

# The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

## XICANO RICORSO: A THIRTY-YEAR RETROSPECT FROM AZTLÁN

March 17 - May 15, 1994

### PROGRAM NOTES

**Xicano Ricorso** is an exhibition of videotapes made by Chicano and Chicana artists that spans a thirty-year historical period that beginning with the Chicano civil-rights movement of the 1960s. The word *Aztlán* has come to signify all of the following: (1) the mythical/historical place of origin of the Aztecs from which they began a migration in 1111 A.D. that culminated two hundred years later in the foundation of Tenochtitlán, today Mexico City; (2) the popular symbolic name for the Southwest of the United States, where most Mexican-Americans live, or wherever Chicano culture flourishes; and (3) an autonomous Chicano territory sought by political or revolutionary action -- a future Chicano homeland.

Geographically, *Aztlán* is located within areas of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and Wyoming. Together, these are the areas that make up the territory that was ceded to the United States after the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which ended the Mexican War, fought by the United States and Mexico. For the purposes of this project, however, *Aztlán* should be regarded as a cultural archetype representing the spiritual unity of *La Raza* (the Chicano body politic). **Xicano Ricorso** traces Chicano consciousness from its inception as a political movement to its recent manifestations as cultural discourse and an expanded field of personal identity within the American experience.

Beginning with Ernesto Palomino's seminal work My Trip in a '52 Ford, 1963, and Sylvia Morales's feminist work Chicana, 1970, this video project culminates in the contemporary work of a mature group of younger media artists. Although too young to have directly participated in the Chicano civil-rights movement, their individual and collective political and artistic consciousness was nevertheless formed by it.

Characterized by a determined effort to overturn the dire conditions existing within the Chicano communities during the postwar period -- communities interdependent with the larger industrial and agricultural economies -- first-wave *Chicanismo* became manifest primarily as a collective political agency. Organizers from the community negotiated human rights for the under-represented farm workers, and established "La Causa," as the rallying cry for social justice in the workplace, on the street, and in the public education system. Much of the art produced during this era advocated direct action, influenced as well by the nascent political ideologies of *La Raza*: bold, confrontational, and instantly recognizable imagery announced the reclamation of dignity and honor in the wall murals and silkscreened broadsides that were

the instruments of social struggle against oppression and discrimination.

Today, we are still witnessing the entry of Chicano and Chicana artists into the mainstream of American culture, attaining visibility in both the art world and art criticism, arenas until only recently predominantly occupied by white male artists. Within the context of the great geopolitical shifts of recent years, a generation of artists has emerged, versed in the language of agit-prop on the one hand and international economics on the other. The logical progenitors of the Chicano ideology, these artists are engaged in practices as diverse as painting, sculpture, photography, video installation, digital photography, and interactive computer-generated digital media. The artists that comprise the second generation *Chicanismo* employ conceptually-based critical strategies in their respective projects to generate meaning contextually, while amplifying the resonance of socially relevant issues. **Xicano Ricorso: A Thirty-Year Retrospect From Aztlán** presents the differences and similarities between founding members of the movement and their progeny, while addressing the future of the Chicano ideology in light of the profound changes pressing upon the urban environment.

Within the context of a community fraught with continuing high levels in the high-school dropout rate and an increasing incidence of gang violence, the selections presented here attest to the vigor and determination of the artists who live and work in Aztlán. Their individual visions are drawn from the heart and soul of the Chicano experience; their collective enterprise traverses times of change, reflected in both the evolution of the traditional Chicano family unit and the phenomenon of expanding access to media and technology for Chicano and Chicana artists. Presented here is a video compendium of the myriad, diverse voices of Aztlán.

Armando Rascón  
Guest Curator

## **Exhibition Schedule**

### **PROGRAM 1**

Thursdays, 6:00 p.m.; Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 4:00 p.m.

*Pocho Biography.* 1990. Roberto Bedoya. 2 min.  
*Jack Stellman.* 1990. Roberto Bedoya. 2 min.  
*I Never Tell the Truth Because I Know There Isn't Any, or, I Never Could Spell Assimilation.* 1994. Daniel Martinez. 8 min.  
*Low 'n Slow: the Art of Lowriding.* 1983. Rick Tejada-Flores. 30 min.  
*Absolut Hurry.* 1992. Manuel Abril. 10 min.  
*A Rifle A Prayer.* 1975. Joseph Camacho. 3 min.  
*Mujeria I: The Olmeca Rap.* 1991. Osa Hidalgo-de la Riva. 4 min.  
*Anima.* 1990. Frances Salome España. 5 min.  
Total running time: 64 min.

### **PROGRAM 2**

Tuesdays, 12:00 p.m.; Fridays, 6:00 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 2:00 p.m.

*How Else Am I Supposed to Know That I'm Alive?* 1992. Evelina Fernandez. 30 min.  
*My Trip in a '52 Ford.* 1963. Ernesto Palomino. 26 min.  
*El Espajo/The Mirror.* 1989. Frances Salome España. 6 min.  
Total running time: 62 min.

### **PROGRAM 3**

Thursdays, 12:00 p.m.

*When You Think of Mexico: Commercial Images of Mexico.* 1986. Yolanda Lopez. 28 min.  
*I Never Tell the Truth Because I Know There Isn't Any, or, I Never Could Spell Assimilation.* 1994. Daniel Martinez. 8 min.  
*The Fence/La Cerca.* 1991. Ruben Ortiz. 8 min.  
*How to Read Macho Mouse.* 1991. Ruben Ortiz and Aaron Anish. 8 min.  
*Mujeria I: The Olmeca Rap.* 1991. Osa Hidalgo-de la Riva. 4 min.  
Total running time: 56 min.

### **PROGRAM 4**

Tuesdays, 4:00 p.m.

*La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead.* 1989. Lourdes Portillo and Susana Munoz. 50 min.  
*Borderwatch.* 1992-94. Roberto Salinas. 5 min.  
*Pocho Biography.* 1990. Roberto Bedoya. 2 min.  
*Jack Stellman.* 1990. Roberto Bedoya. 2 min.  
Total running time: 59 min.

### **PROGRAM 5**

Fridays, 12:00 p.m.

*Veinte Años Despues.* 1990. KMEX Television. 55 min.

**PROGRAM 6**

Mondays, 4:00 p.m.; Sundays, 12:00 p.m.

*Custom Mambo.* 1992. Ruben Ortiz. 8 min.

*El Pachuco: From Zoot Suit to Lowriders.* 1983. Jose Camacho. 50 min.

Total running time: 58 min.

**PROGRAM 7**

Thursdays, 2:00 p.m.

*Chicana.* 1979. Sylvia Morales. 29 min.

*Absolute Hurry.* 1992. Manuel Abril. 10 min.

*Mujeria I: The Olmeca Rap.* 1991. Osa Hidalgo-de la Riva. 4 min.

*Anima.* 1990. Frances Salome España. 5 min.

*El Espejo/The Mirror.* 1989. Frances Salome España. 6 min.

*Vuelo Mundial.* 1977. Raul Guerrero. 6 min.

Total running time: 60 min.

**PROGRAM 8**

Fridays, 2:00 p.m.

*Mañanamañia.* 1994. Harry Gamboa, Jr. 25 min.

*A Rifle A Prayer.* 1975. Jose Camacho. 3 min.

*Low 'n Slow: The Art of Lowriding.* 1983. Rick Tejada-Flores. 30 min.

Total running time: 58 min.

**PROGRAM 9**

Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m.

*Cada Cabeza Un Mundo.* 1994. Marine Dominguez and Margo Segura. 55 min.

*Runaway Teens.* 1994. Anna Chavez, Channel 5 KPIX, San Francisco. 5 min.

Total running time: 60 min.

**PROGRAM 10**

Saturdays, 12:00 p.m.

*Breaking Pan with Sol.* 1990. Nancy de los Santos. 28 min.

*Tanto Tiempo.* 1993. Cheryl Quintana Leader. 26 min.

Total running time: 54 min.

**PROGRAM 11**

Mondays, 2:00 p.m.

*El Pachuco: From Zoot Suit to Lowriders.* 1983. Jose Camacho. 50 min.

*Anima.* 1990. Frances Salome España. 5 min.

*I Never Tell the Truth Because I Know There Isn't Any, or, I Never Could Spell Assimilation.* 1994. Daniel Martinez. 8 min.

Total running time: 63 min.

**PROGRAM 12**

Mondays, 12:00 p.m.

*Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo.* 1986. Lourdes Portillo and Susana Munoz. 64 min.

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