

The Chicano Art Movement

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When in the process of choosing my topic I came across the Chicano Nationalism Movement and thought it would be perfect. Then I found this subset to the movement, the Chicano Art Movement. In researching, I found that art was actually an integral part of the movement because the art was an avenue for visual forms of expressing the Chicano identity and important social issues. As a Chicana artist, I was extremely interested in learning this part of American history. I think I became caught up with the idea of this movement and I fell into the trap of idolizing it, but then I started having these conversations with artists and professors who opened up my perspective. My friend sent me a podcast criticising the Chicano movement and the host had a quote from Angela Davis saying that we must be critical of the things we love. So that became the focus of this project.

There are so many aspects of Chicano art, such as poetry, music, prison art, and even low-riders. I decided to focus on murals and posters because I believe they were the most effective in bringing the artist's messages into the community. Murals and posters were especially made for and by the community, therefore, I argued that they were essential in inspiring a cultural and political consciousness for Chicanos in order to mobilize them to protest social injustice. Chicano art was significant in that it stressed this idea of "art for the people". They empowered communities by telling the history of that neighborhood and getting people to engage with the art.

I decided to create a website to present my project because I felt it was the best vehicle for displaying the murals and posters of the movement. A website would enable me to create a gallery of the artwork and even feature the key artists of the movement. Furthermore, I was able

to show the present-day Chicano art and how it has transformed and gone beyond the Chicano community and taken on global and immediate issues.

This project became more than a history lesson. It was uncovering the elements of the movement that were hidden such as the queer and Chicana voices that were suppressed and the Indigenous people that Aztlan disregarded. It was uncovering this part of my Chicana identity that isn't taught in my classroom, but should because the more awareness and information that we learn the better we can understand different experiences. Not only understanding the hurt and the struggles of the past, but also the means to heal those wounds. Yet if we continue to bury this history and hide it from Latinx students we are only creating an environment that continues to wipe away young children's history and identity. I am privileged that I can go to the Mission and get a sense of that identity through the art, but not all people have that.