

# CHICANO DREAM

Cheech Marin Collection  
(1980-2010)

**JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>-  
OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup>**



Carlos Donjuan,  
*Nasty Nez*, 2009.  
Coll. Cheech Marin.

In 2014, Bordeaux and Los Angeles are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of a partnership that goes back to 1964. Consequently, the Museum of Aquitaine has chosen to introduce more than 70 major Chicano artworks, that testify to the the cultural, social and political movement that has been driving the mexican-american people since the 1960<sup>s</sup>. Introducing part of the private collection of Mexican-American and LA-based filmmaker, actor, and scriptwriter Cheech Marin, the exhibition will feature thirty Mexican-American artists, as an account of the Chicanos' attempts to re-write History through their own narrative. Chicano Dream is an invitation to understand this lengthy process.

## **"To be" Chicano**

"I never thought myself as brown or Chicano until somebody mentioned it. I did not become a chicano until I was forty. I had to find that. You know, you're not born a Chicano."

Chaz Bojorquez

Whilst Mexico gains independance in 1821, the USA appends Texas and half of the Mexican territory to their own land, following the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty. Consequently, Chicanos are the heirs of the Mexican people who formerly used to occupy these territories.

The word "chicano" - which derives from the Indian term "mehicano" (or mexicano) – was considered as a derogatory name, used by "WASP" Anglo-American people to refer to the Mexican workers who were recruited by railways and farming companies at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1960<sup>s</sup>, this term became a synonym of activism, the rallying call of a community struggling for recognition, against the representations that were conveyed by an "all-English" society.



## **Between art and political statement, the birth of Chicana identity**

The awareness of one's own roots and the promotion of one's own History, language and mixbreeding, turned out to be the favourite topics that were developed by Chicano artists, writers and poets, around *El Movimiento*.

Most of the artists who are being exhibited here took part in this dynamic.

Strikes, political statements in the face of injustices,...it all encouraged an atmosphere that was to be favourable to artistic production. And so, the sprawling city, the barrios, the childhood memories, the daily life, the cultural and religious symbolic are as many themes that enabled Chicano artists to become aware of their own identity and affirm it.

## **Muralism and screenprinting : how to move into the city**

The struggle is also about taking over the city : murals and silk-screening are the manifestations of what Chicanos consider as being a legitimate recapture. Emiliano Zapata, Frida Kahlo et Che Guevara thus evolve amongst pre-columbian patterns.

At the same time, screenprinting, a printing method that remains quite simple and affordable, has developed within collective workshops such as Self Help Graphics & Art. Many Chicano artists cut their teeth in these, animating workshops for the youth and making the ritual papier-mâché skulls, prints and skeletons, therefore announcing the Dias de los Muertos.

### **Partners**

**Chaucer Freight, Association des Amis du musée d'Aquitaine, Institut culturel Bernard Magrez, Cultura, vignobles Travers, Télérama, France Bleu Gironde, Standard, Kéolis Bordeaux.**

The exhibition also introduces the work of two young silk-screening artists, Melanie Cervantes and Jesus Barraza, leaders of the Dignidad Rebelde collective (Oakland, USA) whose work shows the continuous commitment of the chicana artistic production.

## **Beyond a political statement, an art that is left to be discovered...**

The various supports and pictural themes that are being used, combined with the unique inspirations of each and every artist, although they all share a common History, enables us to figure out a genuine chicana signature. Between community street art and classical art, Chicano art lives through its symbolic, bright colours and emblematic characters that all durably anchor it between identity expression and artistic heritage.

*The mural that adorns the Museum's facade was made by John Valadez, an American artist that is a pioneering figure of Chicano muralism in Los Angeles, and who was welcomed in Bordeaux as an artist-in-residence, during the last few weeks.*



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