

“No son todas las que están ni están todas las que son” Carla Stellweg

The presence of Latinas and Latinos in the artistic and cultural life of American society, unless it serves some entity’s commercial or political interest, is either nonexistent, insignificant, or unworthy. That has been the case in the past and continues to be so.

—Antonia Castañeda, Arturo Madrid, and Tomás Ybarra Frausto

Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985 includes works by more than one hundred artists, of whom eleven are US-born Latinas or Chicanas or Latin American-born women who were active in the United States. They represent various generations whose contributions, while of singular relevance to the exhibition, collectively point to a larger community—one that is spread all over the United States. In the spirit of current archival exhibition models, the artists discussed here provide viewers with an insight into the revolutionary activism of those times and show the ways in which the artists claimed their right to speech, turning the female body into a site of symbolic resistance. Women artists from Latin America operated, produced, and navigated in an era of social turmoil and military interventions. The work of those who moved to the United States developed differently from that of US-born artists, whose work reflects their experience of another historical, social, economic, and political reality. Yet those born in the United States and those who immigrated there while maintaining ties with their home countries, despite racial and class differences, share a legacy of developing an aesthetic that addressed the marginalization of women during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the decades after World War II, US feminism focused on the workplace, sexuality, family, and

reproductive rights, and it was not until 1972 that Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Today, more than forty years later, the ERA has yet to be ratified by all the states. During the 1960s and 1970s Chicana, Latina, and Latin American women artists participated in the civil rights, antidiscrimination, antiwar, and gay rights movements, among others, fighting for equality. Although the US feminist movement focused primarily on the rights and concerns of white women, during the 1960s and 1970s, after increased protests and political battles against institutional racism, a “second wave” of feminism emerged that included those of color. Within the Chicano movement, women, although intertwined with their brothers in the struggle for equal rights, felt ignored and found themselves without proper representation as artists. From this, a Chicana feminist movement arose to respond to the complexities of Latina empowerment, often facing resistance from male Chicano leaders and organizers. At the same time gender inequality ran the whole spectrum, affecting LGBTQ Chicano/a artists as well.¹ By looking at the work of Latin American, Chicana, and Latina artists together, it is hoped that we can gain a better sense of Latina artists’ contributions to US feminist art history and that evolving scholarly research can imagine what, if anything, “Latin American feminist art” might be.

Of the eleven artists under discussion, Celia Alvarez Muñoz, Judith F. Baca, Barbara Carrasco, Isabel Castro, Yolanda López, Sophie Rivera, and Sylvia Salazar Simpson were born in the United States, and those who were not—including Josely Carvalho, María Martínez-Cañas, and Sylvia Palacios Whitman—developed their careers in the United States in parallel with others born elsewhere, such as Marisol (Escobar), Ana Mendieta, Catalina Parra, Liliana Porter, and Regina Vater, all grouped under other geographic regions. Categorizing artists by their nationality is of course arbitrary; here, however, it serves to illustrate how their place of origin shaped their work and how the two-way cultural influence between the United States and Latin America at that time impacted their careers. Having established solid international careers, these Latin American and Latina artists surely serve as role models for subsequent generations of women artists.

In the work of Porter and Mendieta or of Martínez-Cañas and Palacios Whitman, there are connections between their origin and body politics similar to those of Chicanas and Latinas in terms of resistance and affirmation: seeking justice for artists cut off from the mainstream while resisting cultural assimilation in a complex, contentious, vibrant agenda. The distinction



between the two groups, however, grows out of their divergent histories. For example, many of the California-based Chicanas countered the 1962 Chicano manifesto's patriarchal construct of "nationhood" as the mythical and spiritual Aztlán, instead substituting the territories that Mexico gave up in 1848 in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In contrast, many of the artists who arrived in the United States from Cuba or Central and South America were escaping dictatorships at home and engaged in a more international art activism. What unites the Latin American and Latina or Chicana artists is particularly evident in works of body and performance art that reflect the achievements of the US civil rights movement as well as US policy in Latin America from the 1950s to the 1970s, which involved military interventions across the hemisphere in response to the rise of left-wing governments. In some instances the United States was involved in overthrowing democratically elected governments, for example, through coups in Guatemala (1954), Brazil (1964), and Chile (1973) and through its support of the Contras in Nicaragua.

In the 1950s and 1960s Latin American women artists were considered "radical" for breaking with social or magical realism and instead practicing various genres of lyrical or geometric abstraction.² During the 1960s and 1970s New York was a magnet for artists, particularly those breaking away from the old "radical" modes at home, working at the intersection of politics, poetry, body art, sound, happenings, film, and dance. The New York downtown scene was an especially fertile field for women artists such as the Argentine-born Marta Minujín and the Chilean-born Sylvia Palacios Whitman.³

Palacios Whitman (b. 1941) studied painting and sculpture at Santiago's School of Fine Arts before arriving in the United States in the early 1960s and becoming part of the vibrant experimental downtown art scene in New York. During her prolific career her use of the body has been central to expanding the theatrical aspects of her visual stories, as exemplified in *Human Paper Coil* (1974; fig. 1), in which she wrapped herself in a spiral of brown paper. The work provides a telling analogy to the suffocating social conditions that women have traditionally faced and struggled against.⁴ It may have also referred to a notorious intrauterine contraceptive device (also referred to as a "coil") that was pulled from the market in 1974 after it was linked to many infections and several deaths.

Regarding the genre of performance, Palacios Whitman stated, "I did study a little ballet, like all little



Fig. 1
Babette Mangolte, Sylvia Palacios Whitman "Human Paper Coil" at Sonnabend Gallery, 1977. Black-and-white vintage gelatin silver print. 8×10 in. (20.3×25.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist and BROADWAY 1602 HARLEM, New York.

girls. But I always entertained my family in the attic. At the time I just didn't know it was something you could do. So eventually I've gotten to where I always was!"⁵ *Passing Through* (1977; p. 165) is a complex piece in which Palacios Whitman—aided by props, body extensions, and other performers—revived her memories and past. The backdrops display images of rural South Chile, including the Osorno, Calbuco, and Villarica volcanoes, which were close to her family home. Discussing Latin American women artists more generally, Amy Kaminsky has written, "The body can be a testament to the power of memory. It is a historical document in itself, which breaks, scars and records pain. It can be used to remember the disappeared or to remember forgotten events or to reinstate people in the facts and figures of history."⁶

Palacios Whitman incorporated text into almost all her art, and writing is what weaves together her diverse body of work, which includes her notebooks, large-scale fabric sculptures, works on paper, one-of-a-kind art books, and performances. It also provides the grounding for her various materials and subjects, many related to play and memory. Palacios Whitman's work is a living testimony to forgotten events, to the radical nature of her memories, and to the quest of women artists from Latin America and elsewhere to forge their own identities amid a patriarchal world.

The Brazilian-born Josely Carvalho (b. 1942) was also active in New York, becoming a leader of the grassroots feminist movement in the 1970s. She uses various mediums, in her words, "perhaps as a way to give voice to different voices."⁷ Photographic silk-screening, however, has remained a constant throughout her career, allowing the participation of others in making protest art and also providing a means for her to construct personal narratives by rearranging memories and lived experiences while blurring or dismantling cultural boundaries (p. 81). According to Lucy Lippard, the resulting works are "both an expression of nostalgia for childhood and a declaration of independence from the two nations to which she owes allegiance."⁸

Carvalho's activism began in the 1970s, first in Mexico City and then in Arlington, Virginia. When she arrived in New York in 1975, she continued to organize community projects that integrated art, sociology, and politics.⁹ She was the founder and director of the Silkscreen Project (1976–87) at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery in New York, where she taught simple silk-screen techniques for creating posters, banners, and "walking murals" for various protests. This feminist activism inevitably shaped her personal and complex

oeuvre, in which her *Diary of Images* explores multiple interconnected themes relating to women's lives. The first "chapter" of this ongoing diary, *In the Shape of a Woman* (1970–86), addresses abortion, labor, rape, pregnancy, and related issues, marking Carvalho's search for a territory where the female figure is a geopolitical sanctuary.

The Nuyorican photographer and activist Sophie Rivera (b. 1938) has played a large role both as a teacher in the Bronx, where she was born, and as a key figure in the emerging 1970s street photography movement of El Barrio (East Harlem) and the South Bronx, neighborhoods that are home to an extensive Boricua community.¹⁰ Rivera is best known for her large-scale portraits of anonymous Nuyoricans, monumentalizing everyday people and challenging stereotypes in a personal and unique manner that, as Adál Maldonado has observed, reflects "the invisible condition that many artists of color experience within the mainstream."¹¹ Her powerful images give a face and a voice to the marginalized.

Rivera's works transgress the limitations placed on specific cultural and feminist heritages along with gender roles, as observed in *Bowl Study* and the *Rouge et Noir* series (both 1977–78; pp. 184, 185). In these she shares intimate views of her excrement and menstruation collected in a pristine toilet bowl, a form of self-portraiture that is concurrently abstract and flagrant. Her most arresting self-portrait (ca. 1970s) is one of her naked body hovering over a "toilet bowl," which on closer inspection seems to be the camera's lens focusing while mirroring her genitals as she sits with legs spread (fig. 2). In her overall body of work, gender and culture shape the interactions, relationships, and experiences of the body politic in contemporary multiracial America.

In contrast to Rivera, Carvalho, and Palacios Whitman, María Martínez-Cañás (b. 1960) was only three months old when her parents left Cuba for Puerto Rico, later settling in Miami. She maintains close ties to her Cuban origins, as evidenced by her work's constant exploration of questions of truth and fiction, of what is real and what is imagined. By erasing, layering, and using double exposures, Martínez-Cañás incorporates a variety of technical innovations. The photograph as both body and subject is central to her series, some of which she revisits over many years (fig. 3). Additionally, she uses photo-based archives, portraits of family and friends, and other found materials, such as those belonging to the notable Cuban collector-curator José Gómez Sicre. These materials are essential to her construction and



Fig. 2
Sophie Rivera, Self-Portrait, ca. 1970. Black-and-white photograph. Image: 11×14 in. (27.9×35.6 cm); sheet: 12½×15½ in. (31.8×39.4 cm). Collection of Martin Hurwitz, M.D.



Fig. 3
María Martínez-Cañás, Fragment Pieces series, 1981–82. Vintage gelatin silver print (unique). 11×14 in. (27.9×35.6 cm). Courtesy of Julie Saul Gallery, New York.

deconstruction of notions of identity and the body. In her works "identity" is often blurred, obliterated, or removed, making viewers uncertain whether they are looking at a play on the artist's own identity or a generic portrait of gender-based identity. Martínez-Cañás's video *Una problema de identidad* (An identity problem, 1984; p. 144) expresses a view of identity as fluctuating from female to male and vice versa. Is her work a covert exercise in role-playing, or is it meant to reveal the political body of Cuban Americans or her own Cuba-Rican political body? Martínez-Cañás's fusing of male and female identities reminds us of how fluid gender has become in contemporary art.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, Chicana artists' feminist consciousness broadened to embrace powerful composite identities, to integrate the female body into Chicano sociopolitical values, and most of all to redefine the macho symbolism implicit in Mexican national pride.¹² One pivotal image was that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a traditional religious figure that was radically transformed into a Latina-Chicana revolutionary heroine. Other reinvented heroines included *pachucas* and *cholas*, and Chicana punk and camp glam fashion trends also emerged during this period.

Judith F. Baca (b. 1946) has been at the forefront of Chicana art since the 1970s and has executed miles of murals in Los Angeles and elsewhere as solid proof of her ongoing belief that public art should serve to unify.¹³ Aside from Baca's long muralist career, one of her lasting influences has come through her probing of gender roles by putting ideologies of oppositional masculinity, dissident femininity, and the politicized heteropatriarchal *familia* of Chicano power to the test. In a 1985 interview, she stated: "Our people are the internal exiles. To affirm that as a valid experience, when all other things are working against it, is a political act. That's the time we stop being Mexican-Americans and start being Chicanas."¹⁴

Baca's mixed-media work *Las Tres Marías* (The three Marias, 1976; p. 61) consists of three panels. The back of the triptych is covered with red velvet that is tucked and rolled to resemble the upholstered seats of a lowrider, while the front consists of a mirror flanked by portraits of a young Chicana and of Baca herself, creating a provocative reinterpretation of the three Marys: Mary Magdalene, the Virgin Mary, and we the viewers, who are invited to confront our place in this triangle of race, gender, and culture. Used originally as a performance piece, it was later included in the traveling exhibition *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* (known as CARA, 1990–93).¹⁵

Over time *Las Tres Marías* has become a seminal Chicana revolutionary work, wherein the masculine idea of “la familia de raza” was definitively reversed by matriarchy, a strategy of Chicana feminism. Moreover, with the three images the artist embraces the historical conventions of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) or its secular interpretation “to love, honor, and protect.” Additionally, it could refer to Los Tres Grandes (the Mexican muralists José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros)¹⁶ or perhaps “Los Tres,” three men who were accused of shooting a narcotics agent who was bringing drugs into the East L.A. neighborhood where Baca was executing a community mural at the time.¹⁷ In any case, the work continues to hold up a mirror to its viewers, testing our individual comfort zones.

In the 1970s the Bay area artist, teacher, and activist Yolanda López (b. 1942), along with Baca and Carrasco, was among the first women artists to break into the previously exclusive male Chicano mural scene, guiding young female students in painting one of the first murals by women at Chicano Park in San Diego.¹⁸ Lopez’s Guadalupe series consists of portraits in which she replaced the Virgin figure with her mother, her grandmother, and even herself, transferring the virtuous symbols associated with the icon to ordinary women. This gesture was crucial in the reformulation of Chicana art as it inverted the misrepresentation of Chicanas by giving value to working-class Mexican American women of any age and defying the fetishized physical stereotypes projected on all women. López took the reconfiguration of the *patrona* a step further in her later installation *Tableaux Vivant* (1978; p. 130) by replacing the image of the Virgin with that of her own body, a radical gesture that, aside from being sacrilegious in Mexico, embodied the notion that “living, breathing women also deserve the respect and love lavished on Guadalupe.” The creation of alternative role models became a means “to work with the viewer in a reconsideration of how we as Chicanas portray ourselves.”¹⁹

López wants her work to be a tool for social and political change, and so too does the L.A.-based muralist Barbara Carrasco (b. 1955), whose experiences with personal and sociopolitical struggles inform her work’s exploration of what it means to be Chicana. In *Pregnant Woman in a Ball of Yarn* (1978; p. 80), we see an outward expression of the overall subjugation of women and those marginalized within the male-dominated Chicano art movement. A feminist critique of stereotypical gender roles, the lithograph depicts a bare-breasted pregnant woman trapped in a ball of



Fig. 4
Asco: Patssi Valdez (center), Gronk (left), Harry Gamboa Jr. (right/photographer), *À la Mode*, 1976 (printed 2010). Gelatin silver print. Image: 12½×18½ in. (32.4×47.6 cm); sheet: 16×20 in. (40.6×50.8 cm). Smithsonian American Art Museum. Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Degenhausen Endowment.

yarn, confined to her external and internal barriers. Almost censored in the seminal CARA exhibition because it was deemed offensive and sexist by some curators, it precisely critiqued sexism.²⁰

This, however, was not the first time Carrasco confronted institutional censorship; in fact, she created an entire piece, aptly titled *Censorship* (1984; p. 80), dedicated to her experiences fighting it.²¹ In the image the artist portrays herself beginning to paint over the case file for Siqueiros’s 1932 mural *América Tropical*, which was whitewashed by L.A. civic leaders.²² In the foreground she strategically places an American eagle seal on a tape dispenser, which dispenses red tape that forces its way between her and her painting, yet she continues, resisting the cover-up of significant cultural histories. Thus, by actively participating in community art that redresses and rewrites history, Carrasco, along with other Chicana muralists, inserted a feminist perspective into the mural movement and Chicano culture.

Also dealing with politics but in a more conceptual manner is the work of the experimental photographer and teacher Isabel Castro (b. 1954), who attempts to dismantle stereotypes by emphasizing the dangers and struggles that Chicanas face within their contextual realities. Her series of color photocopies *Women under Fire* (1980; p. 82) depicts young Latinas—women Castro knew personally and who trusted her—in the crosshairs of a gun, representing not only the physical threats women face but also the “greater obstacles imposed on them by their communities and society in general.”²³ Castro began this series in 1979, after hearing about the federally funded nonconsensual sterilizations of Mexican American women at an East L.A. hospital in the mid-1970s.²⁴

Moreover, while the gun sight aimed at each woman makes her a target for the label *chola* or *ruca*, their neutral and detached expressions and masklike faces point to the strength and endurance needed. Similarly, Castro’s *X Rated Bondage* series from 1980 spotlights injustices to women, in this case condemning the sexual exploitation of women of Mexican American backgrounds.²⁵ By rephotographing images from porn magazines, Castro recovered the anonymous women forced into prostitution due to lack of opportunities.

Hailing from East L.A., the multimedia artist Patssi Valdez (b. 1951) began working at the height of the Vietnam War, the 1968 high school “blowouts,” or walkouts, and the Chicano Moratorium of 1970, which were all crucial in the trajectory of the urban Chicano movement. Los Angeles is home to the largest Mexican population in the United States, and as its residents

began demanding socioeconomic and political justice, many artists responded. In the 1970s and 1980s Valdez played a central role as the only female member of the avant-garde performance art group Asco (*nausea* in Spanish), which staged wild street actions and produced cinematic film stills (fig. 4).²⁶

Valdez strove to offset stereotypical and racist images of Chicanas and the generally limiting roles of women at that time by using her body as a tool for political consciousness. She was unique, however, in that she did so by creating a hyperfeminized urban persona, consisting of camp, glamour, and punk stylizations, all defiant modes of self-representation protecting the body/soul in an estranged world.²⁷ Her over-the-top sense of drama and theatrical skills are evident in her photographic self-portrait from around 1970–73, which displays a glamorous Chicana movie star excluded from the big screen: a critique of ethnic stereotypes in Hollywood.

Aside from photography and performance, Valdez’s career also incorporated graphic arts, stage and costume design, and painting. In an interview she explained the significant role self-fashioning has played since her childhood: “I always wanted these beautiful things and my mother couldn’t buy them for me. So I would invent my own glamour and my own fashion . . . that’s always been a part of me.”²⁸ This DIY aesthetic was fundamental for the youth culture of the Chicano punk movement and can be seen in Valdez’s 1980s avant-garde film stills from *Hot Pink* (1980; p. 208), showing decked-out yet indifferent young women and men touching, kissing, and hugging one another in a pink-saturated room.²⁹ Moreover, *Hot Pink* was a precursor to the burgeoning queer aesthetic of the 1980s, which developed from earlier identity and gender politics.

The conceptual artist-activist Celia Alvarez Muñoz (b. 1937) found that it was her move from the domestic sphere outward, sharing her private life with the public, that helped construct her identity. Both Alvarez Muñoz and Valdez repositioned their bodies and work within a public space “located beyond the confinement of the home, yet one that embraces an ethnic solidarity centered on a female *mestizaje* capable of political agency and empowerment.”³⁰

Alvarez Muñoz spent her formative years along the US-Mexico border in El Paso, and much of her art involves pairing text with photographic images to tell anecdotes wherein complex clashing and blending of cultures and languages occurs. Her Mexican American upbringing afforded her the opportunity to challenge limits of personal and cultural identity



Fig. 5
Sylvia Salazar Simpson, untitled plate (watermelon shoe), from *Imitations*, 1977. Artist’s book including eleven panels with color photographs, accordion fold. Panels: 6×6 in. (15.2×15.2 cm) each. Courtesy of the artist.



Fig. 6
Sylvia Salazar Simpson, Sylvia Salazar Simpson, 1970s. Artist’s portfolio with nineteen black-and-white photographs. Sheets: 10×8 in. (25.4×20.3 cm) each. UCLA Arts Library.

while investigating the relationship of narrative and image, as in her Enlightenment series of the 1980s. The title refers to Alvarez Muñoz’s realization that her early years were a period of enlightenment.³¹ Each piece in the series, including *La Honey* (*Enlightenment* #9) (1983; p. 54), is encased in a wooden box—a “conceptual package”—and reflects a child’s perspective, illustrating through clever double entendre how bilingual youth grapple with language, as a source of both knowledge and misunderstandings.

Sylvia Salazar Simpson (b. 1939) occupies a unique place among Chicana artists active in California during the 1970s and after. Her radical body of work is not inscribed in a strict Chicana feminist landscape but is closer to early happenings, body art, and performance much in vogue at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), which was a hotbed of the avant-garde in the 1960s and 1970s. Her insistence on using food, whether fresh or decaying, and the body in her work is inspired by Indian Tantric art, the writings of Octavio Paz, and the works of Paul McCarthy (b. 1945), John Baldessari (b. 1931), and Allan Kaprow (1927–2006), one of her professors at CalArts, who once stated, “The line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible.”³² In that spirit Salazar Simpson’s work projects a Fluxus-like sensibility. As the artist stated, “I build spaces for your imagination to inhabit.”³³

In works such as *Eggs A/Z* (1973), Salazar Simpson explores not only food but also language, and her shoe-foot pieces (fig. 5), which reference Cinderella and foot fetishes, signal her break with traditional art-making practices to instead explore the boundaries of installation art, actions, and performance. Buying and cooking food and feeding others has been a preeminent normative female activity, and Salazar Simpson has cited the lasting influence of sensory memories from her childhood: “Running around my grandmother’s place in the country, there were these intense odors, the smell of processing or fermenting food or the chicken coop made me realize smell fixes everything onto memory.”³⁴ Her food-based artworks include headdresses fashioned from pineapples, tortillas, vegetables, or pig’s feet, all woven into her hair. These intimate dressing-room actions resulted in photographs in which the artist stares poker-faced straight into the camera (p. 194) or is seen from the back, bare shouldered, looking at her own reflection in the mirror (fig. 6; p. 193). These eye-catching images positioned Salazar Simpson at the forefront of 1970s international avant-garde performance art.

Over the course of the 1980s, Chicana and Latina

artists began to connect to the pluralistic and multi-cultural tendencies in the US art scene and initiated a dialogue with other artists of color and with immigrants from Latin America and Asia, many of whom were in exile from authoritarian governments in their native lands. During these years artists and arts professionals began to organize themselves by working in groups or opening alternative artist-run spaces. Such activities served as an inspiration for *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s* (1990)—a collaborative effort between the New Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, all in New York—which included works by Carvalho, López, Mendieta, and Porter and by artists representing other marginalized groups, such as Asian Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans.³⁵ Though criticized, *The Decade Show* focused on the same personal, social, and political issues that the Latin American, Chicana, and Latina artists whose work is included in *Radical Women* successfully strove to address.³⁶ Since then several of these artists have become examples and mentors to younger artists who, like them, have moved away from traditional national symbolism and instead developed a more contemporary approach to their work, one that is in tune with current complex transnational networks while still acknowledging many of the political and cultural references pertinent to Latino/a and Chicano/a art.

Notes

“No son todas las que están ni están todas las que son” is a well-known expression in Spanish, which translates roughly as “Not all who are here matter; nor are all who matter here.” Epigraph: Antonia Castañeda, Arturo Madrid, and Tomás Ybarra Frausto, “Latino Art Still Excluded in American Society,” *San Antonio Express-News*, February 28, 2016. For their assistance with this essay, I offer my appreciation and thanks to Anna Indyk-López, Tessa Morefield, Adál Maldonado, and Armando Cristeto.

1 While many forms of gender inequality exposed by mainstream US feminism were relevant to women of color, overall the race and class experiences of white and brown women did not correlate. White feminists enjoyed access to racial privileges and simply did not speak to the injustices experienced by women of color. Moreover, they often failed to define themselves in terms that positively or proactively involved men, while many Chicanas remained invested in the struggles of the men in their community despite the patriarchal nature of traditional Mexican American culture. Rather than acceding to the common request that they wait their turn, Chicana feminists saw that the sexism within the Chicano movement intersected with racism in the larger society and made addressing both *simultaneously* a central component of their ideology. Today US feminism has expanded to focus on current social and economic inequities as well as political representation and the



Fig. 7
Barbara Carrasco, cover for
“Special Woman’s Issue,”
Revista Xhisme Arte, no. 7
(January 1981).

environment, all of which may lead to a more unified activism.

2 The contributions of women artists to the development of abstraction in Latin America were often relativized and seen as an add-on to those of their male counterparts under the general rhetoric that abstraction is universal and thus genderless. Despite these obstacles, many of today’s celebrated Latin American avant-garde women artists remained in their home countries, while others—such as Lygia Clark, Lea Lublin, and Marie Orensanz—went to Paris instead.

3 See Carla Stellweg, “Magnet—New York: Conceptual, Performance, Environmental, and Installation Art by Latin American Artists in New York,” in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920–1970* (New York: Bronx Museum for the Arts and Abrams, 1988), 284–311. The chapter covers the period from 1960 to 1970.

4 Brian Boucher, “Sylvia Palacios Whitman Makes Her Return,” *Art in America*, December 13, 2013, <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/previews/sylvia-palacios-whitman-makes-her-return/>.

5 Whitney Museum of American Art, “Rituals of Rented Island: Sylvia Palacios Whitman,” video, 4:33, 2013, http://whitney.org/WatchAndListen/Exhibitions?play_id=895.

6 Amy K. Kaminsky, *Reading the Body Politic: Feminist Criticism and Latin American Women Writers* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 20.

7 Josely Carvalho, talk given at the opening of the exhibition *Connections Project / Conexus*, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York, January 1987.

8 Lucy R. Lippard, “Visitations,” in *My Body Is My Country* (Hartford, CT: Real Art Ways, 1991), unpaginated.

9 Prior to moving to New York, Carvalho was a visiting professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México’s school of architecture and then an artist in residence in Virginia. *Ibid.*

10 Barbara J. Love, *Feminists Who Changed America, 1963–1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 385.

11 Adál Maldonado, e-mail correspondence with the author, April 4, 2016.

12 Linda Saborio, *Embodying Difference: Scripting Social Images of the Female Body in Latina Theatre* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 50.

13 In March 2016, as a tribute to her radical work, Baca was one of only five Latina or Latin American artists in a list of 101 women artists whose contributions were documented for International Women’s Day. The other four artists were Tania Bruguera, Leonora Carrington, Frida Kahlo, and Ana Mendieta.

14 Diane Neumaier, “Judy Baca: Our People Are the Internal Exiles,” in *Cultures in Contention*, ed. Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier (Seattle: Real Comet, 1985), 62–75.

15 Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, eds., *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, 1991). CARA challenged the mainstream to consider Chicano art as an art movement on equal footing with other well-recognized art movements and to view Chicano art as something other than a “subculture,” even though it stretched the boundaries of what was traditionally shown in museum

settings. CARA was the first exhibition of its type and became a template for curatorial practices surrounding Chicano art and exhibitions. At the same time CARA clearly demonstrated that there was still a critical bias toward male artists in museums and in the arts (see also Cecilia Fajardo-Hill’s essay “The Invisibility of Latin American Women Artists: Problematising Art Historical and Curatorial Practices,” in this volume).

16 Baca’s monumental projects are comparable only to those of the Mexican Muralists José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, at whose workshop in Cuernavaca, La Tallera, Baca studied.

17 Neumaier, “Judy Baca,” 68.

18 David R. Maciel, Isidro D. Ortiz, and María Herrera-Sobek, *Chicano Renaissance: Contemporary Cultural Trends* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 203.

19 Yolanda López, quoted in Shifra Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 208.

20 Barbara Carrasco, oral history interview conducted by Jeffrey Rangel, April 13–26, 1999, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

21 On the controversy surrounding Carrasco’s mural *History of Los Angeles: A Mexican Perspective* (1981–83), see Merle Schipper, “Festival ’90: A Matter of Pride; Controversial Murals Overcome Censorship to Depict L.A. History and Chicano Pride,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1990.

22 *América Tropical* depicted a predatory American eagle placed above a crucified Mexican Indian, symbolizing the exploitation of migrant workers in the United States and their mass deportation to Mexico. In the late 1980s the Getty Conservation Institute and the City of Los Angeles began a conservation project with the aim of making the mural publicly accessible.

23 Isabel Castro, quoted in Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas*, 206.

24 Maciel, Ortiz, and Herrera-Sobek, *Chicano Renaissance*, 203.

25 Castro participated in the seminal 1978 exhibition and colloquium *Hecho en Latinoamérica* at the Museo de Arte Moderno and the Museo de Antropología, Mexico City, as well as in *Hecho en Latinoamérica 2*, at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, INBA, Mexico City, which featured her X-Rated Bondage series. Armando Cristeto Patiño, e-mail correspondence with the author, May 12, 2016. See also *Hecho en Latinoamérica: Primera muestra de la fotografía latinoamericana contemporánea* (Mexico City: Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía, 1978).

26 See C. Ondine Chavoya and Rita Gonzalez, *Asco: Elite of the Obscure; A Retrospective, 1972–1987* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz; Williamstown, MA: Williams College Museum of Art; Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011). There are important connections between Chicano/a performance artists and groups such as Asco and the performance-music scene in Mexico, as in the “neo-Mexican” artists who, along with Astrid Hadad, showed and performed during the exhibition *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1991. Yolanda López’s earlier *Portrait of the Artist as the Virgin of Guadalupe* (1978) and Barbara Carrasco’s *Self-Portrait* (1984) and her cover of *Xhisme Arte* magazine (1981; fig. 7) can easily be juxtaposed with neo-Mexican works by Mónica Castillo (b. 1961), such as *The Body of Christ* or *Female with Salad* (both from 1987), or the magazine *La Pus moderna* (1989–96).

27 Amalia Mesa-Bains, “Chicano Body Aesthetics,” in *Body/Culture:*

Chicano Figuration, ed. Elizabeth Partch (Rohnert Park, CA: University Art Gallery, Sonoma State University, 1990), 9.

28 Carolina A. Miranda, “Painter Patsi Valdez on Capturing Energy, an L.A. Fashion Installation,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 30, 2014.

29 It is possible that Valdez had seen some of the early Andy Warhol movies, such as *Chelsea Girls* (1966). Nevertheless, in the case of the Chicano punk movement, it was eminently political in its response to the continual exclusion of East L.A. Chicano bands from the West L.A. punk scene.

30 Saborio, *Embodying Difference*, 64. The term *mestizaje* refers to both interracial and intercultural mixing or a hybrid identity.

31 Celia Alvarez Muñoz, oral history interview conducted by Cary Cordova, February 7–28, 2004, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

32 Kirstie Beaven, “The Happening, Allan Kaprow,” *Performance Art 101* (blog), Tate, May 30, 2012, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/performance-art-101-happening-allan-kaprow>.

33 Sylvia Salazar Simpson, artist’s statement, September 1995.

34 Sylvia Salazar Simpson, telephone interview with the author, March 25, 2016.

35 See “The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s,” New Museum Digital Archive, http://archive.newmuseum.org/index.php/Detail/Occurrence/Show/occurrence_id/195. In 1989, as chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, I initiated work on *The Decade Show*. After my resignation Julia Herzberg took over as the museum’s curator for exhibition.

36 On the criticism of *The Decade Show*, see Roberta Smith, “Three Museums Collaborate to Sum Up a Decade,” *New York Times*, May 25, 1990, and Margo Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 33.