

# A LEGACY OF CHANGE

Mexic-Arte Museum's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition

featuring the  
Permanent Collection



THE OFFICIAL MEXICAN  
AND MEXICAN AMERICAN  
FINE ART MUSEUM OF TEXAS

## Exhibition and Education Sponsors



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# GALLERY GUIDE

May 1 - August 2, 2009

Gallery Guide Sponsored by: **3M**  APPLIED MATERIALS

Mexic-Arte Museum is supported in part by the Texas Commission on the Arts, the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division, Humanities Texas, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art, local businesses, corporate sponsors, and Mexic-Arte Museum members.

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## Permanent Collection

¡Bienvenidos! Mexic-Arte Museum welcomes you to the 25th Anniversary Permanent Collection Exhibition entitled *A Legacy of Change*. The exhibition is organized around five central themes that introduce you to a significant selection of the Museum's Permanent Collection. The themes are: Mestizaje/Connections, Conflict/Struggle, Identity/Consciousness, Death/Rebirth, and History/Memory. Collectively, these themes provide a lens with which to organize and examine artwork that has been gathered and collected over 25 years, creating the first Mexican and Mexican American Museum in Texas.

*Legacy of Change* expresses the perseverance, complexity, and impact of Mexican art, and Latina/o art in the United States, through the presentation of artworks and material culture. These selected works and documents focus on specific issues such as the transformation of Mesoamerican cultures through Spanish conquest and colonization, the rise of Mexican nationalism, the Chicana/o Movement and more. Artists in the exhibition include the renowned artists José Guadalupe Posada, Jean Charlot, Angelina Beloff, Luis Jimenez, Santa Barraza, and Regina Vater amongst many others.

*Legacy of Change* is also as much a story about the Museum's foundation and growth as it is about the artworks found in the collection. Mexic-Arte Museum began in the early 1980s when three young Latina/o artists, with a vision for cultural and social change, began to build a collection, museum, and unprecedented opportunities for the Latino community in Austin.

The material in the permanent collection can be categorized in an infinite number of ways, and we encourage you to explore your own relationship to the works with the interactive resources that we provide. On behalf of our partners in the Austin community, Texas, the United States, and Mexico, we welcome you to enjoy and continue to be a part of our *Legacy of Change*.



Installation View: Mestizaje and Connections Section

# A LEGACY OF CHANGE CO-CURATORS' STATEMENT

## Exhibition Credits

### Co-Curators

Sylvia Orozco *Executive Director*  
Toni Nelson Herrera *Education Director*  
Alex Freeman *Education Associate, Research Associate,  
Sponsored by the University of Texas at Austin,  
College of Fine Arts*

### Exhibition Production

James Huizar *Production Manager*  
Sean Gaulager *Production Assistant*

### Exhibition Graphic Design

Jesus Alaniz III *New Media Designer*  
Elva Martinez *Design Intern*

### Special Thanks To:

Frank M. Rodriguez *Development Director*  
Megan Montgomery *Education Outreach Coordinator*  
Alexandra M. Landeros *Public Relations and Membership Director*  
Angela Jane Hicks *Museum Store Manager*  
Melissa Ortiz *Program Support Specialist*

### Education Interns

Richard Guerra  
Jessica Lazuka  
Korina Loera  
Laura Rigby

Curating this exhibit has been an amazing collaborative process involving many members of the Museum's dedicated staff and volunteers. It all began with a simple question: How will we take a wide array of artworks and objects gathered over a 25 year period and come up with one big idea? After examining many drawers and rooms inside the Museum, we decided the thread that tied it all together was *change*. But how would we organize and display the many faces of *change* that we encountered? The answer was a thematic show.

We came up with five themes that were broad enough to encompass the artworks and objects without placing limits on their possibilities or stifling the viewer's experience. The themes helped to organize the space and create clear areas of interaction. It allowed us to find a way to put together dance costumes, impressionist paintings, drawings, contemporary prints, posters, popular art masks, and books together in a way that made sense and communicated our ideas without closing off exploration and inquiry.

It was important to arrange the artwork and objects in a way that physically demonstrated the multi-vocal dialogue of the pieces. Many of the artists in fact were influenced by each other through only a few degrees of separation. And displaying in this way helped to make the point that there is no single Latino experience and that the Latino experience is *A Legacy of Change*.

We also imagined the ways we could get the audience to interact, and we wanted to experiment. Accessibility was key; our goal was to find a way for any visitor, Latino or non-Latino, to engage with the big ideas we displayed in our unique exhibition.

We faced all of these challenges with an enormous sense of responsibility, given the important role the Museum plays and our deep respect for the struggles it has faced on its path.

To be the ones to take on the responsibility of representing this Museum at the moment of such a significant milestone makes us so proud and humbled. Being part of this *Legacy of Change* through creating this exhibition, and having the privilege to carry the vision of this Museum forward is what drives all of us here at Mexic-Arte Museum.

## MESTIZAJE AND CONNECTIONS

*Mestizaje* is a term that refers to the complex and robust cultural mixture of Indigenous and Spanish cultures in Mexico extending over hundreds of years, a process born out of an undeniably violent and cruel conquest. *Connections* is the other organizing element that refers to the international and stylistic associations between the Americas and Europe during the Post-Conquest period. Selected artists in this section reflect the persistence of both of these types of cultural fluidity.

Questions to consider in this section include: Why are understandings of culture sometimes so fixed, and how might we expand them? When different worlds collide what kind of new cultures form? How do artists defy and transgress geographic, stylistic and cultural boundaries?



Joaquín Clausell, *Untitled*, Oil on board, Gift of John Charlot

**Joaquín Clausell** made important political and artistic connections that impacted Mexican art history. He was born in San Francisco de Campeche in 1866 and later moved to Mexico City where he studied engineering and law.

He worked as a political cartoonist and journalist for *El Universal* and other Mexican newspapers

before starting his own opposition newspaper *El Demócrata*. The paper was highly critical of the Díaz regime and published information denouncing the repression of the indigenous population of Chihuahua. He was imprisoned, and the newspaper shut down because of his radical stance against the government.

After Clausell's release he lived in New York and Paris, where he met French Impressionist painters Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro, and influential French writer Émile Zola who encouraged him with his painting. Clausell returned to Mexico, having been influenced by the international arts scene and revolutionary ideas of the era, to devote himself to painting for the next 35 years.

## CONFLICT AND STRUGGLE

Entrenched obstacles such as racism, inequality, and injustice prompt individuals to create change in their environment. This section considers the intertwined legacies of social, political, religious, economic, and cultural *Conflicts* in the Americas, and the various strategies and *Struggles* in response to them. The subjects in these artworks range from the fight for basic needs for survival and dignity to armed conflict and political uprisings.

Questions to consider in this section include: What is the difference between *Conflict* and *Struggle*? In what ways do the lives, cultures and experiences of Mexican Americans, Mexicans, and other Latino groups converge and/or diverge? How did dominant political regimes impact and shape the political landscape of the Americas? How do artists challenge and subvert various forms of oppression?



Fidel de la Puente Basabe, Devil Mask and Figure, Teololoapan, Guerrero

The mask displayed here is by Mexican artist **Fidel de la Puente Basabe** and helps introduce this section on *Conflict* and *Struggle*.

This mask was used in a devil-making contest on *Díez y Seis de septiembre* (September 16th – the anniversary of Mexican Independence from Spain) and commemorates local participation in the War for Independence. Local insurgents are said to have found themselves without weapons and besieged in Teloloapan – they dressed up as devils to scare off the enemy.

People make these devil masks to commemorate the fact that unarmed local rebels under siege by Spanish forces donned these kinds of masks to frighten the enemy.

## DEATH AND REBIRTH

In Mesoamerica *Death* and *Rebirth* were celebrated and seen as part of a unified cycle of transformation. Yet, post-Conquest cultural activity around death was often harnessed to serve explicit political purposes. Artists in this section show not only the playfulness of the cultural concept of death, but also a darker, more contemporary view. They ask us to take a moment to contemplate our existence. Regardless of our personal views, it is undeniable that *Death* and *Rebirth* are what keep life growing and changing.

Questions to think about in this section include: Which artworks portray *Death* playfully and which works tend to frighten and why? Which artworks challenge our way of looking at and understanding our world? How do artists use the concept of *Rebirth* as a metaphor?



Iker Larrauri, *Untitled*, Acrylic and oil on canvas, 1999, Gift of Tom Gilliland

The founders of Mexic-Arte Museum began organizing Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations before the Museum was founded. They did so in order to help transmit, educate, entertain, and share this ritual of memory with the Austin public.

Día de los Muertos actually has many distinct variations that can be discerned within areas of former Spanish colonization where the ritual began. It is a dynamic activity that has changed and developed as a cultural tradition over the many years and in the various sites in which it can today be found from Latin America, to the United States, and even Canada—wherever Latino communities exist.

This painting is by **Iker Larrauri** and its imagery depicts the holiday as it is celebrated in Guatemala. There, Día de los Muertos is marked by the building and flying of magnificent kites that are enormous in size and are incorporated into the annual family visits to cemeteries. Seeing Día de los Muertos in this unfamiliar way reminds us that, as an important part of life, the rituals of death are always changing.

## IDENTITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

*Identity* refers to the multiple ways in which we define ourselves and are defined by others. Our awareness of ourselves in our world and the expression of those ideas to others make up our *Consciousness*. These two notions of defining one's self and exploring one's relationships with others are central to the works presented in this section. Artists in this section present their individual definitions of what it means to be Mexican or Latino in multiple contexts.

Questions to think about in this section include: How many different *Identities* can you find? How do *Identities* develop and what changes them over time? How do we see artists grappling with *Consciousness* over time?



Alma Lopez, *La Llorona Desperately Seeking Coyolxauqui*, 2003, serigraph, Serie X

**Alma Lopez** is a California artist added to a special edition of Serie X. She went to Coronado Studio as a part of the SALA Project (West San Antonio Meets East Los Angeles). This print addresses the murders of women and girls on the U.S. - Mexican border. This print is pink, alluding to the black crosses on pink backgrounds painted by families and friends to represent a missing young woman or a girl in Juarez. The background represents the mothers: the Virgen of Guadalupe (the background design of her dress), and the Coatlicue (the necklace). The female figure with the Coyolxauhqui engraved on her chest represents the daughters. The flowers in the foreground represent an offering for an altar or a funeral and the plucking of lives.

This piece relates the theme of *Consciousness* because of its concern for awareness of the lives of women and families along the border.

# HISTORY AND MEMORY

Museums tell stories and thereby construct meanings about the world around us. Created by artists and focused on exhibitions about Mexican, Latino, and Latin American art and culture, this section considers the process by which this Museum grew and developed.

Mexic-Arte Museum has played a significant role in the community and greater art world by attracting and developing national and international artists and exhibitions. The Museum's outreach education programs and public events like Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) are also vital to the *History* of the Museum.

Many exhibitions, educational programs, and friendships that have been created here will provide *Memories* that will last for years to come. If you have ever been involved with the Museum in any way, we invite you to share your *Memories* in the space provided on the wall.

Some questions to think about in this section include: How does a museum begin and how does it change? How does one remember, consider, and move a museum into the future at the same time? What parts of the story are we telling, and in what ways does the audience actually make up the story?



Alejandro Colunga, *Autobus*, 6 color lithograph, 1980,  
From the Ernesto de Soto Collection

Los Angeles in 1965. In the mid-seventies he founded a printmaking workshop in San Francisco, CA which specializes in contemporary lithographs, fine prints and etching by many well-known Latin American and American artists. Mr. de Soto donated this collection of lithography prints to Mexic-Arte Museum in 2005.

Born in 1923, **Ernesto de Soto** is an artist, writer, and master printer originally from Tucson, AZ. He studied printmaking in Los Angeles, CA, and later moved to Mexico to continue his printmaking and to teach at the Institute at San Miguel de Allende in the 1940s.

He was the first Mexican American to receive the honor of being named master printer from the Tamarind Institute in

## Mexic-Arte Museum 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events

**Wednesday, April 29, 6:00-8:00 PM**  
**Member Preview with complimentary refreshments**  
7:00 PM Guided Tour by Education Program Director Toni Nelson Herrera

**Saturday, May 2, 2:00 PM**  
**A Legacy of Change: Symposium on the State of Latino Art Museums**

Eduardo Diaz  
Smithsonian Latino Center,  
Washington, D.C.  
Henry Muñoz  
The Museo Alameda, San Antonio, TX  
Sylvia Orozco  
Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin, TX  
Carlos Tortolero  
National Museum of Mexican Art,  
Chicago, IL

**Sunday, May 3, 1:00-4:00 PM**  
**Free Family Day**  
Mexic-Arte Museum welcomes art lovers of all ages to be among the first to explore  
*A Legacy of Change.*

This Family Sunday will feature:  
• 1:30 PM: Live dance performance by the children of Ballet Folklórico Mexikayotl  
• 3:30 PM: Family-friendly tour  
• Hands-on art activities  
• Interactive scavenger hunt

*Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn about the amazing art and culture of Mexico!*

MONDAY - THURSDAY 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
SUNDAY 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

**All Sundays during the exhibition are FREE to the public.**

Group tours are available by appointment only. Call (512) 480-9373 or e-mail [educationoutreach@mexic-artemuseum.org](mailto:educationoutreach@mexic-artemuseum.org).

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