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Publication Date

2020

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

A Genealogy of Solidarity: Chicana/o Political Posters in the San Francisco Bay Area Across
Three Artist Generations

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Chicana and Chicano Studies

by

Kevin Wilfredo Cruz Amaya

2020

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2020

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

A Genealogy of Solidarity: Chicana/o Political Posters
in the San Francisco Bay Area Across Three Artist Generations

by

Kevin Wilfredo Cruz Amaya

Master of Arts in Chicana/o Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Charlene Villaseñor Black, Chair

The posters analyzed in this project map out a Chicana/o-Central American solidarity nexus with important implications for imaging solidarity in our contemporary moment during which we are witnessing an increased dehumanization of Central Americans at the hands of multiple nation states. I conceptualize this as “a genealogy of solidarity” and offer it as both the object explored and an approach for complicating a linear Chicana/o art historiography. This historiography has discursively defined poster production in a progressive, linear trend moving from highly politicized content during the 1960s to a decrease in overtly political imagery in our contemporary moment. As I argue and elaborate, this has the inadvertent consequence of not recognizing historical moments of Chicana/o/x visual solidarity with Central America(ans). As

such, this project offers the following contributions. By returning to the archive and analyzing poster creation across multiple generations of artists, this project contributes to existing scholarship on Chicana/o political posters by drawing out the mentorship relationships between artists and offers an alternative history of political poster production that does not cease in 1975. Secondly, a genealogy of solidarity helps tracks the lasting legacy of Chicana/o political poster production from the 1970s and into our contemporary moment. It documents a longer history of solidarity between Chicana/o communities and Central Americans made possible by the Third World politics prominent in the San Francisco Bay Area. I conclude by noting the potential importance of *centros*, print studios, and workshops as crucial sites for understanding the connections between artists' generations and set out the conceptual parameters for what I term a "popular art consciousness" present in the San Francisco Bay Area. This project rests and makes its contributions at the interface between Chicana/o Studies and Central American Studies.

The thesis of Kevin Wilfredo Cruz Amaya is approved.

Karina Alma

Alma López Gaspar de Alba

Charlene Villaseñor Black, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

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Acknowledgements

Academic work is always a collective effort. First, I would like to thank my family. Every milestone in my career has been made possible by their sacrifices and support. *Para mi mamá*, Silvia Amaya, *mi papá*, Cesar A. Cruz, and my brother, Cesar A. Cruz. I would not be where I am today without your love and support. This would have never been accomplished without your emotional and literal sustenance.

I would also like to thank my Master's committee, Charlene Villaseñor Black, Karina Alma, and Alma López Gaspar de Alba. I am grateful for your support and belief in this project. Charlene: thank you for believing in ideas wholeheartedly. Karina: this project began as a term paper for one of your seminars and I grateful for your encouragement to pursue it further. Alma: your critical questions from an artistic perspective have moved this project in important directions. I cherish your artistic knowledge. You have been invaluable in these last two years.

To the artist who produced the work that allowed for this project to happen, I hope I have done justice to your work.

Rosario Majano, the best partner I could ask for. Thank you for the love, laughter, and tolerating my endless rants about posters. You have been there for all the pain and joy. I cannot thank you enough.

A special thanks to my good friend Pedro Trujillo. I appreciate all the endless rides to late night soccer games. Stress is inevitable in the academy, so thanks for helping me retain my sanity through soccer.

Last, and certainly not least, a huge thank you to the incredible cohort seven, Iris Ramirez and Joana Chavez. Graduate school has been a rollercoaster, but I am glad it we have gone through the ups and downs together.

Introduction: A Genealogy of Solidarity

Solidarity Then and Now

Rarely are we asked to bear witness to joy. Bearing witness, in relationship to Central America(ns), almost always conjures up images of atrocities, war, and destitution. Solidarity is consequentially grounded in our ability to bear witness to and respond to these atrocities. While reckoning with the suffering of others is crucial to ending state sanctioned violence, it comes at a price. As Kency Cornejo reminds us, this form of solidarity denies other realities, more humane ones that contain moments of joy and creativity (Cornejo). Juan R. Fuentes's 1985 silkscreen poster *Somos Hermanas: Embracing Our Sisters in Solidarity* asks us to bear witness to joy as an act of solidarity (figure 1). His poster depicts an embrace between two women. The woman on the left warmly holds the other with a facial expression of relief and joy. Her *hermana* (sister) remains anonymous, with her back towards the viewer. The poster illustrates an intimate moment of familial reunion, as suggested by the poster's title. Two diagonal maroon sections containing the poster's text and frame this heartfelt image, but they also function as a buffer for the viewer. White lines implying a tear frame the scene and create a distance between us and the intimate moment being depicted. We are cautioned to not interrupt. Instead, we are asked to participate in other ways, in this case to attend a conference and perform the labor of consciousness raising. Small text in the upper left corner documents the 1985 International Women's Day, for which the theme was *Somos Hermanas: Embracing Our Sisters in Solidarity* (We Are Sisters: Embracing Our Sisters in Solidarity). In equally small text below the central image, the poster makes a specific announcement of the First West Coast Conference on Women in Central America, held on the weekend of March 8, 1985, at Mission High School in San Francisco, California.

If read as an historical document, the poster illustrates an extensive network of community, social, and political organizations in San Francisco's Bay Area standing in solidarity with Central American women. The conference's program consisted of guest speakers, including Yadira Balerio of the *Asociación de Mujeres Nicaraguenses Luisa Amada* and Mireya Lucero of the *Asociación de Mujeres de El Salvador*, workshops, and a panel discussion. The conference was sponsored by the Alliance Against Women's Oppression, Somos Hermanas: S.F. Women's Centers/Women's Building. While the poster visualizes an emotive embrace between two Latinas, it also visually articulates a moment of political solidarity with women in Central America. The use of the familial term *hermanas* is widened to encompass kinship beyond biological, ancestral, and national ties. It is deployed as a term to imply a mutuality in political struggle and mobilized to establish a form of solidarity that moves beyond simply standing beside one another in struggle. While the personal histories of the *hermanas* remain elusive, the mutuality illustrated by Juan R. Fuentes is grounded in embracing one another at a humane level and in difference for the sake of a common political goal.



Figure 1. Juan Fuentes, *Somos Hermanas: Embracing Our Sisters in Solidarity*, 1985. Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

In our contemporary moment, the Central American exodus—often referred to as caravans—has fueled anti-immigrant responses by U.S. right-wing politicians, organized white supremacist groups, and nativist citizens, but it has also brought to light acts of solidarity with Central American people. Contemporary Chicana/o/x artists have employed their artwork in expressions of solidarity and to denounce the inhumane conditions Central American migrants are experiencing at the U.S.-Mexico border, and at large.¹ As Karina O. Alvarado, Alicia Ivonne Estrada, and Ester E. Hernández note, “In 2011 and by the summer of 2014, a surge of Central

American unaccompanied child migrants gained mainstream visibility, becoming sensationalized as a crisis by U.S. politicians and media” (3). While this dire contemporary moment has prompted visual responses by artists in recent years, this project makes an original contribution at the intersection of Chicana/o/x and Central American Studies by analyzing Chicana/o political posters and mapping out a visual Chicana/o-Central American solidarity nexus dating back to the early 1970s.

I track this history of visual solidarity between these two communities in an in-depth account, that for the first time, puts the work of Rupert Garcia, Juan R. Fuentes and collective Dignidad Rebelde in conversation. The implications of this project for Chicana/o Studies is that it offers an historical consciousness of coalitional work between Chicana/o and Central American communities in our contemporary moment. It specifically tracks the Third World politics manifested in the work of Chicana/o artists and traces a sustained commitment to solidarity with Central American communities in the U.S. and the isthmus. At an historical moment where children are kept in inhumane conditions and adults are vilified by mainstream media and politicians, this project provides an art historical antecedent to the possibilities for connection against systemic dehumanization, military violence, and government sponsored terror.

As such, this project is driven by the following lines of inquiry: How do posters as artistic objects and documents disrupt established characterizations of periods in the history of the Chicana/o art movement and of the movement at large? How did artists understand and visualize solidarity with Central Americans and how does this relate to the cultural nationalism of the Chicana/o movement? As a first attempt to map out the relationships across multiple artist generations, this project answers these questions by revisiting the political poster archive held by

the Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG), located in Los Angeles, California and draws insight from communication with artist Juan R. Fuentes and interviews with Jesus Barraza. Contemporary examples from Dignidad Rebelde are drawn from their artist website and images provided by the artists. I conclude with a tentative response to the following questions that arose in the process of this writing. What makes the San Francisco Bay Area a distinct node of Chicana/o political poster production? By turning towards the poster workshop and *centros*, I ask, are posters site specific? How does geography, meaning the place where these workshops are established, shape the message?

Based on my analysis of posters, I propose the concept of a “genealogy of solidarity” to describe artistic practice and production that traces a Chicana/o Third World Consciousness across generations of artists into our contemporary moment and complicates established periodization of the Chicana/o poster movement. By examining the work of artists across multiple generations, I propose reconsidering the accepted periodization of Chicana/o political poster production offered in the literature, which situates explicitly political work as central to the years prior to 1975.² This project argues otherwise and advocates that political poster production breaks through the 1975 threshold specifically in reaction to political, economic, and military turmoil in Central America during the late 1970s, and into the contemporary moment. This new approach to the history of Chicana/o political posters makes visible the informal and formal mentorship relationships that have made possible for a socially committed and community oriented artistic practice to persist across generations of artists. As such, this project makes visible the unintended consequence of this periodization—the interpretive invisibility of gestures of solidarity from Chicana/o artists with Central American people.

The following overview of the literature regarding the Chicano poster movement outlines the accepted periodization and characterizations associated with each of these artistic periods. This assessment of the literature elaborates on how discursively this periodization has unintentionally rendered a longer history of Third World solidarity invisible. I begin with a discussion of Shifra M. Goldman's 1984 article, "A Public Voice: Fifteen Years of Chicano Posters," an early analysis of Chicana/o poster production and scholarly gesture towards a distinct Chicano poster movement. I then discuss the foundational text *Arte Chicano: A Comprehensive and Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Art, 1965-1981*, wherein Shifra M. Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto establish the periods and characterizations for the study of Chicana/o art. The discursive gravity of *Arte Chicano* manifests in uses of its periodization, and accompanying descriptions, in two major exhibition catalogues: *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* (1990) and *Just Another Poster?: Chicano Graphic Arts in California* (2001).³

Chicano Poster Art: Outlining A Movement

Two forms of art gave a visual voice to the Chicano movement: posters and murals.⁴ According to Shifra M. Goldman, they reflected "the history of Mexican peoples in the United States and on the separatism, cultural nationalism, search for identity, and socio-political struggles" of the Chicano movement in the late 1960s (50). In her 1984 article, Shifra Goldman posits a Chicano poster movement. According to Goldman, "it must be viewed as a movement rather than simply as a collection of individuals making posters" (50). At the time of its publication, Goldman's article was radical in that it asserted a collective uniqueness to poster production during and for the Chicano civil rights movement. It was unique for the reason that individual artists coalesced at an historical juncture and collectively put forth, through their

artwork, a political consciousness, social agenda, and artistic ideals. This movement, much like the mural movement, was divided into two distinct periods: 1968-1975 and from 1975 to present (at the time of publication this referred to 1984). I draw on this proposal, in hindsight, to make the counterargument that the poster movement's radical and political edge did not wane as did the civil rights arm of the movement. Many of the artists continued to create socially and politically committed work well beyond the early years of the Chicano movement and into the contemporary moment.

In her essay, Goldman accorded distinct descriptions to specific periods in this chronology. The first, 1968-1975, referred to posters that were “marked by a totally noncommercial, community-oriented character in the attitudes and expectations of the individuals and groups who made the posters, the purposes they served, the audiences they addressed, the facilities that were established to promote poster making, and the collectives that flourished” (50). Posters produced during the first seven years of the poster movement were devoted to achieving goals beyond the aesthetic interest and goals of the artists, yet it does not mean that artists were not invested in aesthetic exploration and innovation. Instead, posters were produced for the sake of communicating to and for the community: “almost invariable, in the 1968 to 1975 period, Chicano posters were communicative and educational,” writes Goldman (52). Posters advertised community events, protests, celebrations, and provided information in visual form, as exemplified by Juan Fuentes's *Somos Hermanas: Embracing Our Sisters in Solidarity* (1985). The goal was to disseminate a message, not procure profit or recognition for and by the artist, which were the ideals of a cultural nationalism outlined in “El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán” of 1969.⁵

The second period proposed by Shifra Goldman, beginning in 1975, encompasses a change that slightly deviates from the ideals and politics regarding artistic production outlined in El Plan. This change occurs in the attitudes, political commitments, and messages, as well as what constituted “community” for Chicana/o artists. It also witnessed a move away from non-commercialism and towards mainstream values for art.⁶ Goldman notes the first important change that occurred in this second period as a broadening of the political and social agenda of the movement: “Crucial to this second period is the changing perception of the Chicano role in the United States, and in the international arena—a perception that brought an end to separatism for most Chicanos and a closer alignment with Third World (especially Latin American) liberation struggles” (50). At the historical juncture of 1975, Chicana/o artists reevaluated the political agenda for the movement within the United States and recognized affinities with other civil rights and liberation movements in the United States, and globally. In other words, Shifra Goldman posits this second period as a period during which Chicana/o artists articulated visual gestures of solidarity with other oppressed people of the world. While a third world consciousness solidified and was crucial to this second period of the poster movement, this line of discourse assumes that gestures of solidarity are most visible after 1975.

This project seeks to complicate another description associated with the second phase determined in the literature. A second, and simultaneous, shift transpired during the second phase of the poster movement. It was a shift perceived to carry Chicanas/os, including artists, away from the goals, ideals, and commitments of the movement. Goldman’s second characteristic accounts for the assimilation of Chicanas/os to mainstream society. She writes, “other segments of the Chicano community became more assimilationist in relation to the dominant society and its values, and more commercial in the content and dissemination of their art” (50). The content

of the art presumably reflected the aesthetic interests of the artists; a turn away from “art for community’s sake” and towards the mainstream adage and belief of “art for art’s sake.” While a segment of posters produced during this period shifted away from collective ideals and towards the individual interests, this does not mutually exclude politically oriented work.⁷

Although this decline in explicit social protest content generally holds true, my project is concerned with the effects of these neat categories. A genealogy of solidarity disrupts the association that art made in the first period is generally community oriented with an explicit political and social protest content, and anything after is automatically categorized as part of a decline in political and social protest content. As her article suggests, by the 1980s the ideals and content represented in posters slowly leaned toward professional gallery aspirations. This is evidenced by the introduction of numbered poster editions as opposed to the unsigned protest posters of the earlier period.⁸

This transition of Chicana/o art from community oriented work towards a commercially driven artistic production was also articulated in the publication of foundational texts for the study of Chicana/o art. Chicana/o art historians Shifra M. Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto published the foundational text *Arte Chicano: An Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Art 1965-1985* (1985), in which they outline the social, economic, cultural, and historical contexts that inform the Chicano art movement. *Arte Chicano* was a transformative text in that it provided the fundamental intellectual tools for the appreciation of Chicana/o art and offered a corrective to the dismissal of Chicana/o art by art history.⁹ A first of its kind, *Arte Chicano* (1985) provided future scholars with an intellectual point of departure for the study of Chicana/o art. Among the many contributions of *Arte Chicano* to the field of Chicana/o art history, the periodization offered by

Goldman and Ybarra-Frausto profoundly affected later scholarship and the exhibition of Chicana/o art.

Establishing the Phases

Goldman and Ybarra-Frausto's influence extends directly into the first major traveling exhibition of Chicana/o art in the U.S., *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985* (CARA).¹⁰ The exhibition opened nearly five years after the publication of *Arte Chicano* (1985) and utilized the same periodization of the annotated bibliography. Excerpts from the introduction of *Arte Chicano* provide the social and historical context for the exhibition catalogue's essay "The Political and Social Contexts of Chicano Art" (83-95). The periodization outlined previously remained for the exhibition catalogue, thus discursively reifying the two time periods for a national audience.

As *CARA* concluded, Shifra Goldman's and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto's work profoundly shaped the first major exhibition specifically dedicated to Chicana/o poster production.¹¹ In 1993, scholars, curators, archivists, and museum directors convened to initiate a collaborative endeavor that would result in the first comprehensive traveling exhibition of Chicana/o poster art, *Just Another Poster?: Chicano Graphic arts in California*. The exhibition toured multiple cities across the nation concluding in 2003 at the Jersey City Museum. In the spirit of Goldman's proposal and articulation of a Chicano poster movement, the exhibition held as its core belief that Chicana/o posters visually constitute the rich social, political, and cultural complexities of the movement. More importantly, the exhibition, like its predecessor *CARA*, outlined the major theoretical and intellectual frameworks for the study of Chicano poster art.

One essay stands out as it echoes, with a slight modification, the foundational periodization of Shifra M. Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto. Tere Romo's "Points of Convergence: The Iconography of the Chicano Poster," offers an analysis of the changes in iconography in Chicano posters beginning from the 1960s and into the 2000s. She argues that posters "functioned as points of convergence for the myriad of forms, signs, and symbols available to Chicana/o artists" (92). The result of this convergence was a distinct Chicano iconography that developed across multiple historical periods. My engagement with Romo's work regards her proposal that, "Within each of these phases, Chicano poster production was marked by distinct changes in intent and iconography" (93). She proposes three periods that in general uphold the observation of a steady decline of explicit political content in Chicana/o poster art.¹²

I find her second period, "Synthesis: The Chicano Poster and Cultural Reclamation, 1972-1982," of specific relevance to this project. It is at the historical juncture of the early 1970s that Romo identifies a turning point in the iconography of Chicano poster art. According to Romo's description of this phase, "the majority of the posters were created to publicize community events or *centro* activities," meaning that they performed the function of advertising community cultural events (101). Thus, posters gradually moved away from piercing political content and towards articulating and promoting the development of a Chicano cultural identity. Yet, I argue that some of these posters which advertised community events remained explicitly political. I believe there was a parallel political visual vocabulary expressed by artists during this second period even though it was subtle. In addition to cultural events, posters that continued to be produced were in support of and in response to social movements in Latin America (see figure 1). In other words, cultural reclamation through the synthesis of Mexican symbols with local

events was paralleled by images of protest denouncing social oppression abroad, expressing solidarity with other Third World people, and announcing community events of political consciousness raising. As I will demonstrate in this project, the posters produced by Garcia and Fuentes substantiate that the 1972-1982 decade generally described as one of cultural reclamation for Chicana/o poster art also coincides with the armed struggles in Central America during the 1980s. Poster production did not decline in political content, it simply shifted to solidify a Third World consciousness during that decade.

A Genealogy of Solidarity: Drawing Parallel Lines and Rethinking the Phases of Chicano Poster Art

In hindsight, it is complicated to discursively reconcile the political gesture of solidarity in Juan R. Fuentes's *Somos Hermanas: Embracing Our Sisters in Solidarity*, 1985 with the periodization established in the historiography of Chicana/o art (figure 1). This discursive disjuncture offers an opportunity to rethink the periodization and propose a "genealogy of solidarity" as an alternative conceptual framework for understanding political poster production in the San Francisco Bay area. Recent scholarship rethinks the phases and descriptions established for Chicano poster art.¹³ For example, Karen Mary Davalos analyzes the important theoretical and artistic contributions of Yolanda López in the monograph *Yolanda M. López* (2008), which gestures towards a discord between political posters and neatly articulated historical periods. As Davalos writes of Yolanda López, "Her oppositional consciousness supported a broad understanding of politics that would tease out the errors of Chicano art historiography. Her work would force a new periodization that does not announce the end of intense overt political messages in 1975" (57). A quintessential example from Yolanda López's

oeuvre that “teases out the errors of Chicano art historiography” is her poster *Who’s the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?* produced in 1978.¹⁴

Davalos advances this critique of Chicana/o art historiography in *Chicana/o Remix: Art and Errata since the Sixties* (2017), where she argues against a “dualistic approach” that has resulted in binary oppositions like political versus apolitical art (3-4). Although early scholars like Goldman and Ybarra-Frausto were offering a tentative timeline for Chicana/o art, the articulation of these periods in subsequent Chicana/o art discourse resulted in conventional binary categories. These oppositions, in turn, leave important pieces like Yolanda López’s *Who is the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?* (1978) in a state of interpretative and historical limbo, unaccounted for because it falls out of the time period designated for politically explicit works *and* as too political for a period designated as commercial. This interpretive limbo is also inhabited by examples of Chicana/o artists extending visual gestures of solidarity with Central American peoples.

Historical periods are never clear cut as there are always deviations, nuances, overlaps, and continuing patterns that disrupt them. The goal of this project is to demonstrate that politically committed poster production did not end at 1975 and that in fact it carries on into our contemporary moment. In *Chicana/o Remix* (2017), Karen Mary Davalos offers a decolonial and new methodology for Chicana/o art history and a productive approach for the conundrum posed by artworks, exhibitions, and events held at community cultural centers that do not adhere to the periodization and dualistic interpretative framework established in foundational literature. Her critique of the canon is both directed at art history writ large and Chicana/o art history in particular. Decoloniality in Davalos’s work refers to her unveiling of art history’s “structures, methods, and institutions,” which perpetuate the invisibility of Chicana/o art by deeming it too

narrow, too political, and not universally legible (13). This invisibility is one that is “rooted in the histories of colonialism, imperialism, material and political dispossession, and legal and discursive exclusion citizenship,” making the writing of a complex Chicana/o art history an initial step in decolonizing art history in general (13).

Decolonizing art history requires new methodological tools that make visible the complexities of Chicana/o art. Taking a visual-theoretical cue from Sandra de la Loza’s *Action Portraits* (2011), Davalos highlights the need for “us to return to the archive with eyes wide open,” or as she proposes it “remixing the archive,” in search of a much more complicated history of Chicana/o art (7). Davalos’s return to and remix of the archive—inspired by the work of Sandra de la Loza—actively proposes a theoretical approach that provokes a historiography that complicates associations between time periods and cultural productions. My project shares in Davalos’s critique of the dualistic methodology of Chicana/o art and identification of the “ignored, forgotten, or undocumented aspects of cultural production” (9).

In a similar vein, I draw theoretical insights from a return to the archives and argue that what we know about political poster production by Chicana/o artists like Garcia, Fuentes, and Dignidad Rebelde is also largely insufficient, and shaped by a reliance on binaries. My questioning of the bifurcation between political posters and commercial fine art print is grounded on identifying how they are not diametrically opposed strands of Chicana/o political poster production, but rather parallel trajectories. My return to the archive differs from Davalos’s in that it thinks about the past not in distinct case studies across time, but rather how one generation influences the following. My project thinks across multiple generations of artists by drawing out the mentorship relations between artists. It links and sees connections between a movement that occurred over five decades ago but that offers potential hopeful futures through the

contemporary work of artists in the now. I draw from Michel Foucault's genealogical approach to historical and archival analysis to conceptualize the first part of this conceptual contribution. For Foucault, genealogy as an examination of descent "permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which—thanks to which, against which—they were formed" (81). To construct a genealogy of solidarity requires an attentiveness to the contingency the concept of solidarity had to distinct historical events. Solidarity as I will demonstrate has been subject to and a product of disruptive historical events, in particular the exercise of power by nation states. What helps string together these three generations of artists are the collective responses by social movements with which they identified.

While the historical circumstances shape and resignify solidarity across generations, what is crucial to my analysis is that it is a practice that has descended and reappeared across generations of Chicana/o/x artists. A genealogy of solidarity, as I propose it, is both the object explored in this project and an approach for complicating a linear Chicana/o art historiography that rests on a progressive linear trend from highly politicized poster production during the 1960s to a decreased overtly political poster production in our contemporary moment. Instead, a genealogy of solidarity insists on the multiple of strands of political thought and practices that compose what we know as Chicana/o art. As the object of study, a genealogy of solidarity entails pausing on the large body of Chicana/o political posters and paying close attention to the visual details evidencing solidarity across a dispersed, but nonetheless connected history of poster production.

These moments of solidarity identified in this project makes it so that the concept of a genealogy of solidarity, as I conceive it, rest at the interface between Chicana/o Studies and Central American Studies.¹⁵ Ana Patricia Rodríguez offers a critical discussion of how solidarity

with Central American people is narrativized in Chicana/o literary production through what she terms “solidarity fictions” or “fictions of solidarity,” in which *transfronterista* Chicana and Latina feminists document and contest the United States’ involvement in Central American wars as a neocolonial and imperialist power (199). Criticism of U.S. imperialism and expressions of solidarity from Chicana and Latina writers, critics, and filmmakers with Central American refugees during the 1980s were grounded on the recognition of similar historical experiences with U.S. imperialism.

While “fictions of solidarity” propose condemning critiques of U.S. imperialism, Rodríguez also points out that they relied on the “romance of solidarity,” which makes for a solidarity that “privileged Chicana subjects, protagonists, histories, agencies, and sensibilities” (219-222). A Chicana or Latina subject position, that is ultimately tied to their role as author, is partially and momentarily decentered, only to be re-centered again as a protagonist of the narrative. This results in a lack of discursive agency for Central Americans to tell their story from their own on subject positionalities, making them the objects of a narrative rather than the subjects of it. While I agree with and recognize the importance of Rodríguez’s critique, this project posits political posters as an art form in which “solidarity serves as a means to channel sympathy and empathy into action” (219). This is not to say that literature is any less politically motivated or cannot incite action. The political poster is an artistic medium that functioned as a tool in and of activism due to its facility and immediacy of production.

In her recent article “US Central Americans in Art and Visual Culture,” Kency Cornejo also offers a critical discussion of visual art, solidarity, and Central American visual representation in mainstream visual discourse during the 1970s to 1990s. In it, she points towards the persistence of narrow visual codes utilized by mainstream U.S. visual producers and

solidarity organizations in representing Central Americans in order to elicit solidarity. Cornejo terms this visual discourse in photographs, political posters, and film an “aesthetics of solidarity,” that portrayed Central Americans to U.S. audiences through the narrow visual tropes of violence, poverty, and tropical landscapes (Cornejo). In this case, visual solidarity has the consequences of reifying Central America(ns) within these tropes for a U.S. mainstream and forecloses the possibility of self-determination or creativity by Central Americans. Cornejo makes us aware that even when solidarity is attempted by a well-intentioned U.S. mainstream, it still operates under power differential and racial hierarchies.

Ana Patricia Rodríguez’s and Kency Cornejo’s conclusions on solidarity prompt my consideration of the relationship between the content and the form of the political poster, how solidarity is visualized when it comes from a marginalized community rather than the mainstream. “Fictions of solidarity” bind author to a narrative structure, but political posters often times rely on the diminishing role of the artist. In political posters, the message takes precedence and subjectivity of the artist manifest as a trace. This effect results, in part, due to the process of production for posters. They defy and complicate notions of the singular art object, or as Chon Noriega comments, they “exist somewhere between the unique art object and the mass media” (23). Posters are produced in relatively large runs or editions ranging from several dozen to several hundred in order to communicate a message, call to action, or a gesture of solidarity. They complicate the dominant notion that an individual art object is a manifestation of artistic genius and insist that nonetheless “beneath their ostensible message is an aesthetic sensibility that knows there are no easy messages. But the need to communicate remains urgent” (Noriega 21).

Chapter 1: Art on the Front Lines

A Third World Consciousness

A stenciled portrait of Ernesto “Che” Guevara circulated as one of the images capturing the revolutionary student uprising at San Francisco State University in 1968 (figure 1). Rupert Garcia’s silkscreened poster *Right On!* (1968) is an early piece in his oeuvre of political posters and artworks created for social change and raising political consciousness. Garcia created this poster specifically in support of the coalitional work of the Third World Liberation Front, and as such, resorted to a revolutionary image that ideologically captured the political revolutionary and Third World consciousness of the group. In addition to drawing on the visual impact of Che’s portrait, *Right On!* (1968) reflects a Chicana/o artistic sensibility that synthesizes elements from multiple cultures, a sensibility made possible in the formal qualities of the poster. I use *Right On!* (1968) as a starting point for this chapter because of the context in which it is created. Garcia’s poster functions as a marker of visual and ideological exchanges between marginalized communities in the U.S. and revolutionary movements abroad fighting U.S. imperialism. I begin to trace “genealogy of solidarity” with *Right On!* (1968) and continue with the poster production of Juan R. Fuentes and Dignidad Rebelde. I situate Garcia’s work in its historical context with a brief account of the Third World Liberation Strike at San Francisco State College and highlight its importance in germinating a Third World political consciousness amongst key and canonical Chicana/o artists.

The Third World Strike

1968 marked a crucial year for Third World solidarity amongst Chicana/o artists of the San Francisco Bay Area. Animated by the worldwide uprisings that same year, students at San Francisco State College (now university) organized and protested the failure of the institution to

meet the needs of students from marginalized communities. The strike lasted nearly five months, beginning on November 6, 1968, less than a month after the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City, and in the same year as student riots in Paris, France. Inspired by social movements waged abroad and at home, a multiracial and multiethnic coalition of students demanded ethnic studies, equitable admissions policies that correlated with the demographics of San Francisco, and financial support for students.¹⁶ Influenced by worldwide resistance and revolt, students organized under the term of Third World to “create solidarity across lines of race, ethnicity, national heritage, color, and immigration status,” which did not subsume their differences, but instead allowed students to organize around shared social struggles (Davalos, *Yolanda López* 34). Like many of the other student uprisings throughout the world, the Third World Liberation Strike incited art students to socially engage their artistic production. Chicano artist Rupert Garcia was among the students who participated in the Third World Liberation Strike, a social uprising that left indelible impacts on Chicana/o political poster production in the following generations.



Figure 2. Rupert Garcia, *Right On!*, 1968. Achenbach Foundation, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Rupert Garcia, Che, and the Third World in San Francisco

Rupert Garcia established his artistic career amidst the politically charged events of 1968. Ramón Favela discusses the lasting consequences the Third World Liberation Strike had on Rupert Garcia's ideological and artistic commitments: "in 1968, Garcia began to see a use for his art on the cutting edge of a momentous social change in American society. In that same year he abruptly gave up acrylic painting...turning his energies to producing silkscreen posters and serigraphs exclusively for the next seven years" (8).¹⁷ Garcia's involvement in the Third World Liberation strike encouraged a shift from the studio-based form of the painting to the mass-

reproduced form of the silkscreen poster. It was the urgency of the moment that moved Garcia to take up the silkscreen poster as his medium of expression. This formal shift in his creative process coincided with an ideological recalibration of his role as an artist in society.

Posters, unlike easel paintings, exist in multiples and hold the power to reach a wider audience than a painting would in a shorter time period. Painting is a traditional art form that is conventionally appreciated within the sterile confines of a museum or an art gallery. The appreciation of paintings within museums is dependent on their decontextualization and their existence outside of the everyday experience of people. Posters, in comparison to paintings, exist and circulate within communities. They are democratic and accessible to the masses. The content and form of Garcia's posters are intertwined and imbued with the ideological position of the Third World Liberation Strike. As Garcia's experience during the strike demonstrates, art was meant to play a key role in society, not simply exist in the isolation of a museum wall. The strike was a moment, as Favela notes, when Garcia's work demonstrated a politically and socially committed ideological stance that placed art as central to advancing political movements (8-10).

Rupert Garcia's earliest political poster, *Right on!* (1968), functioned as a double gesture of Third World Solidarity (figure 2). On the one hand, I recognize solidarity with the people of Cuba and their success against U.S. imperialism. Garcia's stenciled portrait of Che Guevara is perhaps an early instance of what Favela conceptualizes as Garcia's "ideological portraits," in which "The ideology expressed by the image was a statement of the artist's position" (21). The portrait of Che is a black and white impression, meaning that Garcia had aesthetically reduced Che's image down to an essence. The essence that Garcia was trying to convey was one of revolution and success against U.S. imperialism. The phrase "Right On!" is a statement of support and approval, but can be understood as a gesture of solidarity with the people of Cuba

who vicariously experienced the death of Che Guevara almost a year prior to the strike at home. The phrase, along with the iconic image of Che, whose gaze aims toward the distance, is a hopeful sign of encouragement, one that announces that Che's revolutionary essence persists in the political organizing of students at San Francisco. Although produced in 1968, *Right On!* makes clear Garcia's ideological position with and through the figure of Che and demonstrates an urgent alignment with Third World efforts against U.S. imperialism and repression at home.

Garcia produced *Right On!* (1968) by making a stencil of Alberto Díaz Gutiérrez's iconic photograph of the revolutionary, yet Garcia flipped the image and Che's gaze. This aesthetic choice by Garcia suggests that Che's revolutionary spirit looked elsewhere, perhaps towards the U.S., and thereby extended a gesture of solidarity towards home. Printed as a one-color stencil, the poster's formal qualities speak to the urgency in expressing solidarity with Third World students who had come under internal repression by the institution at San Francisco State College and functioned at a more practical level of solidarity. Ramón Favela reveals that this early poster by Garcia was "one of the earliest posters done for the student strike bail funds" (19). With the proceeds generated from the sale of the poster directly used to bail out members who had been arrested as a result of the campus wide strike, Garcia's poster is a gesture of solidarity that materialized into means for liberating people out of jail. Garcia's *Right On!* (1968) does fall within the characterization of the first period in Chicana/o art history (1968-1975), in that it is community driven and explicitly political. But it also demonstrates an early moment when Chicana/o artists aligned and understood themselves in relation to Third World people abroad and within the United States.

Garcia's double gesture of solidarity in *Right On!* (1968), was part of the effort by students to situate their struggles in the university, as part of a global revolutionary moment.

Garcia's use of Che's image symbolized and drew on the idea of an international revolutionary moment. As David Kunzle argues, "The image of Che, who incarnates the much controverted principle of international revolution is, fittingly, couched in a truly international visual language" (24). Garcia's poster was part of this "international visual language" that mobilized the ideal of the Cuban revolution being replicated across the globe, even if it was at the local level.



Figure 3. Rupert Garcia, *Free Los Siete*, 1970. Achenbach Foundation, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Although there are countless examples of gestures of solidarity by Rupert Garcia, the resolution of the Third World Liberation Strike in 1969 was quickly followed by *Los Siete* court

case, which involved seven Central American teens who were wrongly accused of the death of a San Francisco City police officer.¹⁸ Rupert Garcia produced a poster in solidarity of *Los Siete* in 1970 (figure 3).¹⁹ The poster, simple and exemplary of Garcia's anti-pop art style, has a large, vibrant red number seven as its largest visual element against a mustard yellow background. According to Ramón Favela, "Garcia appropriated the pictorial devices and premises of pop art and subverted them from a Chicano and Third World perspective to serve his aesthetic and ideological ends" (11). Garcia appropriated the banality and detachment of pop-artists, like Jasper Johns, who investigated the aesthetic potential of the 0-9 digits. John's work pointed out the banal, yet useful role that digits played in society. Garcia appropriated the pictorial interest in the simple shapes of numbers to enumerate commonplace over-policing of communities of color in San Francisco.

I would be remiss if I did not comment on Garcia's intentional chromatic choices, which visually articulate a connection between liberation struggles waged abroad and in San Francisco's communities of color. Pop-art is often associated with vibrant, eye-catching colors. Garcia subverts the use of bright colors, "especially those that allude to specific racial and political associations in the popular imagination," to establish solidarity with Third World people abroad and in the U.S. (Favela 12). As a Vietnam veteran, who came into radical political consciousness, Garcia retrospectively aligned himself with the people of Vietnam who fought off American military invasion. This experience and political ideology manifested in his color choices for his posters, more pointedly through the use of bright yellow and red in reference to the Vietnamese flag.²⁰ Through color, Garcia threaded a gesture of solidarity that linked the struggles of Vietnamese, Chicana/o, and Salvadoran communities against military and systemic forms of oppression from first world countries like the United States. The bottom of the poster

reiterates the campaign's slogan demanding the release of the seven youth. Garcia's use of Spanish foreshadows the call to action brought forth by his student Juan R. Fuentes in 1982.

Beyond '75: Calls to Action and an End to U.S. Intervention in Central America

In his 1982 poster, *International Day of Protest: Stop U.S. Intervention in El Salvador* (figure 3), Juan R. Fuentes extends community driven and politically oriented work beyond the 1975 threshold in a call to action to end military intervention in El Salvador. Fuentes, born in Artesia, New Mexico, in 1950, was raised in Salinas Valley, California. In 1969, Fuentes moved West and started school at San Francisco State where he was to meet Rupert Garcia and become his student, a connection that would set him on the path to carry political poster production beyond his years at San Francisco State. At a personal level, Fuentes was connected to a previous generation of artists like Garcia who would become a sort of mentor for Fuentes. At an institutional level, Fuentes's presence at San Francisco State was bound up with the political activism of the Third World Liberation Front. He was admitted in the efforts to increase the population of students of color, which occurred a year after the Third World Liberation Strike. This was one of the few demands by students that was met by the institution (Cordova 116-118). As his body of work demonstrates, Fuentes developed an internationalist ideology during his time in the city of San Francisco and at San Francisco State. Cary Cordova notes, being there "launched Fuentes on an educational journey that intimately linked his development as an artist with his understanding of himself as a Chicano, a Latino, a Third World Person of color, and a member of the left" (118). As Fuentes describes in his artist website, he has dedicated his "art to supporting and being part of a global movement for social change," and sees himself as part of a larger global community struggling for liberation. Juan R. Fuentes's experience and reflection as

an artist illustrates an earlier instance when Chicana/o artists recognized their subjectivity in relation to a larger international uprising. This positionality in relation to a larger international struggle against forms of oppression manifests in political posters as moments of visual solidarity.



Figure 4. Juan R. Fuentes, *International Day of Protest*, 1982. Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

In 1982, for example, Juan Fuentes designed the poster for the International Day of Protest to Stop U.S. Intervention In El Salvador (figure 4). The rally and protest held on Oct. 16, 1982, first assembled at the Federal Building at 450 Golden Gate Ave. in San Francisco and

traveled to Dolores Park, a park named after Chicana civil rights movement leader, Dolores Huerta. In his poster, Juan Fuentes documents two distinct moments of protest. The first calls for an assembly in front of a federal building in a moment of direct opposition to state authorities and power, during which protestors demanded an end to U.S. involvement in El Salvador. A rally of solidarity concluded the day's program at a local community.

In "Not Just Another Social Movement: Poster Art and the Movimiento Chicano," George Lipsitz highlights this major role of the poster: "At a time when their enemies controlled almost all the major mechanisms of the public sphere... Chicano activist artists created forms of agitation and education through creative use of silkscreen and photo-offset images" (73). Fuentes utilized the poster as a means to amplify the critical voices of Salvadoran people and allies who denounced U.S. military and political intervention in El Salvador.²¹ The poster's background, depicting a stream of soldiers and a scene of violence against civilians, visualized the aggressive nature of U.S. military intervention in Central America. This state-sanctioned violence was obscured and justified by American government officials under the sanctioned rhetoric of America's fight against the spread of communism.

In denouncing U.S.-backed violence in El Salvador, Fuente's poster documents a moment of solidarity in which the plight of Salvadorans is centered within a Chicana space. Spatially, the rally demanding the end of U.S. intervention in Central America culminated in a space marked as a Chicana/o space, as suggested by the park's name. Although seemingly a symbolic gesture, the organizers at the time were cognizant of the larger Salvadoran community living in the San Francisco Bay Area, but as the poster documents, they decided to draw connections between the two struggles.²² The site chosen for the culminating rally implied connections between the *campesino* and anti-Vietnam struggles animating the Chicano movement during the 1960s, and

anti-U.S. intervention movements waged by Central Americans residing in the U.S. during the 1980s. The transposition of U.S. military intervention from Vietnam onto Central America brought forth solidarity movements between the Chicana/o and Central American community in the Mission District.

A Chicano-Central American solidarity nexus is further exemplified by the calls to action made in the poster. The text on the right-hand side of the poster reads: “No Vietnam War in Central America, Stop Military Aid to Honduras, Hands Off Nicaragua, No Arms to Guatemalan Dictators.” Juan Fuentes’s reference to Vietnam confirms the historical connections gestured to by the locale of the rally. His poster draws solidarity between Chicana/o struggles against U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Central American struggles against military intervention in the isthmus. This connection demonstrates the identification of a Chicana/o subjectivity in relation to Central American people. The Vietnam War for Chicanos marked a decisive moment in the formation of the movement’s political consciousness.²³ Although a Chicano experience is mobilized to galvanize people into action, Fuentes centers the experience of Salvadoran people and their agency as leaders in the struggle. For example, the central image of the poster is a portrait of a *campesina* whose stoic gaze looks beyond the frame of the image and into the future, suggesting a posture of triumph and resistance.



Figure 5. Juan R. Fuentes, *Romero Presente*, 1992. Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

Almost a decade later and near the official end of the Civil War in El Salvador in 1992, Fuentes produced the poster, *Romero Presente* (1992) in which he juxtaposes past and present in a single visual gesture of solidarity that does not rely on perceptions of El Salvador as suspended in a state of perpetual war (figure 5). His commemoration of archbishop Óscar Romero's assassination demonstrates a continued solidarity with the people of El Salvador. The dark background depicts a religious procession of people holding images of patron saints. Monseñor Romero, after whom the poster takes its title, is the most recognizable portrait, which suggests

the image depicts a mourning procession. Romero, who was assassinated under the auspices of the Salvadoran military government in 1980, has become a martyr of the Salvadoran Civil War and representative of a people's struggle. Fuentes created the background for the poster by using a documentary-style photograph of Salvadorans mourning Romero, thus situating Romero's assassination as the historical background for the poster. A faint, yet discernible, image of military soldiers compositionally sits in-between a colorful, full body portrait of a mother and the historical event of Romero's assassination.²⁴ The woman's face sits parallel to an older woman in the procession, a juxtaposition symbolizing the country's past, present, and a future haunted by the ghost of war and U.S. military intervention.

Juan Fuentes's denouncement of military violence is made clear by his reproduction of Lilliam Jimenez's condemning poem "To the Soldiers of El Salvador Who From 1931 to 1980 Have Ruled the Country Through a Military Dictatorship." Very little is known of Lilliam Jimenez, except for the fact that the Salvadoran poet lived in exile in Mexico.²⁵ The poem is a striking indictment of El Salvador's military men, and a forewarning of justice to be served. As a moment of solidarity, the poster serves to amplify a Salvadoran voice in exile. The following stanza stands out in particular as it poetically correlates with the central image in the poster:

"Look at them standing before History
the universal truth,
before the living and the dead
who speak from the graves and attest to their deeds"

Juan Fuentes illustrates Lilliam Jimenez's imaginary of poetic justice, by depicting the ghost of military men as standing before history and truth and being held accountable by the "living" for their deeds. This poetic reckoning prophesized in Jimenez's poem, visualized through Fuentes's poster, materialized that same year as the Truth Commission for El Salvador. The commission

was backed by the United Nations and charged with investigating many of the atrocities that occurred during the war. This international body was responsible for bringing to light the abuses of military power. As the reproduced poem announces, perpetrators were to stand before history and “see what must be seen./They will have to pay/for the horrible fate of each victim...” and confront the consequences for their calculated murder of an archbishop denouncing the Civil War. Although visually and conceptually dark, Fuentes’s poster remains hopeful and centers, quite literally, the resilient future of the country as young woman breast feeding her child.

Fuentes’s poster not only denounces U.S. backed military atrocities in his gesture of solidarity, but also centers the resilience of Salvadoran people after the war. In slight variation to Jimenez’s poem, which states that military men must pay for “all the dreams they ripped out of our breast,” Juan Fuentes draws the mother breast-feeding her child. For Fuentes, the mother persisted in the context of Civil War and defied the violence by keeping her dream alive. Her stoic gaze, piercing through the poster’s composition and into the context of the viewer, reinforces her presence in the present as a resilient survivor. She stands as the brightest element in the composition, reinforcing the notion that she lives and survives despite the atrocities symbolized behind her. This chromatic shift from muted colors to the lively red of her dress places the mother in the context of a U.S. audience. She is, perhaps, a migrant who survived the war *and* the migration to the United States. Fuentes’s work is a gesture of solidarity with those who survived the war and migrated North, while also denouncing a U.S.-backed civil war.

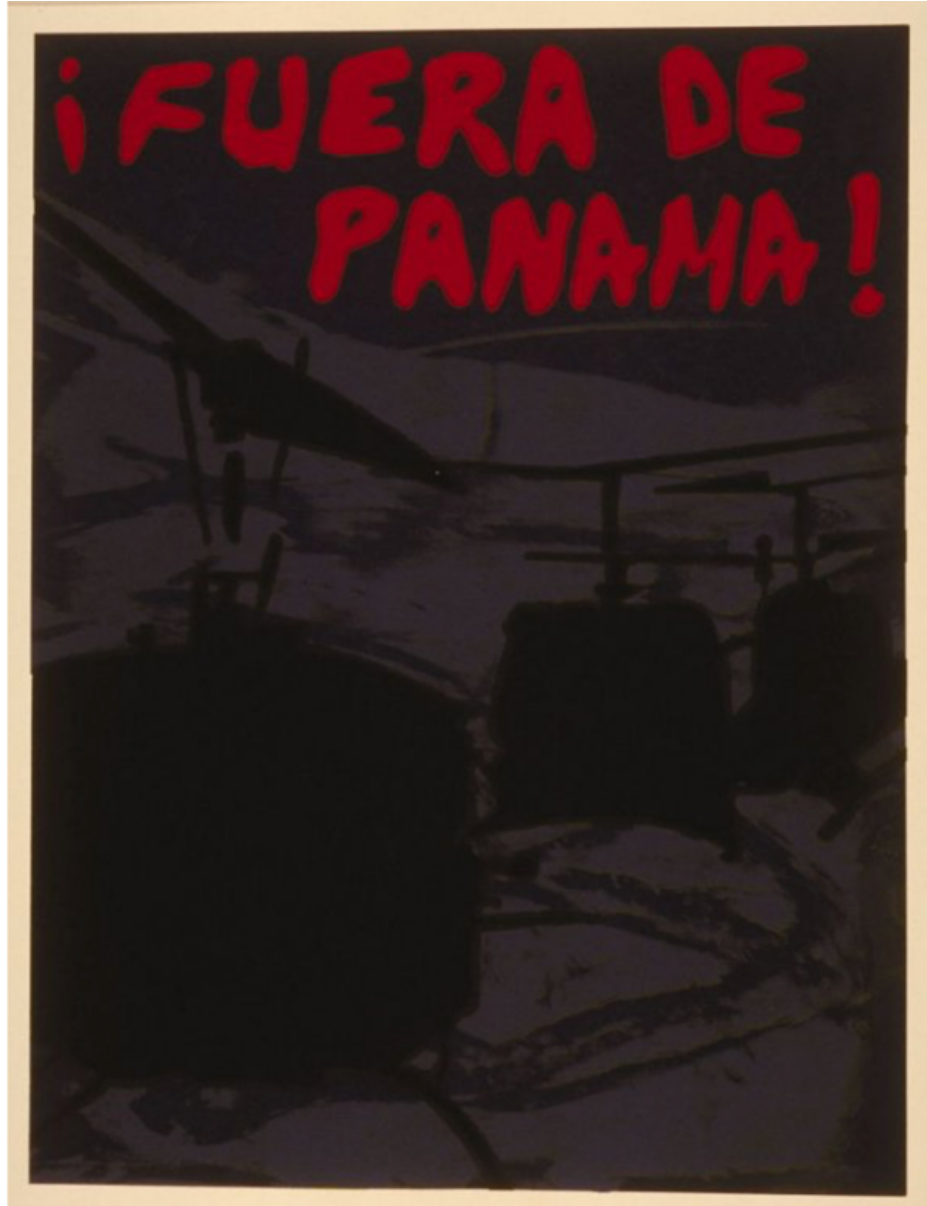


Figure 6. Rupert Garcia. *¡Fuera de Panama!*, 1989. Achenbach Foundation, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Similar to Juan Fuentes, Rupert Garcia's 1989 *¡Fuera de Panama!* Protests U.S. military invasion in Central America. *¡Fuera de Panama!* (1989) denounces the U.S. invasion of Panama and draws a historical connection between Chicana/o resistance to the Viet Nam War and anti-imperialism in Central America (figure 6). In 1970, Garcia printed his iconic *¡Fuera de Indochina!* poster. This early poster was a contribution to the 1970 Chicano moratorium held in East Los Angeles, "a protest against the disproportionate numbers of Chicanos being drafted and

killed in combat in the Vietnam War” (Favela 21). *¡Fuera de Indochina!* (1970) was as much a sign of protests against the disproportionate death rates of Chicanos in Vietnam, as it was a gesture of solidarity with Indochinese people abroad experiencing the ravages of war. Garcia identified U.S. military intervention as the root cause of human loss in Indochina through his use of helicopters in his 1989 posters. The central image of a screaming Vietnamese soldier is replaced by ominous black helicopters, which are abstracted silhouettes against a nightmarish purple and grey background. While *¡Fuera de Indochina!* (1970) made visible human suffering, *¡Fuera de Panama!* (1989) was a preventive sign of protest against forthcoming human suffering in Panama as a result of U.S. military intervention.

I highlight these aesthetic connections between the two posters not only for the historical similarities drawn between Indochina and Central America, but also to point out the recognition of a Chicana/o subjectivity in relationship to an international community. Cary Cordova, in her analysis of Garcia’s *¡Fuera de Indochina!* (1970), notes the use of Spanish in relationship to a screaming figure as Garcia’s “intent to deliver a specifically Chicano antiwar perspective” (110). Aesthetically, Garcia extends this gesture of solidarity with Panamanians in 1989, by using the same phrase of protest, “Fuera de...,” (Get out of...) to call for an end to U.S. military intervention. Garcia emphasizes the phrase through his use of red against a dark and homogeneous background. His color choices emphasize the urgent message against U.S. military invasion in Panama. A bright red demands particular attention to the text, which reveals a moment of solidarity through language.

Garcia’s use of Spanish suggests a common experience of systemic violence between Chicanas/os in the U.S. and Panamanians. In choosing Spanish as the language of protest, Garcia rejects English, as it symbolizes the language of U.S. imperialism and military aggression.

¡Fuera de Panama! (1989), when located as a part of a genealogy of solidarity, reveals that Rupert Garcia disrupted a Chicana/o nationalist positionality, beginning as early as 1970, and continued this practice of solidarity with Panamanian people in the late 1980s.²⁶ By analyzing this work as part of a genealogy of solidarity, pausing to account for the “vast accumulation of material,” one realizes that a sign of protest from 1970 is rearticulated almost two decades later (Foucault 76). The political edge and content ascribed to the first period continues well beyond the threshold of 1975, especially in the work of Rupert Garcia, and carries into the twenty-first century.

Garcia and Fuentes—student and teacher—remained committed to Third World solidarity since the late 1960s and well beyond 1975. This brief selection of posters demonstrates how their works challenge the established periodization of Chicana/o art history. But more importantly, the posters exemplify how visual solidarity with the people of Central America was expressed by artists across two different generations. In the section that follows, I introduce the work of Dignidad Rebelde, who carry on a genealogy of solidarity established by artists like Garcia and Fuentes. Both older artists continue to create and mentor younger generations of artists like Jesus Barraza, co-founder of Dignidad Rebelde.

In a recent artist communiqué, Jesus Barraza makes this relationship of mentorship with older Chicana/o artist generations. He writes, “In 2001 I began working at the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts (MCCLA) in San Francisco as their graphic designer. I was very fortunate to work with Juan R. Fuentes, director of Mission Grafica, the in-house printmaking studio” (Barraza and Cervantes 213). This led to a two-year period during which Barraza worked closely with Fuentes, and learned “about the studio’s history of combining fine art printing and poster production to support local and international organizing groups” (Barraza and Cervantes 213).

The mentorship from Fuentes and the poster-making skills developed during this two-year period occurred at a crucial point between Barraza's realization of the power of visuals during the 1999 Third World Liberation Front hunger strike at UC Berkeley and the establishment of Dignidad Rebelde. In the following chapter, I explore how a Third World consciousness and solidarity is maintained in the twenty-first century by Dignidad Rebelde yet is nonetheless grounded in the political consciousness fostered and encouraged by an earlier generation.

Chapter 2: Twenty-First Century Gestures of Solidarity: Dignidad Rebelde

Solidarity finds vitality and continuity in the twenty first century with the work of Dignidad Rebelde. Artists and partners, Jesus Barraza and Melanie Cervantes have created visual gestures of solidarity with social movements beyond their immediate community in the Bay Area. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the work of Dignidad Rebelde, as the next generation of Xicana/o/x artists,²⁷ participates in a genealogy of solidarity maintained in the San Francisco Bay Area and argue that their work is conversant with and grounded in Third World Liberation politics of earlier generations. They reinvigorate the Third World Liberation politics of previous generations from an *indigenista* and women-centered philosophical and political position. While the use of *indigenismo* and claims of *indigenista* identities within Xicana/o and Chicana/o communities have received substantial strands of criticism, I draw inspiration from the work of Dylan A.T. Miner to establish Dignidad Rebelde's identification and practices as *indigenistas* as crucial for forging solidarity with social movements across the hemisphere.²⁸ This *indigenista* based practice of visual solidarity begins at the intersection of their guiding principles: Xicanisma and Zapatismo. The intersection of Xicanisma and Zapatismo, as I will demonstrate, makes possible a notion of solidarity that is forged from a positionality that acknowledges Third World Liberation struggle as fundamentally interlinked radical responses to legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and an intensified neoliberalism.

Inheritance: Expressions of Solidarity and Working with Community

Dignidad Rebelde creates gestures of solidarity with communities struggling against systems of oppression based in their founding collaborative exchange of politics, artistic knowledge, and love. In "Empujando Tinta: The Work and Politics of Dignidad Rebelde," Jesus Barraza and Melanie Cervantes trace "the true beginning" of Dignidad Rebelde to the moment

when their “art practices merged and our shared politics became the guiding principles of our art making” (209). At its core, Dignidad Rebelde began in the combination of creative forces and political ideologies that occurred through a process of sharing with one another. The act of sharing is to gift others a portion of what one holds, to hold space in communion, to hold something in common with others. Sharing, like solidarity, implies an exchange that benefits the collective, rather than self-interest. Dignidad Rebelde has extended this initial act of sharing at its foundation to the communities with whom they work. This approach of working with community and creating visual expressions of solidarity with the goal of empowering communities fighting towards social change seems novel. But this methodology of “socially engaged practice that uses art as an empowering tool to activate social change” is an inheritance from previous generations of Chicana/o artists including Juan R. Fuentes and Celia Herrera Rodriguez (210). Collaboration amongst themselves became the model for working with communities fighting for social change and has yielded over a decade’s worth of work supporting social movement struggles.

This fundamental approach to solidarity guided by an exchange of politics, artistic knowledge, and love for one another remain consistent in the work of Dignidad Rebelde. Yet, it is distinct given the set of social movements and rebellions during the 1990s, and Dignidad Rebelde’s engagement with previous generations of Chicana/o artists and politics. This has expanded the spectrum of social causes covered in their work without losing sight of an earlier generation’s influence on their collaborative artistic ethos. Most importantly, this collaborative artistic ethos and mode for creating vivid depictions of solidarity retains its grounding in a mutuality that acknowledges the humanity in others. It is an approach that seeks to visually undo dehumanization—often perpetuated through visual othering and narrow stereotypes—by imagining communities in empowering roles and makers of social change. The events of the

1990s has rooted their approach in the “Indigenous worldview focused on building community by taking back the land from colonial landowners to provide people with basic human rights,” gathered from the intersection of Xicanisma and Zapatismo (Barraza and Cervantes 209).

Throughout their body of work, Dignidad Rebelde mobilize the concept of Xicanisma—an *indigenista* political, economic, and social project—as a philosophical point of departure for articulating solidarity with Central American people. Xicanisma, as proposed by Ana Castillo, is a political project that tasks practitioners “not only to reclaim our indigenismo—but also to reinsert the forsaken feminine into our consciousness” (12). For Castillo, Xicanisma is a political praxis that raises consciousness about societal and communal forms of oppression targeting women. It is a movement within a movement that forefronts the needs, experiences, and contributions of Xicanas within the Chicano movement. While Xicanisma is a political and consciousness-building project and practice stemming from Xicanas in the U.S., Dignidad Rebelde has mobilized Ana Castillo’s proposal of Xicanisma as a starting point for establishing a form of solidarity between Xicanas in the U.S. and struggles against systemic oppression throughout the hemisphere, particularly those led by indigenous women. This belief and commitment to dismantling systems of oppression, grounded in Xicanisma, was amplified by Zapatismo.

Having come of age during the late 1990s, Barraza and Cervantes were witnesses to a renewed sense of revolution brought forth by *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, which became a central pillar to their creative gestures of solidarity. In 2007, Jesus Barraza intended to create an online blog dedicated to his interests in art, technology, toys, and music.²⁹ At a loss for a title, Melanie Cervantes suggested a phrase from one of Barraza’s early political posters, “Dignidad Rebelde.”³⁰ This phrase, drawn from a song title, part of the fundraising album

“Todos por Chiapas,” was first enunciated by Sub-comandante Marcos, one of the spokespersons of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*. Dignidad Rebelde was conceived at this intersection of solidarity, political poster production, and the politics of an international revolutionary indigenous movement. As Barraza and Cervantes state in “Empujando Tinta: The Work and Politics of Dignidad Rebelde,” Zapatismo as a political philosophy has “taught us the importance of embracing an Indigenous worldview focused on building community by taking back the land from colonial landowners, to provide people with basic human rights such as home, land, work, bread, health, education, liberty, justice, and peace” (209). Zapatismo became a lens for connecting and identifying social movements throughout the hemisphere as moments of resistance to evolved versions of colonialism in the late twentieth and twenty first century.

The Zapatistas publicly denounced the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement on January 1st, 1994, which was another installation of their “500-year legacy of resistance” (Callahan 219). Their form of resistance became known to the world as Zapatismo. Manuel Callahan distinguishes between armed forces (Zapatistas) and practices of resistance (Zapatismo) enacted by a broad base of indigenous communities in Chiapas, Mexico, with the latter being “available to us as a political and cultural practice we can discuss, analyze, interpret, and enact within the context of a globally networked mobilization against neoliberalism” (Callahan 218). As systems of oppression and economic disparities intensify at a global level, so do forms of resistance. Solidarity within the openness of Zapatismo, as a response to the neoliberal project, links Third World Liberation Struggles and Zapatista resistance as nodes in a network of resistance.

A New Front: The Third World Liberation Front Invoked

Much like Rupert Garcia, who recognized the power of images amidst the Third World Liberation Strike in 1968-1969, Jesus Barraza experienced the power of visuals in combating systemic and state sanctioned repression during the 1999 Third World College hunger strike at the University of California, Berkeley. The strike denounced the implementation of Proposition 209, which targeted the progress made under the auspices of affirmative action at UC Berkeley. Strike organizers reenergized under the banner of a political coalition from three decades prior, Third World politics, in an effort to defend Ethnic Studies from legislative and institutional attacks. By the time of the hunger strike in 1999, Barraza had spent five years in the San Francisco Bay Area and was connected to student activism at UC Berkeley through his work as a staff member for the student newspaper *La Voz de Berkeley*. This experience allowed him to develop his artistic skills while designing posters, flyers, and newsletters for college and community organizations in the area (Barraza and Cervantes 212). The communications support work he and other members of the Chicana/o techie collective Ten12 did for the 1999 third world Liberation Front strike proved to be a crucial moment for Barraza's political consciousness.³¹ It is a moment that demonstrates how the legacy of San Francisco Bay Area Third World coalitional politics intersected with a renewed sense of indigenous revolution brought forth by the Zapatista Rebellion in 1994 and visualized by Barraza.

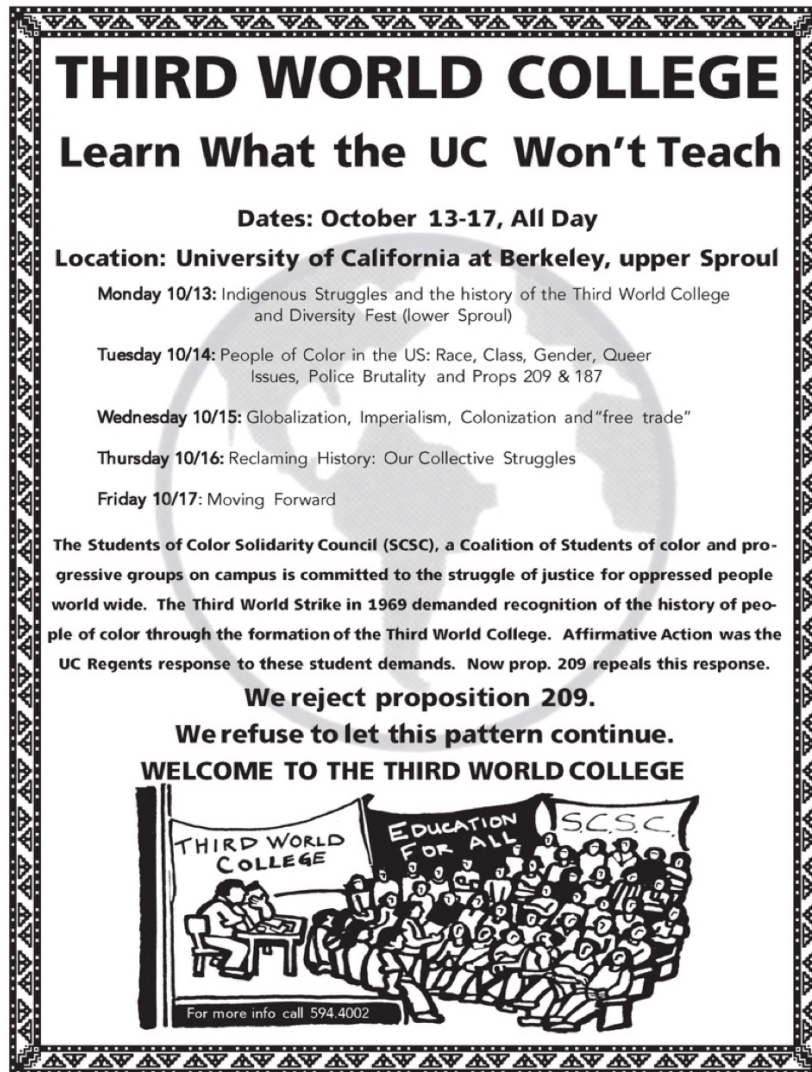


Figure 7. Jesus Barraza, *Third World College: Learn What the UC Won't Teach*, 1999. Image courtesy of the artists.

Framed by an indigenous motif and pattern, the black and white digital poster above announces events promoting the weeklong “Third World College” organized by the Students of Color Solidarity Council (SCSC).³² A graphic rendition of the world serves as the background for the poster and situates the Third World College and subsequent strike as microcosms of a larger global struggle against systems of oppression. A borderless world is an apt background for a poster announcing coalitional efforts for two reasons. On the one hand, the globe indexes the increasing homogenization of the world via-economics and consumption

legislated through neoliberal policies of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It marks the political and economic backdrop for the events taking place at UC Berkeley. On the other hand, the translucency of the background suggests a world yet realized. One that is devoid of nation-states and borders, both resulting from the colonial project in the Americas. Yet contrasted with the remaining of the image, the globe serves to articulate an image of solidarity. While the graphic rendition of the world signals an undifferentiated political movement or world, the schedule draws out the multiplicity of issues that conform such unity. The lineup for the teachers ranged in topics from Indigenous struggles, history of the Third World College at UC Berkeley, to discussions of the intersection of Race, Class, Gender and Queer Identities. As an early poster in Barraza's body of work, I find it important for it marks a moment of individual and collective coming into political consciousness. In the words of the poster itself, it documents a moment during which students of color at UC Berkeley got to "Learn What the UC Won't Teach" and refused the dismantling of a hard-won educational space.

Activist and artists like Barraza saw these issues discussed as interconnected and part of a much larger system of oppression historically rooted in a longer history of colonization. The cascading text at the bottom of the poster denounced Proposition 209, but importantly students "refuse[d] to let this pattern continue" and welcomed others into an alternative space of resistance and rebellion: The Third World College. A politics of refusal functions as frame of reference for a renewed practice of Third World solidarity amongst the student coalition. Here I would like to return to Barraza's visual framing of the Third World College and student resistance, and point out that by using an indigenous pattern, Barraza sets the overarching bounds of this solidarity to be guided by indigenous political principles and world views. It would be no

surprise that this approach to the poster was guided by the recent Zapatista uprising four years prior.

Viewed through the prism of Zapatismo, Barraza's poster visualizes what Manuel Callahan identifies as the Zapatistas' politics of refusal, which serve as the basis for solidarity. Expressed by their slogan *Ya Basta!* (Enough!), Zapatistas rejected the neoliberal project legislated in the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1994.³³ Refusal functions as an invitation to "participate in a new political space (encounter), develop new political relationships and strategies of doing politics (dialogue), and collectively articulate a new political project (autonomy)" (Callahan 220). It is a political practice that is enacted through the collective denunciation of systems of oppression. The small drawing at the bottom illustrates this creation of solidarity in the act of refusal and encounter of people through dialogue. Thick black lines delineate the collective body participating in a form of dialogue, gathered together in encounter under the banner of the Third World College. This encounter and collectivity do not subsume individuality—one is still able to recognize individuals within the drawing—but it also does not exalt a single leader above the collective. Refusing is not simply the act of announcing an unwillingness to accept the conditions at hand, it is also the impetus for forging new conditions of political possibility. This political possibility, what I understand as solidarity, is a process grounded in constant dialogue, tension, and rotation of leadership. Perhaps this is what you won't learn at the UC: to coalesce in difference and shared in struggles.

Monochromes: Images of Triumph and Resistance



Figure 8. Melanie Cervantes, *¡Farabundo Presente!*, 2009. Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

Echoing Juan R. Fuentes's 1992 *Romero Presente* poster, Melanie Cervantes's *¡Farabundo Presente!* (2009) invokes the legacy of labor leader Farabundo Martí in a gesture of solidarity celebrating Salvadoran people as agents of change amidst and against neoliberal forces in the early 2000s. Specifically, Cervantes created *¡Farabundo Presente!* (2009) in celebration of the political triumph of El Salvador's leftist political party, FMLN, by capturing the joy of *el pueblo Salvadoreño* in a cascade of interconnected figures (figure 8).³⁴ The print, as the accompanying artist statement describes, celebrates the presidential victory of Mauricio Funes of

the *Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* political party. As Cervantes notes in the artist statement, the poster celebrated “an end to 20 years of ARENA rule, and almost two centuries of right-wing domination of El Salvador.” While the poster celebrates the victory of the FMLN, Cervantes illustrates the victory as the people’s victory.

Done using a single stencil and printed in red, the image decenters the singular historical figure and impresses upon viewers people power. While the use of the iconic FMLN red gestures towards the leftist politics of the party and its supporters, it also functions as a means for the artists to express a symbolic gesture of solidarity. Here, red functions as a way for Cervantes to establish a shared political ideology with the joyous crowd in the image. Needless to say, color functions as a symbolic bridge that begins in the visual lexicon of FMLN supporters and culminates in the production of the poster. While this may appear insignificant or rather a simple visual reference through color, the use of red is a means of expressing solidarity on the visual terms of those being represented. Using the process of silk screening, Cervantes reinforces the idea of a collective victory carried out by accumulative individual acts of resistance via the ballot box. Shrouded by the red of the flag, individual bodies merge into one another. One’s shadow becomes another’s hair or clothing. One’s hat is one and the same with the party’s flag. Individual and collective occur at once, highlight difference within “el pueblo Salvadoreño,” and therefore denying the possibility of a contrived stereotype or an essential identity.

The use of shadows in the stencil also allows for the viewer to seamlessly participate and enter the image. While the figures depicted in the poster gaze outwardly in a multiplicity of directions, one figure rendered in complete shadow at the bottom of the poster gazes inwardly. It offers the viewer a clever, hardly perceptible, visual way into the poster. It asks us to pause and bear witness to a people’s celebration and demands a level of focus that ultimately decenters

ourselves. In a sense, this hardly perceptible figure, much like solidarity, asks us to do the labor necessary in order to share in other's struggle. The commonality, rendered by Cervantes, occurs at the level of shared political struggle amongst the Salvadoran people.

Cervantes's poster shares affinities with Rupert's *Right On!* (1968) in its use of text in an emphatic celebration of the people's struggle against right-wing political rule. The phrase "¡Farabundo Presente!" (Farabundo, Here) draws a historical connection between the 2009 victory of FMLN candidate, Mauricio Funes, and the armed struggle waged by FMLN guerillas during the Civil War against the military and U.S.-backed government during the 1980s Civil War. "Que Viva el FMLN" signals the transition of the FMLN from a guerilla army to a leftist political party, and shares similitude with the Chicano movement rallying cry "Viva la Raza." Rhetorically, the poster draws similarities between the two rallying slogans. The phrase on the one hand celebrates the longevity of a leftist political ideology from the Civil War in the 1980s into the early 2000s. Cervantes's poster is dominated by a stencil of a mass of people celebrating the political victory and establishes a moment of solidarity with the *people* of El Salvador. The phrase "¡Que Viva El Pueblo Salvadoreño!" (¡Long Live the People of El Salvador!), is proportionally bigger than the rest of the text, implying a greater importance within the image. The importance of the larger social body of *the people* is stressed by the descending phrases in the image, which build up from the individual Farabundo Marti to *el pueblo Salvadoreño*. As they describe in their artist communique, their work stands as "a gesture of solidarity and love for our communities that are struggling for social transformation" (Barraza and Cervantes 215).



Figure 9. Jesus Barraza, *Honduras: El Pueblo Mundial Esta Contigo*, 2009. Dignidad Rebelde artist website.

Jesus Barraza's 2009 digital monochrome poster *Honduras: El Pueblo Mundial Esta Contigo* captures a moment of victory by the people in their struggle for social transformation in Honduras (figure 9). Shifting from Spanish to English, the poster communicates global support for the people of Honduras protesting the military coup carried out in 2009 that undermined democracy. Democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya was ousted by conservative military forces on June 28, 2009 and forced into exile in neighboring Costa Rica. The military coup came

as “Zelaya began to address some of the deep historical and social inequalities by raising the minimum wage, lowering energy prices, and attempting to prioritize the poor,” which threatened the social stratification intensified by neoliberal policies like the Central American Free Trade Agreement (Alvarado et al. 14). Refusing to depict Hondurans at the mercy of the state, Barraza’s poster centers on a group of protestors waving a Honduran flag atop what seems to be a water or oil tanker. The people have symbolically and literally laid claim to natural resources which have been presumably privatized, as it is expected, under the specter of neoliberalism. More succinctly, the people are above profits and are purveyors of democracy.

Barraza proposes a form of democracy that is based on the appropriation of the nationalist symbol of the flag to articulate the power of the masses. Compositionally, the poster draws on the horizontal blue stripes that constitute the Honduran flag. Chromatically, the entirety of the image is rendered in the flag’s cerulean blue. These two aesthetic choices make nation and those in protest in defense of constitutional rights one and the same. While aware of the problematics associated with the fervor of nationalism, Barraza opted to utilize this image for its “seductiveness,” enticing the viewer to pause and witness the waiving of a flag, a performative gesture establishing independence. It is a symbol chosen by Hondurans as they sought to defend the well-being of the nation amidst the wresting of power via military force.

In its bilingualism, Barraza’s poster functions as gesture of support that speaks to those in Honduras fighting for control of their country and to generations of the U.S.-Honduran diaspora, from a Xicana/o positionality. While bilingualism assumes parity, language use in the poster favors Spanish for the sake of establishing a sensible gesture of solidarity with those in Honduras. For example, Barraza prudently opens this gesture of solidarity in Spanish and reverts the ascribed supremacy of the English language. It is a message meant, first and foremost, for the

people of Honduras, or Spanish speaking Honduran communities within the U.S. In a linguistic and formal choice, Barraza communicates solidarity on the terms of Honduran people. It is an aesthetic move that decenters the artists, although momentarily, to prioritize its viewer abroad. But, these linguistic and formal choices are also useful for understanding the positionality from where solidarity is and can be potentially enunciated. The English viewer gains access to the image from its margins and remains partly decentralized. As English readers we are asked to enter the poster from the bottom, reading our way through the phrases “down with the coup,” and “Honduras the people are with you,” as if chanting in protest with the masses surrounding the water or oil tanker. We are asked to stand in solidarity, to be part of the masses, but not the purveyors of democracy for the people of Honduras. We are to remain at a distance and witness. Hondurans are the ones in charge of liberating their flag.

Conclusion: Something in the Bay: A Popular Art Consciousness

“You know, the Bay area is known as kind of... as very multicultural...and I think that sounds, also, very ‘multi-culti.’ Very surface. But it's known for its Third World solidarity.” — Jesus Barraza³⁵

In the process of research and writing for this project, I have come to realize that the range of solidarity visualized by Chicana/o/x and Xicana/o/x artists extends beyond gestures with Central American communities. This has prompted the query of whether a genealogy of solidarity is part of a broader political and artistic consciousness in the San Francisco Bay Area. I believe Barraza’s words above would suggest so. He recognizes a distinctiveness to the Bay Area in that it is known for its Third World solidarity politics, something that seemed present when he arrived in 1994 after graduating high school and that continues in 2020. In these concluding thoughts I would like to offer the concept of a “popular art consciousness,” to describe a broader, persistent, and regionally specific understanding and practice by socially committed artists in the San Francisco Bay Area. These concluding, yet preliminary thoughts, theoretically contemplate a way of thinking by artists that is broad enough to accommodate support for a range of political causes, social struggles, and communities.

I draw on the writings of Rupert Garcia to begin to map out this future line of inquiry. In his brief, but critical essay, “The Politics of Popular Art,” Rupert Garcia offers a useful theoretical discussion on uses of the term “popular art.” For Garcia, the term has two diametrically opposing uses, one from the people and the other by the art establishment. I invoke the former. For Garcia, popular art is an art that “genuinely and biasedly reflects, in an open and sincere way and in a particular historical phase of its development, the hopes, interests, spirit, and will of a people to continue to struggle against the social forces of exploitation” (3). It is art that is unabashedly by the people and for the people. The parameters of popular art are that it

must counteract, in a broad sense, forces of exploitation. It is a category that is produced and defined from the bottom up. I extended Garcia's comment by suggesting that a "popular art consciousness" becomes an awareness by generations of artists in the San Francisco Bay Area that their work is in support of the people. It is a concept that retains this commitment to and for the people, but one that does not require it to remain "in a particular historical phase of its development" (Garcia 3). In other words, "a popular art consciousness," as the genealogy of solidarity intimates, persists throughout time and is inculcated across generations of artists.

I return to Barraza's insistence on locality to suggest that places and spaces have been crucial for fostering this "popular art consciousness." Specifically, I gesture towards *centros*, print studios, and workshops as crucial sites for understanding how a "popular art consciousness" is maintained throughout generations of artists. This project opens up the possibility an historical account of political poster workshops, both spontaneous and later established ones, that proliferated after the activism that took place at college campuses across the San Francisco Bay Area during the late 1960s. The artists whose work I analyze devoted their work to these activist campaigns and were responsible for establishing a network of political poster workshops throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. These workshops, *centros*, and print studios functioned as what Deborah Cullen describes as "contact zones," places where political education and artistic innovation occur collectively (Cullen 2012). Informal and spontaneous poster workshops during the Third World Liberation Strike at San Francisco State in 1968 and places like La Raza Silkscreen Center and Mission Gráfica, I suggest, became nodes of political poster production that sustain a "popular art consciousness," beginning during the Chicano movement and persisting in our contemporary moment.

Notes

¹ In light of children separation at the border and the impending arrival of the Central American migrant caravan, Dignidad Rebelde published their digital poster, “¡Ya Basta!” (<https://dignidadrebelde.com/?p=3956>). The poster denounces family separation tactic deploy at the border as a draconian means of discouraging migration to the U.S.

²This line of inquiry and argumentation is in conversation with the work of Karen Mary Davalos (2008, 2017), and Carlos F. Jackson (2017).

³ Both exhibitions are also held as groundbreaking moments when Chicana/o art entered mainstream institutions at a national scale.

⁴ Political posters are focus of this project. Important works on the Chicano mural movement include *Signs from the Heart: California Chicano Murals* edited by Holly Barnet-Sánchez and Eva Sperling Cockcroft (1990), and Guisela Latorre’s *Walls of Empowerment: Chicana/o Indigenist Murals of California* (2008).

⁵ As the oft-quoted statement from El Plan, “We must insure that our writers, poets, musicians, and artists produce literature and art that is appealing to our people and relates to our revolutionary culture,” illustrates, the production of posters was to remain with, in, and for the community if it was to accomplish the goals of liberation outlined in the manifesto (1969).

⁶ The designation of non-commercial implies that a work of art is produced with the intention of promoting aesthetic achievement for the sake of something other than capital gain or recognition for the artist. In this case, posters were non-commercial in that they were created for the sake of highlighting community needs. Conversely, mainstream art values dictate that aesthetic accomplishment is only a possible outcome when art is produced for “art’s sake.”

⁷ This shift is notable in Goldman's structure for her argument which begins with art collectives and concludes with highlights of individual artists.

⁸ Tere Romo marks this as the transition from political poster to fine art print in "Points of Convergence: The Iconography of the Chicano Poster" (2001).

⁹ To a large degree, Art History had failed to consider Chicana/o artistic production as worthy of rigorous analysis and had done so under the claim that Chicana/o art was too representational for its modernist emphasis on formalism, as Goldman and Ybarra-Frausto discussed (13). Formal analysis of art accords value on the successful or unsuccessful use of formal elements like line, shape, color, or composition.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive analysis of the exhibitions impact and politics see Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Chicano art Inside/Outside the Master's House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition* (1998).

¹¹ In the acknowledgements for the *Just Another Poster?: Chicano Graphic Arts in California* exhibition catalogue (2001), Marla C. Berns, director of the University Art Museum, signals towards the importance of Shifra M. Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto's foundational work. She writes, "The overarching project goal was to explore Chicano posters as part of a complex and inclusive political, social, and cultural movement, building on the important foundational scholarly work of Shifra Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto" (10).

¹² The time periods provided by Romo are as follow: *To Seize the Moment: The Chicano Poster, Politics, and Protest, 1965-1972*, *Synthesis: The Chicano Poster and Cultural Reclamation, 1972-1982*, and *Selling the Vision: The Chicano Poster as Art, 1983-Present*.

¹³ See Karen Mary Davalos (2008, 2017), and Carlos F. Jackson (2017) for recent scholarship problematizing the periodization of Chicana/o art.

¹⁴ See Karen Davalo's *Yolanda M. López* (2008) for a comprehensive analysis of Yolanda M. López's artwork.

¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that this project occurred at a moment during which the César E. Chávez Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies was undergoing a name expansion to include Central American Studies. This project demonstrates a historical trajectory that squarely justifies and pays homage to the interactions between these communities and leans towards the hopeful collaboration between two communities towards a just future.

¹⁶ See Karen Mary Davalos' *Yolanda M. López* (2008) and Cary Cordova's *The Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco* (2017) for detailed accounts of the Third World Liberation Strike.

¹⁷ Rupert Garcia produced silkscreen posters and works after 1975. I highlight this particularly because it coincides with Shifra Goldman's and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto's first period. The trajectory outlined by Favela for Garcia's work follows the steady decline in social, political, and protest content.

¹⁸ See Cary Cordova's *The Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco* (2017) and Tatiana Reinoza's "'No Es un Crimen': Posters, Political Prisoners, and the Mission Counterpublics."

¹⁹ Rupert Garcia's *Free Los Siete* (1970) poster can be accessed through the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco's website, <https://art.famsf.org/rupert-garcia/free-los-siete-1990181>.

²⁰ The use of red and yellow can also be found in his canonical *¡Cesen Deportación!* poster produced in 1973 and reprinted in 2013 with Jesus Barraza of Dignidad Rebelde.

²¹ As discussed by the authors of *U.S. Central Americans: Reconstructing Memories, and Communities of Resistance* (2017), "During the Reagan era, Central America became the bull's-

eye to the Reagan Doctrine that formally developed overt and covert fight against communism” (6).

²² I base my analysis on the work of Ana Patricia Rodríguez in *U.S Central Americans: Reconstructing Memories, Struggles, and Communities of Resistance* (2017), where she critically analyzes the importance of the 1965 Immigration Act in shaping the Salvadoran experience in the U.S. pre-1980s (46-47).

²³ In *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era* (2005), Lorena Oropeza provides a comprehensive discussion of the Vietnam War in relationship to the Chicano movement.

²⁴ Visually, the poster’s central image of a mother holding her child resembles the woman depicted in Judy F. Baca’s mural *Migration of the Golden People* (2004). The mural can be accessed on SPARC’s website: <http://sparcinla.org/carecen-2004/>.

²⁵ A biographical note is provided by the “History is a Weapon” website along with a translation of her poem. The biographical note can be accessed here: <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/jimeneztothesoldiers.html>.

²⁶ This genealogy of solidarity extends two years later when Rupert Garcia produces the poster *¡Fuera del Golfo!* (1991).

²⁷ According Dylan A.T Miner, the use of the spelling “Xicana/o/x” signals towards and pays homage to the indigenist and indigenous identification, politics, and cultural production by Xicana/o artists and activist (221).

²⁸ A granular discussion of criticism of Xicana/o and Chicana/o claims to indigeneity is beyond the scope of this projects, but recent critiques include María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo’s *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States* (2016).

²⁹ Their artist website www.dignidadrebelde.com now functions as a platform for sharing their work, earning an income from sales, and point of contact.

³⁰ This information was made available during Melanie Cervantes' online public lecture "Melanie Cervantes on becoming an artist" on March 20, 2020.

³¹ The collective was co-founded by Jesus Barraza, Jose D. Lopez, Marco Palma, and Favianna Rodriguez. They coordinated and executed an awareness campaign for the hunger strike using posters and the Internet (Barraza and Cervantes 212).

³² Jesus Barraza explained in a personal interview conducted on March 17, 2020 that at the moment had access to design software that allowed for him to create these posters and disseminate them for printing.

³³ Callahan defines the neoliberal project as the systemic and coordinated "increased globalization of capital that is to be achieved by opening markets to trade, privatizing natural resources and state-run services, eliminating workers' rights, reducing the social wage and benefits, and homogenizing communities through consumerism, the commodification of everyday life, and the exaltation of private property and individualism" (219).

³⁴ The archival record at the Center for the Study of Political Graphics also notes Jesus Barraza as a creator for the print. I assume that the print was collectively produced but designed by Melanie Cervantes.

³⁵ Interview with the artist, May 18, 2020.

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