The Latino Art Now! Chicago Latino Virtual Gallery is a research project translated into a dynamic web presence featuring 40 artworks and 35 artists. It examines the artistic production of artists of Latin American descent and US-born Latinos in the city of Chicago. The Latino Art Now! Chicago Latino Virtual Gallery, as an innovative digital interactive learning 3-D space, supports the current broad redefinition of American art prompted by changing demographics. It explores artistic issues, contexts, meanings, visualities and historical groundings in addition to artists’ own engagements with identity, community, public art and the urban space.

The Latino Art Now! Chicago Latino Virtual Gallery and its ancillary materials are made possible by the generous support of the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Inter-University Program for Latino Research and the in-kind support of the Smithsonian Latino Center. The digital educational resources have been made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Comcast NBC Universal, and the Chicago Community Trust.

Gallery e-Guide Team:
Principal Investigator and Curator: Olga U. Herrera, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago
Research Associate: Norma Rosso, Independent Arts Manager
Creative Director: Melissa A. Carrillo, Smithsonian Latino Center
Instructional Designer/Artist: Stacey Fox, Reynardine Productions
Educational Content Advisor: Dr. Juana Roman
Graphic Design: Paola Ramírez, InToch Designs
Web Design: John-Noall Reid, Greyhouse Media

Inter-University Program for Latino Research, University of Illinois at Chicago
How can you have your class do a virtual walk through of the Latino Art Now Chicago Virtual Gallery?

- Go to: http://latino.si.edu/LatinoArtNow/LAN-ChiVG
- After you have downloaded your platform experience (MAC or PC), unzip the files and select the .exe or .dmg file to open the Gallery simulation.
- Next, you will be prompted with an instruction screen that will give you an overview of how to navigate the space and access information.
- Click on the Enter button to enter the space.
- Locate our Education Coordinator Natalia Ramos for a brief audio walk through of the space.
- Next, enter the gallery space using your eGuide and Transmedia Toolkit for exploration and learning activities.

Available Resources:

Latino Art Now! Chicago Virtual Gallery: http://latino.si.edu/LatinoArtNow/LAN-ChiVG
SLC Educator Training Toolkit Vol. 2. Spanish Interactive Version:  
http://latino.si.edu/LatinoArtNow/docs/LAN_ChVG_ESP_EdTrainingToolkit.pdf
SLC Educator Training Toolkit Vol. 2. English Interactive Version:  
http://latino.si.edu/LatinoArtNow/docs/LAN_ChVG_ENG_EdTrainingToolkit.pdf
SLC Teacher Training Toolkit Vol. 1: http://latino.si.edu/LVM/TeacherToolkit?slide=0
How can you find Latino artists/artwork for your learning activities?

- The Latino Art Now Chicago Virtual Gallery is structured by periods in Latino Art History, Genre, Gender, Artists and Ethnicities.
- For example, select the ‘gear’ icon from the toolbar on the lower right hand side of the Gallery simulation environment.
- For our example here, we chose our point of entry and exploration via the artist. For a customized search by ‘Artist,’ select the ‘Artist’ tab as seen in the image sample below.
- Note: In this example, we selected ‘Chavez.’ The artwork for Chavez shows up in the preview window. Note, the location of the artwork is indicated with a red dot in the Gallery mini map.
Featured Artists

**Featured Artists in the Latino Art Now! Chicago Virtual Gallery**

Cándida Álvarez  
Rene Arcéo  
Casa Aztlán  
Jose Bermúdez  
José Bernal  
Mario E. Castillo  
Juan Ángel Chávez  
Carlos Cortez  
María Enríquez de Allen  
Héctor Duarte  
Diana Frid  
Mario Galán  
Esperanza Gama  
Eric J. García  

Maria Gaspar  
José Guerrero  
Hull House-Kilns  
Miguel Juárez  
Adrian Lozano  
Rodrigo Lara Zendejas  
Silvia Malagrinó  
Elsa Muñoz  
Luis M. Ortiz  
Ray Patlán  
Gamaliel Ramírez  
Daniel Ramírez  
Marcos Raya  

**Featured Artists in the SLC Educator Transmedia Training Toolkit, Vol. 2**

Carlos A. Cortez  
José Bermúdez  
José Bernal  
Mario E. Castillo  
Juan Angel Chávez  
María Enríquez de Allen  
Héctor Duarte  
Mario Galán  

Elsa Muñoz  
Errol Ortiz  
Gamaliel Ramírez  
Héctor Rosario  
Rufino A. Silva  
Edra Soto  
Bibiana Suárez

**Curator: Olga U. Herrera, Ph.D.**

Dr. Olga U. Herrera is the director of the Washington D.C. Office of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR) headquartered at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the former Coordinator of the Arts & Culture Program of the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives and collaborated with the Latino Virtual Museum since 2009 as curatorial advisor. She is currently working on developing the Latino Art Now Chicago Virtual Gallery, part of the Smithsonian Latino Center.

Herrera has published essays on Latin American and Latino art and is the author of *Toward the Preservation of a Heritage: Latin American and Latino Art in the Midwestern United States*, (University of Notre Dame, 2008). She is currently working on the book *Art Deployed: The U.S. State, Modern Art and South America* (under contract with University Press of Florida). She is the Guest Co-editor of the spring 2017 Art Issue of the Journal Diálogo at DePaul University. She holds a Ph.D. in modern and contemporary Latin American art history and theories of globalization from George Mason University. She sits on the Board of the Friends of Art Museum of the Americas (AMA).
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Latino Art Now! Chicago Virtual eGallery Guide

The lesson plans and activities included in the Educator Transmedia Training Toolkit, Vol 2 are focused on the following artworks and artists:

**Foyer**

**HISTORY OF CHICAGO**

Incorporated in 1837, the city of Chicago has been a destination spot in the Midwest for immigrants from Europe, Eastern Europe and the Americas attracted by economic and labor opportunities beginning in the mid 19th century. A veritable center of industry, manufacturing, transportation, technology and commerce Chicago also figures large in the history migration and settlement from Mexico. Drawn by seasonal agriculture jobs and year-round work in steel mills and stockyards, and aided by the completion of railroad tracks that traversed the United States, Chicago witnessed the formation of a permanent transnational Mexican community beginning in 1916.

**Juan Angel Chávez**

In this outdoor mixed-media mosaic mural, Chicago-based artist Juan Angel Chávez, born in La Junta, Chihuahua, Mexico in 1971, captures the ethos or spirit of Pilsen, home to Chicago’s large Mexican community since the late 1960s. A traditional transitional neighborhood nestled in the lower west side of the city; it owes its name to Czech immigrants who settled it after German and Irish ones. Utilizing glass and stone, the artist creates a visual narrative with elements from his memory that document a common immigrant experience.

Chavez points to a rich Mexican history and a formation of a new culture and heritage in the U.S. homeland by using key elements in his mural design: a pair of shoes indicating a journey, a symbolic Castilian rose bud, an old family tree with deep roots, a field of thistles, a blast furnace in a steel mill, and a skyline of a bursting industrial city with red buildings and structures. These elements serve as the backdrop to a series of round inset portraits of a man, a girl, a boy, a woman and photographs of a house and a bus, and the words Pilsen and a cursive Damen. The pointing hand in the upper register calls attention to a sunny field, water and sky while the one in the lower register points to the roots of the old tree in a circle of a white winter.

**Resources:**
Juan Angel Chávez Website: [http://www.juanangelchavez.com/](http://www.juanangelchavez.com/)
Juan Angel Chávez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive)
Juan Angel Chávez Interview in YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k0Zmthz0Bk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k0Zmthz0Bk)
MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

As the cultural crossroads of the United States, the Midwest has been an important region in the growth and industrialization of the nation. Chicago, in particular, as a port and hub of transportation, and the site of industry and manufacturing has figured large as a magnet destination for foreign and internal migration in a country of immigrants. Although the first Mexican enclaves sprouted in Chicago in the late 1910s, a noticeable Puerto Rican presence would not appear until thirty years later. The late 1940s significant airborne migration of U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico can be considered within the context of Operation Bootstrap initiated to help the island transition from an untenable agriculture-based economics to one of industrialization and development aided by mainland companies. By the early 1960s Mexicans and Puerto Ricans constituted the main two Latino groups soon to be joined by a migratory wave of exiled Cubans seeking refuge from the communist regime of Fidel Castro. Chicago has also been the destination point for Central American and South Americans as well.

Bibiana Suárez

In her Aves raras Series, six panels that are part of her large installation Memoria (Memory), artist Bibiana Suárez (b. 1960, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico) appropriates old maps to highlight historical journeys of immigration and migration from Latin America to the United States. By mimicking the pictorial strategy of the aesthetics of the game of memory, each card provides multiple layers of meaning of a political ethnic identity both as it refers to the place of origin and the place of new residence. Engaging the viewer in a dialogue with this intricate artwork, the artist elicits and facilitates a personal questioning of the multiple Latino origins in Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba; journeys of immigration and migration at various historical junctures; and the settlement and formation of new hybrid identities.

In the first set of cards, the artist considers Mexican immigration and the formation of Mexicanidad from the perspective of the Bracero Program (1942-1964), reinforcing immigration and migration as labor and economic issues. While the first map, ca. 1920, highlights the net of railroad tracks that connected Mexico during the Porfirio Díaz presidency and the extension to the U.S.-Mexico border, the second map prominently situates the city of El Paso, TX, ca. 1942, as the first point of entry to the United States where Braceros received work permits and assignments. The artist's imposed circular flying pattern of eagles as a symbol for those who migrate, suggests a careful study of the territory and historical situations.

The second set of cards highlights the migration from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to the mainland United States under the modernization and industrialization program Operación Manos a la Obra (Bootstrap Operation) in 1948 during the governorship of Luis Muñoz Marín that saw a steady flow of Puerto Ricans to New York, Chicago and other cities. The use of an urban development map of San Juan, ca. 1941, calls attention to the migration of the countryside Jíbaro to the city while the map of the Bronx Borough next to Spanish Harlem, ca. 1942, points to the significant growing presence of Puerto Ricans and the airborne circularity between mainland and island. Suarez’s use of hummingbirds with flying patterns echoing the ritual of mating further suggests a unity and indivisibility of country and commonwealth.
Concentrating on the Cuban first immigration wave after the Cuban Revolution, the artist uses maps of Cuba and Miami of 1961. Featuring a crane bird native to Cuba, the maps serve to illustrate a massive urban change in two cities 90 miles apart, and the increasing touristic attraction of an Art Deco Miami Beach.

Resources:

Bibiana Suárez Artist website: http://bibianasuarez.com/
Bibiana Suárez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive
Bibiana Suárez, Interview in YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s07-rZkc48E/
Gabriela F. Arredondo and Derek Vaillant “Mexicans in Chicago.”
   http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/824.html
   http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rican-studies/story-us-puerto-ricans-part-four
Gina M. Pérez, “Puerto Ricans.”
   http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1027.html
A settlement house located on the Near West Side of Chicago in a traditional immigrant neighborhood, Hull House (1889-1964) assisted waves of recent arrivals from all corners of the world to acclimate to their new homeland with an array of social services. Founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, Hull House also offered a space for recreation and social, educational and artistic activities. Facilitating rooms for meetings and clubs, and making available a menu of legal aid and special classes such as English language, citizenship preparation, and art and crafts, Hull House produced a social space creating a sense of community to recent arrivals from Mexico. The establishment of the Hull-House Kilns ceramic program under Myrtle Merritt French in 1927 attracted local Mexican craftsmen and ceramist who enriched the classroom with novel clay techniques, designs and glazes. Coinciding with a period of great interest in the United States on the artistic production in Mexico including a renowned mural movement, artists Jesús Torres, Miguel Juárez, José Ruiz, Camilo Fuentes, Hilarión Tinoco and others, benefited of “the enormous vogue of things Mexican” by becoming recognized artists who sold their work in Chicago and New York. Their decorative designs often followed a simplified method of drawing developed by Alfredo Best-Maugard based on seven elements found in Toltec, Egyptian, Assyrian, Chinese, Greek, Persian, Hindi, Aztec cultures and others. Circles, waves, straight lines, zig-zags, spirals and semi circles and S shapes found their way into all kind of decorations. Although Hull House-Kilns closed in 1937 in the midst of the Great Depression, some of the artists continued to have successful art careers.

In 1964 in the midst of a massive urban renewal with an expressway interchange and a proposed new public research university campus—The University of Illinois at Chicago Circle—ultimately destroyed the thriving social fabric of the Near West Side accelerating the resettlement of the first Mexican community to the nearby Pilsen Neighborhood and others.

Jesús Torres

Jesús Torres (1899 Silao, Guanajuato, Mexico – 1948, Chicago) settled in Chicago after stints as a road construction worker in Texas and a seasonal farm worker in Michigan. Attending Hull-House English language classes, Torres also enrolled in pottery classes soon finding his love for clay and a full-time job and an instructor position. The son of a shoemaker, he had grown up surrounded by the town’s artisans. At the newly established Hull-House Kilns Torres excelled with his creativity and artistic skills in a factory setting of a commercial pottery production operation. As a creative worker, he not only made platters, planters, and others but also experimented with the Best-Maugard method of design to create unique decorations.
Miguel Juárez began attending ceramic classes at Hull-House in the early 1930s after losing a leg in a job-related accident and, as Torres before him, soon found his way to the Hull-House Kiln commercial operation producing figurines and place settings. Better known for his nativity scenes, crèches, musical bands and compositions of vignettes of Mexican life, Juárez introduced new ways of modeling clay by assembling small parts rather than carving from larger pieces of clay. Juárez took part of exhibitions at the University of Chicago and at the Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933.

Resources:

“Hull House.” [Link](http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/615.html)

Mexicans and the Hull House Colonia in the 1920s and 1930s:

[Link](http://hullhouse.uic.edu/hull/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/subsub_index.ppt&chap=56)

Hull House Kilns:

[Link](http://hullhouse.uic.edu/hull/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/subsub_index.ppt&chap=62)


[Link](http://hullhouse.uic.edu/hull/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/show_doc.ppt&doc=854&chap=62)

Curriculum Material:

[Link](http://www.lib.niu.edu/1999/iht629962cm.html)
[Link](http://www.terraamericanart.org/learning/art-study-jesus-torres-at-hull%C2%AD-house-kilns/)
Following in the vein of Chicago’s early Mexican ceramic artists, Alfonso “Piloto” Nieves Ruiz (b. 1976, Querétaro, Mexico) has expanded and enriched a clay tradition with sculptures that incorporate recycled materials and comment on social and environmental issues. A self-taught artist residing in the Chicago area since 1997, Piloto utilizes art as a personal means of expression to address a consumerist and disposable society while exploring the forces of creation and destruction in contemporary human existence and behavior. A humanist in search of balance and harmony in life, his sculptures draw from multiple sources: dreams, pre-Columbian mythology, and the grotesque. In this sculptural installation, Niño espejo, niño inmigrante. ¡Anahuac Tawantinsuyu vuela de nuevo!, a symbolic central figure gives life to a new being serving as a reflection of a current moment in the migration history of the Western Hemisphere. In the process, arms become a flying eagle and a condor referencing pre-Columbian sites of Anáhuac (Aztec Mexico in Nahuatl) and Tawantinsuyu (Incan Empire in Quechua) as a rebirth of the Americas. Sculpted in terracotta, Piloto incorporates as wings tree twigs, branches and roots to produce a dramatic effect of flight.

Resources:
Alfonso “Piloto” Nieves Ruiz website: http://anrstudios.com
Alfonso “Piloto” Nieves Ruiz in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive
Migratory Birds of the Americas in YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqJT5eBUV8I
Skokie Public Library, Studio Visit, Alfonso Piloto Nieves Ruiz in YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lKDhCdBO1Y
These ceramic sculptures, part of the thirty-four-piece installation Deportable Aliens/Extranjeros Deportables by Chicago-based artist Rodrigo Lara Zendejas (b. 1981, Toluca, Mexico), shine a spotlight on a troubled moment in U.S. immigration history. Amplifying the current anti-immigrant political rhetoric, the artist draws attention to the ironic forced deportation and repatriation of U.S. citizens of Mexican descent during the Great Depression years of the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations. Although in Chicago repatriation was voluntary, the city saw a 36% decline of the Mexican population between 1929 and 1938. Modeled after real people’s facial features and gestures, the thumbs serve as signifiers of identity replacing the unique personal fingerprints.

Resources:
Rodrigo Lara Zendejas website: http://www.rodrigo-lara.com
Rodrigo Lara Zendejas Interview in YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxxSgfvmicg
María Enríquez de Allen

Settling permanently in Chicago in 1961 after a career as an elementary school teacher in Villa Unión, Coahuila, Mexico and after working in Crystal City, Texas, María Enríquez de Allen (1907-Laredo, TX, 1999) joined the new Halsted Urban Progress Center in Pilsen in 1968 where she taught arts and crafts to children and adults and was instrumental in the celebration of Mexican traditional holidays until her retirement in 1973. A self-taught artists, she is widely recognized as an important feminist artist of the last quarter of the twentieth century in Chicago and the United States. It is under this movement of feminist art as—florista, santera, artesana—that Enríquez de Allen received the distinguished Women’s Caucus for Art Honor Award in 1994 along artists Beverly Pepper and Faith Ringgold. Latino art historian Shifra Goldman noted her lifelong creativity and her successful integration of art with craft in her aesthetic production.

Drawing from traditional Mexican crafts that she learned as a young girl from her mother, she expanded her vocabulary and production to include a great number of techniques and materials—both natural and artificial—to produce a wide arrange of clay sculptures, artificial flowers, crochet knitted and quilted art pieces, santos and art installations. In this ofrenda installation, the artist addressed the theme of death as part of multicultural life junctures that sought to integrate art and everyday life. Enríquez de Allen recreated a private chapel dedicated to the Day of the Dead rather than creating a cemetery setting. Her ofrenda, personalized with an altar holding her signature handmade flowers, art and own chairs, honors her first husband Manuel Castillo de León (1902-1947) and daughter Minerva Castillo Enríquez as part of the Mexican Día de los Muertos celebration on November 2.

Resources:
María Enríquez de Allen Website: http://www.medafinearts.com/maria-enriquez-de-allen.html
María Enríquez de Allen in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive
José Guadalupe Posada (1852, Aguascalientes, Mexico – 1913, Mexico DF) is perhaps the most prolific and influential Mexican printmaker and illustrator of the early 20th century. His penny broadsides, or popular news sheets, mostly featured his iconic *calaveras* (skeletons) who came to life to visually comment on a wide range of then current events—scandals, disasters, celebrations, heroes and bandits—and to satirize the upper political and social classes. Known as the “Printmaker to the Mexican People,” Posada’s fame extended well beyond Mexico beginning in 1920 thanks to the efforts of artists Jean Charlot, Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco. This revival of his art led the Art Institute of Chicago to present the first large exhibition of the artist in the United States in April-May 1944.

**Carlos A. Cortez**

[Image]

Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada (1852, Aguascalientes, Mexico – 1913, Mexico DF) and his graphic and printmaking tradition of satire and social justice influenced a generation of artists in Chicago, including Carlos Alfred Cortez (1923, Milwaukee – 2005, Chicago). The son of a Mexican member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and a German pacifist socialist and poet, Cortez grew up in a home environment with radical political discussions and German socialist literature. Coming of age during WWII, Cortez rejected the draft on political grounds, becoming a conscientious objector. In 1947, he joined the Industrial Workers of the World becoming a Wobblie, and in the process an illustrator and writer for their newspaper *The Industrial Worker*. Settling in Chicago in 1965, Cortez became an active member of art collectives such as the Movimiento Artístico Chicano (MARCH) in 1973 for which he created the print *Homage to Posada/Homenaje a Posada*. A prominent multidisciplinary group of artists and writers, MARCH was instrumental in establishing a rich transnational program of exhibitions, lectures, and workshops with Mexico and the quarterly newsletter *Abrazo*.

Cortez’s composition features a portrait of Posada on the right side, busy at work on a plate and accompanied on the left by a figure of *Calavera Catrina*, first published in 1913 as *Calavera Garbancera*. The elegant hat-clad female skeleton is a satirical commentary on the upper class Mexican Europeanized fashionable women who denied their indigenous heritage, and Posada’s best known calavera, a symbol for the annual celebration of Día de los Muertos / Day of the Dead on November 2. In this homage, Cortez positions Posada and Catrina as inextricably bound in a timeless life and death. In the early 1980s, Cortez adopted his middle name Koyokuikatl (coyote song in Nahuatl) as a symbol of freedom.

**Resources:**

Carlos A. Cortez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive)


An artist keeping the Mexican printmaking tradition alive in Chicago is René Hugo Arceo (b. 1959, Cojumatlán de Régules, Michoacán, Mexico). A painter, printmaker, curator and educator is also the cofounder of Gallery InkWorks (1984) and Taller Mexicano de Grabado (1990) now known as Casa de la Cultura Carlos Cortez. Arriving in the city in 1979, Arceo's engravings have explored political and social justice themes addressing immigration, identity, and history. A recurrent theme in his work since the mid 1990s is the depiction of mestizaje. In this hand-colored linocut, the artist considers the dualism of a cultural and racial Mexican identity with ancient indigenous and European roots. His split portrait of a feather-headaddressed Aztec warrior skeleton and the peasant charro-dressed Emiliano Zapata interrogates two historical experiences and the construction of one mestizo identity.

Resources:
René Arceo Website: http://www.arceoart.us/index.html
René Arceo in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive

Eric J. García

A political cartoonist, satirist, painter and printmaker, Eric J. Garcia (b. 1977, Albuquerque) is the cofounder of Instituto Gráfico de Chicago. Combining history and popular culture in his art, he explores episodes long forgotten in order to understand contemporary issues. In Miracle at the Cottonwood, an oversized ex-voto painting on tin, Garcia enters into a self-dialogue of identity and exploration of the meaning of being American. A type of religious folk art, ex-votos are popular pictorial offerings to give thanks for miracles and favors received from saints. In Garcia's painting an upside down St. Anthony of Padua, patron saint of lost things, takes a prominent place in the left hand corner. A closer look reveals that the fifteen figures engaged in the fierce battle is one and the same: the artist. Representing himself in his U.S. Air Force uniform, he underscores the ironies of a Mexican heritage and a U.S. birth and citizenship in a personal reenactment of the Battle of the Alamo of 1836. As a child, Garcia played with toy soldiers always assuming the position of the good guys defending the Alamo Mission against the bad Mexican guys of General Santa Anna. The miracle alluded in the title of the artwork and the purpose of the ex-voto is to give thanks to St. Anthony for helping Garcia understand his personal history without the filters of a Television historical white washing. The written narrative in the left corner highlights his coming to terms with a heritage and his will to fight alongside it. In a strange case of life imitating art, while in the United State Air Force, Garcia was stationed in San Antonio to train in the defense of U.S. military bases.
As an undergraduate student at the University of New Mexico, Garcia worked as a political cartoonist in the school’s student paper. He now has his own political cartoon El Machete Illustrated. Garcia received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Resources:
Eric J. Garcia Website: http://ericjgarcia.com
Eric J. Garcia in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive
El Machete Illustrated: http://elmacheteillustrated.tumblr.com
One of the first fresco murals painted in Chicago by a Latino artist was at the Boys' Club Building of the Hull-House complex. Arriving in Chicago in 1925, Adrian Lozano (1921 Aguascalientes - 2004 Chicago) who had enrolled in art classes at Hull House growing up, would return to paint the mural Progress of Mexico as a young man. His fresco located on the upper register of the paneled wall illustrated three periods in the history of Mexico—Pre-Cortesian, Colonial, and Modern. Showcasing the rich Mayan and Aztec past and the arrival of the Conquistadors on the left, Lozano also made reference to the Cristero conflict on the 1920s in which the Mexican government sought to counter by force the influence of the Catholic Church in everyday life affairs. The artist painted himself as a bespectacled architecture student taking part of the building of the industrial modern state on the right. Lozano was active in the art scene of the 1950s becoming later a renowned architect.

Recognized as the first Latino outdoor mural of the late 1960s Public Mural Movement, Peace (Metafisica) was painted by Mario E. Castillo (b. 1945, Coahuila, Mexico) and a group of nine youth and volunteers in 1968. Located on the exterior south wall of the four-story Halsted Urban Progress Center of the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity, the mural was part of a summer assistance program and the Neighborhood Improvement and Beautification in the Pilsen neighborhood. With the closing of Hull House, the sixth Urban Progress Center in the city sought to support the Johnson's Administration War on Poverty by offering work and training young men in impoverished neighborhoods. In a horizontal design that incorporated Mayan and Aztec motifs, the mural also served to mark the new boundaries of an urban and culturally-diverse space now home to a displaced Mexican community. Castillo proposed the mural to the director of the center who provided total freedom in design.

Rich in symbolism, Peace echoed the chants of the anti-Vietnam War movement that engaged a peace philosophy and flower power of the times. His native imagery of the Americas combined with Indian spiritual philosophy and symbolic abstract elements departed from the later ones that addressed social struggles, civil rights and other movements of the 1960s and 1970s in a particular visual vocabulary and figurative style. Castillo’s approach looked at a cultural heritage engaging youth that became the model for future commissions and mural work in the city. Richly composed, his use of the sun, wombs, embryos, crosses, and patterns address specific moments such as hippie popular culture, pop art, street art and a larger need for peace in the universe. At that time when he painted the mural, Castillo was not aware that William Walker had
painted the mural *Wall of Respect* in 1967 in the South Side of the city, launching what became known as the Public Mural Movement. Instead he was drawing from the rich tradition of 1920s Mexican mural movement and figures such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros that were familiar to him.

**Resources:**

Mario E. Castillo Website: [www.mariocastillo.net/](http://www.mariocastillo.net/)

Mario E. Castillo in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive/](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive/)


Mario E. Castillo on Abstract Art in YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0TThLHbF1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0TThLHbF1s)


**Ray Patlán and Casa Aztlán**

Leading a group of National Youth Corps students in the summer of 1971, Vietnam veteran and artist Raymond Patlán (b. 1946, Chicago) oversaw the painting of the murals in the façade of Casa Aztlán. In 1970 the former Howell Neighborhood House, a settlement house serving the Czech and Bohemian neighborhood since 1905, became the new Casa Aztlán as the community center for a new growing Pilsen Mexican community. The students of the summer program developed the overall thematic design under Patlán's supervision incorporating Aztec and United Farm Workers symbols and a bright color scheme that brought pride to the community. The mural *Hay cultura en nuestra comunidad* addressed issues of the moment such as the activism of Cesar Chavez in favor of farmworkers rights, the call for peace in the midst of the Vietnam War, and respect for the rights of others. By 1977 the original mural had deteriorated. Marcos Raya and other artists developed further the concept creating a new one which celebrated the permanence of the community.

Inspired by the murals he saw in his family visits to Mexico, Patlán became interested in public art at an early age. Graduating from Harrison Tech High School in 1965, Patlán served in the 9th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army in Vietnam in 1967–1968. Returning to Chicago, he attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago later transferring to Chicago State University. Patlán left Chicago in 1975 and moved to San Francisco to teach mural art and photography at the University of California, Berkeley. Since his first murals in Pilsen, he has directed and collaborated in more than one hundred murals in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

**Resources:**

The first and oldest Puerto Rican mural painted in 1971 in Humboldt Park in Chicago, "The Crucifixion of Don Pedro Albizu Campos," pays homage to the leaders of the Puerto Rican independence movement. Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965) was born seven years before the Spanish American War that ended the Spanish colonial domination in the Caribbean and opened a new chapter for Puerto Rico as a U.S. territory. Although the Foraker Act of 1900 established a civilian government in the island under a U.S. governor, it was the 1917 Jones-Shafroth Act or Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act that granted US citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. It also established a new government structure with executive, legislative, and judicial branches, similar to the one in the states of the Union, with a congress and a bill of rights but with a governor appointed by the US president. In bestowing these rights, the U.S. government also extended conscription in the armed forces securing a large number of Puerto Ricans to fight in World War I. One of these Puerto Rican soldiers was Albizu Campos.

Following his military service, Albizu Campos earned a law degree from Harvard University in 1919. Once in Puerto Rico, he joined the Nationalist Party in 1924, rising to its presidency in 1930 to advocate for the independence of Puerto Rico. In 1936 he was indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice for conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States and was sentenced to ten years in prison in Atlanta. In 1947, Albizu Campos returned to Puerto Rico and resumed his quest for independence and a change in status by means of rebellion and armed insurrection. He was incarcerated again in 1950 for organizing the Nationalist Party Revolts across the island. Although he was pardoned in 1953 by governor Luis Muñoz Marín, he was sentenced to jail again and tortured after the armed attack on members of the 83rd Congress by four Nationalist Party members intending to attract the world’s attention to the cause of Puerto Rico’s independence.

In this mural, artists Mario Galán, José Bermúdez, and Héctor Rosario, then students at Malcom X College, drew from Puerto Rican history by depicting a crucified Albizu Campos. Flanked by two similarly crucified figures—Lolita Lebrón to the left and Rafael Cancel Miranda to the right, the scene echoes the crucifixion of Jesus. In the upper left register of the mural, portraits of leaders in the first independent movement against Spain, Ramón Emeterio Betances, Segundo Ruíz Belvis, and Mariana Bracetti, look on. In the right upper registry, leaders Eugenio María de Hostos, Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón and José de Diego bear witness to a new independent movement.

Rich in nationalist iconography, the mural also features as backdrop the Bandera de Lares (Flag of Lares) raised during the first attempt at Puerto Rico’s independence from Spain in 1868. Originally designed by Betances and sewn by Bracetti, the Flag of Lares incorporated a white cross representing the desire for nation and freedom, dividing equally a red zone for the blood spilled by heroes of the independence movement and a blue zone with a five-point star of liberty. First flown during the Grito de Lares, the flag became the symbol of the revolution against Spanish colonial rule.

Resources:
“La Crucifixión de Don Pedro:” http://architreasures.org/la-cru cifixion-de-don-pedro-2/
José Guerrero

Widely known in the Pilsen neighborhood where he conducted tours of public art murals for more than thirty-five years, José Guerrero (San Antonio, TX, 1938 – Chicago, 2015) moved to Chicago in 1964. He worked in a Sunbeam appliance plant and in the late 1980s at the Chicago Park District. As a self-taught cartoonist and artist, Guerrero took part of the public art mural movement of the 1970s. His first mural Si se puede echoed the chant and motto of the United Farm Workers (UFW) first enounced during Cesar Chavez’s fast in 1972. The mural, sponsored by Casa Aztlán and the Chicago Mural Group, featured the UFW red flag with the stylized Aztec eagle next to the flag of Mexico and a group of people marching in solidarity to farmworkers’ rights. Guerrero went on to work with John Pitman Weber in the murals of the United Electrical Workers which they named Without Struggle There Is No Progress and later took mural classes from him. Parallel to these efforts, Guerrero also developed an interest in printmaking thanks to the influence of Carlos Cortez. He took part of Taller Mexicano de Grabado, renamed Taller Mestizarte and Casa de Cultura Carlos Cortez, and opened his own workshop which he named Obrero Press. As a graphic artist, Guerrero was interested in linocuts and a two-color block printing process. He participated and organized a series of portfolios with Pilsen artists.

Resources:

John Pitman Weber. “José Guerrero, Printmaker, Muralist, Worker.” El Beisman,
http://elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=881

In the mural *Sea of Flags*, Gamaliel Ramírez (b. 1949, Bronx, NY) and assistants Star Padilla, Moncho, Luis Ortiz, Melissa Cintrón and other community members recreated the 11th Fiesta Boricua of 2004. This Chicago’s Puerto Rican heritage festival, known also as De Bandera a Bandera, is held every year on Division Street in Humboldt Park, and features music, food, and entertainment in a six-block area delimited by two 59-foot tall public art steel Puerto Rican flags that serve as gateways at each end of the street.

The mural features members of the community walking side by side with historical figures of the Puerto Rico Independence Movement such as Lolita Lebrón, Pedro Albizu Campos (bust statue to the left) and important cultural figures as Pedro Pietri who died the year the mural was painted.

With *Sea of Flags* the artist also calls attention to the Law 53 of 1948 or Ley de la Mordaza (Gag Law) enacted by Puerto Rico legislature, dominated by the Popular Democratic Party, to suppress the Nationalist movement in the island. This law made a crime to own and/or display any of Puerto Rico’s national symbols such as the Puerto Rican flag, singing the national anthem or a patriotic tune, to talk or write about Puerto Rico’s independence from the United States, or to meet or hold any assembly in favor of Puerto Rico’s independence. The Ley de la Mordaza was signed on June 10, 1948 by the US- appointed governor Jesús T. Piñeiro. As a consequence of Law 53, hundreds of sympathizers of the independent movement in Puerto Rico were imprisoned.

In the mural, Lolita Lebrón holds in her hand the Bandera de Lares in the sea of Puerto Rican flags. The current flag of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was adopted in 1952 after a design created in 1895 by a Puerto Rican political group allied with the Cuban Revolutionary Party that advocated for the independence of Puerto Rico and Cuba from Spain.

**Resources:**
- Gamaliel Ramírez Website: [http://gamalielramirez.weebly.com/](http://gamalielramirez.weebly.com/)
- Gamaliel Ramírez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive/](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive/)
- *Sea of Flags* in YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tf_GKm9D570/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tf_GKm9D570/)
- A Selection of Murals and a Mural Statement by Muralists/Artist Gamaliel Ramírez in YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhUy2ZwQ-ho/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhUy2ZwQ-ho/)
Gulliver in Wonderland is a mural enveloping three sides of the exterior walls of Héctor Duarte’s home studio in Pilsen. Covering an area close to 3,000 square feet, this mural depicts a giant Gulliver at the moment of awakening, and trying to break free from his ties. As a modern-day interpretation of Jonathan Swift’s classic book Gulliver’s Travels, Duarte gives new energy to the story of Captain Lemuel Gulliver with that of an anonymous Mexican migrant recently arrived in the United States or “Wonderland.” The struggles of the immigration journey and the many obstacles encountered in a new country, culture, and new language are amplified by the use of barbed wire as visual representation of physical, psychological and cultural borders. At the same time, he makes allusions to ties that also bound the human body and spirit like poverty, not knowing the language, not understanding the culture.

By asking “Do you want to remain tied up or do you want to break free?” Duarte draws in the spectator. Standing on the street next to the outstretch figure, we become no less than Lilliputians in the story and party to the challenges of border crossings in the Windy City. Just as Swift commented on England and France in its day with political satire, here the artist makes allusions to the need for a better and more humane immigration system. His masked Gulliver speaks of those immigrant farm workers exposed to pesticides and other chemicals.

Duarte (b. 1952, Caurio de Guadalupe, Michoacán, Mexico) trained in mural painting at the workshop of David Alfaro Siqueiros in 1977, has established a significant presence in the thriving public art scene of the city, completing more than 50 murals in Mexico and the United States. Preoccupied with space and polyangular perspective, the artist presents a unique solution to a mural that is best appreciated from the intersection of Cullerton and Wolcott Streets. Completed in 2005, Gulliver’s blue jeans branding patch lists the names of those who collaborated with Duarte in this mural.

Resources:
Héctor Duarte Website: http://www.hectorduarte.com
Héctor Duarte in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive/
Héctor Duarte in YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZaY1xdfewU/
One of the first Mexican artists to attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on the G.I. Bill, Louis Mendoza Ortiz (Saltillo, Mexico 1918 - Chicago, 1997) graduated in the spring of 1954 with a BFA in painting. His professors were Max Kahn, Laura Van Pappelendam, John Rogers Cox, and Paul Wieghardt who recognized his talent awarding him class honorable mentions in painting and still life. Prior to his art career, Ortiz, was part of a troupe of acrobats with the Cole Brothers-Clyde Beatty, Tom Mix and Ringling Circuses. He joined the Second Marine Division during World War II fighting in Guadalcanal and Tarawa and rising from private to Sargent. Ortiz received a Purple Heart Medal after being wounded in action. In Chicago, Ortiz lived in the near South Side living in the Taylor-Halsted Street area, home to a Mexican community until the early 1960s when construction for the Ryan Expressway and the University of Illinois at Chicago and the urban renewal movement razed up the area. Ortiz won the Chicago and Vicinity Exhibition Awards at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1955 and 1958. Ortiz was an artist-member of the Feingarten Gallery in Chicago, New York and San Francisco and was a non-resident artist of the Sarasota Art Association in 1960-1961.

Ortiz who exhibited his paintings frequently in Chicago, New York, San Francisco also ventured into metal sculpture beginning in 1959 using aluminum, bronze and steel. Ortiz’s regular job at the time was ornamental iron worker.
Rufino A. Silva

One of the early Puerto Rican modern artists in Chicago, Rufino A. Silva (1919, Humacao, Puerto Rico – 1993, Mount Vernon, Washington) first arrived in New York in 1936 and moved to Chicago in 1939. With a scholarship granted by the government of Puerto Rico, he studied drawing, painting and illustration at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1939 to 1942. Upon his graduation he received the John Quincy Adams Foreign Traveling Fellowship which he used to travel to South America. After serving in World War II, Silva became an art instructor at the Layton School of Art in Milwaukee, and also taught at Saugatuck School in Michigan. Thanks to the G.I. Bill, Silva traveled to Paris in 1947 where he attended l’Académie de la Grande Chaumière receiving a certificate in 1950. Then, he went to the University of Perugia, Italy to take courses on Etruscan art history. Silva worked at the Stamperia Nacionale and the Studio Hinna in Rome as a graphic artist. Returning to the Midwest, Silva continued his professional career as an artist receiving the Clusman Prize in 1955. In 1959 he joined the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as a tenured Associate Professor of Painting. He retired as emeritus professor in 1982.

A figurative painter evident in Acontecimiento con Fotógrafo, Silva's expressive treatment of the human figure and his emphasis on faces and elongated emotional hands add dynamism and psychological tension to the group of ten men absorbed in observation above them. Silva trained a number of artists among them Chicago artists Paul Sierra. In 1989 Silva settled permanently in the town of Sedro Wolley, in Washington State.

Resources:

https://latinostudies.nd.edu/assets/94040/heritageweb.pdf
Paul Sierra

In this tridimensional rendition by Stacey Fox of the painting Harvest by Chicago artist Paul Sierra (b. 1944, Havana, Cuba), the viewer is invited to enter the pictorial plane and explore the landscape where the solitary figure stands. Set in a field of wheat field after the harvest, the controlled burning proposes a new beginning, a new cycle of life.

Based in Chicago since 1961, Sierra arrived in the United States as a teenager with this family. He attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1963-1966. As a student he spent time studying the international collections at the Art Institute of Chicago where he discovered the European masters. In 1966 he left the School and started to work in advertising while continuing to paint in his own time. During his thirties, he left the advertising world to concentrate fully in his passion for painting. Sierra found in Chicago the freedom and stimulation to forge his artistic career without the pressures of the mainstream art market. His figurative and landscapes paintings explore the paradox between dreams, memory and reality and the illusory nature of existence. The imagery is drawn from the diverse influences that have shaped his identity, from the Cuban and Latin American heritage to American popular culture and literature.

His thematic range is consistent, and he has explored in multiple variations landscapes—such as Harvest, Greek mythology and car crashes. Sierra often depicts anonymous figures, birds and mythical creatures in vivid detail against dramatic and distorted landscapes. His images are frequently disrupted by the presence of two opposing natural elements, water and fire, to evoke an oneiric state of mind. In the midst of Chicago’s urban environment, Sierra has discovered the beauty and intimacy of green and open spaces such as Lincoln Park, which he has rendered at different times of the day in a vibrant and rich palette. Sierra’s lush landscapes and strong palette have been frequently associated with his Caribbean heritage. However, as Sierra has explained, he not interested in nostalgia: “Art has provided me a means for leaving the past behind; not getting lost in the limbo between the old and the new. Art is of great help to the immigrant, allowing him to transform the chaos of his life into a positive vision.” (Artist Statement in his website)

Resources:

Paul Sierra Website: [http://www.paulsierra.com/home#.V872gjsyFsM](http://www.paulsierra.com/home#.V872gjsyFsM)
Paul Sierra in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive)
Paul Sierra Chicago Arts Interview in YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atd1_Ef5ebw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atd1_Ef5ebw)
Interactive inspired by Paul Sierra’s Harvest: [http://www.lvminteractive.org/UNITY/LVM_Sierra_Harvest/LVM_Sierra_Harvest.html](http://www.lvminteractive.org/UNITY/LVM_Sierra_Harvest/LVM_Sierra_Harvest.html)
Paula Pia Martínez

Arriving in the United States at a young age Paula Pia Martínez (b. 1956, Chile) attended Northern Illinois University receiving a B.F.A in sculpture in 1981 and an M.F.A. in 1984. In her work Martínez uses color as a narrative to express her connection to people, places and memories. In *The Scent of Marigolds*—a heavily impastoed large-format painting, Martínez emphasizes the bright colors of marigolds flowers held by open hands and the flying petals to create a connection between the main elements in the composition. At the same time inviting the viewer to expand the sensory processes to consider smell. Her use of texture and gold add additional luminosity to the surface of the painting.

Participating in group and solo exhibition since 1984, Martínez is currently and instructor at Harold Washington College and Morton College in drawings, ceramics, sculpture, painting, and design.

Resources:
Paula Pia Martínez Website: [www.paulapiamartinez.com](http://www.paulapiamartinez.com)
Paula Pia Martínez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive)
In the Cataclysm canvas mural painted at the height of the 1990s financial globalization years, Marcos Raya (b. 1948, Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico) portrays the social and economic upheaval of the new phase of capitalism. Executed in 1995-1996, the mural was first shown at the Chicago Historical Society-National Museum of Mexican Art exhibition Pilsen/Little Village: Our Home, Our Struggle of 1997. The central figure of a blond statue of liberty as a cyborg—part female, part machine giving birth to the promises of technology and the destructive instruments of war—divides the canvas into two urban areas where processes of globalization rampantly transform the cityscape and its inhabitants. To the left is the old and new industrial Chicago with its steel mills, nuclear power plants, steel architecture high-rises, expressways and rapid transit as symbols of a progressive urban renewal representing the promises of a global city. A figure of an African American wearing a prison uniform tops it all. An underground group of gas-masked military personnel, police with links to the high spheres of national security alludes to the warfare and oppressive state. To the right, the artist presents the less gentle and humane side of globalization utilizing as backdrop the Pilsen and Little Village working-class neighborhoods, home to a succession of immigrant groups since the mid-nineteenth century such as Irish, German, Poles, Czech, and since mid-century Mexicans and Latinos. In contrast to a downtown Chicago, Raya highlights the buildings of the local neighborhood with a recognizable Casa Aztlan, a social service and community landmark, whose façade murals he restored in 1994. In this play of the haves and the have nots, the artist casts the efforts of La Raza cultural revolution and citizen activism marching for education, job opportunities, improved living conditions and against poverty, crime and police brutality illuminated by portraits of local heroes. In the foreground, children and women rally against the gentrification of the community they call home.

Raya moved to Chicago in 1964 attending Crane High School where he became interested in art. He studied at the Windsor School in Lenox, Massachusetts taking art classes with Allen Thieler and frequently visiting New York museums. In one of these visits to the Museum of Modern Art, Raya became deeply influenced after seeing the Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage exhibition of the spring of 1968. Back in Chicago in 1970 Raya became immersed in the Chicago's public mural movement painting a series of murals and later becoming a studio artist and a fixture at Pilsen's and Chicago's art world.

Resources:
Marcos Raya Website: [http://www.marcosraya.com](http://www.marcosraya.com)
Marcos Raya in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive)
Errol Ortiz

Errol Ortiz, Serenely Absorbing Passionless Violence, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 40 in. Courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Olga U. Herrera

Errol Ortiz (b. 1941, Chicago), son of Louis Mendoza Ortiz, attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) during the late 1950s and early 1960s, becoming acquainted with the work of Ed Pascke and Karl Wirsum. Drawing from popular culture and mass media, Ortiz exhibited with the Chicago Imagist group’s shows organized by Don Baum at the Hyde Park Art Center in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Long overdue, Ortiz’s first solo exhibition took place in 2015 at the National Museum of Mexican Art.

With the painting Serenely Absorbing Passionless Violence, Ortiz addresses the epidemic of gun violence in the city and the shooting and killing of fifteen-year-old honor student Hadiya Pendleton on January 29, 2013, one week after performing with her school band at President Obama’s second inauguration. Pendleton, mistaken by her killers as a member of a rival gang, was shot and fatally wounded in the back while taking shelter from the rain with a group of friends in Harsh Park. In Ortiz’s painting, the central figure is absorbing the killing and expressing her wishes to bring peace and end the cold and senseless violence. She is flanked by two gray figures representing her killers. Their gray shirts reveal additional victims and a past of crime and death. Hadiya wears a red sleeveless top representing the blood of the victims on the street with a repeating pattern of a dead African American boy.

Resources:
Errol Ortiz in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive/
Esperanza Gama

In the new series of male portraits created to celebrate the opening of the Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids at the Vallarta Botanical Gardens in Jalisco, Mexico at the end of 2014, Esperanza Gama (b. 1962, Guadalajara, Mexico) continues her use of natural elements of her rich visual vocabulary. In this painting of El Jardinero executed on bark amate paper with pigments, Gama portrays the upper torso of a man with his left hand placed close to his heart. An orchid, of the barkeria genus native of Mexico, in rich pink to purple colors attracts a blue hummingbird. A known pollinator, Mexico is home to more than 50 species of migratory and resident hummingbirds and over 1,200 species of orchids. El Jardinero, or gardener in English, and the emphasis on the hand underscores the joint efforts of men and birds in the tending and propagation of plants in nature. The natural fiber of the bark used in the amate paper adds to the richness of the brown tones of the pigment in her drawing strokes in which paper and figure becomes one.

Gama attended the School of Fine Arts at the University of Guadalajara were she studied with the muralist Jesús Carrillo Tornero. She received a BFA in 1984. She became a professor of painting and drawing at the Cabañas Cultural Institute in 1985. In 1988 Gama moved to France to study printmaking and drawing at the École des Beaux Arts in Chaville, France. After travel in Southeast Asia and Japan, Gama settled in Chicago in 1994. Gama is the recipient of the 2003 Sor Juana Achievement Award for Visual Arts from the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago.

Resources:
Esperanza Gama Website: http://www.esperanzagama.net/
Esperanza Gama in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive
“Esperanza Gama Vida y obra,” May 2026. El BeiSMaN Films: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYNnbyEfkUA
Chicago born and raised artist Elsa Muñoz (b. 1983) first came across art in her last two years of high school. After only one semester as a psychology major at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Muñoz enrolled at the American Academy of Art where she received a BFA in 2006. With an academic realist style, she uses her own photographic compositions to serve as the basis for her artwork. As a painter, Muñoz is also interested in poetry and the poetics of everyday life.

In *Drifting Sun/Sol a la deriva* Muñoz captures a real life fleeting moment of a female figure walking or standing by a bush while bathed with shadow and shimmering light. The artist’s close attention to detail and precision in depicting the braided hair and twigs, and her capturing of atmospheric conditions underscores her rich painting technique and the hyper realist style of her artworks. Her subject matter ranges from figurative work, nocturnes, landscapes, to depictions of controlled burns.

Cristina Correa, a poet born in Chicago, was inspired to write an Ekphrastic poem after Muñoz’s *Drifting Sun/Sol a la deriva*:

**Searchlight**

*After Elsa Muñoz, Drifting Sun/Sol a la deriva, 2010, oil on panel*

The pink moon of a face pulses urgent as shadows wait. It’s as simple as this:

an ear is a pool of light that drowns out lonely meaning. Listen back

for vein or blood.

Tug back the hair long as a fence that grows in the light. The other side

of her waiting mind. I’d tell you, don’t wait
to go into the light. Remember,

this is simple. Golden the branches,

the innocent bars, the slapped wood, the heaving cheek, the not-unseeable blackness. This

shimmering pain, this circulatory growing will always find you.

© Cristina Correa

**Resources:**


Elsa Muñoz in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive/](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive/)

Painted one year after graduating with an MFA from the University of Chicago, The All-Powerful Word of 1978 features the trapezoid shape that would be a recurrent theme in the art of the artist. Influenced by the work of Barnett Newman and minimalism, Dan Ramirez (b. 1941) explores perception and the interaction between the viewer and the work of art. With a contemplative quality, he manipulates the aesthetic intellectualism of minimalism. Variegated color fields create vibrating and illuminated areas in an otherwise flat geometric volume. His characteristic gradated wash technique is complemented by the use of horizontal strokes with a soft graphite pencil that give a luminous quality to the volumes. The artwork poses questions about truth, and spiritual, human and existential issues. The titles in his artwork—The All-Powerful Word—is important for the viewer to understand the subject matter. At the time of completing the artwork, he was interested in Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language.

Born in the South Side of Chicago grew up with a Mexican father and a Croatian mother in an artistic environment in which art, poetry and music were part of an everyday life. Prior to attending art school, Ramirez drove a truck hauling steel for 15 years. He received an associate degree from Chicago City College and holds a BA from the University of Illinois at Chicago and spent one year at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before transferring to the University of Chicago. Ramirez taught Columbia College in 1977-1978, the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1978-1987 and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1987 to 1999 where he is professor emeritus.

Resources:

Dan Ramirez Website: http://www.danramirezart.com
Dan Ramirez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive
Julie Karabenick, “An Interview with Artist Dan Ramirez.” Geoform  
http://geoform.net/interviews/dan-ramirez/
Joining the ranks of artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Jones and David Hammonds who have used flags in their visual repertoire, **Edra Soto** (b. 1971, Puerto Rico) investigates the symbolism in her own series of American, Puerto Rican and Chicago flags. Created while in residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in Captiva, Florida, Soto’s *Tropicalamerican US* features the printed digital image of an original flag in a green, quilt-like collage of carefully woven leaves the artist gathered from various tropical trees. The stars and stripes are achieved by means of a tone and color play in the Caribbean crafty tradition of palm weaving. Printed on silk, and in this case, archival paper, Soto’s tropical US flag proposes a series of implied questions about the complexity of the social fabric of the nation, the relationship of the U.S. with her native Puerto Rico while questioning the responsibilities associated with geographical allegiances.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Soto graduated from the Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico with a BFA in 1994. Soto moved to Chicago to attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she obtained an MFA in 2000 immediately attending the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Making Chicago her place of residence, Soto has been involved in artistic interventions such as The Franklin—an alternative exhibition space and artist-run project in her home’s backyard.

**Resources:**

Edra Soto Website: [http://edrasoto.com/home.html/](http://edrasoto.com/home.html/)

Edra Soto in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive/](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive/)

SAIC Alumni Porfile: Edra Soto (Post-Bac 1998, MFA 2000): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9k8spNLkTY/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9k8spNLkTY/)

Edra Soto, Art Instructor in Chicago (Spanish): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5TVVui0ew/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5TVVui0ew/)

Formative Works: Edra Soto: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjshABE84A0/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjshABE84A0/)
Nereida García-Ferraz

In her art Nereida García-Ferraz (b. 1954, Havana, Cuba) addresses issues of displacement and belonging and the contradictions of being in two places and two cultures: the here and there. She uses drawings, painting, photography and installations to weave together imagery from her memories as well as the context in which she lives. Her work is informed by family memorabilia, language, film, architectural ruins and rites that are connected to her Cuban identity and history. At age fifteen, García-Ferraz migrated with her family from Cuba to Chicago in 1970. She attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she completed a B.F.A. in 1981. It was during this period in which she re-valued her Cuban identity in a new country through her art. With her use of personal symbolism, memory and visual narratives, she speaks of her personal experience through an individualized iconography that registers the journeys of being inside and outside.

In this painting title Outside García-Ferraz explores the connection between places and voices set amidst a lush oneiric landscape where the inside and outside converge into a rich night fable. With tones of blues and greens under a full moon, this nocturne scene finds a young girl awake on a red bed set against a tree whose cut limbs begin to show new growth. In this depiction of a fragmentary childhood dream-like scene, a woman standing next to a red curtain turns her head towards the viewer while horse riders, heart-shaped shrubs, red architectural structures, and a long illuminated road fill the personal space. Richly composed with registers of saturated color, the composition uses a symbolic white airplane to denote the traveling back and forth between the two worlds of exile. As a teacher and activist, García Ferraz has had a national presence. In 1988 she founded the photography program at MACLA, San Jose Center for Latino Arts. She currently works in innovative educational projects in Miami at MOCA, Miami Art Museum and BASS Art Museum.

Resources:
Nereida García-Ferraz Website: http://nereydagarciaferraz.com
Nereida García-Ferraz in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive
A full time artist, Christopher Tavares Silva (b. 1972, Puerto Rico) comes from a hip hop tradition of skateboarding, graffiti writing and street art which he started at age fourteen. Silva settled in Chicago at age eleven in 1983, and attended the American Academy of Art. With a visible presence in Pilsen and Chicago, he is interested in the interaction of his art with the public as a visual transformative experience. Reclaiming wood and discarded materials, he shapes them into tridimensional compositions that appeal to the viewer senses with flying birds, characters, animals, color, texture, light and sound making it accessible to all. Interested in collaborations, Silva often works with urban youth and other artists in his large scale work and public art projects. In addition to the visual arts, Silva is also a sound artist and interested in DJ culture with his Mother Falcon recording project. His mixed-media installation Colony Collapse incorporates LED lighting and sound from his own as a sensorial experience. Silva runs the art exhibition space Believe Inn in his basement.

Resources:

Chris Silva Website: [http://chrissilva.com](http://chrissilva.com)
In this panel part of the triptych The South/Missing, Silvia A. Malagrino (b. 1950, Buenos Aires, Argentina), an interdisciplinary photographer and filmmaker, addresses the disappearance of 30,000 people in Argentina during the military dictatorship of 1976-1983 in the period called The Dirty War (La Guerra Sucia). Using a photographic technique that combines text and photographs, the photomural simulates a stone engraving, or in the words of the artist “a fragment of a defaced political poster.” At the top of the stone is the word Vida (Life) directly alluding to the chant by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo during the dictatorship. As a human rights organization in Argentina, this group of mothers of the disappeared still voice the chant in a revised form, Aparición con vida (We want them with life). The South/Missing is part of the larger project Inscriptions in the War Zone. Her evocative black and white images allude to the evanescent vestiges of human existence while exploring the interconnection between memory and dreams, reality and fiction. With this work, Malagrino puts together fragments of a history of persecution, repression, violence and death in her use of photographs of the actual people, or desaparecidos, who continue to be missing.

Malagrino, a professor in photography at the University of Illinois at Chicago, studied literature and modern languages at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and French and French Literature at the L’Alliance Française de Paris in Buenos Aires. After years of living under the oppressive military dictatorship in Argentina, in 1978 she decided to move to the U.S. She arrived in Chicago in 1984 to study photography at the University of Illinois in Chicago where she completed an MFA in 1987. Malagrino initially turned to photography as a means of communicating her experiences in Argentina. During the 1990s she started working with digital media and created a series of site-specific installations using large size photo-murals, written texts and photographs. The installation, titled Inscriptions in The War Zone, 1990 – 1998 deals with the issue of the “Desaparecidos.” At the turn of the century Malagrino started to experiment with filmmaking and returned to Argentina to inquire into the history of political violence in her country. In 2005 she completed Burnt Oranges, an experimental and poetic documentary that weaves together her return journey to Argentina, her memories and the legacy of the military dictatorship.

Resources:
Silvia A. Malagrino Website: http://www.silviamalagrino.com
Silvia A, Malagrino in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive
An interdisciplinary artist, María Gaspar (b. 1980, Chicago) received her BFA from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 2002 and her MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2009. To create Brown Brilliance Darkness Matter, a site specific installation, Gaspar explored photographic artworks in the collection of the National Museum of Mexican Art (Antonio Turok and Anonymous) and her family photographs to generate a dialogue about contemporary identity. One of them, a 1963 photograph of Gaspar’s parents by the Grant Park’s Buckingham Fountain as newly arrived from Mexico, marks the opening chapter of a new life in the windy city. Reconfiguring the photographs as shifting historical narratives, the artist cuts strips of the various photographs and weaves them in a plain pattern creating new images which she then prints on an oversized slightly billowing fabric. The visitor is prompted to walk around the installation to explore the photographic panels which float suspended from the ceiling and conduct their own reading of deeply layered and reconfigured meanings embedded in the images. Her addition of the Acapulco chairs and tables, an anonymous design that came into prominence in the 1950s in Mexico and all of the Americas, adds color and context to the contemplative space. On the tables are brown ceramic pieces that add to the brown brilliance.

Gaspar’s projects have explored the city of Chicago and the neighborhood of Little Village, where she grew up. Her community-based public art City As Site of 2010, a six-week series of inter-disciplinary site-specific interventions and performances by youth in the neighborhoods of Little Village and North Lawndale, explored various issues relevant to them creating a dialogue about neighborhood and geographies. Since 2012 Gaspar has been developing the 96 Acres Project as a site-responsive and educational one that addresses the impact of the Cook County Jail as the site of disproportioned incarceration of Latinos and African-Americans. A project involving community stake holders, 96 Acres explores issues of social and restorative justice through art to generate new narratives of power and space. Gaspar was named the 2014 “Chicagoan of the Year” in the Visual Arts by The Chicago Tribune. She is currently an assistant professor at the School of the Art institute of Chicago.

Resources:
Maria Gaspar Website: http://mariagaspar.com/home.html
Body in Place – Maria Gaspar -The Art Assignment- PBS Digital Studios: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ7LVHldYuE
Arriving in Chicago as a nine-month baby, Diana Solís (b. 1957, Monterrey, Mexico) first lived in the Bridgeport neighborhood moving to Pilsen with her family at age seven. A painter and artist, Solís attended the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) initially taking courses in Spanish literature and Latin American Studies from 1973 to 1976 when she transferred to Columbia College to study photography. Working for the local newspapers, Solid decided in 1997 to return to school. She graduated with a BFA studying under Dan Ramirez at UIC. Since then Solís has explored various themes in painting and drawing. Her series of acrylic and ink works informed by pop art and culture tell stories of journeys in the cycle of life though an illustration style. In a whimsical world of emotions and human drama, innocent childlike characters and anthropomorphic beings take part of a fairytale-like world while unveiling social constructions of childhood. With them, Solís explores issues of home, migration and belonging echoing the illustrative works of some of her favorite writers Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and Maurice Sendak.

Active in the Pilsen artistic community, Solís has taught in the Chicago Public School System and in the after-school programs of Pros-Arts Studio.

Resources:

Diana Solís Website: http://dianasolisarteypapel.blogspot.com

Diana Solís in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoartchive


Dianna Frid

Dianna Frid, *Esta mina (This Mine)*, 2015, canvas, colored pencils, aluminum, adhesives and nine mineral rocks, closed 18 x 16 x 3.5 in., open 18 x 32 in. Courtesy of the artist.

With a keen interest in the production of artist’s books since 1993, Dianna Frid (b. 1967, Mexico City) uses canvas and traditional art and crafts materials to create one-of-a-kind artworks. Her most recent series is inspired by a 2013 visit to the rare book collection of the Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa at the University Benito Juárez in Oaxaca, Mexico. There she came across key natural science texts illustrating the rigorous construction and classification of modern knowledge during the Enlightenment. In her exploration of the relationship between text and textile, with *Esta mina* Frid establishes a contemporary dialogue with pre-modern rare books in the library such as Athanasius Kircher’s *Subterranean Worlds*. Just as the actual books bear the signs of infestation, hers also display the physical transformation as a living object and as a container of mineral specimens.

The book cover with a title in a playful typography in black with bright colors spots set against nine organic shapes in aluminum, does not hide the hand-stitches of pages and cover that holds it together. Once opened, *Esta mina* reveals the position of mineral specimens in especially-created holes that recall those of larvae and insects feeding on paper and glue found in rare book and manuscripts. *Esta mina*, or *This Mine* in English, gives a contemporary twist to encyclopedic organization of knowledge from the early years of the enlightenment and in particular to the classification of minerals in a natural science book. With canvas pages covered with aluminum foil in the back that reflect light when turned, the book becomes a rich repository of light and knowledge from the past.

Born in Mexico City, Frid moved to Canada with her family in her teenage years. After attending Hampshire College for a few years, she transferred to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago graduating in 1991 with a BFA and later completing an M.F.A in Fiber and Material Studies. Frid is currently Associate Professor of Studio Art at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Resources:

Dianna Frid Website: [http://www.diannafрид.net](http://www.diannafрид.net)
Dianna Frid in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: [https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive](https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive)
Artist’s Interview en Espanol: [http://artadia.org/artist/dianna-frid/](http://artadia.org/artist/dianna-frid/)
In her richly colored and tactile paintings, Cándida Álvarez (b. 1955, Brooklyn) follows a process of dissecting and reassembling images from memory, popular culture and everyday life. She combines different media with unconventional materials—house paints, vellum and cloth napkins to create complex compositions with silhouettes and patterns. Her work is informed by what she describes as her archive of personal biographical memories, music and dance and as well as images from newspapers, cartoons, and kitsch. In her art Álvarez explores perceptions of space and the way images intervene and interact to affect the viewer.

This strategic modulation of the viewer’s experience is manifested in Swarm, a large-scale painting in which tones of yellows and reds accentuate a single stinger and the pain of an insect bite. Although born and raised in New York, Álvarez references her memories of Puerto Rico where her parents grew up.

Álvarez’s parents imbue in her intellectual curiosity, imagination and a sense of playfulness. She completed a BFA at Fordham University, New York in 1977 and continued studies at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1981. She moved to Chicago after completing an MFA in painting at Yale University in 1997. She is a tenured professor of painting and drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the founder of Sub-City projects, a performance and installation space for artists in Chicago.

Resources:
Cándida Álvarez Website: www.candidaalvarez.com
Cándida Álvarez in the Chicago Latino ArTchive: https://iuplr.uic.edu/iuplr/chicagolatinoarchive
Cándida Álvarez Chicago Arts Interview in YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44MDOBqKTYg
Caroline Picard, “Centerfield: Art in the Middle | Mashed Up and Shredded into Space: An Interview with Cándida Álvarez” January 22, 2013.