

## *Mission Statement*

To mark its 25th anniversary, the Galería de la Raza introduces the (Re)Generation Project, a collective endeavor that will culminate during the 1995 exhibition season. In 1995, the Galería will host a series of exhibitions and events dedicated to the emerging generation of Chicano-a/Latino-a artists and cultural workers of the Bay Area. The project will develop dialogue between this emerging generation and the previous Movimiento generation that originally established the Galería de la Raza.

The established artists and staff of the Galería have recognized the absence of a current mass movement for this emerging generation and the necessity of creating a space of collective activity and developing new leadership. Therefore, the (Re)Generation Project was introduced to provide this emerging generation with support for their future commitments to socially and politically engaged art and community-building. The project will be based on an inter-generational dialogue that will develop a contemporary model of collective consciousness, community activism, and cultural production. A central task of this project will be to provide a space for artists and cultural workers concerned with feminist and gay/lesbian issues. This model will be made apparent through committee activity and the organization of each (Re)Generation exhibit.

Through the (Re)Generation Project, the Galería de la Raza will also re-define itself as a cultural institution. The issues and needs of this new generation will direct and provoke changes in the institutional organization of the Galería as well as develop new audiences. The project's emphasis on inter-generational dialogue will also develop the Galería as a site for mentorship and guidance from the artists and cultural workers of the previous generation. The (Re)Generation Project will help prepare the Galería for its third decade of community service and activism.

The vision of the (Re)Generation Project is to provide this emerging generation with a sense of purpose and artistic support. Galería de la Raza hopes to develop a new generation of Chicano-a/Latino-a artists and cultural workers whose life direction is in service to their community and whose future cultural production is informed by the struggle and vision of our past.

## *Lagrimas y Sonrisas:*

*the first (Re)Generation Exhibition*

*A Curatorial Perspective by  
Armando Rascón*

With five years remaining in the century, 1995 marks the space of the New Revolutionary Class. We look back upon a fruitful period of incremental change for the Chicano-a community during the past twenty-five years and willingly seize the here-and-now. There is no better moment than the present to stage the living narrative of our unbending intentionality of purpose. We have therefore formed a proactive ideapolis called the (Re)Generation Project in order to renew the call for unity and action on the front lines of the cultural wars being staged throughout Aztlán and the rest of the country. It is particularly timely and necessary to realize the role of political agency in the arts and how it can provide for a community, especially given the current climate of NEA funding cuts and a political power base that proposes federalization of Proposition 187. The rehearsal is over. The stage is set for a complete performance, from start to finish.

This first (Re)Generation exhibition recalls the ubiquitous Mexican low-brow comic book, *Lagrimas y Risas*. The small format comic book series appeared weekly on corner newsstands throughout Mexico and in many of the barrio mom-n-pop shops here in the United States in the '40s and '50s, perhaps even earlier. During the era of very few television sets in the Latin American household, *Lagrimas y Risas* provided the most lasting value for a few cents with its highly popular captioned foto-novela depictions of a world of romantic love, a steady flow of highly sentimentalized teen angst set in the world of the working class and the poor. Espionage, romance, intrigue, adventure . . . week by week.

*an unfurling of plots and sub-plots twisted endlessly baroque in newer and fresher versions of rancorous deceit, vengeance, calculated viciousness and betrayal contrasted with visions of Love's promise for eternal affection, of true loves entwined in the blazing embrace of pure Love's zenith of passion, eroticism, and pleasure. (Picture this: hand-worn recycled copies of *Lgrimas y Risas* in the barbershop, on the kitchen table and night stand, in the shoe shine stall, in the hands of the woman standing just outside her door late afternoon- and the boy leaning against the news-stand reading a fresh copy in the early morning light.) In a world drawn steadily closer to the television screen and computer terminal, the complete disappearance of *Lgrimas y Risas* remains only as a mere memory to a vast cross-section of readers of all ages, sexes, and spiritual denominations previously connected to the continuing narrative suspended in a week's dose of life expectations and dénouement.*

*Outside that frame of memory, in the context of the here-and-now, *Lgrimas y Sonrisas* serves as the title of an exhibition of contemporary artwork by a young generation of artists, perhaps too young to ever have seen or heard of the above mentioned Latino pulp fictions. The hard reality of the '90s is one of zero tolerance for rhapsodic notions of overly sentimentalized goo. Removed from these trappings, the current version of *Lgrimas y Risas* resides in the dramatic pulse of a generation of youth that has proclaimed hyper-reality as a primary philosophical basis for being. Given the dark mood that hangs in the rafters, perhaps sobriety is not such a bad thing.*

*Underlying much of the work in *Lgrimas y Sonrisas* are the signs of a (re)generation of cultural workers that have evolved throughout the Reagan/Bush years, culminating in art forms keenly wrought from transitional states of identity — between neo-indigenist cultural anthropology and the ideological imperatives located within the empowering discourse of the Chicano-a civil rights movement — and contemporary popular culture. These are the children of the post-CETA, post-affirmative action, and post-MTV eras. Contained here is the groundwork for the student of the '90s, the New Revolutionary Class.*

## *The Education Committee*

*The Education Committee of the (Re)Generation Project is dedicated to encouraging and developing the understanding and appreciation of Chicano-a and Latino-a art. The committee conceives, coordinates, and produces an extensive program of events to enrich the public's understanding and enjoyment of the (Re)Generation Project at Galería de la Raza.*

*At a time when the arts are viewed as expendable on the education agenda, we hold true to the philosophy that art needs to be a present and important aspect of an individual's education. Recent immigrant-oriented hostility, added to diminishing resources and funding for the arts, compels us to deepen and strengthen our commitment as cultural workers. This work allows for self-definition and community affirmation, both vital in the fight against this current wave of xenophobia.*

*The committee will sponsor educational visits to schools, organize lectures and hold round table discussions. Participating artists, chosen from the (Re)Generation exhibitions, will conduct hands-on workshops with students and present slide lectures related to their work. Round table discussions will provide an opportunity for the exhibiting artists to discuss their work and exchange ideas while creating a dialogue within the community.*