institutions of higher education with the subject of "Chicano History."[16]

The first chapter introduces the two murals of study in this thesis, *Chicano History* (1970) at University of California, Los Angeles and *Chicano Student Mural* (1973) at the University of Houston. The former was painted during the summer of 1970, by the collective efforts of Eduardo Carrillo, Sergio Hernández, Ramses Noriega, and Saul Solache, in the spirit of celebrating the recently established Mexican American Cultural Center, the predecessor of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles.

[14] Leading scholars in Chicanx muralism in general and in East Los Angeles in particular, consider *Chicano History* as one of the earlier Chicano murals amongst them are: Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, Shifra Goldman, Holly Barnett-Sanchez, Guisela Latorre, and Timothy Drescher. The *Chicano Student Mural* was completed three years later but it is also amongst the earliest and most well-preserved murals in its kind.

[15] In 1989, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto proposed a chronology to encompass the earlier developments of Chicano art. The chronology was to be included in the unpublish catalogue for the 1981 exhibit *Califas: An Exhibition of Chicano Artists in California.* The exhibition was organized by Eduardo Carrillo. Carrillo collaborated in painting the mural *Chicano History* which is listed in the chronology as the earliest of its kind. In "Califas: socio-aesthetic chronology of Chicano art." 23. Typed Manuscript; Documents of Twentieth-Century Latin American and Latino Art: A Digital Archive and Publications Project, ICAA-1082145. https://icaa.mfah.org/s/en/item/1082145#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-1673%2C0%2C5895%2C32999

[16] Reynaldo F. Macias and Carlos Manuel Haro. Museum Label displayed during the exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo,* at the Pasadena Museum of California Art in 2018. That was the last exhibit held at the Pasadena Museum of California Art before its closure in the summer of the same year.

Image 1: Eduardo Carrillo, Sergio Hernández, Ramses Noriega, and Saul Solache, *Chicano History* mural, 1970. Oil on panel, 144 x 264 inches (12 x 22 feet). Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles. Image courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. Photograph by Jenny Walters.

The second mural of study, *Chicano Student Mural*,[17] was painted during the summer of 1973 by the collective of Leopoldo Tanguma, Mario Gonzales, and Ruben Reyna, in the spirit of celebrating the recently established Mexican American Studies Program, the predecessor of the current Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston, Texas.

[17] In 1974, Mario Gonzales re-titles the mural *La Marcha por la Humanidad* in remembrance of the recent passing of David Alfaro Siqueiros. Chapter 2 includes this discussion and explains the planning and making of the mural. How the meaning of the mural changes after Gonzales re-titles it remains an area of further research.

Image 1.2: Mario R. Gonzales, Ruben Reyna, and Leo Tanguma, *The Chicano Student Mural* later renamed *La Marcha por la Humanidad* (Dedicated to David Alfaro Siqueiros) mural, 1973. Oil on panel, 108 x 528 inches (9 x 44 feet). Student Center, University of Houston. Image courtesy Ruben Reyna.

Chapter 2 covers the social context describing the planning and the making of the murals and proposes that both murals are symbols of the student tactics that function as revolutionary and celebratory in reclaiming the spaces of two historically segregated public universities. Documentation about the planning and making of the murals *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student Mural* (UH, 1973) is almost nonexistent, and when it does is scarce and difficult to access, and before this thesis, it was important knowledge that existed only in the memories of a few who passed them down in their testimonies. Based on original research and documentation, this thesis is the first time that the historical material included is brought together.

The second chapter argues that the production of each mural evidences the re-signifying of the newly occupied spaces at each public institution and celebrates the establishment of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles; and the establishment of the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston, Texas. The discussion demonstrates how teachers and students – *la vieja y la nueva escuela*- empowered each other in support of the rising of the Chicano

consciousness at each public institution. The chapter concludes by describing how both murals function as symbols that remain celebratory in that both institutions UCLA-Chicano Studies Research Center and UH Public Art Collection hold each in their collections two of the earliest surviving and most well-preserved Chicano student murals painted at institutions of higher education with the subject of Chicano History. This is significant, because both murals are each historical monuments of cultural heritage and as such, they are exemplary of their kind. They are both celebratory symbols that represent the historic Chicano student movements in connection to the period of the early Chicano Civil Rights Movements. Most important the social history of both murals indicates that social change at both institutions, UCLA and UH, was possible.

The third chapter adapts the methodologies developed and taught in courses on *Digital Humanities and Object- Based Learning in a Museum and University Context*, imparted at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in partnership with the University of Houston in the fall of 2019. I employ practices for close-looking by means of direct contact, to examine the murals: *Chicano History* (UCLA, 1970), and *The Chicano Student Mural* (UH 1973).

Based on field and archival research, chapter 3 describes the condition and iconography of two of the earliest surviving, and among the most well-preserved Chicano student murals, painted at institutions of higher education with the subject of Chicano history. Scholar Guisella Latorre writes that indigenist murals are objects of a kind produced with the intention to express forms of resistance and to counter imperial and capitalistic hegemony. The chapter offers a visual analysis and interpretation of the

iconography of the murals as strategies for resistance against the status quo as proposed by Latorre.

However, the murals are also unsettling due to the continued discrimination, exclusion, and constrain of spaces by the growing US racial intolerance and the use of military tactics against aggrieved groups protesting peacefully. *Chicano History* remains in permanent storage and according to conservator Ingrid Sayeb,[18] the materiality of the mural is currently in optimal state for preservation. She remarks on the issues of balancing between preservation and access of the mural. Because *Chicano History* is out of sight, it remains inactive and in a state of dislocation. Thus, it is absent from the public memory. This is important because as scholar Guisella Latorre remarks "murals carry much of the knowledge and history not taught in schools and universities."[19] Both *Chicano History* and *Chicano Student Mural* depict stories of resilience and survival while at the same time communicate visually important knowledge that should be passed down through generations.

Chicano Murals and Digital Humanities

In the absence of display of the *Chicano History* mural, I propose a digital humanities project interpretative of the mural in a digital form displayed on an interactive screen such as the one at El Paso History Wall.[20] Or through a web application like the Dartmouth Digital Orozco interpretative project for the mural *The Epic of American*

[18] Phone conversation with Ingrid Sayeb associate conservator of objects and sculpture Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. February 7, 2020.
[19] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of empowerment.,* 26.
[20] https://epmuseumofhistory.org/learn/digie/

Civilization painted by José Clemente Orozco between 1932 and 1934 in Baker-Berry Library at Dartmouth College.[21] It is highly improbable that the mural will return to its original wall. Because of this, *Chicano History* is a mural in constant dislocation. However, the current disassembled state of the mural could change by possible initiatives to find a permanent location to display the mural.

In facing the dearth of preliminary documentation for the mural process of The *Chicano Student Mural* (proposal, drawings, cartoons, notes), I propose to view this mural using infrared light. Infrared imaging techniques can reveal the different layers during painting and reveal the artistic process including the underdrawing.[22] Researchers would be able to see the different layers of paint isolated from each other and whatever images had been covered over.[23] The documentation of the different processes and the different hands at work can be made available for further research in a similar project that I proposed previously for displaying the *Chicano History* mural on an interactive digital screen or website application. Studies with imaging technologies will reveal the two different murals painted on the surface and can be processed as two separate digital images. Scholars could study the original design of the composition from Leo Tanguma and how Mario Gonzales solved problems of design and composition when covering Tanguma's. This is an opportunity to revise our history and to include visual

[21] http://www.dartmouth.edu/digitalorozco/
[22] Museum of Fine Arts Houston. "Examination Using X-rays." https://www.mfah.org/research/conservation/conservation-science
[23] Cascone Sarah. "New X-Ray Images Reveal Just How Carefully Picasso Worked Over His Earliest Blue Period Paintings." *ArtNet*, June 6, 2018. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/picasso-secrets-x-ray-1297568#:~:text=Imaging%20scientists%20are%20able%20to,hidden%20beneath%20the%20visible%20surface.

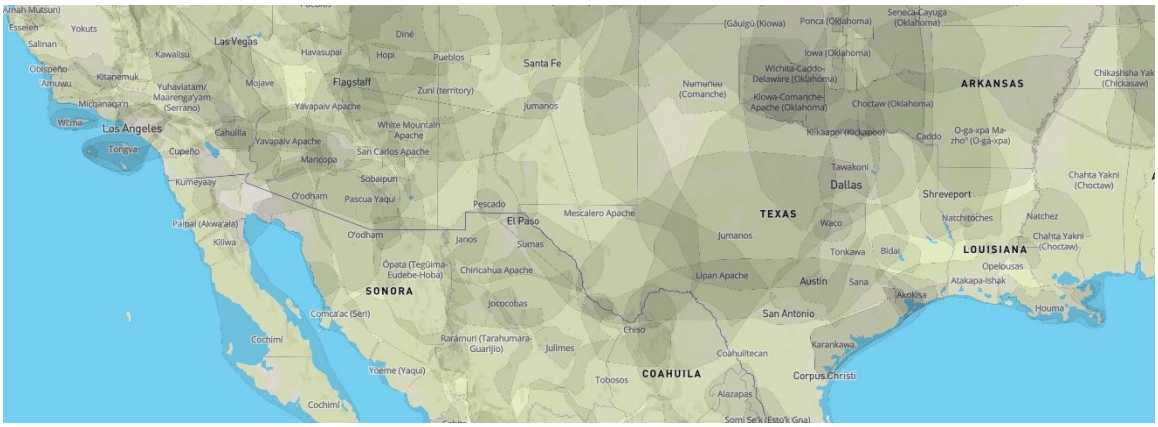
documentation of all of the artists' contributions to the mural. This is important because Leo Tanguma is one of the precursors for the Chicano community mural movement at the turn of 1970 and almost all of his murals painted in Houston have been destroyed. Of particular importance is that *The Chicano Student Mural* predates one of Leo Tanguma's earliest and most iconic works— *The Rebirth of Our Nationality* completed in 1973 at Canal Street in Houston, Texas.

In the following chapter 2 the thesis describes the social context proposing that both murals are symbolic of the celebratory strategies to reclaim the spaces at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at the University of Houston in Texas. The chapter argues that the production of each mural evidences the re-signifying of the newly occupied spaces in support of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution. Chapter 3 will follow with visual and iconographic analysis describing the state of both murals.

Chapter 2

Part of the Historical Record

Image 2.1: Map showing Native land and modern political divisions. The University of California, Los Angeles, was established on Chumash, Tongva, and Kizh land. The University of Houston, Texas, was established on Karankawa, Coahuiltecan, Atakapa-Ishak, and Sana land. https://native-land.ca/



Using both field and archival research, this thesis is the first historical undertaking of examining materials related to *Chicano History* (1970) and *Chicano Student Mural*[24] (1973). This chapter not only covers the social context of the making of these murals by citing secondary sources examining murals and the Chicano movement nationally, but also relies on primary sources including oral testimony interviews, correspondence and photos, to explicate the planning and making of two regionally-specific and historical murals. The chapter proposes that both murals are symbolic of the celebratory strategies to reclaim the spaces of two historically segregated public universities. Texas legally

[24] Part of this research was obtained through the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston which includes material from my conversations with Leopoldo Tanguma, Mario Gonzales, and Ruben Reyna during my services as Graduate Research Fellow.

segregated African Americans, but Mexican Americans were segregated by costum on factors including language.

Documentation about the planning and making of the murals *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student* (UH, 1973) is almost nonexistent, and when it does is scarce and difficult to access. Before this research project, knowledge of the making of these artworks existed only in the memories of a few whose testimonies have been recorded in oral interviews conducted by the author. Using these primary sources, the chapter argues that the production of each mural evidences the re-signifying of the newly occupied spaces at each public institution in a celebratory spirit. The discussion shows the diversity of aesthetics and artists' sensitivity to social justice struggles in the ways that teachers and students empowered each other in support of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution.

Scholar Guisela Latorre argues that the site specificity of mural-making provides the advantage to create imagery coherent within the context of the community in which the mural is created providing a liberating visual rhetoric rooted in our indigenist history. A mural has the potential to defiantly occupy a site and inspire a place for reflection while simultaneously raising community consciousness.[25] Dialectic relationships are drawn "between painted image and sociohistorical contexts"[26] in *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student* (UH, 1973). Los Angeles and Houston function as a "geographic location and metaphorical Chicano identifier for communities

[25] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of Empowerment*., 8.
[26] In Holy Barnet-Sánchez, and Timothy W. Drescher, *Give Me Life: Iconography and Identity in East LA Murals*, foreword by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Albuquerque, University of New México Press, 2016., 19.

and cultures" as suggested by scholars Holy Barnet-Sánchez, and Timothy W. Drescher. The murals are painting interventions that connect with the psychogeography of physical locations of both of the murals— the artworks embedded with meaning in the making of the Mexican identity and by proxy the making of the Chicano identity. This chapter proposes that unlike the community murals that are painted on housing projects or on street fronts, the *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student* (UH, 1973) were created for specific communities inside the universities and, at the same time, against the same institutions in which they were created. In this regard, they function differently than murals displayed on the streets because the publics of both murals of study exist in relation to the secluded space of the institution. However, both murals evidence the counterhegemonic nature of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.

The structure of this chapter is anchored on the socially constructed borderland states of California and Texas, sharing each an imaginary axis of the political division separating the United Sates of México and the United States of America.[27] According to leading founder of Chicano Studies at California State University and pioneering academic on Chicano Studies, Rodolfo F. Acuña, towards the end of the 1960s, out of the 85 percent of Mexican Americans living in urban spaces, 50 percent were in California, and 34 percent were in Texas. Those numbers translated into revenue for schools that failed to their Mexican heritage students' needs. In the sixties, Los Angeles was the second largest Mexican city after México City with a population of more than one million

[27] Further research is necessary on borderland Chicano Student Murals at universities that were established on indigenous territories. Although not everybody supported the nationalistic ideologies of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement the territories that the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán claimed as their ancestral homeland Aztlán disregards other non-Aztec origins and belongings in relation to the geographic locations.

people of Mexican heritage. He adds that if Mexican Americans would form a nation, we would be the "sixth largest Latin American Nation and the fifth largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world."[28] This, one of the largest hypothetical nations, is also the sum of US born people who remain to this day excluded, discriminated and oppressed. Considering these circumstances during the 1960s, future organizers of social movements for the advancement of individuals of the Mexican diaspora in the United States began brainstorming the best means to organize and communicate a sense of identity for themselves, trying to identify and execute discursive forms to best communicate their struggles for justice in order to bring about change.

While the focus of this theses is to discuss the discursive form of visual language used in painting *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student* (UH, 1973), other discursive forms utilized within the larger Chicano movement included writing, manifestos and music. One of the most influential documents of the time is the 1967 *I am Joaquin,* the epic poem of the Chicano people by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales President and Director of the civil rights organization the Crusade for Justice. *I am Joaquin* captures the sentiment of unity in consciousness against hegemony, erasure and acculturation in a way that motivates the Chicano struggles for cultural affirmation and uprising under a nationalistic cultural pride. This section suggests that the original 1967 edition complemented with the illustrations by Yermo Vasquez[29] are important discursive influences reflected in the iconography and organization of the L.A. and the Houston

[28] Acuña, Rodolfo F. 2011. "From Student Power to Chicano Studies." In *The Making of Chicana/o Studies. In the Trenches of Academe,* by Rodolfo F. Acuña, p. 36. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press., xxi.
[29] Gonzales, Rodolfo. 1967. *I am Joaquin,* 1-20, El Gallo Newspaper.

murals. One specific example in the Houston mural is the inclusion of a portrait of "Corky" Gonzales painted by Mario Gonzales.

During the first Chicano Youth Conference in Denver, Colorodo in March 1969, poet Alurista presented the El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán,[30] another major key ideological component for the Chicano Movement. The plan emits a call to action to transmit and disperse their plan in any way or form, including the arts, in a revolutionary fashion while at the same time making a call to action for a national walkout by all Chicanos belonging to the "familia de La Raza." The plan called for the liberation and the building of an autonomous nation, a political party, and demands for public action that "meets the needs of our community."[31] Part of the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán was printed in both English and Spanish on the front matter for the first issue of the CSRC journal Aztlán publications during the spring of 1970.[32] The cover design was *Concepto de Aztlán* by Judith Elena Hernandez. Poet Alurista was Instructor of Chicano Literature and Creative Writing at San Diego State College. This is exemplary of the larger discursive field between image and text in which the "key or common denominator is nationalism" embedded in the concept of Aztlán.

The following month, April 1969, at the University of California, Santa Barbara, another conference built upon the energies of the momentum and resulted in the Plan de Santa Barbara. Professor Acuña presented a curriculum to address these issues at the

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[30] Hereida, Alberto Baltazar Urista. 1969. *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, Denver Conference, March 1969.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Hereida, Alberto Baltazar Urista. "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," in *Aztlan: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts*, ed. Juan Gomez-Quiñones et all. pg. iv-v. Aztlán Publications, Chicano Studies Center: University of California, Los Angeles. Vol. 1 no. 1. Spring 1970.

conference alongside professors Gus Segade, Jesus Chavarría, Juan Gómez-Quiñones, and Gracia Molina, joined by members of the Brown Berets—pro-Chicano activists promoting a range of relevant causes— and students and drafted El Plan de Santa Barbara demanding the increase of access to quality higher education laying a strong foundation for the establishing of Mexican American and Chicano Studies and the recruitment of Mexican American students. During this epic conference the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) was organized in seeking self-determination and self-liberation of their people.[33]

These series of events building on the historical scene across the southwest resulted in a series of high school walkouts that were key precursors for educational representation in both Texas and California. The students were manifesting in opposition to their systematic exclusion from the educational institutions that had already set lower expectations by deeming them inferior, and chastising them for speaking Spanish. These public institutions were set to pipeline students towards vocational schools or into the military industrial complex. The students, their parents, and their communities demanded improvement and reforming de-facto segregated schools, bilingual educational representation, and a better education. Most importantly, they wanted a school path that would prepare them for college. The public school system was failing to address issues of racism in the school districts by discriminating against Chicanx students deeming them invisible in US society.

[33] Acuña, Rodolfo F. 2011. "In the Trenches of Academe." In The Making of Chicana/o Studies. In the Trenches of Academe, by Rodolfo F. Acuña, p. 59-61. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

In 1968, Paolo Freire published *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in Brazil. The book was published in English the following year. In the book Freire advocates for a revolutionary pedagogy that is based on dialogical education.[34] The chapter suggests that the students' movements at both the University of Houston in Texas, and the University of California in los Angeles are exemplary of Freire's model of "libertarian education" in which students, after identifying issues in systems that contribute to their sense of inferiority and identity crisis, explore in a dialogical way with the teacher how to change their immediate obstacles, namely *conscientização* or oppositional consciousness. Thus, arriving at a critical consciousness in opposition to the status quo. "Libertarian education" is a way to re-humanize students and teachers dialogically by making them aware of their circumstances in order to challenge the systems of their oppression. This chapter is in agreement with scholar Mario T. Garcia who has previously suggested that Sal Castro's philosophy of education shared similarities with Paolo Freire's and that the walkouts in California were "synonymous with Sal Castro, the Chicano teacher who inspired and led the students to take this courageous action"[35] adding that Professor Castro was the son of a "union man in México, who told Sal that only a *huelga* – a student strike – would work."[36]

Similarly, scholar Guisela Latorre states that:

> …the often collective nature of many indigenous arts [murals] also involved a process of transformation for both the artist and the community… for Chicana/o

[34] Freire, Paolo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group. 2005
[35] Garcia T. Mario, "Blowout! Sal Castro and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Eastside Walkouts." In *Seeking Educational Justice. The 1968 Chicana/o Student Walkouts Made History,* conference anthology, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. March 10 – March 11, 2018. (11).
[36] Ibid., (18).

> artists who invited local community members to collaborate in the creation of murals, this spiritual transformation also took the form of political revelation, whereby all those involved underwent a radical process of what Paulo Freire would call conscientização, or 'conscientization,' through which they became conscious of their own oppression but also of their own potential and power to bring about change at an individual collective level.[37]

The historical context above from all of the different documents will help the reader understand the ways in which the artists of the murals of this study participated in a larger discourse of cross-cultural influences and homogenous forms such as in the murals *Chicano* History (1970) and *La Marcha Por La Humanidad* (1973), including their iconography. These murals are both specific to the places they were made for as well as to the national Chicano ideology because the people participating in their making reflected their own auto-determination by indicting the systems and institutions oppressing them through strategies of direct action, civil disobedience, community organizing and participation in the sharing of a civic consciousness. Even the planning and making of the murals are important components to the larger struggles against common systems of oppression in the US society. The murals are monuments of the regional struggles that brought about social change in the educational system at UCLA and at UH. Furthermore, the material and visual form of the murals are embedded with the struggles and strategies for representation and reclamation of public spaces. Their production re-signifies and re-claims the institutional space *para la causa.* Demonstrating the empowerment that comes from representing our communities in the visual field.

[37] Latorre in Walls of Empowerment., 8.

Lastly, this chapter describes the planning and making of *Chicano History* and *The Chicano Student Mural* in tandem with the support of their respective institutions and development of specialized programs serving students of Mexican heritage. By discussing the establishment of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston, Texas, this chapter places the creation of these murals within larger institutional changes in their corresponding universities.

The University of California, Los Angeles Chicano Studies Research Center

> Two weeks after the painting was finished it was the Chicano Moratorium and it seems like a lot of what went on at the moratorium was actually mirrored in this imagery of this painting we just finished. Eduardo Carrillo. [38]

The excerpt epigraph is from the testimony of Eduardo Carrillo in the documentary by Pedro Pablo Celedón, *A Life of Engagement*, which traces the artistic trajectory of Carrillo as an "American artist discovering his Mexican cultural heritage." According to Carrillo, in the documentary, he was most likely applying the final brushstrokes on the prescient mural about two weeks before the events that transpired during the National Chicano Antiwar Moratorium.

On August 29, 1970 in East Los Angeles, California, an estimated thirty-thousand demonstrators, including the painters of the *Chicano History* mural, headed to Laguna

[38] Testimony from Eduardo Carrillo with Pedro Pablo Celedón in the documentary winner of the Gold Remi at the 48th Houston Film Festival, *A Life of Engagement,* Barefoot Productions. 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi7QD0Ew-E8

Park in their support of the Chicano struggles against the Vietnam War.[39] Most of them were in their early twenties but they were also joined by their families, including their children and elders. The peaceful and celebratory Chicano National Protest day ended in police riots when the Los Angeles Police gassed and attacked them using military anti-crowd control tactics.[40] Hundreds of demonstrators were injured and/or jailed. Three people died, including journalist Rubén Salazar, who supported the Chicano cause with an influential voice in reporting about *el movimiento*. Laguna Park was renamed after Salazar in his remembrance. The riots started before the anticipated speech by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales and deprived his announcement of a new political party.[41] Eduardo Carrillo was beaten by the police and jailed.[42] Sergio Hernández was distributing issues of the ConSafos magazine—to which he contributed as staff—when the police riots exploded. He helped in keeping children safe, evacuating them away from Laguna Park.[43] Ramses Noriega was among the leading organizers of the Moratorium.[44]

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[39] Testimonies from Eduardo Carrillo, Sergio and Diane Hernández, and Ramses Noriega. Also, in Eva Sperling Cockcroft and Holly Barnet-Sánchez, *Signs from the Heart.* Social and Public Art Resource Center: University of New México Press, 1993.
[40] Rosales, Francisco Arturo, "The Chicano Moratorium," in *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, 2nd ed. Houston: University of Houston Arte Público Press, 1997. (199-203); Testimony of Rosalio Muñoz in Garcia, Mario T. *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2015. (211 – 319).
[41] Rosales, Francisco Arturo, *Chicano!* (203).
[42] Conversation with Sergio Hernández, Acton, California. October 7, 2019. Also, Eduardo Carrillo testimonial in *A Life of Engagement,* in Pedro Pablo Celedón. 2014.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Conversation with Rosalio Muñoz, August 2, 2019, UCLA-CSRC Library. Also, Mario T. Garcia includes testimonies of Muñoz describing his relationship with Noriega in *The Chicano Generation. Testimonios of the Movement*. University of California Press, 2015. (225-298). And, art historian Denise Lugo Oral History interview with Ramses Noriega in 1980. Retrieved, August 15, 2019. http://dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10139/5033/RAMSES_NORIEGA_1and2.pdf?sequence=1

Previous to the Chicano National Protest day were the "blowouts" when high school and college students coordinated protests in which an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 students walked out of their schools. The students were from the majority Chicanx school district of Los Angeles Eastside, and from other parts of the Los Angeles Unified School District.[45] The students were manifesting in opposition to their systematic exclusion from the educational institutions that had already set lower expectations by deeming them inferior, and chastised them for speaking Spanish. These public institutions were set to pipeline students towards vocational schools or into the military industrial complex. The students demanded "improvement and reforming" [46] de-facto segregated schools, bilingual educational representation, and a better education. Most importantly, they wanted a school path that would prepare them for college. The public school system was failing to address issues of racism in the school districts by discriminating against Chicanx students deeming them invisible in US society.[47] The students who coordinated the protests were influential in the establishment of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, the following year. Professor Sal Castro was crucial for the meeting between the aggrieved high school students and the students from the UCLA UMAS, which was recently founded in 1967. Carlos Manuel Haro, then an undergraduate student, was among the initial members of UMAS. Their demands included the establishment of Chicano studies and "classes that integrate some aspects of

[45] Garcia T. Mario, "Blowout! Sal Castro and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Eastside Walkouts." In Seeking Educational Justice. The 1968 Chicana/o Student Walkouts Made History, conference anthology, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. March 10 – March 11, 2018., (11).
[46] Ibid., (30).
[47] Ibid., (12).

the Chicano experience."[48] Members of UMAS High Potential Program, a predecessor to the Academic Advancement Program, served a critical role in forming the Chicano Studies Research Center.

In 1969, in the light of the recent pressures from students defying police and university administrators, UCLA ceded in creating ethnic studies via four organized research units (ORU) each with a concentration in African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Chicano Studies. The Institute for American Cultures was established in Campbell Hall. During that time, many graduate students became teachers such as professor Reynaldo Macias. Professor Macias was a freshman student at UCLA in 1965 recruited from Garfield High School via the Educational Opportunity Program for underrepresented minorities. In 1968 he was appointed to the taskforce for the High Potential Program[49] to open up opportunities for students of their communities who otherwise would have been excluded from the institution. In 1969, Professor Macias chaired Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de *Aztlán*.

In 1967, Virgil Roberts, then an undergraduate student at UCLA, became the chair for the Black Student Union's Education Committee.[50] According to him, the Vietnam antiwar protests "coincided with the birth of black consciousness."[51] In 1968, he was a leading figure in drafting the proposal in forming the Center for Afro-American Studies after the newly appointed UCLA Chancellor Charles E. Young Roberts, who

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[48] Ibid., (22).
[49] The program evolved into the Academic Advancement Program.
[50] Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia, "Bunche Center for African American Studies," in *Forty Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA*. Ed. Chicano Studies Research Center Library, UCLA. (41- 48).
[51] Ibid.

entrusted the Black Student Union's Education Committee to come up with a proposal to address the educational needs of their populations. Coincidentally, Juan Gomez-Quiñones—a graduate student during this time—pressed the importance of a center focused on research and teaching. But after two students from the Black Panther Party were shot and killed right outside Campbell Hall (where *Chicano History* was in the making), fearing persecution as well, Virgil Roberts continued his studies at Harvard Law School.[52] That same day, Professor Robert Singleton was by Campbell Hall when John J. Huggins and Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter were shot and killed. Robert Singleton became the first director of the center for Afro-American Studies per Chancellor Young.

The Mexican American Cultural Center was founded in 1969 with the support of Edward Roybal, a native of Boyle Heights, serving as the first US Latino congressman from California since the state's founding in 1879.[53] Professor Rodolfo Alvarez, was one of three Mexican Americans with a PhD in Sociology when he became the first director of the center. He later changed the center's name to the Chicano Studies Research Center to "acknowledge the social forces that had created the Chicano movement."[54] During the early 1970s, UCLA graduate Juan Gomez-Quiñones became the director for the center during the period of 1972 through 1975 with Carlos Manuel Haro serving as his program director. According to Professor Haro, it was during this period in which the fundamental structure of research, a library and archive, community services, and publications was in effect.[55]

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Tash, Jackeline, "The Long Road Home; 40 Years," in *Forty Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA*. (51).
[54] Ibid., (18).
[55] Ibid., (19).

Roberto Cabello-Argandoña was the first librarian when the CSRC Library was founded as a student library collection in a room at Campbell Hall. He was initially hired as an undergraduate research assistant by then history professor Juan Gomez-Quiñones. Cabello-Argandoña began the research collection by expanding the holdings at the library during a period when there were very few publications about Mexican Americans. He began first by acquiring all doctoral dissertations on Mexican Americans published by any US university, old periodicals in Spanish language, and microfilming a special collection of newspapers from México's national library from the time when California was part of México. The collection continued growing by further acquisition of other newspapers, posters and other materials once considered ephemeral are now crucial to the historical record. Now localized at Haines Hall, the Research Center and Library collections are recognized internationally by their contributions to preserving Chicanx culture. The *Chicano History* mural is integral to the library history and significant to the study of US underrepresented populations.

Chicano History

In 1969 upon the establishment of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles the planning and making of a historic mural began. A year later, in 1970 *Chicano History* was completed. It is a wall mural in the collection of the Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).[56] It was produced in collaboration between Eduardo Carrillo (Chicano,

[56] Ownership of the mural is not settled. In 2013, Ramses Noriega signed a "deed of gift once the University of California has permanently mounted the *Chicano History* mural for public display on the UCLA campus." Sergio Hernández commented that he didn't

US b. 1937-1997); Sergio Hernandez (Chicano, US b. 1948), Ramses Noriega (Chicano, Mexican b. 1944), and Saul Solache† (I have limited information for Saul Solache including the testimony of Sergio Hernández). According to Ramses Noriega, the mural was intended to be read as a chronological timeline from left to right as the "four eras in la Raza's history" unfold.[57]

During this time, a young Chicano photographer named Oscar Castillo made important contributions to the documentation of the early Chicano Civil Rights Movement during his work for *La Raza* newspaper, including his Photograph Collection of the National Chicano Moratorium of August, 29 1970. Photographer Castillo is perhaps the only photographer to ever document the finished work *Chicano History* in *situ*, as well as the process in the making of the mural. The photograph taken by Oscar Castillo captures the recently completed *Chicano History* mural, documenting its installation at the CSRC library on the 3rd floor in Campbell Hall at the University of California, Los Angeles. Castillo's photograph shows the beginnings of one of the most extensive archives for Chicano studies— its humble beginnings described as "a free-floating period" by Professor Haro, recalling a time when some students, in need of a table for their new Chicano library, drove down to México in a pickup truck and bought a wood table, and placed it in the library.[58]

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recall "signing any agreement giving up right to the mural. Ed Carrillo and Saul Solache had passed by then. Conversation with Sergio Hernández, Acton, California. October 7, 2019.

[57] Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary." Ramses Noriega explains the different hands that worked on each section representing the different eras of the mural. Sergio Hernández, another painter for *Chicano History* walked me through the different hands that produced the mural during *Testament of the Spirit* at PMCA.

[58] Conversation with Dr. Haro at UCLA-CSRC on August 14, 2019.

Image 2.2: Photograph taken in situ of *Chicano History*, c.a. 1970. Image courtesy Oscar Castillo.

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Born to farm workers in Sonora, México in 1944, Ramses Noriega moved to the US in 1956. As a Spanish speaker in a working-class family, he had a difficult time adapting to the US, experiencing racism, isolation, and neglect.[59] His mother worked as a food packer and his father was in and out of mental hospitals. He attended Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, California from 1959 to 1963. During this period, Noriega experienced lack of support from teachers and counselors who prepared Mexican descent students to be farm workers. In 1963, he enrolled at UCLA and along with Guadalupe Esparza started United Mexican American Students (UMAS) which later

[59] Lugo, Denise Oral History interview with Ramses Noriega in 1980. Retrieved, August 15, 2019. http://dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10139/5033/RAMSES_NORIEGA_1and2.pdf?sequence=1

changed its name to Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA).[60] He and Eduardo Carrillo met at UCLA during the Chicano movement. He was also involved in the walkouts in East L.A. and the High Potential Program at UCLA and traveled "throughout the Southwest organizing Chicano students."[61] He was heavily involved with Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers struggles.

According to Noriega, during late 1969 and early 1970, upon receiving his MA, the CSRC invited him to paint the mural "The History of *La Raza* (Chicanos)" on the third floor of Campbell Hall. CSRC let Noriega pick the artists of his choice to help him. He chose Ed Carrillo, Sergio Hernández and Saul Solache. Noriega explains to art historian Denise Lugo how Saul Solache came up with the idea to divide the mural into four panels converging in the center. According to Noriega he:

> …presented injustices at different institutional levels. For example, I exposed the Police…the Catholic Church… the Vietnam War… the system of United States where this blind justice was giving a dollar to a *viejita* that her son had died in Vietnam… I put in the background a whole bunch of Chicanos demonstrating with a sign that say "*juntos venceremos, viva la raza, viva la causa*… and I put a huge fort as a symbol and on top of the fort I put the Chicano flag… a symbol of strength and unity… there was one Chicano there, he is wearing a suit, he has no shoes, and he painted his hair blonde. He's eating a little girl; he has torn off her arm and part of her arm he's eating it.[62]

Sergio Hernández must have been in his early twenties when he painted his contriubution to *Chicano History.* He received a BA degree in Chicano Studies and a minor in art in 1967 from California State University, Northridge and contributed to the historical socio-political magazine *Con Safos,* including a cartoon strip called *Anie &*

[60] Ibid., (5).
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., (16-17).

Porfi. In 2009, he received second place for Best Original Editorial Cartoons by the National Newspaper Association's Better Newspapers Contest.

During a conversation with Sergio and Diane Hernández that took place on October 7, 2019, Sergio recounted biographical details and historical context surrounding his involvement with the mural project. He graduated from high school in 1966 and attended East L.A. Junior College for two years. After that, he landed a job at the International Institute in Boyle Heights as well as accepted the opportunity to contribute to *Con Safos* magazine. As a result of working with *Con Safos* magazine, Sergio met Frank Sifuentes[63] who was at that point running a college clearing house for Chicano students and was going to the high schools and recruiting kids for the EOP[64] program Centro Joaquin Murrieta.[65] Following this meeting, Sergio Hernández began working as a recruiter and eventually enrolled at Cal State Northridge, which at that time was the L.A. State College. It was during this time that he was approached about a mural project:

> …a gentleman by the name of Saul Solache[66] came to campus. I think he was an instructor. He had been an Urban Planning student. I think he had been a graduate student, and I think he was teaching a class in Chicano Studies… I think it was

[63] Frank Sifuentes founded of *Con Safos* magazine in 1968. Listed on the editorial staff as Francisco Sifuentes (el Pancho de A.T)." The A.T. acronym was attributed because he was from Austin, Texas. "La Mesa Directiva de C/S," *Con Safos*. 1968 – 1972. Ibid.
[64] Educational Opportunity Program, in California was established in 1965 at the University of California, Berkeley, and Los Angeles campuses. The University of California Board of Regents provided the funding after pressure from UC United Mexican American Students after the Watts Uprisings of August 1965. In the spring of 1969, Rodolfo F. Acuña became the chair of Mexican American Studies, according to him, there was a considerable increased of enrollment of black students, and a small body of "Mexican American" students. In, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies*. Rutgers University Press, 2011. (44).
[65] The Centro Joaquin Murrieta de Aztlan was established in 1972 as a nonprofit college placement service to aid Latinos.
[66] Saul Solache not only collaborated with the Ed. Carrillo, Sergio Hernández and Ramses Noriega to complete *Chicano History*, he was, arguably, the person who conceived of the mural and working securing funding.

> late ’69 or early ’70 when he said “would you like to paint a mural?” Because I had painted a mural at the Cal State Northridge.[67] I’ve painted two murals, one was at the Chicano House which it ended up being burned down. [Solache] asked me if I’d be willing to participate in the mural.

Sergio Hernández then mentioned that there were issues at CSRC with who would get to paint the mural. He added that Solache actually went about getting the funding but the CSRC at UCLA had gotten the area for him and they wanted their own people. After some agreements, the four artists began meetings at the library where they were going to paint the mural and after they decided their sections and themes. Then Solache came up with the idea of dividing the mural into four areas. Each artist decided what they were going to paint and Solache designed the composition of the mural, each agreeing that they could paint on each other’s sections. According to Sergio Hernández, some of the other logistical aspects decided upon during these meetings at the library included discussion of the surface they were going to paint. Hernández initially thought that they were going to paint on the wall but then Carrillo, Noriega and Solache decided that they were going to paint on hardwood panels:

> So, they furred up the wall, and they actually screw the panels to the furring, and then, Ed Carrillo who had painted murals on the past knew exactly how to prepare the surface. So he took, a concoction that he made of glue, and gesso, and all kinds of weird stuff, and he actually painted the boards. Prepare the surface. I’m not sure if he sanded it but it was really smooth. He knew exactly what to do so he did all the prep work on the actual board. And that’s why the way they are today. Because he knew what he was doing.[68] So anyway, then we started painting.

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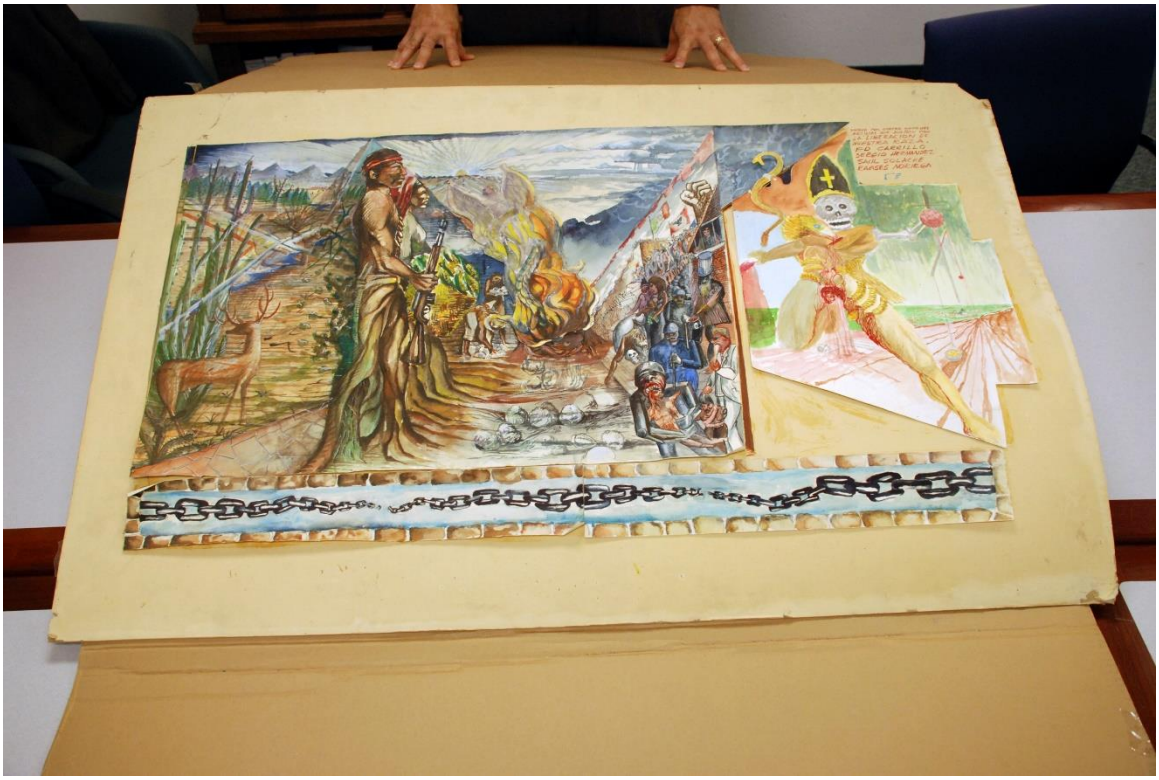
[67] California State University, Northridge. At that time was the San Fernando Valley State. Rodolfo F. Acuña recalls that “it was not the center of the largest Mexican American community, nor did it have a large Chicana/o student population,” with estimated fifty students maximum, and with less than one hundred Mexican American with a doctoral degree. In, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies.* Ibid., (48).

[68] That Ed Carrillo “knew exactly what he was doing” will be helpful for the reader to remember in the discussion of the property appraisal of *Chicano HIstory* in Chapter 3

Image 2.3: Preliminary cartoon made by Saul Solache of *Chicano History*. Written on the top right corner reads "Painted por cuatro humanos [?] artistas que sueñan con la liberacion de nuestra Raza. Ed Carrillo, Sergio Hernández, Saul Solache, Ramses Noriega." Signed S.S. UCLA-CSRCL. c.a. 1970. Image courtesy of Oscar Castillo.



Although currently *Chicano History* is stored its survival is significant because of its historic value and the scarcity of murals of this kind. Among the murals lost in California from these artists include: Eduardo Carrillo's 1976 *Birth Death, and Regeneration* was whitewashed; and Sergio Hernandez's mural at the Chicano House at Cal State Northridge c.a. 1969-70, was lost to a fire (arson?).[69]

[69] The possibility of arson is not far reaching as there had been similar hate crimes in the US including during the time period. Of particular coincidence is the case of Leo Tanguma. When he lived in Texas his studio -which was on the vicinity of a Ku Klux Klan high activity area for hate crimes- was also lost to a fire.

University of Houston, Texas Center for Mexican American Studies[70]

In 1927 the Houston Independent School District (HISD) established the Houston Junior College, a segregated institution, and, at the same time the HISD created another "separate but equal"[71] institution: the Houston Colored Junior College. The Houston Junior College became The University of Houston in 1934, and admitted only non-black students until 1962. In 1963, UH became a public institution and tried to deter black students by keeping them taking classes at Texas Southern University, established in 1951 from the former Houston Colored Junior College, which had fewer resources and offered fewer classes. This institutional exclusion was a remaining Jim Crow strategy to circumvent the 1954 landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education.* This strategy for systemic exclusion impeded not only black students from enrolling in courses at UH but also students of Mexican descent.

Towards the 1960s and 1970s in Texas, the leadership from the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) in boycotting against segregated schools and organizing about thirty-nine statewide walkouts demanding Mexican American studies differed from the California walkouts. MAYO efforts were centralized mainly on driving a political force along the efforts of José Angel Gutierrez and La Raza Unida Party in the building of Aztlán,[72] which is also depicted in the Houston mural with a portrait of Gutierrez holding their emblem. MAYO members include its founder Willie Velásquez

[70] Unfortunately, the global pandemic under COVID-19 happened during the summer when I was starting archival research the University of Houston and I could not complete my studies for this reason resulting this section on an area of further research.
[71] Pegoda, Andrew Joseph, "The University of Houston and Texas Southern University: Perpetuating Separate but Equal" in the Face of Brown v. Board of Education," *Houston History,* Vol. 8 No. 9, Fall 2010. (19-23).
[72] Acuña. *The Making of Chicana/o Studies.* Ibid., 54.

and María Elena Marínez—the first woman to chair the Raza Unida Party. MAYO was concerned with taking over school boards to seek educational reform that would empower and teach Mexican youth to build up positive self-images, demanding dignity and respect.[73]

During the sixties, segregation was still an issue in Texas. Grievances from black students at Texas Southern University (TSU) and at the University of Houston (UH) included housing and dining services which motivated them to form the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation (AABL).[74] Chicano Power and Black Power joined forces in their struggles; the AABL students garnered the support of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), MAYO, and alongside the League of Mexican American Students served a significant role in the creation of ethnic student programs. During the spring of 1969, AABL begun a series of sit-ins at Woolworth's lunch counters in Houston. A key moment was on February 7, 1969 when AABL students presented a list of grievances to UH president Philip Hoffman demanding the creation of Afro-American Studies as a pathway to end racism at UH which was "imitating racist [US] society at large." According to Robinson Block, Hoffman's archive contains correspondence from numerous people including UH alumni "encouraging not to surrender to the demands of 'communist' and 'negro students.'"[75] By March 1969, three white UH students attacked student leader of AABL Gene Locke, resulting in later students protests against this attack at the Safety and Security Office, moving their protest to the Cougar Den (where

[73] Ibid., 36-40
[74] Block, Robinson, "Afro-Americans for Black Liberation and the Fight for Civil Rights at the University of Houston," *Houston History,* Vol. 8 No. 1, Fall 2010. (24-28).
[75] Ibid., 26.

The Chicano Student Mural was painted less than year later) resulting in some property damage at a cost of $2,000. During the following weeks, the Harris County District Attorney Carol Vance, who persistently persecuted black activists, issued arrest warrants for UH students, including Gene Locke, Dwight Allen, Deloyd Parker, TSU student Ester King, and Doug Bernhardt—the only white student and member of SDS. AABL used the momentum from the protests against the attack and the serving of the arrest warrants to organize a rally at Emancipation Park in support of the UH students, hosting speakers from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.[76] They demanded the creation of a degree-granting department that further expanded upon the current course offerings in Afro-American History, Afro-American Literature, and Afro-American Culture. By May 1969, the new Afro-American Studies Program was established with Professor Robert Hayes, who happened to be white, as the director.

Three years after the founding of the Afro-American Studies Program at UH, the Mexican American Studies Program was created in 1972 and later renamed in 1995 as the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS). The program was established as an area of interdisciplinary studies in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. This major historical event was made possible by both pressure from students and members of MAYO. According to CMAS former director professor Anastacio "Tatcho" Mindiola, Jr. "UH pledged to create several joint faculty positions between departments" and their salaries would be split between the departments and the program; however there were few Mexican Americans holding professorial positions at that time which made it

[76] Ibid., 25-28.

difficult to find faculty and a permanent director for the center.[77] Their first director was College of Education doctoral student Guadalupe Quintanilla, who served until 1978 and received funding for the program with the support from State Representative Ben Reyes. In 1979, assistant professor, and first Mexican American professor of Anthropology Margarita Melville served as director for one year. Professor Melville was followed by UCLA doctoral student Victor Nelson Cisneros, who was in Texas conducting research for his dissertation. Professor Mindiola became the next director in 1980.

Hired by the University of Houston in 1974, Professor Mindiola was instrumental in the development of the Center for Mexican American studies. At the time of his hiring, he was a doctoral student at Brown University and became the first Mexican American faculty in the Sociology department, eventually receiving his Ph.D. in 1978. Professor Mindiola recalls the lack of support and resources from the university and that CMAS did not have a budget. He met with State Representative Roman Martinez in the seventies to strategize how to secure a line item for educational programs from the university's Small Business Center and Energy, receiving no support from the administration. It was not until 1983 that Representative Martinez, a member of the Appropriations Committee, succeeded in "amending the university's budget to allocate $160,000 from the Continuing Education Program for Mexican American Studies."[78] However, Dean James Pickering from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts attempted to deny the funding to professor Mindiola and threatened him. After negotiations between Chancellor Ed Bishop and

[77] Mindiola, Jr., Tatcho, "Developing the Center for Mexican American Studies at UH," *Houston History*, Vol. 9 No. 1, Fall 2011. (38-43).
[78] Ibid., 40.

Professor Mindiola, the university finally transferred the funding to CMAS. But struggles for university budget allocations continued to occur in 1985 and 1987.

In 1990, the Black Leadership Union and the African American Studies Program sought out help from Professor Mindiola to also secure a budget from the university. Three years late in 1993, CMAS created the Graduate Fellowship Program. According to an article in *Houston History* magazine, Professor Mindiola first hand experienced the discrimination from the Houston public schools.[79] He joined the Army in 1960 and was later accepted at the University of Houston under the G.I. Bill a year later in 1961. He helped in establishing the first Mexican American student organization, allying with black students in joining efforts for educational representation. These efforts lead to the establishing of the African American Studies program and subsequently the Mexican American Studies Program.

Another example of discrimination was the case of Leopoldo Tanguma, who similarly as Professor Mindiola, Mario Gonzales, and Ruben Reyna, attempted to enroll at UH under the G.I. Bill but the registrars directed him to Texas Southern University. Tanguma later met painter and Professor John Thomas Biggers, who had studied art at the Hampton Institute (later renamed Hampton University).[80] Biggers' art was featured in the historic exhibit *Young Negro Art* at the museum of Modern Art in New York in 1943. Years later, he won a contest at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH). However, during 1950, the racist MFAH did not allow him to attend the reception. Biggers was

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[79] Harwell, Debbie, "Tatcho Mindiola, Jr.: A visionary at the University of Houston," *Houston History*, Vol. 9 No. 1, Fall 2011. (36-37).
[80] Sweeney, "Biggers, John Thomas," *Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, accessed February 11, 2021. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/biggers-john-thomas.

similarly discriminated against by the racist Dallas Museum of Art in 1952 when he won the Neiman Marcus Company Prize. Biggers eventually obtained a doctorate in education in 1954, and honorary doctor of letters in 1990 from Hampton University. The impact of both meeting Biggers at TSU and encountering his murals had an enormous impact on Tanguma, the first artist to direct the *Chicano Student Mural,* who was heavily influenced by professor Biggers even more so than by David Alfaro Siqueiros.

The Chicano Student Mural and *La Marcha Por La Humanidad*

The documentation of *Chicano Student Mural* is similar to the UCLA-CSRC mural, and to many murals of this time period for that matter. The following paragraphs serve to reconstruct the making of *The Chicano Student Mural* from the testimonies of Leopoldo Tanguma, Mario Gonzales, and Ruben Reyna.

The recently established Center for Mexican American Studies and Mexican American Youth Organization students at UH spearheaded petitions for a mural. They chose the wall at the University Center Cougar Den as the location for this mural commission because, as Ruben Reyna recalls, "it was our Chicano corner, we were less than a hundred students and we all knew each other"— this side of the cafeteria was their place of gathering and sharing communion. This is important because in exercising *conocimiento, convivencia, and confianza*[81] the painters and their peers were reclaiming the recently segregated space of UH. During that time, the backwall of the mural

[81] To borrow the *consejo* that Tomás Ybarra-Frausto shared with the attendants of the conference during the opening remarks of the Latino Art Now! Conference at the University of Houston in 2019. In the remarks he invited us to approach each other in "knowledge, communion, and trust."

separated the food line from the cafeteria so every student after getting their food would walk around and see the mural. The celebratory mural then must have been a powerful sight to catch with a direct statement of self-affirmation and cultural pride.

Leopoldo Tanguma[82] is an army veteran of Mexican farmworkers family. Growing up, he worked, even as a child, with his family picking potatoes in Texas. He was no stranger to experiencing discrimination, which influenced him to depict the stories and the heroes of the working people who suffered from oppression in México and in the US. According to Tanguma, UH-MAYO originally commissioned him to paint a mural about the Chicano struggle and he begun to work on it before he visited with Siqueiros in México. After his return to UH, his mural was "destroyed." The design of the UH mural is strikingly similar to the design of his later mural, also painted in 1973 *The Rebirth of Our Nationality*, which he notes that he drew both murals free hand. *The Rebirth* is another historic landmark located at Canal street in Houston which was recently restored with Tanguma in collaboration with muralist GONZO247. On both murals, one can observe a horizontal movement towards the center of the composition that initiates from the left and from the right of the composition. The center of the mural is also the focus of the mural. In both murals there is a continuation of movement implied by the composition which guides the viewer back to the left and the side ends of the mural. Similarly, in both murals, is the way how the figures depicted engage the viewer with a narrative that happens in the future and that it depends on individual choices and uncertainties.[83]

[82] Virtual conversation and email correspondence with Leo Tanguma during the summer of 2020.
[83] A thorough comparison between these two murals is also an area of further research.

Image 2.4: Image comparison between a photo stitch of the Tanguma-Gonzales mural and the subsequent Gonzales-Reyna mural at the Student Center. c.a. 1972 and 1973, University of Houston. Top image photos provided by Leopoldo Tanguma. Bottom photo courtesy of Ruben Reyna.[84]

Tanguma was removed from the commission after he had some disagreements with MAYO and Mario Gonzales. Gonzales took over the completion of the mural. Ruben Reyna joined as apprentice. [85] In the surviving images from Tanguma's work, one can observe that the influence in design and iconography remains similar to the completed mural. Similarly, one can observe the design problems that Gonzales and Reyna came up

[84] This visual comparison is an area of further research perhaps involving the use of imaging technologies to create a digital version of the Tanguma-Gonzales mural.
[85] Virtual conversation with Leo Tanguma on July 17, 2020; Ruben Reyna on August 12, 2020; and Mario Gonzales on August 19, 2020.

with to cover Tanguma's mural.[86] According to Ruben Reyna, Tanguma was depicting a lot of communist iconography. According to Tanguma his "idea at that time was to depict and symbolize the spiritual death that University graduates faced. Though this was my thought at the time, I no longer believe it."[87]

Image 2.5: Leo Tanguma and Mario Gonzales working in situ at *The Chicano Student Mural,* incomplete, c.a. 1973. Image courtesy Mario Gonzales.

[86] Comparing the Tanguma-Gonzales mural and the Gonzales-Reyna mural to better enunciate influences and problem solving of design how the visual discourse is altered is an area of further research.
[87] Conversations and correspondence with Leo Tanguma, 2020.

The following information comes from a conversation with Leopoldo Tanguma that took place on July 17, 2020. Tanguma describes his intentions for the mural as follows:

> At the mural's center, I depicted a young Chicano graduating from the University of Houston. He wears the University colors as he steps forward to accept his diploma. I portrayed him hesitating about moving forward as he glances back at the figures calling to him. At the same time, a grotesque and skeletal Uncle Sam holds the young man and guides him to the right. As Uncle Sam steps forward pulling the young man along and steps on the U.S. Constitution, symbolized by a large opened book. To the left of the university graduate I depicted the community calling on the young man to use his education to help his people. Community and barrio people call on him in urgency before he is taken by the materialistic and libertine society where his talents will further enrich his manipulators. Waiting to encounter the U of H graduate is a man with an unshaven face, chomping on a cigar while he offers the young Chicano a suit of his nationality, namely a suit of red, white and green (the colors of the Mexican flag). The man hides his left hand behind his back as if not wanting the young man to see what he is holding. He is holding a puppeteer's wooden control bar with the puppet strings. The man grins slyly as if to say, 'sure you can be your Chicano self, and don't worry if I control and use you; it's for your own good!' The face of the cigar chomping man is that of the U of H President of the time.[88]

The UH president of the time was still Phillip Guthrie Hoffman. He became president in 1961, serving until 1977 when he became president of the University of Houston System until his eventual retirement in 1979.[89] According to the UH records there was later an investment scandal under Hoffman's presidential tenure.[90] In our interview, Tanguma recounts that as he was becoming increasingly more aware of the exploitive capitalist system, he grew more empathetic to the socialist cause identifying

[88] Conversations with Leo Tanguma, 2020.
[89] University of Houston. Office of the President. "President's Office Records, 1927-1981." Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries. https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu
[90] Area of further research. Due to COVID-19 I couldn't complete the archival research.

with the Mexican Student movements, particularly the massacre of 1968 at La Plaza de Las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco and the Cuban Revolution.

Image 2.6: Leo Tanguma working in situ at *The Chicano Student Mural*, incomplete, c.a. 1973. Image courtesy Leo Tanguma.

Some of Tanguma's murals lost in Texas from the seventies include: the UH mural mentioned in this study that was painted over (1973), *Towards a Humanitarian Technology for la Raza* (1972), *Americanization of a Chicano* (c.a. 1974), and the 1977 mural against police brutality in the memory of Vietnam veteran Joe Campos Torres, who was killed by a Houston police who later were charged with a light sentence of one year.

Mario Gonzales[91] is a Vietnam Veteran and a MAYO member who was studying visual arts at the University of Houston. After his return from Vietnam, he experienced discrimination while a student on the UH campus as well as while living in Houston, recognizing in many different instances that his rights were denied and ignored. He said that he learned more about his own history from his Mexican grandfather because the school public system "didn't teach me anything about my history." Coincidently, he was looking to paint a mural on campus and brought his proposal to MAYO, submitting sketches to MAYO seeking support to present his proposal to the student senate for approval. Upon the approval and funding of the mural, MAYO voted for a joint effort between him and Tanguma.[92]

He mentioned that the mural was "about me, it is a self-portrait, it is my experience in American identity politics." He mentioned that he chose the Cougar Den because that was the place where he and "other Mexican American congregated by that wall." Before painting the mural, he travelled to México to study muralism, extending his visit upon meeting Siqueiros and worked with him at his studio in Cuernavaca. Returning to UH, Gonzales recalls that his first task in planning the mural was creating a grid to transfer the design into the wall with charcoal. Using acrylic on vinyl, Gonzalez and Tanguma prepared the wall with five coats of gesso before they began painting. Gonzalez recalls that after two weeks of working together, Tanguma started to paint different images from the proposal approved by the Student Senate. Conflict arose between the

[91] Virtual conversation and subsequent email correspondence with Mario Gonzales during the summer of 2020.
[92] He could not locate the sketches but mentioned that MAYO may have them. I couldn't establish communication with professor Lorenzo Cano.

two painters and Tanguma went to MAYO, who voted for Tanguma to finish the mural, subsequently firing Mario Gonzales. Tanguma worked on the wall for about five weeks before eventually dropping the commission. After Tanguma left the project, professor Tatcho Mindiola asked Ruben Reyna, his friend from high school, to convince Mario Gonzales to come back and finish the mural. After Gonzalez returned to the wall, they secured $300 dollars to fund the completion of the mural. Additionally, Gonzalez asks for Reyna and MAYO members to help him finish painting the mural. Mario would "sketch directly onto the wall the areas to block the images that Tanguma had painted because they were communist."

Ruben Reyna[93] is also a Vietnam Veteran and a member of MAYO. His mom was from San Miguel Allende in México and worked as a cotton picker and his dad was from Weslaco and worked as a truck driver. They lived in the Rio Grande Valley, moving to Houston in the early 1950s. While living at Clayton Homes housing projects, he attended San Jacinto High School where he recalls that he was denied the right to speak Spanish.

According to Reyna's testimony of the chain of events that lead to the eventual creation of *The Chicano Student Mural* in the Cougar Den, by mid-July 1973, "MAYO was looking to get a mural" remembering that "the black students got a mural already." They raised $3,000 for the cause and at that time Mario Gonzales submitted some sketches to the Student Senate to get approval for a mural. It was during the Student Senate meeting that Maria Herrera and Reyna met. Mario Gonzales had previously made some posters for Reinaldo Rodriguez who was part of The Student Senate. While the

[93] Virtual conversation and subsequent email correspondence with Ruben Reyna during the summer of 2020.

Student Senate agreed to the mural, they objected the images of the "Uncle Sam, Lady Justice and all the Anti-American" references. According to Reyna they got funded by both the Student Senate and Ethnic Affairs, in addition to private groups outside UH, LULAC, and MAYO. Work began during the summer of 1973 with the expectation to begin in June and complete in July. He stated that Mario Gonzales traveled to México to first-hand experience murals because there were not many murals in Houston at the time and they wanted to learn about "the Mexican muralists and that movement."

Ruben Reyna also mentioned Leo Tanguma's proposal to the Student Senate. In that meeting, Tanguma was "voted the main artist" and Mario Gonzales was assigned as his assistant. Reyna remembers the dispute between the two mural paintings, recounting that "Leo was painting Russian communist" iconography and that after some disagreements between them "Leo fired Mario but Mario was MAYO so they fired Leo." At this point, the mural was still incomplete. When Mario Gonzales and Ruben Reyna returned to continue layering on the whitewashed mural, they only had $300 left and the month of August. CMAS was not even a year old and Professor Mindiola had a contract with UH so with institutional pressure in mind, the mural needed to be completed. Reyna mentioned that he drew inspiration from his classes on Chicano Studies that he wanted to "paint the Mexican American experience to paint our own history." He was inspired to paint from their Mexican past to their subsequent future, to their "present Chicano."

Reyna recalls that during his classes he researched his "forefathers" and that he was "learning how to educate myself as I was painting the mural." A particular memory worth mentioning is women MAYO students collaborating in the painting of the mural, including María Jimenez and Cynthia Perez, asked why they were painting "only men."

So, they added the icons from the sixteenth century Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz; the Mexican Revolutionary-era La Adelita "leading the movement of the campesinos with the Mexican flag," from the past; and Maria Escalante from their present movement. This exemplifies the dialogic relationships between professors and students in their desire to include their communities by representing them in the university space through mural making.

Reyna concludes with mentions about how the mural was rejected by the administration, the art department, and UH students in general who physically attacked the mural. Then there is the period when the cafeteria "closed its doors and locked up the Cougar Den" except for the bowling alley, and the cafeteria moved to the first floor. It remined closed until 2011 during the renovation and "talks to peel the mural off the wall and rolling it up until they find a wall."

In conclusion, as scholar Guisella Latorre remarks "murals carry much of the knowledge and history not taught in schools and universities."[94] Both *Chicano History* and *Chicano Student Mural* depict stories of resilience and survival while at the same time communicate visually important knowledge that should be passed down through generations. The chapter offered a reconstruction of the social history around the murals in order to better understand the social relationships invested in the production of these two monuments. However, both murals share a fraught history that remains unsettled.

The next chapter describes the condition and iconography of the murals while offering a visual analysis and interpretation of the iconography of the murals as strategies for resistance against the status quo. The final chapter concludes with areas of further

[94] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of empowerment.,* 26.

research in which I propose a new way we can learn more about “lost knowledge” embedded in the murals like Tanguma’s communist layers.

Chapter 3

Description of the Murals' Condition and Iconography

This chapter adapts the methodologies that I developed from the courses on *Digital Humanities and Object- Based Learning in a Museum and University Context*, imparted at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in partnership with the University of Houston in the fall of 2019. I employ practices for close-looking, by means of direct contact, to examine the murals *Chicano History* and *The Chicano Student Mural*. Based on field and archival research, this chapter will describe both the condition and iconography of two of the earliest surviving, and among the most well preserved, Chicano-themed murals painted at institutions of higher education with the subject of Chicano history.

The first study of visual analysis describes the condition and iconography of the mural *Chicano History*, painted during the summer of 1970, in the spirit of celebrating the recent founding of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles. The second study of visual analysis describes the condition and iconography of the *Chicano Student Mural*, painted during the summer of 1973, in the spirit of celebrating the recently established Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston, Texas.

Chicano History

> This letter shall serve to set forth the steps that UCLA plans to take in the removal of the Chicano Studies Mural…-UCLA Executive Vice Chancellor Murray Schwartz. April 11, 1990.

Chicano History was completed in 1970. It is a wall mural in the collection of the Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).[95] It was produced in collaboration between Eduardo Carrillo (Chicano, US b. 1937-1997); Sergio Hernández (Chicano, US b. 1948), Ramses Noriega (Chicano, Mexican b. 1944), and Saul Solache† (no information has been located for Saul Solache). The excerpt epigraph is from a letter obtained from Sergio Hernández in which UCLA Vice Chancellor Schwartz expresses that the mural is to be removed "from its current place in Campbell Hall and its relocation in the new Chicano Studies Center Library in Room 52 of Haines Hall."

However, *Chicano History* could not be easily relocated due to its sheer size. The colorful mural weighs five hundred and fifty pounds and measures approximately twenty-two by twelve feet. It is painted using Winsor and Newton oils, and gesso on nine ¼ inch wood panels designed to fit the perimeter of the wall including the window and duct. Each panel was originally installed using slotted wood metal screws that secured each panel to the wall.[96] The artists' prescient decision to paint on a removable support ensured the survival of *Chicano History* in its current condition. In 1993, when the CSRC moved to Haines Hall, the mural was de-installed and was stored with the intention to

[95] Ownership of the mural is not settled. In 2013, Ramses Noriega signed a "deed of gift once the University of California has permanently mounted the *Chicano History* mural for public display on the UCLA campus." Sergio Hernández commented that he didn't recall "signing any agreement giving up right to the mural. Ed Carrillo and Saul Solache had passed by then. Conversation with Sergio Hernández, Acton, California. October 7, 2019.

[96] Rice, Brooks and Bridgette Saylor, ASA. "Personal Property Appraisal." Saylor Rice Appraisals. Los Angeles, California, January 8, 2018. (6) University of California, Los Angeles Chicano Studies Research Center Documentation. Retrieved in August 20, 2019 from UCLA CSRC email correspondence.

eventually relocate the work, even as it remained in storage. Due to the de-installation, the mural suffered significant damage: corresponding areas of paint were compromised when the screws were removed.

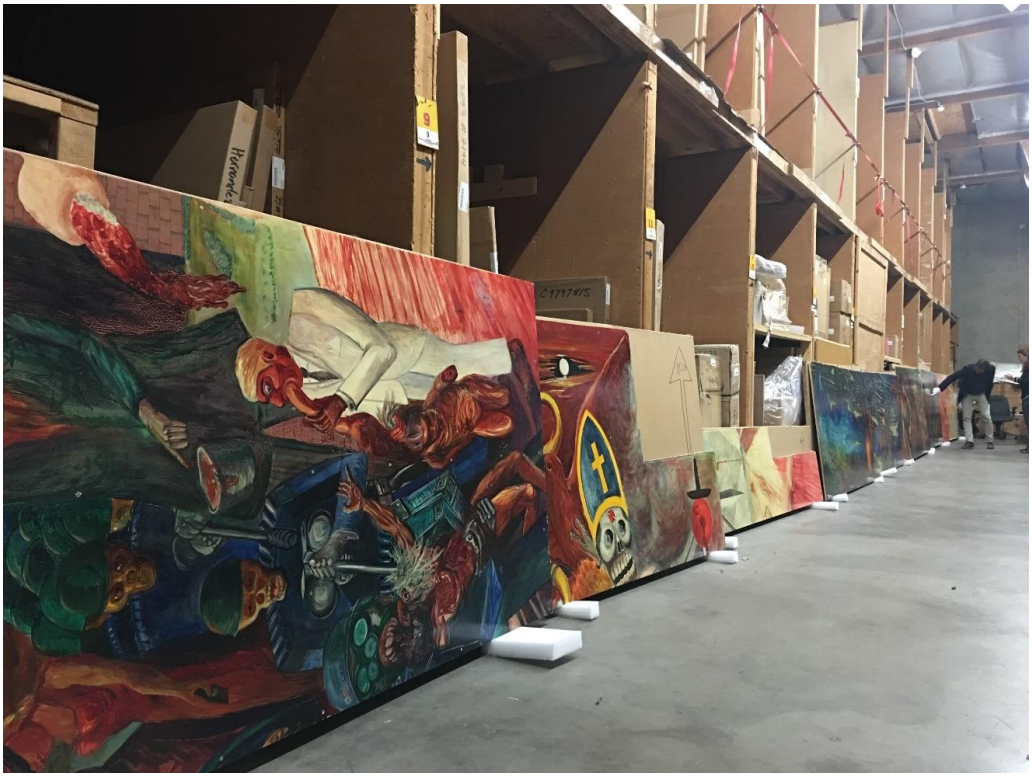
In 2017, the Getty launched *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, Latin American and Latino Art in LA,* a widespread initiative of museum exhibitions focusing on Latino art across Southern California. Through this initiative, in 2018, *Chicano History* was brought out from storage and first installed at the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA). Professor Carlos Manuel Haro, a student at UCLA in 1965 and one of the earliest members of the United Mexican-American Students (UMAS) established in 1967, recognized the work in storage,

> I remember that Chon Noriega asked me if I could go identify an item that we had in storage. When I saw the mural, I remembered it. I had forgotten about it.[97]

The mural traveled with the Crocker Art Museum's exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo,* in light of the artist's contribution to the mural. In addition to its installation at the Crocker, *Chicano History* was also installed at the American University Museum in Washington, D.C., between 2018 and 2019. The mural had suffered due to the repetitive de-installation, re-installation, and transportation, as well as from the traffic of the public, and began to show signs of wear during these exhibits.

[97] Conversation with postdoctoral scholar at UCLA-CSRC Carlos Haro on June 15, 2019. Professor Haro also served as director of the UCLA-CSRC from 1975-1982.

Image 3.1: The photograph documents the moments during the condition report of *Chicano History* at Cooks Crating Storage. Photo courtesy of UCLA-CSRC Library. Email correspondence.



In 2018, and despite various mural dislocations, the Personal Property Appraisal conducted by Saylor Rice Appraisals documents the *Chicano History* as being in "good to fair overall condition."[98] The examination was conducted on November 20, 2017, at the Cooke's Crating and Fine Art Transportation in Los Angeles, California. The appraisers chose a Cost Approach Value. Their decision was based on market activity and commission rates. The appraisers also consulted with Sergio Hernández Studio, as well as with other active and late career California muralists regarding commission rates for

[98] Ibid. The report considered the 'good' rather than 'very good' condition of the mural in regards to the signs of wear.

similar murals.[99] Among the artists consulted were Wayne Healy of East Los Streetscapers who reported a cost of $125.00 per square inch, and Victor Reyes with a commission rate between $175 and $210 per square foot. The appraisers also consulted the National Consumer Price Index (CPI) to stipulate the change in the price over time. They compared *Chicano History* with another mural by Carrillo. That work, *El Grito* had been commissioned in 1979 at $30,000 and the stipulated cost in 2017 amounted to $101,000 or $336.66 per square foot. The appraisers also considered several factors in the appraisal of the value of *Chicano History* including: its status as the first Chicano themed mural painted at a university; the contributions of the artists during the Chicano Civil Rights Movement; the cultural significance of the mural for Los Angeles Chicano history; the stature of the artists, and the resurgence of a market-driven interest in Chicano art. The Value Conclusion was set at $45,000 considering the "amateur fabrication and resulting condition issues associated with the mural."[100]

Una Ganga!

Although the Personal Property Appraisal by Saylor Rice Appraisals was conducted with the sole purpose of insurance coverage, it also demonstrates that even in the early twenty-first century not much has changed in the ways that Chicano art is undervalued in the mainstream. There was no "amateur fabrication" in the making of *Chicano History.* As Sergio Hernández recalls "Eduardo Carrillo knew exactly what he was doing." During the 1970s modernism was mainstreaming in the US, abstraction

[99] Ibid., 9.
[100] Ibid.

became a high-end product of the art market, and formalism a way to silence activist artists who were protesting against the status quo during the rising of the Chicano consciousness. Depictions of iconography that represent the poor and the working class next to the contested allegories of democracy, justice, and peace in a psychogeography that reclaims history while celebrating cultural affirmation were considered poor's people art by the mainstream. This kind of art critiques the capitalist system of the status quo, such as in the case of the *Chicano History* and the *Chicano Student* murals. However, the form allowed the artists to represent their communities and themselves: people of color from various indigenous diasporas identifying themselves with the Chicano consciousness. This artform is crucial to the rehabilitation of indigenous stories directly informing their grassroots movement with origin in indigenist subject matter.

Art Historian Shiffra Goldman points out how formalism is "the dominant art philosophy in western art history, and criticism."[101] Philosophers of the likes of Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg inclined towards modernism and the formal qualities of painting argue that art was disinterested in external social factors, namely "art for art's sake." Goldman argues that art criticism is exclusionary and elitist when in the hands of the mainstream. The status quo is not interested in socially engaged art because it disrupts

[101] Goldman, Shifra. "The State of Chicano Art Criticism.," March 1981. TMs. Santa Cruz, CA. Courtesy of Eric Garcia, POA Shifra Goldman, North Hollywood, CA Courtesy of Arte Público Press, University of Houston, Houston, TX. Typed Manuscript; Documents of Twentieth-Century Latin American and Latino Art: A Digital Archive and Publications Project, ICAA-1082533 https://icaa.mfah.org/s/en/item/849457#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-1673%2C0%2C5895%2C3299

the status quo assimilationist project. This thesis is in agreement with Goldman in taking art as "capable of changing consciousness."[102]

Similarly, scholar Guisela Latorre exposes the hypernarcisistic "cult-of-the-artist" approach by writers focusing on modernism and argues that many art historians and critics fail to "recognize the legitimacy and value of Chicana/o art."[103] This emphasis on the individual "genius" of modern artists against the collective work by artists engaged with their communities led to a commodification of art in the current market system.[104] If it was an early Italian renaissance fresco, an obscure mural by Mexican painter Siqueiros, or a modern oversized canvas by one of the mainstream contemporary painters—also influenced by Mexican muralist Siqueiros—Jackson Pollock, the Value Conclusion would had been set much higher, perhaps an extra one or two zeros to the right of the set value. The mainstream art criticism maintains Chicano muralism among the lowest in value because according to the status quo it is made by "lesser people," it is the art of "the other," or is simply a "poor's people art."

To understand the denigration of art produced by peoples deemed as "other," it is necessary to include a brief history of western art to understand the artistic shifts in the mainstream artworld. Roughly starting with the art of the Greeks who valued a set of mathematical harmony that they perceived as divine with extreme aesthetic attention dedicated to achieving ideal proportions in visual arts. Thus, the Greeks established a western canon for art that would continue through the Roman empire. Similarly, during the Italian Renaissance period, there was another cultural shift that placed emphasis on

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of Empowerment*., 7.
[104] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of Empowerment*., 246.

elevating *men* and the cultural rebirth of the humanities. During this period, Greek and Roman aesthetic traditions and values were revisited by the Italian artists. Incidentally it was during this period that Giorgio Vasari elevated the individual artists by recognizing a kind of genius in their creations, and thus the cult of the artist was born. However, it is important to mention that it was exclusionary because since then, "other" artists had been left out of the historical record including women and other—subordinating anyone who was not a white European male. Also during this time, the atrocities by the violent encounter of colonization created in the European imagination the view of a dehumanized continent and their people as a means to and end. One of the ways to do this is to undervalue their artistic productions because "savage" or "uncivilized" people cannot make art.

In the centuries following the Renaissance, France and England established their own academies of art to promote ideals developed from those initial Greek and Roman aesthetic values. It was not until the early modern artists at the turn of the twentieth century addressed the philosophical issues and views of Emmanuel Kant who proposed a synthesis of disciplines; the Modernists came up with formalism as a way to answer the issue of painting as non-representational in the light of the photographic camera and against the canonical standards set centuries earlier by the Academy. This shift at the time was revolutionary in liberating artistic form. However, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and the explosion of Capitalism, the emergence of social classes and increase of acquisitive power, formalism became a product of the art market and a way to silence activist artists who represented the poor and the working class, like artists working in the social realist tradition. Socially realist work in the form of the *Chicano*

History and the *Chicano Student* murals allowed the artists to represent their communities and themselves: people of color from various indigenous diasporas identifying themselves with the Chicano consciousness. This artform is crucial to the rehabilitation of indigenous stories directly informing their grassroots movement with origin in indigenist subject matter.

Iconography

Guisella Latorre writes that indigenist murals are objects of a kind produced with the intention to express forms of resistance and to counter imperial and capitalistic hegemony. She argues that:

> "The rehabilitation of indigenous history and culture became a crucial component in the growing politicization that saturated Chicana/o political thought with the onset of the Chicano movement, or *El Movimiento* the state; colonial; expansionist, and postindustrial history that directly informed the indigenist subject matter of these wall paintings."[105]

The indigenist vernacular of the time that Latorre proposes for resistance against the status quo can be seen in a detailed description of the iconographic program of the mural as follows: Starting at the first quarter, Eduardo Carrillo painted a "pre-Columbian landscape," according to Ramses Noriega, with depictions of species endemic to the American Southwest ecosystem using a combination of ultramarine and cobalt blue contrasted with orange and brown. On the lower left corner there are various types of cacti as well as reptiles. Above them a river cascades from a waterfall depicted in the middle ground of the pictorial space. Fish can be seen swimming below the water's

[105] Latorre, Guisela. *Walls of empowerment.*.

surface. In one section of the creek, towards the middle of the river, there is a rabbit rendered in mid-jump across the creek. Opposite the rabbit is a deer grazing by the bushes; above, many large birds soar across the open blue sky. Towards the center of the composition on the middle-ground there is an image in reference to the architecture of the Ancient Americas.

Image 3.2: *Chicano History* (detail 1). Photo taken during the exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo*. 2018. Pasadena Museum of California Art.

On the second quarter, Sergio Hernández depicts the monumental figures of a man and a woman, represented as farm workers standing in profile, their faces directed toward the right. These figures dominate the left side of the mural and represent, according to Noriega, the "Mexican armed revolution… the warrior and the family as the central focus of our people."[106] The male figure is holding what seems to be a Mauser rifle in his right hand while a bullet belt is hanging from his shoulder. There is also a Bowie knife hanging by his waist. The female figure next to him, instead of a rifle, holds a bundle of corn. Right next to her in the background is the image of a small house and a cornfield. Below the cornfield, two other farmworkers appear to bend over towards the earth as though working the land. This image is very similar to the *Gleaners* painted by Jean-Françoise Millet in the social-realism style, the particular style that influenced the Mexican muralists. However, in this case, instead of picking crops they are depicted scavenging human skulls and thus transforming the farming field into a graveyard. Below them, Hernández depicts the image of Emiliano Zapata coming back to life. As the revolutionary leader reaches towards the foreground with his left hand his right hand clutches the ground. Above Zapata, Sergio Hernández paints a representation of a Phoenix figure bursting into the flames of his rebirth while breaking the "chains of oppression."[107]

[106] Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."
[107] Conversation with the artist on October 7, 2019. Acton, California. This visual detail seems also referential to other discursive forms to break the chains of oppression.

Image 3.3: *Chicano History* (detail 2). Photo taken during the exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo*. 2018. Pasadena Museum of California Art.

In the third quarter, Ramses Noriega depicts "the spirit of a social revolution exposing the various issues of the times."[108] There is a fortress wall rendered in the background featuring a Mexican flag. Right below a group of people is portrayed in gestures of protest, dressed as revolutionary modern farm workers; the protesters hold banners from the early Chicano Movement. There is a female figure on the far left who holds a "Crusade for Justice" banner, another male figure wielding a machete while behind him a banner of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee emerges from the crowd. Other banners— "¡Viva! MECHA" and "¡Viva! La RAZA"—compete for space next to a large banner held by various individuals. It clamors "¡UNIDOS VENCEREMOS!" These groups of protesters, according to Noriega, are the embodiment of "a new spirit [that] emanates as Chicanos come forth luchando for justice, peace and truth."[109] Right below this scene, there is a diagonal line of militarized police depicted marching as monstrous beings directing the eye of the viewer towards the first plane. In the foreground, there is a creature depicted wearing glasses comprised of multiple lenses, with mechanical arms; the killing machine devours a person alive, detaching the head of a human with its fangs, its helmet blazoned with a U.S. flag and swastika next to the initials of the Los Angeles Police Department. The iconic representation of Uncle Sam is depicted as a terrifying creature that commands the soldiers to march and to cannibalize. To the upper left of this scene, there is a representation of a *pietà* in which an elderly woman covered in a dark-green rebozo holds the lifeless body of a fallen martyr whose splayed limb and outstretched head hanging backwards compel the viewer. Above them

[108] Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."
[109] Ibid.

there is a field covered with several wood crosses representing a burial ground—a continuation of the cornfields in the previous panel of the mural that here becomes a graveyard. Right above them two other figures are represented. A blonde female dressed in a red evening gown is blind-folded. She is depicted handing a paper note—in the context of this mural the currency is in dollars—to the woman who grieves over the dead body. The other figure next to the blond woman is a man dressed as a clergyman, but wearing a mask as though to symbolize the political theater enacted by religious institutions.

Image 3.4: *Chicano History* (detail 3). Photo taken during the exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo*. 2018. Pasadena Museum of California Art.

On the fourth quarter, beside marching troops, Saul Solache depicts a scene of cannibalism. According to Noriega, it is the depiction of a "'blond Chicano eating a

mestizo child."[110] He is depicted feasting on the right arm of the little girl depicted next to him. Solache depicts the other figure that dominates the right-most side of the mural—a gargantuan white nude body in self-inflicted emasculation. According to Noriega, Solache depicts the "emasculating spirit that the Spanish conquest brought which indicts the Catholic Church."[111] This figure is rendered with a skull for a face and bare bones in place of a left arm; he wears a miter to specify the institution of the Roman Catholic Church. On his forehead there is a red cross made in the fashion of Saint George's cross – a crusaders symbol. The body of this figure is violently subjugated by a golden eagle. It seems that Solache is replacing the rattle snake with the clergy figure. Behind these two figures there is a reenactment of the eagle devouring a rattlesnake as found in ancient histories of the foundation of Tenochtitlán, and the modern Mexican coat of arms. The eagle breaks through the figure's chest with its beak while preying on the body with both claws. On his right hand, the human figure holds the castrated penis while its body bleeds on what it seems to be by visual evidence the architectural structure of the Metropolitan Cathedral in México City. Also, based on visual evidence, there seems to be behind the cathedral a representation of an ancient settlement similar to Teotihuacán depicted by the figure's right foot. The human figure holds a sword in the left hand. Over the handle of the sword a globe is depicted in red showing the American continent bleeding. A scale is located balancing on the center of the blade of the sword. In the foreground the scale holds what appear to be minerals, while in the background blood from the American continent overflows the scale plate and spills like a river towards the foreground. Saul

[110] Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."
[111] Ibid.

Solache composes this scene elevating the perspective which offers the viewer a “god’s eye” perspective to travel the psychogeography of this continent. Below the outstretched left leg there are depicted various architectural structures that appear to reference the National University in Mexico buildings Rectoría and the Central Library. My guess from visual analysis is that the architectural iconography could be UNAM’s Rectoría and Biblioteca Central de la Ciudad Universitaria. This could further connect the Chicano Student Movement with their contemporary student movements in México city.

Image 3.5: *Chicano History* (detail 4). Photo taken during the exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo*. 2018. Pasadena Museum of California Art.

La Marcha por la Humanidad

In order to better understand the visual language of the *Chicano History* mural, this thesis establishes a dialectical relationship and puts at dialogue the L.A. mural with the Houston mural. Located at the University of Houston (UH) main campus, this mural is one of the earliest and most well-preserved Chicano murals painted at a university in the US. Previously known as *The Chicano Student Mural*, it was completed during the summer of 1973 by Mario Gonzales and Ruben Reyna who both enrolled at UH upon returning from the Vietnam War. Petitions for a mural were spearheaded by the recently established Center for Mexican American Studies and Mexican American Youth Organization students at UH. Originally the painter Leo Tanguma was given the commission but after disagreements between the involved parties Tanguma ceded the project. These events are detailed in Chapter 2, but of particular importance for this chapter is the work that Mario Gonzales and Ruben Reyna did in completing the iconographic program that Tanguma had already laid out.

The Chicano Student Mural was also painted during the Chicano Civil Rights Movement depicting the social sentiments of its times. It represents the past, present, and future inner struggles against acculturation, while inviting the viewer to reflect upon the message as conveyed by two young Chicanos who were just coming back from fighting a war overseas. It was painted on the wall of the University Center Cougar Den where the painters and other students gathered in the cafeteria. Since its completion, the mural's iconography—for example, the image of Uncle Sam stepping on the US constitution—has been the subject of conflicting ideological viewpoints. As a consequence, the mural's existence has been threatened over the years. UH students defaced the artwork and there

were institutional attempts (in 1995 and 2012) to have the mural permanently removed. The mural has nonetheless survived, and its particular location may have contributed in fact to its current state of preservation. It is one of the twelve Latino and Latin American artists' works in the Public Art permanent collection of the University of Houston System. It has outlasted the old University Cougar Den cafeteria and the Barnes & Noble bookstore, which was replaced by Follett in 2019. Mario Gonzales has stated that their intention was to "educate the modern Chicano, but also to educate everyone to the plight of the Chicano today" adding that they were representing the injustices in the system that "fails to recognize them."[112]

Ruben Reyna, then a Sociology junior and member of MAYO (Mexican American Youth Organization), painted the background as a vibrant sunset sky with bright yellow and red hues. He also painted the left side of the mural representing the Ancient Americas and Mexican heritage that both he and Mario Gonzales embrace. Depicted in green is the icon of the feathered snake deity associated with ancient Mexican cosmogonies such as those found in the Popol Vuh. It rises against the red, yellow and orange colors that the artist used to depict the two captive male figures who are burning at the stake. Their facial expressions and the stress depicted on their bodies enhance the disturbing impact of the image. Behind them two architectural forms echo the contorted bodies in flames. Above in the background there is a structural form similar to those erected by peoples of the ancient Americas and whose function is to situate the viewer as a witness to these past events unfolding in real time. Adjacent to this is the detail of *El Cerro de la Silla*, an iconic mountain and natural monument in the

[112] Virtual meeting conversation with Mario Gonzales, August 19, 2020.

northeastern state of Monterrey in Mexico. Reyna thus represents the conflicting history in the making of the Americas as imposed by the imperialistic forces of colonization.

Image 3.6: *The Chicano Student Mural* (detail 1). 2019.

A group of figures are represented in profile view guiding the viewer towards the right. The larger figures wearing black depicted on the top are the portraits of seven icons in Mexican art and history (from left to right): Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz (1648 – 1695); Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753 – 1811); Benito Juárez (1806 – 1872); Fancisco I. Madero (1873 – 1913); Emiliano Zapata (1879 – 1919); Francisco Villa (1878 – 1923); and Lazaro Cardenas 1895 – 1928).

Below them the figure of a woman in a purple dress carries the Mexican flag in a defiant stance. The artists had identified the source for this image as inspired by “las Adelitas” and Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez (1768 – 1829). Her strong arms are tense as she

carries the undulating flag, further emphasizing the power of her forward movement, as she leads a unified body of campesinos marching with their machetes in hand. In the foreground, the composition incorporates the white color to represent them as they advance, closely assembled. The campesino in the foreground is about to strike with his machete. In this section Ruben Reyna represented the Mexican Wars for Independence and the Mexican Revolution.

Image 3.7: *The Chicano Student Mural* (detail 2). 2019.

Mexican president Lázaro Cardenas rests his hand on a wooden cross while a clerical figure emerges from behind the cross. He stretches his left arm requesting the tithe. Below him, a kneeled woman holds the dead body of an infant in her arms. A similar icon is depicted as well in the Houston mural. The detail in the expression of sadness on her face and that of the hanging limbs of the infant focus the viewer's

attention on her suffering as a mother who has just lost her child. The form in which this image is rendered recalls the iconic representations known as *pietà* employed to represent the suffering of Mary holding the dead body of Christ. The wooden cross behind her and the cardinal above her further suggest this reference. Reyna references the way that the Catholic church was perceived while representing the "dead future for the mestizo in Mexico."

Image 3.8: *The Chicano Student Mural* (detail 3). 2019.

Another clergy figure is depicted holding the hands of an individual in the crowd. He raises the crowd with a strong diagonal line formed by his arms. Gonzales painted these group of people on profile view moving towards the left. The five larger figures depicted on the top represent the portraits of five icons specific to Chicano art and history (from left to right): Alicia Escalante (1933); César Chávez (1927 – 1993); José Ángel

Gutiérrez (1944); Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales (1928 – 2005); and Reies Lopez Tijerina (1926 – 2015).

Image 3.9 *The Chicano Student Mural* (detail 4). 2019.

Below them, a figure of a woman carries the United Farm Workers flag. Her movement is emphasized by the way her hands cling on the standard. As she leads a unified body of individuals in a diagonal line towards the center of the mural, the flag in midair follows her movement. Gonzales is representing in this section the contemporaneous Chicano Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

An allegory of Justice flanks the right side of the mural. She holds a torch and an unbalanced scale. She follows the movement of the masses and appears depicted with blonde hair and wearing highly saturated make up. Gonzales is representing a justice that

"fails to recognize them."[113] The *Chicano Student Mural* was similarly kept from public view for thirty years and it became accessible to public viewing in 2014.

However, although the particular location may have contributed in fact to its current state of preservation the condition of the mural remains unsettling because its context is no longer the intended place of gathering for the Chicanx community. As the backdrop for a bookstore the mural is almost invisible to passersby. Furthermore, the viewing for the mural is mandated by the bookstore's availability hours.

Image 3.9.1: *The Chicano Student Mural*, photograph of the mural in situ, 2019.

[113] Conversation and correspondence with Ruben Reyna. 2020.

This section demonstrates how three years after the completion of the *Chicano History* mural at UCLA-CSRC Library, the collective work of Leopoldo Tanguma, Mario Gonzales, and Ruben Reyna produced The *Chicano Student Mural* in Houston, Texas, during the rising of the Chicano consciousness in support of the political activism of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.

Based on the presumption that both murals compared in this study are works of art, the overarching argument that I propose concerns elevating their art historical value and legitimizing their condition as historical monuments of cultural heritage that must be displayed, protected and conserved. As works of art, both murals are ideal for studies in early Chicano expression via *form* and *content* during the first phase of the Chicano community mural movement from 1965 to 1974. Also, each mural is a visual record of their populations and by proxy each are deposits of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution, which is celebratory. However, the condition of both murals remains unsettling as Chapter 4 will further explain.

Chapter 4

Conclusion: Celebratory Yet Unsettling

Written fifty years after their creation, this thesis is the first time that the historical material presented in the discussion is brought together. Based on the presumption that both murals compared in this study are works of art, this thesis proposes to elevate their art historical value, legitimizing their condition as historical monuments of cultural heritage that must be displayed, protected and conserved. As works of art, both murals are ideal for studies in early Chicano visual expressions of resistance via *form* and *content* during the first phase of the Chicano community mural movement from 1965 to 1974. Also, each mural is a visual record of their populations and by proxy each are deposits of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution. The thesis proposes that both murals are symbolic of the celebratory strategies to reclaim the spaces of two historically segregated public universities.

Based on field and archival research the thesis first covers the social context of the murals documenting from secondary, and primary sources including oral testimony interviews, correspondence and photos, the establishing of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles; and the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston, Texas. The thesis describes as well the planning and making of the two historical murals *Chicano History* (UCLA-CSRC, 1970) and *The Chicano Student* (UH, 1973). The thesis proposes that the production of each mural evidences the re-signifying of the newly occupied spaces at each public institution in a celebratory spirit. The discussion shows the diversity of aesthetics and artists'

sensitivity to social justice struggles in the ways that teachers and students empowered each other in support of the rising of the Chicano consciousness at each public institution.

The research adapts the methodologies that I developed from courses on *Digital Humanities and Object- Based Learning in a Museum and University Context* to describe the condition and iconography of the two historic murals. In order to offer an interpretation of form and content of the murals while describing how these murals are ephemeral monuments that attest to the resilience of their producers—a testament of a group of people whose history has been denied. The thesis concludes by describing how both murals function as symbols that remain celebratory yet unsettling.

The condition of the murals is unsettling in the continued discrimination, exclusion, and constraint of spaces by the growing US racial intolerance and the use of military tactics against aggrieved groups protesting peacefully. *Chicano History* remains in permanent storage and according to conservator Ingrid Sayeb,[114] the materiality of the mural is currently in optimal state for preservation. She remarks on the issues of balancing between preservation and access of the mural. Because *Chicano History* is out of sight, it remains inactive and in a state of dislocation. Thus, it is absent from the public memory. This is important because as scholar Guisella Latorre remarks "murals carry much of the knowledge and history not taught in schools and universities."[115] Both *Chicano History* and *Chicano Student Mural* depict stories of resilience and survival while at the same time communicating visually important knowledge that should be passed down through generations.

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[114] Phone conversation with Ingrid Sayeb associate conservator of objects and sculpture Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. February 7, 2020.
[115] Latorre, Guisela, *Walls of empowerment.*, 26.

Chicano Murals and Digital Humanities

In the absence of display of the *Chicano History* mural, I propose a digital humanities project interpretative of the mural in a digital form displayed on an interactive screen such as the one at El Paso History Wall.[116] Another potential digitization of these materials could be through a web application like the Dartmouth Digital Orozco interpretative project for the mural *The Epic of American Civilization* painted by José Clemente Orozco between 1932 and 1934 in Baker-Berry Library at Dartmouth College.[117] It is highly improbable that the mural will return to its original wall; because of this, *Chicano History* is a mural in constant dislocation. However, the current disassembled state of the mural could change by possible initiatives to find a permanent location to display the mural.

In facing the dearth of preliminary documentation for the mural process of *The Chicano Student Mural* (proposal, drawings, cartoons, notes), I propose to view this mural using infrared light. Infrared imaging techniques can reveal the different layers during painting and reveal the artistic process including the underdrawing.[118] Researchers would be able to see the different layers of paint isolated from each other and whatever images had been covered over.[119] The documentation of the different processes and the different hands at work can be made available for further research in a similar project that

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[116] https://epmuseumofhistory.org/learn/digie/
[117] http://www.dartmouth.edu/digitalorozco/
[118] Museum of Fine Arts Houston. "Examination Using X-rays." https://www.mfah.org/research/conservation/conservation-science
[119] Cascone Sarah. "New X-Ray Images Reveal Just How Carefully Picasso Worked Over His Earliest Blue Period Paintings." *ArtNet*, June 6, 2018. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/picasso-secrets-x-ray-1297568#:~:text=Imaging%20scientists%20are%20able%20to,hidden%20beneath%20the%20visible%20surface.

I proposed previously for displaying the *Chicano History* mural on an interactive digital screen or website application. Studies with imaging technologies will reveal the two different murals painted on the surface and can be processed as two separate digital images. Scholars could study the original design of the composition from Leo Tanguma and how Mario Gonzales solved problems of design and composition when covering Tanguma's work. This is an opportunity to revise our history and to include visual documentation of all of the artists' contributions to the mural.

This proposal is important because close examination and analysis of the layers of the mural can lead to discoveries about the method of manufacture that can provide insight into some of the decision processes of their creators. Using infrared reflectography (IRR) is useful because it allows scholars to see through the surface layers revealing some of the pigments that become transparent while other pigments retain their opacity. This technique can help distinguish between pigments as well as reveal information such as the underdrawing of a painting. These kinds of studies have been carried on paintings providing new insights for art historians who could study how the artists reworked Tanguma's painting revealing the distinct layers of paint. Via imaging technologies scientists and scholars are able to isolate each layer of paint in order to see through the coats and reveal an image that has been painted over.

Other areas of further research

Unfortunately, the global pandemic under COVID-19 happened during the summer I was supposed to research the "President's Office Records, 1927-1981" in Special Collections at the University of Houston and I could not complete my studies for

this reason resulting in an area of further research. Further research is necessary of borderland Chicano Student Murals at universities that were established on indigenous territories. Although not everybody supported the nationalistic ideologies of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, the territories that the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán claimed as their ancestral homeland Aztlán disregards other non-Aztec origins and belongings in relation to the geographic locations.

A thorough comparison between the Tanguma mural at UH and his *The Rebirth of Our Nationality* mural done during the same year is also an area of further research. Generally speaking, the design of the UH mural is strikingly similar to the design of his later mural. Another thorough comparison between the Tanguma-Gonzales mural and the subsequent Gonzales-Reyna mural at UH is an area of further research. Comparing the Tanguma-Gonzales mural and the Gonzales-Reyna mural involving the use of imaging technologies to create a digital version of the mural could better enunciate the influences and problem-solving strategies describing how the visual discourse of the mural has been changed. How the meanings of the mural changed after Gonzales changes the title is as well an area of further research.

These artworks exist against and within the institutional spaces that contain them and sometimes, such as in the case of the UH mural, even within themselves. Both murals function as symbolic monuments that merit conservation and proper display. They are in dialogue with a larger contemporary movement across the southwest borderlands, such as at universities in New Mexico, Arizona, other cities in California and in Houston, Texas. Digital humanities is a possible way of democratizing this information and empowering our communities and their youth.

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