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Mel Casas papers: Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1979

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CARA

CHICANO ART: RESISTANCE AND AFFIRMATION

SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART, MAY 28-AUG. 1, 1993

An interpretive exhibition of the Chicano Art Movement 1965-1985

DEFINING 'CHICANO'

'Chicano' was chosen as the defining term for this exhibition because it was the term used in the 1960s and 1970s by the activist segment of the Mexican American community to name themselves and the social and artistic movements in which they were engaged.

It is important to note that the word 'Chicano' has a complex and controversial history. It was, nevertheless, a perfect term to use for a movement which celebrated a bicultural, bilingual people who were both United States citizens and of Mexican heritage and who were asserting control over their own cultural survival. The word achieves its significance in being chosen and given political legitimacy by Chicano activists. The appropriation of this word marked the exceptional sense of power which naming oneself signifies.

As a part of the civil rights movement, 'Chicano' became a positive cultural and political term that denoted a position of political resistance to ethnic stereotyping, discrimination, and cultural repression. It also affirmed the pride of a people in their maestro heritage. 'Chicano' has as many definitions as there are people who write them. From the beginning of the Chicano civil rights movement (El Movimiento or La Causa) to the present, statements have been made by Chicano artists and writers about the meaning of this term for them. (The quotes in this exhibit represent the diversity of sentiments that were expressed from within the movement itself.)

LA PALABRA CHICANO

Chicano fue la palabra designada para definir esta exhibición porque era el término utilizado durante las décadas de 1960 y 1970 por el segmento activista de la comunidad mexicoamericana para nombrarse a sí mismo tanto como al movimiento del arte que representaba. Es importante notar compleja y controversial. Sin embargo era la expresión perfecta para el movimiento que celebra el ser de personas bilingües de experiencia bicultural, cuidándose de Estado Unidos que afirmaban control sobre su propio sobrevivir cultural. Esta palabra adquiere un importante y legítimo significado político al ser escogida por los activistas chicanos. La apropiación de este vocablo marca el sentido y el poder excepcional que implica el tener la capacidad de autonombraarse.

Como parte del movimiento de los derechos civiles, la palabra Chicano adquirió un sentido político-cultural positivo que definía la resistencia política contra el estereotipo étnico, la discriminación y la represión cultural. Adicionalmente, esta palabra afirmó el orgullo de un pueblo en su herencia mestiza. El término Chicano tiene tan variadas definiciones como el número de personas que desean identificarlo. Desde el principio del movimiento chicano de los derechos civiles (El Movimiento o La Causa) hasta el presente, los artistas y escritores han hecho varias declaraciones acerca del significado del vocablo. Las citas sobre el término Chicano que aparecen en la galería representan los diversos sentimientos expresados dentro del movimiento.



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