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Cary Cordova. *The Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. 336 pp. Hardcover \$42.50.

The history of Latinas/os in San Francisco is still understudied, and the contributions of Latina/o artists and cultural producers to most of the paradigm-shifting art movements that originated in San Francisco are still largely unheralded. This book addresses these glaring blind spots. Cary Cordova conducted dozens of oral histories, extensive urban fieldwork, and meticulous archival research to craft an expansive and in-depth examination of the cultural, political, urban, and transnational significance of Latinas/os in the heart of San Francisco, the Mission District.

The premise of Cordova's study is that the conception of the Mission District as a distinctly Latina/o community was the product of earlier displacements from now vanished Latina/o neighborhoods whose residents were pushed out by the voracious urban development that occurred in San Francisco after World War II. As a consequence of displacement and racial segregation, Latina/o residents moved into the Mission, which by the 1960s had become the predominant San Francisco Latina/o neighborhood. As an urban enclave where Latinas/os from different national origins first settled, the Mission became the epicenter for influential Pan-Latino arts movements throughout the second part of the twentieth century and into the present. Art circles began to notice the Mission's flourishing scene, comprised of Latina/o artists and white artists who moved into the neighborhood in the 1990s and 2000s, and dubbed their work part of the "Mission School." Nonetheless, as Cordova asserts, the description of this artistic "movement" was devoid of any mention of earlier Latina/o artistic productions or the predominant Latina/o character of the Mission.

Cordova notes that in contrast to other U.S. metropolises with sizable Latina/o communities such as Los Angeles, no single national group has been over-predominant in the San Francisco Latina/o population. Ethnic Mexicans have long been present in the Bay Area, yet Central and South Americans have also made San Francisco their destination in formidable numbers, first attracted by the shipping-related industries on the waterfront. Starting in the 1970s, Cold War conflicts in the Americas such as the military junta-led overthrow of Chile's democratically elected government and the civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala—all exacerbated by heavy U.S. involvement—led to large-scale migrations of people fleeing the violence in their homelands, many of whom made the Mission their home. As Cordova explains, encounters between people of different national origins led to the creation of a more encompassing Pan-Latina/o identity that was reflected in artistic expressions, politics, and the creation of organizations and institutions within the Mission. The Latina/o cultural production that originated in the Mission District has transcended local, regional, and transnational scales as artistic and political statements from the 1960s until the present.

The first two chapters are among the book's most important contributions to the history of San Francisco. In these sections, Cordova examines the largely unrecognized existence of pre-World War II Latina/o San Francisco communities in what became known as the Latin Quarter. Cordova presents a detailed study of the residents, religious institutions, and commercial enterprises that were once present in the Latin Quarter, whose ultimate demise

was due to the extensive urban development that began in the 1940s and accelerated in the postwar period. Cordova thus fills an important gap in popular historical accounts of Latina/o San Francisco, which commonly start in the Spanish period with the establishment of the Misión Dolores, then briefly discuss the Mexican-American war and the Latino miners during the gold rush—after which most Latinas/os seem to be erased from the history of the city—and conclude with cursory references to “perpetual migrants” to San Francisco in the late twentieth century. While providing a necessary correction to these incomplete accounts, Cordova specifically emphasizes the importance of Latina/o artists and their cultural production during the countercultural artistic expressions of the 1950s.

Chapters 3–5 cover the emergence of the Chicano Movement as part of the greater civil rights movement. The Bay Area became the epicenter of many student-led movements and grassroots actions, such as the Third World Liberation Front strikes of 1968 that led to the creation of ethnic studies departments at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley, as well as the emergence of the Black Panther Party in nearby Oakland. Cordova sheds light on the fact that artists and political activists working in the Mission were influenced by and also participants in these actions. As Cordova states, the artists and cultural producers laboring in the Mission created a more expansive, relational, and transnational ideology and vision of the Chicano Movement, which in San Francisco became less nationalistic and more Pan-Latino in scope. Political poster making is one of the enduring art forms that were advanced by Latina/o artists in the Mission in works that addressed and advocated global social justice. Muralism, another art form practiced and advanced by cultural producers in the Mission, broke down gender roles as both women and men became *muralistas* who used the walls of the Mission as a canvas to educate, politicize, and build solidarity between Mission residents and global freedom struggles. During this time, the Mission became the home for long-standing Pan-Latino art institutions such as Casa Hispana de Bellas Artes, Artes 6, Galería de la Raza, and the Mexican Museum.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the transnational character of the Mission, as artists and political activists expressed their concerns about the civil wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador and actively supported the leftist revolutionary struggles in those conflicts while also advocating revolutionary change in marginalized communities of color in the United States. Solidarity with the Sandinistas—Nicaragua’s revolutionary faction—in the Mission was augmented by the long presence of a Nicaraguan community whose numbers swelled as the result of the civil war in the 1970s. Among the most active cultural workers supporting the Sandinistas were Mission muralists and poets, some of whom collaborated with the Sandinistas after they prevailed over the U.S.-backed Somoza regime in 1979. The leftist solidarity and kinship networks in San Francisco were also hospitable to migrants fleeing the civil war in El Salvador, who by the 1980s had settled in the Mission and created the Sanctuary movement, which sought to protect Salvadorian refugees with unauthorized status from immigration enforcement raids. At the same time, Salvadorian artists expressed nuanced representations of the civil war in their homeland through their artworks. Although most Salvadorians who arrived in San Francisco during the 1980s did not aspire to become artists, Cordova asserts that many of them turned to cultural production to make their presence visible as part of the Latina/o community in the city and the United States.

In chapter 8, Cordova analyzes the evolution of the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) commemoration in the Mission. What began, in the Mexican tradition, as a remembrance of departed relatives and community members was transformed into a politicized memorial to honor the victims of political violence in the Cold War conflicts in Latin America and of gang violence in the city's black and brown communities. By the 1980s, the Día de los Muertos also served as a memorial for the countless San Franciscans who were afflicted by the AIDS epidemic and as a means of condemning the Reagan administration's deliberate neglect of the AIDS crisis because it primarily affected queer communities. In later years, Día de los Muertos commemorations have drawn attention to the displacement of Latina/o residents by gentrification and real estate speculation in the Mission and throughout San Francisco.

While the epilogue attempts to address the further impacts of gentrification and displacement in the 2010s and into the present, this examination could have been extended. However, aside from that minor objection, this is a solid study that ought to be considered by scholars interested in art history, urban history, and California history. Cordova reminds us that the current processes of gentrification that have occurred in the Mission and in countless other Latina/o neighborhoods throughout the United States are far from being new or geographically unique. Indeed, the displacement of Latina/o communities has been a constant part of the American historical experience. Furthermore, Cordova cautions us that the displacement of communities of color also erases their presence and contributions from the historical memory of American cities. As of 2019, Galería de la Raza and the Mexican Museum have been displaced from their sites in the Mission and their new permanent sites will likely be away from the neighborhood that these institutions called home for decades. Therefore, Cordova's work invites historians not only to recover these histories, but also to connect them to current and future struggles against the displacement of people and communities. By doing so, we recognize the resilience of the residents and cultural workers who have made these neighborhoods their home.

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