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Expressions of Another Center: Borderlands Visual Theory & the Art of Luis Jimenez

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
American Studies

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2011

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my father Tomás, mother Tillie, and my sisters Tasha and Gracie. Their love, sacrifice, and belief in me made all my successes possible. This journey would have been a lonely one without them.

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ABSTRACT

An artist who constantly challenged various social and political boundaries, Jiménez and his art contribute to a growing discourse about U.S. sculpture and 21st century American art. By combining various methodologies such as formal analysis, visual analysis, and critical biography, I will underscore the significance of Luis Jiménez's art in 21st century American art. Jiménez's art functions autobiographically; particular moment in his life affected his art in many ways. His time in Mexico City, New York, and Rome are a few pivotal moments that shifted the focus of his art and encouraged him to return to the Southwest where his controversial art was created.

My methodological approach is based on a concept I call borderlands visual theory. This methodological practice will consist of a social history of art with close attention to content, context, and connoisseurship. An interdisciplinary method that will facilitate the research design of my project, borderlands visual theory explains the theories and methods of Jiménez's contemporary artistic practices. Rooted in

histories of oppression and suffering, borderlands visual theory emerges within a framework of purpose, resourcefulness, and an “against the grain,” anti-border mentality. Grounding my analysis of Jiménez within a larger discussion about American and Chicana/o art will underscore the effective methods Jiménez employed to reach a diverse audience.

Jiménez’s artworks offer an innovative conceptualization of aesthetics and cultural identity and critically examine regional and national politics. He offers an understanding about American art that is hybrid, differential, and contingent, rather than pure or monolithic. By examining Jiménez’s artwork within the rubric of borderlands visual theory, I will offer a more fruitful discussion about his resourceful, innovative, and multidimensional practice that contemporary writings about him neglect. Differentiated by his style politics and motivated by his sociocultural interventions, Jiménez authored unique methods that engage with the issues of his time. My project will illuminate various moments of artistic intervention that situate Jiménez within a larger, and arguably a more appropriate, discussion about American art.

Luis Jiménez was a titan in the art world; his monumental sculptures and poignant lithographs reveal his commitment for a shared humanity as well as provide a platform for his social and artistic agendas. Jiménez created works of art that combined formal artistic practices with Chicana/o vernacular aesthetics. In addition, Jiménez’s incorporation of classical themes and remarkable attention to form situate his art in distinguished academic categories of sculpture and American art. His innovative use of fiberglass materials and archetypal themes position his unique

perspective within formalized discussions in art history. The magnitude of Jiménez's artwork has not been thoroughly documented; because of his ability to cross over into the American art scene, this project will trace out the significant factors that enabled him to cross borders historically closed off to artists of color.

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Introduction

Luis Jiménez's artworks offer an innovative perspective of aesthetics and cultural identity and critically examine regional and national politics. He offers an understanding about American art that is hybrid, differential, and contingent, rather than pure or monolithic. By examining Jiménez's artwork within the rubric of what I am terming borderlands visual theory, I will offer a more fruitful discussion about his resourceful, innovative, and multidimensional practice that contemporary writings about him neglect. Differentiated by his style politics and motivated by his socio-cultural interventions, Jiménez authored unique methods that engage with the issues of his time. My research will illuminate various moments of artistic intervention that situate Jiménez within a larger, and arguably a more appropriate, discussion about American art.

Luis Jiménez is a titan in the art world; his monumental sculptures and poignant lithographs reveal his commitment for a shared humanity as well as provide a platform for his social and artistic agendas. Jiménez created works of art that combined formalized artistic practices with Chicana/o vernacular aesthetics. In addition, Jiménez's incorporation of classical themes and remarkable attention to form situate his art in distinguished academic categories of sculpture and American art. His innovative use of fiberglass materials and archetypal themes position his unique perspective within academic discussions in art history. The magnitude of Jiménez's artwork has not been thoroughly documented; because of his ability to cross over into the American art scene, this dissertation will trace out the significant factors that enabled him to cross borders historically closed off to artists of color.

This dissertation project enters current academic and political debates about the transformation of Chicana/o aesthetics, racial and identity politics in the 21st century, and the “center/margin” discourse of art circles and U.S history. “Expressions of Another Center: Borderlands Visual Theory & the Art of Luis Jiménez” documents a new visual praxis of American and Chicana/o aesthetics that permeate Jiménez’s art. Jiménez’s ability to “cross-over” into the mainstream art scene and create works that spoke across racial and cultural divides positioned him on the cutting edge of public art.

His public sculptures offer a new type of representation, one that visually enacts what Emma Pérez calls a “decolonial imaginary.” Pérez writes, “...the decolonial imaginary is that time lag between the colonial and postcolonial, that interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated” (1999 6). Negotiating multiple perspectives of colonizer, colonized, and the decolonial in his sculptures, Jiménez’s work engenders a third space that accounts for and attempts to fill in the gaps that history ignores—namely, histories of colored working class communities.

This dissertation explores an expression of another center reflected in the art of Luis Jiménez. Each chapter will explore fundamental ideas about art & identity, the limits of community, and an artist’s ability to transcend borders. Chapter 1 outlines the theoretical, methodological, and epistemological components of borderlands visual theory. I explore four historical moments to show how cycles of oppression, revolution, expression, and liberation in indigenous, Mexican, Chicana/o, and American history construct and operationalize a theory of artistic

production and the practice of insurgent thought. The work of Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and Amalia Mesa-Bains guide my initial research findings about Chicana/o art. However my points of departure are not contradictory to the above scholars so much as opportunities to further contextualize a new theory of the borderlands that is not limited to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Chapter 2 offers a critical biographical sketch of Luis Jiménez and various points in his life that I contend informed his aesthetics, politics, and artwork. I trace his journey across the United States and Mexico to document how he perceived of America as a mestizo public artist. Jiménez would later become a pioneer in 20th century American sculpture. The next four chapters are case studies that test borderlands visual theory and the limits of American art and identity. All target specific socio-political eras or moments in U.S. history that curtain the inclusion of people of color into the fabric of American identity. Jiménez's points of intervention in the remaining chapters attack the root problems of identity, nationhood, and racism. Chapter 3 examines the controversy surrounding his *Southwest Pieta* in Old town Albuquerque, New Mexico. Initial problems arose because of the supposed rape scene and Native American depictions that some argued did not accurately represent Old Town. But Luis Jiménez would later find out that the dilemma went far deeper than putting a Native American and Mexican sculpture in Spanish Old Town; the controversy ended up turning into a war of presiding histories over New Mexico. Chapter 4 examines the impact of "tricultural harmony" and the rhetoric of the Land of Enchantment on the University of New Mexico. An analysis of several campus artworks reveals the troubling manner in which racism and racialism are reproduced

and perpetuated in covert manners. Jiménez's *Fiesta Jarabe* combats the colonizing imagery with a public sculpture that celebrates the Mexican American experience in the United States and questions the myth of harmony and racial accord in New Mexico and at the University of New Mexico.

Chapter 5 examines Mexican and American identity along the U.S.-Mexico border through the Jiménez's lithograph *El Buen Pastor: A Profile of a Drug Smuggler*. This chapter traces the impact of colonial Latin American and Mexican religious iconography on contemporary Chicana/o art and offers insightful analysis about criminality and citizenship in the borderlands. Through the lithograph, I explore how American identity is constructed vis-a-vis the U.S.-Mexico border and examine how race politics and immigration rhetoric produce illegal aliens and legal citizens within simultaneous but different spaces. Chapter 6 is my final point of contention with American art and identity. I invoke borderlands visual theory in order to challenge Western iconography that caters to the homogenous, nationalist, and racist American history that excludes other histories and cultures. I contend that Jiménez attempted to create alternative visual images to counter Western history. A sustained analysis of Jiménez's Progress series I demonstrate how borderlands visual theory peels back the layers of history to uncover expressions of another center in U.S. history that helped shape our national culture.

Each chapter tackles important issues that continue to affect how we perceive of American identity. Woven together, the chapter build upon one another and testifies to the personal, regional, borderlands, and national points of American identity that inform how we experience America as individuals cultures, and

communities. In short, This entire dissertation is an expression of another center as told through the artwork of Luis Jiménez.

Chapter 1

Borderlands Visual Theory: An American Framework

Art and ideology are inextricably intertwined. On the one hand, art helps affirm and sustain existing discourses and social practices by representing them as hard facts. This can be seen in images depicting the relationship between Native Americans and Euro Americans as peaceful and harmonious. Rather than depicting their complex and contentious interactions, some artworks completely eliminate this perspective. On the other hand, art *creates* and brings forth new ideologies that affect how we understand the world. For example, Judy Baca's "Great Wall of Los Angeles" chronicles U.S. history from alternative perspectives and explores histories from "the bottom up". Because of the profound and at times dangerous knowledge that art evokes, we must develop new ways of seeing that are shaped by our differences as human beings in a diverse and inequitable world.

According to Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, images tell us more about the cultures that produce them rather than what the images represent (2005 6). Rather than documenting "truths" about the Other, images reflect the fears, anxieties, and prevailing ideologies of dominant groups. Renato Rosaldo contributes to this discussion in his book *Culture and Truth* and states "if ideology often makes cultural facts appear natural, social analysis attempts to reverse that process. It dismantles the ideological in order to reveal the cultural…" (1993 39). He continues by saying "ideologies are fictions designed to conceal feelings of guilt. In more general terms, this mode of analysis argues that the work of ideology is either deliberately to disguise real class interests or unintentionally to express underlying

social strains" (73). These astute observations require that we move beyond static notions and descriptions of the Other because they are inherently flawed based on their racist and racialist logic. We must look for new ways of seeing and applied research that accounts for positionality, bias, and intent.

My research on Chicana/o art and the U.S.-Mexico border helped me develop a new frame of reference for understanding American art and identity. The artists and scholars I investigated transformed personal and political obstacles into opportunities which helped me unearth a theory of art that was not limited by categorizations. Rather, Chicana/o art, as a living, breathing, transformative genre, broke away from the margins and settled prominently and permanently as another center in the art world. Borderlands visual theory, my contribution to the fields of visual culture, American studies, and art history, weaves Chicana/o art and identity into the fabric of American history. The chapters to come will test my theses about borderlands visual theory through the artwork of Luis Jiménez (1940-2006). Each chapter focuses on issues of context, community, and history from various points of Jiménez's career. I trace the formations of borderlands visual theory in Jiménez's public works and argue that in any context this theory is applicable. As a pioneer that challenged the way we understand American art and identity, Luis Jiménez helped birth an oppositional and multicultural lens that should affect how we understand the world.

Borderlands visual theory documents expressions of another center. Heavily vested in looking at context, content, and positionality in visual culture, its major function is to understand the dynamics that allow for subjugation, marginality, and

oppression and then work toward dismantling them. Its goals are not merely to document or point out moments of violence in Chicana/o communities, but to sever the unequal power relations that create and sustain borders and margins—both physical and ideological.

Borderlands visual theory offers new ways of seeing. Its interdisciplinary methodologies and progressive artistic practices create a new framework for understanding current modes of expressive culture. A theory of action and creation, borderlands visual theory prompts artists to confront issues related to resistance and affirmation. It is also useful in re-conceptualizing the relationship between identity politics and public art.

History as Epistemology

Borderlands visual theory is primarily rooted in four historical periods: the indigenous era, the U.S.-Mexico War, the Mexican Revolution, and the Chicana/o Civil Rights Movements. These inter-connected times periods revolve around a cyclical relationship between conflict, revolution, and enlightenment. Various artistic practices and artworks produced within these eras have been adopted and used as vehicles for cultural remembrance and to create an organic Chicana/o expressive style.

Descendents of the Chichimeca tribe, the Aztecs have a long history in the Southwestern United States and in central Mexico. Some scholars and historians claim that in 1168 the Aztecs were forced South by tribes and drought, abandoning their homeland, Aztlán (located in the U.S. Southwest) (Dunham 1958 xiv; Chávez 1984 8). On their long walk into Mexico, legend has it that the Quetzalcoatl, the

plumed serpent (Miller & Taube 1993 141), appeared before them prophesizing that when they saw an eagle perched upon a cactus with the serpent in its mouth their journey for a new homeland would end (Carrasco 1992). Led by Huitzilopochotli, the Aztecs were promised an eventual return to Aztlán (Rendón 1971 7-8). According to Rodolfo F. Acuña, “between 1325 and 1345, the Azteca founded their capital of Tenochtitlán on an island in Lake Texcoco (later drained to build Mexico City)” (2007 11). For almost two centuries, the Aztec empire reigned over Central and Northern Mexico until Spanish *conquistadores*, namely Hernán Cortes, landed at the Yucatan Peninsula and eventually overthrew the tribe with the help of indigenous communities formerly oppressed under the Aztecs (Acuña 2007 22). Evicted from their homeland and their empire in ruins, the Aztecs became second class citizens in their own home.

Conquered in their homeland, Aztecs (among with various other tribes) fought genocide and historical erasure through distinct methods of cultural adaptation. A prominent narrative documenting their survival involves Juan Diego and the Virgin of Guadalupe. According to historical records, an apparition of a young Nahua woman appeared before Diego and spoke to him in Nahuatl (Poole 2006 1-3). Diego retreated to bishop Zumárraga who doubted the story’s validity. As Diego returned to the woman, he was instructed to take roses he found at Tepeyac Hill as proof of her existence (ibid). After showing the roses and (more importantly) the image of a woman impressed upon the cloth, Diego stated the young woman’s request to have a shrine built in her honor. Bishop Zumárraga praised the woman’s image,

interpreting the woman as the Christian Virgin Mary.[1] This moment of cross-cultural dialogue offered indigenous people a revolutionary way to protect their religious and cultural ways of life and provides the groundwork for understand borderlands visual theory.

Contemporary Chicana/o history and expressive culture evoke indigenous art for inspiration and revisionist versions of history. Aztec deities, agrarian symbols, and various religious symbols are weaved in artworks by many Chicana/o artists. They want to express not only nostalgia for an era of power and homeland, but also a remaking or refashioning of cultural practices and beliefs. The incorporation of various codices, icons, and images reconfigure spiritual beliefs and practices that unfold in contemporary borderlands visual theory.[2] The use of indigenous imagery is an empowering tool that recognizes a heritage of nobility and autonomy. It is also a refusal to accept assimilationist rhetoric that identifies Chicanas/os as *pocho* and "Hispanics". It is a decolonizing methodological practice that honors the past and claims an indigenous heritage.

After three hundred years of Spanish rule, Mexico won its independence in 1821 and worked to establish itself as a country. After allowing European settlers to reside in northern *Coahuila y Tejas* (what is now Texas), rebellion ensued and led to the Texas Revolution of 1835-1836 and, more importantly, the U.S.-Mexico

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1 Some scholars argue there is no supporting evidence of the apparition prior to 1648 when Franciscan priest Miguel Sánchez wrote about it in his *Imagen de la Virgen María* (see Stafford Poole's *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531-1797* (1995) and Poole, Lockhart, and Sousa *The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega's Huei tlamahuiColtica of 1649* (1998)

2 Laura Perez's *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities* (2007) offers a sustained analysis about how spirituality resurfaces in contemporary Chicana art and how it, as a method of consciousness raising and self determination, transforms religious iconography and helps shape a communal identity.

Revolution of 1846-1848. On May 13th, 1846, Congress, under the Presidency of James K. Polk, declared war on Mexico (Acuña 2007 43). Ending in defeat for Mexico, territory negotiations commenced. Ratified on May 2nd, 1848 by the Mexican congress, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ceded land north of the Rio Grande to the United States, including what today is Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, and parts of Colorado and Utah(Acuña 2007 56). Over night, Mexican citizens found themselves in a liminal space.[3] They were immediately severed from their country of origin and became second class citizens in their own land. The second stage of borderlands visual theory shifted from the Spanish-Indigenous perspective to include a Western (Anglo) American perspective.

Displacement, social subordination, and racism were primary effects of the war. Chicanas/os made every effort to redefine themselves during an era of Manifest Destiny; storytelling, religious art, and food ways became aesthetic practices used to display their own unique identities. The underlying goal for these new Americans of Mexican descent was sustaining their cultural memory. While multiple conquests attempted to assimilate border residents, collective memory became an oppositional tactic that helped strengthen Mexican traditions and cultural practices in the United States. Borderlands visual theory recognizes the power of memory as a form of agency. Incorporating aesthetic practices of this period into discussions about contemporary artistic practices makes the War a driving force in the production of visual theory.

3 See Richard Griswold del Castillo *The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (1992).

Mexican President Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911) had an agenda for Mexico based on economic infrastructures that would benefit a small amount of wealthy elites and business owners while neglecting the millions of working class people throughout the country. Diaz's oppressive tactics toward strikers and activists turned him into an enemy of the people. Throughout southern and northern Mexico various groups of people began to rebel against this violent dictator. In 1910 the Mexican Revolution commenced with tremendous support across the nation. Emiliano Zapata, Carmen Robles, and Pancho Villa were iconic figures that inspired a nation of people to take up arms against the government; the revolutionaries successfully overthrew Diaz. Shortly after the Mexican Revolution, various political, social, and cultural changes swept across Mexico. Mexican artists demanded a radical change in traditional artistic practices previously controlled by the government. This new art scene reaffirmed the goals of the revolution. José Vasconcelos, then Secretary of Education, supported this cause and urged Mexican artists to paint images that celebrated indigenous Mexican identity. The Mexican mural movement began starring *Los Tres Grandes*, Diego Rivera, José David Alfonso Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco, along with Frida Kahlo. Their murals and artwork played a key role in the social revolution of Mexico and also portrayed a new national identity across the nation and even in the United States. Mexico's revolutionary art provides borderlands visual theory with material means to challenge the issues of homogeneity tied to national identity.

Chicana/o visual imagery borrows heavily from this period. Images of Zapata and Villa are used to remind communities how working class people mobilized to

create radical change in their lives. Mestizo and indigenous iconography again poured into the visual landscape of Mexico and crossed border into American communities. The revolutionary *muralistas* taught artists new ways of using art as a social and political medium. Art of the Mexican Revolution catalyzed artists in the United States to rethink the purpose and social function of their art. Artists became activists and cultural workers during very turbulent times.

Lastly, the Chicana/o Civil Rights Movements were a result of various conflicts and injustices Chicanas/os experienced living in the United States. Surrounded by racism, segregation, inequalities, and physical and spiritual violence, Chicana/o communities realized they needed to come together in a struggle for survival. Having to make due with limited resources—financial and political—Chicanas and Chicanos used everyday materials to make posters, murals, paintings, and home-based arts. Their art was specific and had purpose.

During the First National Chicano Liberation Youth Conference in Denver, Colorado, Alberto Urista, better known as Alurista, recited *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, the Spiritual Plan of Aztlán. Serving as a manifesto, *El Plan* called all Chicanas and Chicanos to help aide *la causa*. Broken into seven sections—unity, economy, education, institutions, self-defense, cultural, and political liberation—*El Plan* dictated what communities should do in order to attain equality and social justice. Of particular importance here is the call for artists to participate in *la causa*:

> Cultural values of our people strengthen our identity and the moral backbone of the movement. Our culture unites and educates the family of La Raza towards liberation with one hear and one soul. We must insure that our writers, poets, musicians, and artists produce literature and art that is appealing to our people and relates to our revolutionary culture. Our cultural

> values of life, family, and home will serve as a powerful weapon to defeat the gringo dollar value system and encourage the process of love and brotherhood. (El Plan 1967)

El Movimiento charged artists and cultural workers to produce art that represented the goals and values of their revolutionary community. Art of this period established a unified presence in the United States and invoked a collective call for community and national identity.

Individually these four historical moments offer multiples histories that influence Chicana/o culture and traditions. Various methodological practices are borrowed throughout the centuries in order to create an art “of the people” and an art of community. Refashioned in contemporary society, these modes of artistic production have shaped the ideological, political, cultural, and spiritual functions of Chicana/o art. Together these time periods help shape power and drive behind borderlands visual theory.

Theory & Pedagogy

The complex historical events that shaped the U.S. Southwest (The Spanish Conquest, U.S.-Mexico War, and the Mexican Revolution, to name a few) had a tremendous impact on the artistic practices and cultural production of what Jose Limón calls “Greater Mexico” (1998 3). Not only have these events created hybrid, poly-vocal identities, but they have also illuminated other histories that have recently been documented. Various books written by Chicana/o scholars offer new perspectives grounded in “new historicism” that detail events and perspectives often left in the margins of history.

Borderlands visual theory is grounded in resistance, opposition, hybridity, autonomy, advocacy, community, place-making, affirmation, celebration, experimentation, and empowerment. Rooted in a history of oppression and suffering, borderlands visual theory emerges within a framework of purpose, resourcefulness, and an "against the grain," anti-border mentality. Understood generally as anti-colonial in rhetoric and agenda driven, borderlands visual theory re-conceptualizes history, perception, borders, and identity via visual culture. Vested in theories of semiotics (Barthes 1977, Eco 1979) and differential consciousness (Sandoval 2000), this concept de-essentializes identity and allows for a multiplicity of differentials (i.e. race, gender, class, geography, sexuality, culture, etc). Borderlands visual theory is about making space in academia for progressive race-based scholarship and "making place" for Chicanas and Chicanos in today's society. It functions within borderless limits.

Artists, scholars, and activists who practice borderlands visual theory are motivated by their positionality, their differential identities, and their *picaro* (trickster) sensibilities. In *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Renato Rosaldo states that "one must consider the subject's position within a field of social relations in order to grasp one's emotional experience" (1993 2). Fully aware of society's limitations in their lives and existence, Chicana/o artists work to tear down borders, both physical and ideological, and work to disrupt deeply-rooted assumptions about race, class, culture, and art. Inspired by their experiential knowledge that is harnessed in a methodology of resourcefulness, these artists challenge the

limitations that they too are trapped in physically and politically. Through their art and pedagogy, visions of liberation and self-representation are lived out.

The unique qualities of borderlands visual theory are that it is experimental, fluctuating, and malleable. Based on education, hybridity, and community, this theory allows for multiple interpretations and variegated methodological practices. In other words, borderlands visual theory works from the margins or the centers; it can be used by an "high-tech Aztec" or a third world feminist; it can be used in the most mundane manner (a hubcap *milgro*) [Figure 1] or in one of the most radical ways (carving out the image of Quetzalcoatl from the Statue of Liberty) [Figure 2].[4]

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, in his book *Warrior for Gringostroika*, demonstrates a need for an art of autonomy and community, where his position, bias, and intent are not only in tact in his art but also a vital source of information for people outside his Chicano-*Chilango* culture. For Gómez-Peña, "I have to make intelligible art for American audiences who know very little about my culture. This is my daily dilemma. I have to force myself to cross a border, and there is very little reciprocity from the people on the other side" (1993 15). Gómez-Peña argues that the border is a straight line that demands straightforward behavior and any deviations, or *tangents*, from that line require immediate and systematic correction (11). However, Gómez-Peña's tangential (deviant) approach to art allows him to uncover histories and see things once hidden. That tangential view also "confronts the commonly held idea that the border represents a permanent danger" (16).

4 See the hubcap milagros by artist David Avalos and Ester Hernández's *Libertad*.

Gómez-Peña furthers his discussion of border identities by confronting the perceived monolithic nature of Chicana/o identity: “everything I create, including this text, contains a multiplicity of voices, each speaking from a different part of my self. Far from being mere postmodern theory, this multiplicity is a quintessential feature of the Latino experience in the United States” (1993 21). Border art and identity thus requires the practice of “creative appropriation, expropriation, and subversion of dominant cultural forms” (43). Gómez-Peña defines border culture in trans-lingual, hybrid forms: “Border culture means boycott, complot, ilegalidad, clandestinidad, contrabando, transgresión, desobediencia binacional; en otros palabras, to smuggle dangerous poetry and utopian visions from one culture to another, desde allá, hasta acá” (43). We see in the above quote variants of single cultures amalgamated into a trans-cultural hybrid art form.

In his “Open Letter to the National Arts Community,” Gómez-Peña articulates a manifesto of action for artists. He states that artists must go beyond just making art. He argues that artists must recapture their “stolen political will and mutilated civic selves” (1993 61) along with rebuilding their community through art. His performances are practices of polyvocality and border semiotics (38). Gómez-Peña continues to define his performance art as “the continual clash with cultural otherness…” and “the creation of alternative cartographies; a ferocious critique of the dominant culture of both [U.S. and Mexico]” (39). Gómez-Peña expresses his angst with the dominant nature of both sides of his identity, calling forth a “ferocious critique” of any limitations of identity and culture.

In the art and work of Gómez-Peña, we see borderlands visual theory take shape in the form of autonomy, polyvocality, opposition, and anti-border rhetoric. His powerful indictment of dominant culture is exemplified in his against-the-grain mentality. Gómez-Peña's inflammatory language criticizes the use of postmodernism and its essentialist theories as ethnocentric and insufficient (1993, 46). In short, we see Gómez-Peña's position within borderlands visual theory as a balancing act where he looks toward a borderless future in hopes that art and visual culture will erase centuries of oppression and inequality.

Using the work of Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Claire F. Fox contributes to an understanding of what she calls the "current fashion in post-national, non-site specific border imagery in contemporary cultural theory" (1999 1). In *The Fence and the River: Culture and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border*, Fox positions borderlands visual theory within the paradigm drama of the border. For her, borders are polyvalent, "a place where urban and rural, national and international spaces simultaneously coexist, often in complex and contradictory ways" (3). Fox's work focuses on the cultural politics of the border by placing them in conversation with what Mary Louise Pratt (1992) calls "contact zones." These contact zones, according to Fox, come with a long history of transculturation; Fox argues that media representations of the U.S.-Mexico border "should not blind one to the materiality of this 'constructed space' and the power it has to affect and structure the lives of those crossing it and divided by it" (14).

Relations between the United States and Mexico rely heavily on an ideologically created yet materially constructed border. Stating that the border "is a

synecdoche of the nations it divides" (69), Fox underscores how problematic border rhetoric is in constructing a sovereign nation. Relying on recycled and recoded visual images such as a fence and a river, the border becomes a site of recycled and recoded nationalistic tendencies that serve to further marginalize the existence of communities across the border. These images of the border reinforce the global power of the United States and also help create a homogeneous view of American identity, land, power, and citizenry.

By placing visual culture in conversation with concepts of power and the nation, Fox ultimately contributes to my discussion about borderlands visual theory. Her text focuses on border ambassadors such as Gómez-Peña and the Bordertown series, thus locating organic border intellectualism within the communities represented and affected by the border. Quoting the Border Arts Workshop/*Taller de Arte Fronterizo*, Fox underscores the importance of site-specificity, or an "art of place:"

> [A]n art of place is concerned less with the phenomenal and geological aspects of a place then when with the cultural, historical, ethnic, linguistic, political, and mythological dimensions of a site…Thus, we see site-specific art transformed into a place-particular practice which represents the domestication and/or socialization of the '70s site, and defines approaches to art-making in which a place, a condition, or an occasion is seen and worked as the materials of human or social exchange. A place is not merely a medium of art, but also its contents (quoted in 1999, 122).

Place-making, as articulated by the BAW/TAF and illustrated in Fox's text, is central to the creation of borderlands visual theory. The re-production of previously nationally-coded space is now a canvas for border artists and scholars to reinterpret. *The Fence and the River* thus illuminates the central paradigms of border studies

and visual culture by severing the relationship of capitalism and artistic practices and weaving border art with autonomy and cultural affirmation.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña's recent book, *Ethno-Techno: Writings on Performance, Activism, and Pedagogy* (2005), continues his discussion about art and performance on the border. When revisiting his previous article "Open Letter to the National Arts Community," Gómez-Peña articulates a set of questions designed to trigger action within the border arts community: "1) what are our new roles as artists and intellectuals in the cartography of terror? 2) What concrete actions can we realistically undertake as a sector to reclaim our stolen civic self and our legitimate right to create and to articulate our artistic vision? And 3) how do we discuss survival strategies with our local and national communities" (xxiii)? Gómez-Peña's article advocates for radical performances that "produce dialogue between artist and spectator, spectator and community, and community and imagined community" (xxiii-xxiv). Again we see a major component of borderlands visual theory at work with the way Gómez-Peña situates community, coalition-building, and art in conjunction with anti-oppression tactics and a sense of empowerment.

Further, Gómez-Peña warns about the media's attempts to consume these radical and revolutionary artistic practices and disable their discursive power. This "mainstream bizarre" (51 and 249) turns these practices into spectacles for entertainment, rather than for political change. To counter the media's debilitating effects, Gómez-Peña calls for a performance pedagogy that challenges authoritarian hierarchies and privileged ideologies by attempting to "create temporary utopian spaces where interdisciplinary dialogue and imagination can flourish. These utopian

spaces are framed by *but not contained within* a pentagon-shape of radical ideas whose vertices are community, education, activist politics, new technologies, and experimental aesthetics" (xxv). Similar to borderlands visual theory, Gómez-Peña's performance pedagogy relies on community and experimentation where experiential knowledge is celebrated and honored for its resourcefulness. Art and visual aesthetics then become a way for artists to reinvent themselves and their hybrid heritage.

Gloria Anzaldúa's profound commentary on borderlands culture, identity formation, and gender & sexuality deeply affect Chicana/o culture today. Although primarily a critique of colonization and patriarchy, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) offers an insightful analysis about resilience, empowerment and autonomy. While Chicanas/os have been victims of colonization and slavery, Anzaldúa does not allow this history to overshadow their ability to overcome. While she writes that "we were jerked out by the roots, truncated, disemboweled, dispossessed, and separated from our identity and our history" (30), she goes on to say that "there is a rebel in me—the Shadow-Beast. It is a part of me that refuses to take orders from outside authorities…it is that part of me that hates constraints of any kind…at the least hint of limitations on my time or space by others, it kicks out with both feet. Bolts" (38). This rebellious nature that is opposed to outsider control is symbolic of the will of Chicana/o communities. Anzaldúa articulates a defiant attitude, one that acknowledges a history of exploitation but does not succumb to it.

Defiance is central to Anzaldúa's epistemology. Recognizing her own marginality within her Chicano culture and United States culture, Anzaldúa becomes

inventive and invokes the creative power within her to write her own identity. She firmly states that “I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes…And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture—*una cultura mestiza*—with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture” (44). Here Anzaldúa articulates an epistemology of self-creation and a theory of resistance.

Anzaldúa’s work roots borderlands visual theory within a central paradox: having to “swim in an alien element” that was once their home. Chicana/o artists have used this paradox as inspiration for their art. Reinventing homelands, expressing an uncompromising self-representation, and evoking a politicizing spirituality (and thereby reclaiming a part of their culture suppressed by dominant culture) have helped revolutionize art in the *barrio*.

Methodologies: Past, Present, and Future

One of the most interesting qualities to borderlands visual theory is that the practices drive the theory, and not vice versa. The theory is directly related to, if not completely organic of, the lived experience of Chicanas and Chicanos in their *barrios*. Resistance and resourcefulness are key elements to Chicana/o aesthetic practices. Because these key ingredients come from everyday practices of existence, borderlands visual theory is accessible to the masses and is not solely situated in academia.

Arguably the most influential text written about Chicana/o art, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto’s “Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility” articulates a shared sense of communal reciprocity and a position of looking from the bottom up. For Ybarra-

Frausto, “Rasquachismo draws its essence within the world of the tattered, shattered, and broken: *lo remendado*…In the realm of taste, to be rasquache is to be unfettered and unrestrained, to favor the elaborate over the simple, the flamboyant over the severe” (156-157) [Figure 3]. Rasquache is “a visceral response to lived reality, not an intellectual cognition” (156). As stated earlier, Chicana/o aesthetics are located within the realm of community, not an intellectual arena. Most popularly quoted is Ybarra-Frausto’s “*fregado pero no jodido*” (down but not out) stance where rasquache has a direct and intimate relationship with “the material level of existence or subsistence… [and] of survival and inventiveness” (ibid).

Rasquachismo offers a brief historical account of its origins yet move toward a more hybrid description of its recent evolution:

> Although Mexican vernacular traditions form its base, rasquachismo has evolved as a bicultural sensibility among Mexican Americans. On both sides of the border, it retains its underclass perspective…Very generally, rasquachismo is an underdog perspective—a view from *los de abajo*, an attitude rooted in resourcefulness and adaptability, yet mindful of stance and style (156).

Born out of Mexican exile and U.S. absorption, rasquachismo rejects nationality as an underlying feature and turns to culture, survival, and community as its foundation. This hybrid, borderless mentality is inherent in past and present rasquache artworks.

Although Ybarra-Frausto states that rasquache seeks to subvert and overturn dominant paradigms, he follows with the statement that rasquache is not an idea or style but an attitude or taste (155-156). Borderlands visual theory diverges from rasquache in the sense that borderlands visual theory is both an ideology of the oppressed and a style of survival. It too is a position of bottom up but with an agenda

toward permanence and rootedness, not temporality and the ephemeral. I want to clarify that permanence is not relational to being static; I propose permanence as a means of solidifying a central place for Chicanas and Chicanos in our historical, national, and collective memory with the ability to shift and permeate through new (globalizing) forces.

A less known yet equally important text contributing to the discussion of Chicana/o aesthetics is Amalia Mesa-Bains' "Domesticana: The Sensibility of Chicana Rasquache" (1999). Her work demonstrates the need to look at art through a more reflexive lens that accounts for differential relationships between gender, race, class and art. According to Mesa-Bains, "Chicana rasquache (domesticana), like its male counterpart, has grown not only out of both resistance to majority culture and affirmation of cultural values, but from women's restrictions with the culture. A defiance of an imposed Anglo-American cultural identity and the defiance of restrictive gender identity within Chicano culture has inspired a female rasquachismo" (161).

Focusing her research and discussion on domestic spaces, Mesa-Bains investigates how women express their emotional trauma and autonomy via home altars and *capillas*. Restricted by their own culture and a larger dominant culture, Chicanas display their faith, personal history, and memory through a particular method of organizing objects around the house. Using seemingly mundane and unnatural artistic products, from family photos to plastic flowers and from upside-down saints to Christmas lights, Chicanas create an artistic practice (domesticana) based a shared ideology of womanhood, community, and subversion [Figure 4].

Writing about her own installation art, Mesa-Bains states that her creations display agency through metaphor: “Using accumulation, fragmentation, and dispersal, the shrines have created the dislocation of boundaries within space through their allegorical devices” (165) [Figure 5]. Her focus on destabilizing borders and order is congruent with borderlands visual theory in the way it utilizes experimental artistic practices to create change in the face of colonizing tendencies in the United States. Mesa-Bains ends her article with a tremendous reminder that we must not entirely restrict ourselves with labels and categories: “Like all explorations terminologies must remain porous, sensibilities never completely named, and categories shattered” (166). This reminder also applies to borderlands visual theory; as said earlier in this essay, this theory functions within borderless limits. In other words, borderlands visual theory’s adaptability, experimental nature, and differential aesthetics require it to not stay tied down to concrete, *formal* aesthetic approaches. This does not mean borderlands visual theory is ephemeral or diluted ideology; contrarily, this theory functions from what Judith Butler calls “strategic provisionality,” using a term or theory but knowing when to transition out of it, “to let it go, living its contingency, and subjecting it to a political challenge concerning its usefulness” (1992 109). The importance of borderlands visual theory is its social function and its experimental nature; systematic or proscribed methods are thrown out the window.

Understanding borderlands visual theory requires we investigate other aesthetic forms in addition to performance, installations, and artwork. The works of Rosa Linda Fregoso and Charles Ramirez Berg are exceptionally versed in

Chicana/o cinematic practices. These authors contribute to a growing and in-depth understanding of the poetics and politics of “brown cinema.” From them, we gain a solid understanding of the underpinnings of race and culture in film and the importance of self-representation.

Rosa Linda Fregoso, in her book *The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture* (1993), offers a grounded perspective of Chicano cinema from a historical and cultural standpoint. Fregoso identifies Chicano cinema as “summed up as the documentation of social reality through oppositional forms of knowledge about Chicanos” (xiv-xv). For her, this film genre initially attempted to define the parameters of Chicano cinema in conjunction with cultural politics of the times (xv). A major component of her work focuses on the idea that Chicano films should be “by, for, about” Chicanas/os. Thus, film scholars should research and write scholarship based on films that are not only *about* Chicanas/os, but also films that area created by Chicanas/os as well as for Chicanas/os.

Writing about films such as “*Yo Soy Joaquin*,” “Zoot Suit,” and “Born in East L.A.” Fregoso creates a trajectory of film-making geared toward self-representation. Within these films is what Fregoso refers to “intertextuality,” or the interweaving of various genres, strategies, and methods for accentuating a “unique improvisational style of juxtaposing images” (7). Important in Fregoso’s work, intertextuality is also central to discussions about borderlands visual theory. The different perspectives and methods used in the logic in intertextuality serve as a basis for understanding how Chicana/o aesthetics work. Having a montage of ideas, images, or concepts comes from the hybrid or differential identities Chicanas/os live with today.

Fregoso also offers an insightful commentary about social identities along the U.S.-Mexico border in her book *meXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (2003). She proposes to "reclaim an alternative racial memory of the borderlands" (55) by "[offering] an account for the apparent contradiction between the visibility of meXicanas in cultural representation and their invisibility in the history of the nation" (xiii). Her work focuses primarily on how the Othering process collapses Chicanas and Mexicanas into a single, homogeneous group.

Her use of feminist methodologies for analyzing various films and novels allow for a polyvalent and systematic approach to understanding the process of marginality within dominant culture as well as her own Chicano culture. Fregoso continues this book with a candid analysis about how Chicana/o scholars should not only look at dominant culture's role in their subjugation, but also how their own cultural ideologies serve to imprison women (see chapter 4). *meXicana Encounters* works within borderlands visual theory on many levels, particularly how she incorporates various feminist methods for understanding how culture is used and appropriated in the goals of decolonization and liberation.

Charles Ramirez Berg's *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance* (2002), contributes to film scholarship by documenting and critiquing the racialization of Chicanas/os in Hollywood cinema. Berg argues that in order for us to change the perception of Chicanas/os in film, we must first understand three key components to film. Firstly, he states that "film representation needs to be understood within a social and historical context" (4). Recognizing key events in time

and space will allow scholars to fully grasp the reasons why stereotypes exist and why they are so successfully disseminated. Secondly, Berg continues to say that:

> the analysis of Latino representation in the movies must move beyond the superficial content analysis…by looking at the deep structure of Hollywood cinema. That is, we need to investigate how standardized cinematic techniques, the accepted norms of 'good' filmmaking (including the star system, casting, screenwriting, camera angles, shot selection, direction, production design, editing, acting conventions, lighting, framing, makeup, costuming, and mise-en-scéne) all contribute to the totality of the image we call a stereotype (5).

Berg calls into question the totality of filmmaking. He asserts that scholars must explore all dynamics of the filmmaking process when considering the deconstruction of stereotypes. Finally, scholars must look at the ways Chicana/o filmmakers have intervened in the pattern of misrepresentation via self representation (5). Knowing what strides have been made can outline a clearer path for future work on films for, by, and about Chicanas and Chicanos.

Sander Gilman's theory about the psychological roots of stereotyping reinforces Berg's claim that film scholarship must participate in the total deconstruction of content and context. Gilman distinguishes between a benign stereotype, "a momentary coping mechanism that preserves our illusion of control over the self and the world," (29) and a pathological stereotype, that which cannot distinguish between a crude representation and the actual individual, and thus feels threatened and "adheres to the stereotypical category and the relegation of the Other to it" (29). Chicana/o filmmakers must create meaningful representations that subvert these two modes of stereotyping. It is only then that borderlands visual theory will make an impact in the film industry. I include Berg in my discussion about

methodology because his work is a sociological investigation about Chicana/o stereotypes and offers ways of deconstructing their meanings. Borderlands visual theory helps artists understand the power of the gaze and its paralyzing effects; it also creates opportunities for subversion.

Fatimah Tobing Rony's *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and the Ethnographic Spectacle* (1996) investigates how cinema and ethnographic film help construct the racialized "Other". Her examination of how indigenous people are perceived helps readers understand they myriad ways that film embeds stereotypes of the racialized "Other" in the conscience of the viewing public. By grounding her analysis in three separate yet inter-connected genres (exposition photographs, ethnographic film, and Hollywood cinema) Rony successfully articulates her two-pronged objectives of the book. Firstly, she offers a "sustained critique of the pervasive form of objectification of indigenous peoples which [she]…will label Ethnographic" (5). The Ethnographic situates indigenous populations in a displaced temporal realm in which they serve as objects of imperialism. Secondly, Rony offers readers the opportunity to explore "the third eye" as a tool for empowering subaltern populations and usurping the power from the colonial gaze.

Rony's discussion of the third eye expands on W.E.B. Dubois' theory of double consciousness. While double consciousness serves as a second sight that allows marginalized subjectivities to see themselves through the colonizer's gaze, Rony's third eye goes a step further. She states that "this racially charged glance can also induce one to see the very process which creates the internal splitting, to witness the conditions which give rise to the double consciousness" (4).

One key element of *The Third Eye* is its interrogation of how cinema naturalizes racial and gender hierarchies. The viewing public necessarily obsesses over the primitive savage in order to reaffirm their position as spectator/colonizer. This consumption of images of the "Other", what Rony calls fascinating cannibalism, allows viewers to participate in the reification of racialized Otherness.

The book's structure, separated into three parts, functions chronologically to show how various film genres of ethnography overlap and inform each other. Inscription, part 1, interrogates the work of Felix-Louis Regnault and how he photographically documented indigenous people's "physiognomic differences." Part 2, Taxidermy, discusses how Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) constructs the Quebec Inuit population as taxidermic, or mummified, representations of a distant past. His ethnographic film further reifies otherness by comparing the Inuit's nudity and posture to wild animals. Teratology, part 3, examines *King Kong* (1933) as a postcolonial commentary of the fear of the "Other" as an over-masculine threat to Anglo civilization. Rony's three case studies trace out how science and film conjoined in an effort to document and reify race and difference.

The Third Eye offers more than a critical assessment of historical films and ethnography. Rony's intervention is at work when she states that "[she] believes that understanding how the 'native' is represented in film—how ethnographic cinema forces us to 'see' anthropology—is crucial to people of color currently engaged in developing new modes of self-representation" (6). Understanding how science and film construct race offers subaltern people the possibility of creating their own realities.

As a theory, the third eye examines a central paradigm of racial and cultural politics; the Self/Other paradigm comes under scrutiny in new and radically different ways. By empowering the Other and subverting the domain of the Self, the third eye allows for a liberating and autonomous experience. Upsetting the imbalance of power and the spectator gaze is a central tenet in recent border art.

As seen in the work of Guillermo Gómez-Peña, uprooting power structures that oppress communities is an oppositional tactic many Chicana/o artists undertake as a serious and passionate cause. Borderlands visual theory moves beyond a recognition of an “internal splitting” and the usurpation of power from the colonial gaze. It demands a restructuring of institutions that allow for the imbalance of power and works toward those ends. By creating art, media, and performance that cause conceptual violence, new trajectories take shape, allowing for more autonomous, communal, and empowering forms of representation.

Borderlands visual theory reflects an important philosophy about art and identity. Rather than simplifying our understanding of other people and cultures into homogenous categories--thus erasing difference through coercive assimilation--this theory helps us identify, document, and explore ethnic distinctions, racial constructions, gender and sexual continuums, and a myriad host of differences. As will be explored throughout this dissertation and through the art of Luis Jiménez, borderlands visual theory helps reconcile the problems of history and community memory in minute and monumental ways. Helping to counter canons of art, scholars, and national memory, Jiménez successfully articulated a new approach to creating another center that honored and affirmed the histories, cultures, and

differences of minoritized communities. Borderlands visual theory was his toolkit to transform America.

Figures

Figure 1. “Hubcap Milagro Series.”

David Avalos

Figure 2. *Libertad.*

Ester Hernández

Figure 3. *Eastern Medicine*, 1999.

Jamex & Einar de la Torre

Figure 4. *Altar*.

Unidentified artist

Figure 5. *Venus Envy Chapter One*, 1993.

Amalia Mesa-Bains

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Chapter 2

Biography: Luis Jiménez's America

If I was an outsider looking at America or the West--what would I see? What would I be looking at? It would be strong and vibrant images that stand out, like the cowboy, not those coming out of the fine-art situation. It would be the motorcycle, the automobile; this is the important visible iconography of America, but it's not art in itself. The use of these popular images is part of the game: to take my work as close to the edge as I can, because then the challenge is greater, and so is the payoff.

--Luis Jiménez, 1984.

On the day he died, Luis Jiménez was attempting to complete the largest public artwork of his career, a 32 foot rearing bronco titled *Mesteño* for the Denver International Airport. Designed to be free standing on its hind two legs, *Mesteño's* electric blue color, fiery red light bulb eyes, and black veins that course its body would soon tower over the mile-high landscape, framing the electric sunset and the Colorado Rockies. At a cost of over $650,000, over twice its initial commission price, and over a decade past its completion date, in February 2008 *Mesteño* finally found its resting place near the front entrance at the airport on Peña Boulevard. Unwelcomed and unappreciated by many Denver residents and art critics for its "apocalyptic, devilish" look and its extremely high price tag[5], *Mesteño* was also praised and celebrated by communities across Denver and the Southwest for its

5 For more information on the DIA debate refer to the Wall Street Journal "A Horse of a Different Color Divides Denver" Feb. 7, 2009, the New York Times "And Behold a Big Blue Horse? Many in Denver Just Say Neigh" March 2, 2009, and the Denver Post "The Horse that Made Denver Talk - About Art" June 6, 2009.

revisionist undertones[6]. But Luis Jiménez saw something much greater than just a big blue mustang when he conceived on the sculpture; to him this monument memorialized an important historical actor in the creation of the U.S. West. Taking into account the historical significance of the horse, the complicated and chaotic time surrounding the completion of the sculpture, and the unique aesthetic qualities Jiménez contributed to the art world, the concept of *Mesteño* as a monument of this country's history, present, and future is a revelation into the life of a charismatic and innovative artist who saw America through working-class eyes.

Luis Alfonso Jiménez Jr. was born on July 30, 1940 in El Paso, Texas to parents Alicia Franco, a native to El Paso, and Luis Jiménez Sr., a Mexican native who crossed into the United States in 1924 at age 9 with his mother. Both parents' family lineage is rooted in Mexico and Europe, thus creating a very interesting *mestizo* identity for the Jiménez family. In a 1985 interview conducted by Peter Birmingham for the Smithsonian Institution, Jiménez outlined his ancestral heritage. His mother Alicia's family migrated into the United States during the Mexican Revolution when Pancho Villa and his troops were in northward route: "as my mother put it--her dad was the mayor of a little town in Chihuahua called Meoki, and of course they were the targets for the Villa forces" (1985). Franco's maternal heritage was of European stock as her mother's maiden name was du Fah and her grandmother's maiden name was Couturiere (ibid). Of the nine children Franco's parents had during the Depression era, only three made it to adulthood (ibid).

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6 See Judy Baca's *"En La Memoria de Luis Jiménez"* http://www.sparcmurals.org/sparcone/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=252&Itemid=204 and the New Mexico Independent "Even in Death, Chicano Sculptor Luis Jiménez Gets Last Word in Denver" April 10, 2009.

Jiménez's paternal heritage also matriculates from Mexico; having crossed into the United States and settling in El Paso, the Jiménez family fled Mexico to escape the violent upheavals that stirred working-class Mexico. Jiménez Sr.'s father passed away when he was only 5 years old, so it was his mother that guided them through the arid desert and across the Rio Grande. Having been raised in a Protestant mission in Mexico, Jiménez Sr.'s mother had received an education at a time when many women in Mexico did not have opportunities to go to school. The Protestant faith and a tradition of education run deep in the family and, according to Jiménez, they were a "minority within a minority...Mexican Protestants" (1985). Jiménez's father did not receive U.S. citizenship until he was born. With French, Spanish, Indigenous, and now Mexican and U.S. blood in the Jiménez family, we begin to see the genealogical influences that had an inherent impact on how Luis Jiménez conceptualized his identity.

A legacy of artistry stemmed from both sides of the Jiménez family who historically had a "tradition of working, of taking pride in craft" (Birmingham 1985). On Jiménez's mother's side, his grandfather was a finish carpenter in the U.S. and his *tío* was a craftsman in metal letters. His father's family were also artists and craftsmen in their own right. Jiménez's paternal grandfather was a bookkeeper, but was also a glassblower who made figurines that he used to court his wife. Jiménez Sr. watched his father make the glass blown objects such as bullfight scenes and cock fights. These objects would later have an impact on his own artistry when he worked at a neon sign shop in El Paso circa 1935 (Birmingham 1985). Stories of courtship and the figurines that were passed down to Jiménez Sr. are significant; as

will be discussed later in this chapter, similar themes and concepts permeate the Jiménez family cadre of art.

Jiménez Sr. was an exceptional artist and an ambitious man who from a young age showed much potential. Although he was nine years old when he started the first grade in the United States, he received his high school diploma by age eighteen. When he was sixteen, Jiménez Sr. entered and won an arts competition based out of New York (David Jiménez 2009).7 According to Luis Jiménez, his father never received any formal training: "What he ended up doing with this artistic ability of his was that he became interested in painting signs; he became a sign painter, and used that as a kind of vehicle to develop" (Birmingham 1985).

In 1940, Luis Jiménez was born and by age six started working with his father in the shop.8 He clearly remembered his father's artistic vision and the first sign they worked on together: "What made him a good designer was that he was always doing these wacky things...I mean it was kind of off-beat...he decided that he was going to put a polar bear in [the sign], but it wasn't going to be a flat cut-out like you see on signs; it was going to be made out of white concrete" (Birmingham 1985). The polar bear sign was commissioned for a dry cleaning company in El Paso and still adorns

7 One of the judges was Alexander Archipenko, a Ukrainian born internationally renowned Cubist who opened art schools in Paris, Berlin, and New York. This Proctor & Gamble sponsored competition also came with a scholarship to study at the School at the Art Institute of Chicago. Jiménez Sr. won first prize, a major accomplishment at age sixteen, but because the award came at the peak of the Depression, no scholarship funds were available and he was never able to study art (David Jiménez 2009).

8 Working at a neon sign shop in the 1930s, Jiménez Sr. was able to put to task all his creativity. As one of three partners in the business, Jiménez Sr. eventually bought out the other partners to own the shop. Throughout his tenure at the sign shop, he was commissioned to do signs in Las Vegas, New York, and other cities across the country. Jiménez Sr. became a nationally renowned sign maker because of his creative use of neon and intricate three-dimensional designs. In an interview conducted by Amy B. Sandback, Luis Jiménez talks about the success of his father’s neon sign shop and how he received national prizes for his signs. Renowned sign enthusiast Barney Wise traveled from New York to El Paso to visit the famous sign shop, Electric & Neon (1984).

the building facade. At age sixteen Luis Jiménez helped his father make a twenty-foot tall horse's head for a drive-in along with three red roosters that crowed every hour at the Red Rooster Drive-ins. According to Jiménez, a petition was submitted on behalf of local community members to mute the sign. This may have been his first run in with community members, but it surely was not his last. Even with the controversy that ensued, the Jiménezes never shied away from bright colors and large-scale ideas. In fact, Jiménez Sr. later designed a sign that displayed a folklorico dancer lifting her skirt up at two vaqueros until their sombreros flew off.

Luis Jiménez had a natural talent for art that his family noticed when he was young. By age two he drew an image of a cat and at age nine drew a graphite on paper image of a skeleton. Both images would eventually be displayed almost fifty years later at his 1994 *Man on Fire* retrospective exhibition. Although he took an art class in junior high and a mechanical drawing class in high school, he did not receive formal training until we went to college. Even at the neon sign shop, Luis Jiménez did not receive training from his father: "...he never sat me down and said this is the way you do something; my father's just not that kind of a person" (1985).[9] At a young age, he entered art contests in El Paso, constantly winning first, second, and third in sculpture. Ted Kuykendall, artist, former employee, and long-time friend of Jiménez, stated that at age four Jiménez won first place at a national soap making

9 Although Jiménez worked at the neon sign shop all his childhood and teenage years, his father never allowed him to contribute to the design of the signs: "I didn't draw. I didn't do any of the designing...my dad wanted that kind of control...[H]e had started training me from the time I was six so I could take over the shop, but he would never let go of any of it" (Birmingham 1985). Luis Jiménez had the skills to do almost everything in the shop; he welded, he painted, and he repaired, but he never designed.

competition (2009). He drew everything around him, including his paternal grandmother.

Luis Jiménez had a very close relationship to his grandmother. Raised in a Protestant mission in Mexico, Mama Luis, as she was called, moved to the United States to offer her family a better life. She was “dark-skinned, but with green eyes, of Indian stock from San Luis Potosi” (Birmingham 1985) and an educated woman, having been taught on the mission. Being one of the first supporters in his quest to be an artist, Mama Luis had a tremendous impact on her grandson's future career and her presence would resurface in much of his artwork. In 1975 Luis Jiménez made a colored pencil drawing of a stagecoach and train framing a portrait of his grandmother; in 1978 he sketched an image of his grandmother and himself staring into a bedroom mirror with his grandfather’s face suspended in the mirror [Figure 1]. The 1975 piece combines some of Jiménez's early ideas that were surfacing in his art: Progress, frontiers, U.S. mythology, and the West. The 1978 piece reflects the autobiographical nature of several of his pieces as well.

Old Woman with Cat (1969) [Figure 2] was a sculpture dedicated to Mama Luis who lived to be 101 years old. The base structure of the work was an old green overstuffed chair Jiménez found on the street. He used to rest on the chair while working at the neon sign shop and decided to make a sculpture out of it by directly applying clay onto the upholstery. This sculpture became an homage to his grandmother: "By the time my grandmother died, she couldn't see very well, even though she used to sew, and she'd become fairly immobile. So it was really a kind of statement about what happened with old people" (*Man on Fire* 1994 63). In the

sculpture, Mama Luis and the chair become one element and a cat is perched upon her lap. Although she never owned a cat Jiménez placed one in the piece to accentuate her immobility. The creative use of non-traditional objects became a trademark of Luis Jiménez's aesthetic which developed throughout his time in school.

When he was not at the neon sign shop, Luis Jiménez learned how to remodel cars. He owned his first car at age 16---a cherry Model A car that did not run for 2 years. After his Model A, he purchased a '31 Ford Roadster and stripped the parts out to put in a fiberglass coupe. This was Luis Jiménez's first introduction and experimentation with fiberglass. His fascination for cars sprung from watching low riders cruising down Montana Ave in his hometown, close to where his father's neon sign shop resided. El Paso, for Jiménez, began to have a much stronger resonance for his artistic growth than he could ever expect.

Jiménez's unique border philosophy grew in part by El Paso's social and cultural history. A city of travel and commerce, El Paso became a crossroads for trade, raw materials and culture in the late nineteenth century. As David D. Romo writes in *Ringside Seat to the Revolution*, "El Paso...[of] 1896 was a booming border town. Railroad lines from the four cardinal direction--connecting to Mexico City, Santa Fe, Los Angeles, and San Antonio--had transformed the town" and was sixty percent Mexican (2005 21). The United States-Mexico border was fluid and in transition in 1896, but by 1917 immigration laws began to enforce borders and restrict unregulated migration (Ngai 2005 18-19, 59). U.S. Anglo lawmakers rhetorically constructed the racial make-up of early twentieth century America by

systematically purging racial minorities to the borderlands and enforcing a homogenous--read, white, upper class--national identity. Border dwellers with generational ties on each side of the U.S.-Mexico border immediately felt the impact of such xenophobic-driven laws.

A mere river separating two bodies of land, this geopolitical border morphed and transfigured how scholars, historians, and city dwellers understand border residents' relationship to the border and the effect of that border on local identities. With the hardening of the border, both militaristically and discursively, border dwellers began to negotiate their identities in new ways. As David Romo states, "fronterizos, people who live on the border, are unclassifiable hybrids. They are not exactly immigrants. Immigrants don't cross back and forth as much. Border crossers are a people on the margin. Not real Americans. Nor real Mexicans for that matter" (2005 11). Thus El Pasoans' culture, traditions, and identities developed out of the historical realities that permeated the border. Mario T. García furthers this statement in his book *Desert Immigrants* (1981) when he writes:

> a dialectical relationship existed between the immigrant's native culture and the attempt by American institutions and reformers to restructure earlier habits and instill a new urban-industrial discipline among the Mexicans...[resulting in] a Mexican border culture, neither completely Mexican or American, but one revealing contrasting attractions and pressures between both culture" (231).

The multiple identities of fronterizos and El Pasoans were thus differential and at times contradictory due in part to the complex historical realities of the U.S.-Mexico border.

For Luis Jiménez, these historical, social, and cultural markers were central to his upbringing and his ideological formation. With Mama Luis' strong Mexican and

Protestant ties and his own ties to Mexican, U.S., and border cultures, Jiménez began to see the borders around him more than just structural, political, and ideological reinforcements. He saw these borders in what Monica Perales characterizes as “far more than being the meeting place of two nation states,” but as “a cultural crossroads where what is Mexican and what is American cannot be neatly separated” (2003 p. 168).

Borders surrounded Jiménez physically, cultural, socially, and artistically. El Paso’s unique history cultivated an extraordinary sense of border-less limits for Jiménez, nurturing his ability to transgress borders historically shut off to his family and his culture. I believe Jiménez began to see these borders not as a means of separation and isolation, but as a medium to express the complex, contradictory, and hybrid notions of place, nationhood, identity, and community through his art.

After high school Jiménez attended Texas Western College (now, the University of Texas at El Paso) from 1958-1959. He took basic courses at TWC and after a year left for the University of Texas at Austin in 1959. Jiménez remembered his time as an architecture student, having to work all hours of the night to complete class projects: "...there'd be times when I didn't go to sleep for two nights, three nights in a row...And you know [the architecture professors] were ruthless. I mean, you know, every hour you were late on a five-week project, it was one automatic letter off" (Birmingham 1985).[10] During this time, Luis Jiménez was commissioned to

10 Jiménez Sr. wanted his son to go to school and become an architect. He wanted him in a financially profitable job market. The constant demands and high standards he set out for his son in the sign shop were to prepare him for a successful career--outside of the arts. Although one would think the conflict Jiménez Sr. had with architects and their skewed view of his craft would turn him away from that industry, it in fact compelled him to force his son to study architecture. Jiménez Sr.

create a mural for the Engineering department and for a local Pizza Hut. Pizza Hut paid Jiménez $15 and three months of free pizza to paint a mural on the side of a local franchise. The mural displayed students on a conveyor belt going into the University and coming out of conveyor belts in assembly-line formation: "there would be different kinds of students pouring out--business majors with their briefcases, art students with their beards, their uniforms, and the fraternity types with beer guts" (Wickstrom 1977). The Pizza Hut mural became a social commentary on the University's ability to mold students into passionless cookie cutter professionals.

When Luis Jiménez first started the architecture program, he was a model student. He was making "fine sensitive drawings" that the professors really enjoyed. But as he grew in the program, so did his aesthetic. Although criticized for doing cartoony drawings, Jiménez stayed true to what he felt he should be creating: "this [was] really what I [felt] like I should be doing…in fact, that I was really, I guess, beginning to develop a personal kind of identity. Maybe it wasn't quite there, and it didn't look right, you know, but I thought I knew what I wanted to do, and it wasn't going to be to do the old master drawings for the rest of my life…and the same thing happened with sculpture" (Birmingham interview 1985). Jiménez knew his ideas and concepts were unpalatable for many, but his vision was developing and his passion was intact.

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wanted his son far away from the art world, partly because he was unsuccessful in "making it." But also because if any industry could mirage the use of artistic talent and refashion it into a reputable and financially worthy endeavor, it would be the world of architecture. Drawing buildings and skyscrapers could be justified as noble work, but to Jiménez Sr. there was no value in painting horses and sculpting pietás.

Although a very arduous and strict program of study, the school of architecture endowed Luis Jiménez with some valuable information about methodology and process. Jiménez stated that there were some advantages for studying architecture rather than what he described as a non-structured standard curriculum of art school: "in the architecture school, you know, there was a way of approaching a problem. You had to define the problem, you had to develop a concept for approaching the problem, and you had to be systematic about it. And I still develop my sculptures the same way, I mean, as if I was going to do it, you know, for an architecture project...the basic approach is methodical" (Birmingham 1985). As described above, and can be seen in almost all of the artworks, Jiménez undertook art projects and skillfully planned the process and implementation from beginning to end.

During his second year at UT, Jiménez began taking art classes. Because of his architecture background, the art school allowed him to take advanced courses in drawing and sculpture. He would take anywhere between eighteen and twenty-one hours each semester along with working various odd jobs. It was during this time that he met his first wife, Vicky Balcou. At the end of his fourth year in architecture school, just one year shy of graduating, Luis Jiménez switched his degree to art: "So after my fourth year, I actually did this totally rebellious thing; I turned around and I dropped out of architecture school, switched to art. I also got married to my first wife, and I was in a situation where my dad and I didn't talk for about five years...there was just this tremendous rift" (Birmingham 1985). Jiménez received a Bachelor of Science in Art and Vicky Balcou received her Bachelor of Fine Arts both in 1964.

Luis Jiménez did not find the support and inspiration he yearned for from the academic training in the United States; during the mid 1960s, Abstract Expressionism was flourishing in the art world, specifically due to its recent acquisition and adaptation by U.S. artists post World War II. For him, "I really felt that for me the image was important, and there wasn't a place for it that I could see in Abstract Expressionism...The problem was that I had certain ideals of what I thought my work should be and should do, and they didn't fit within the framework of Abstract Expressionism" (Birmingham 1985). Thus, Jiménez created his own framework, engendering within his art the essence of humanity--working class people and their everyday heroics. His inspiration came from the "Mexican hills" and from artists who captured Mexican *mestizaje*.

Living in a small apartment on a very limited income, Jiménez received a small grant that took him and his wife to Mexico City to study sculpture with an artist at Ciudad Universitario. Jiménez had high hopes for studying sculpture in his ancestral land surrounded by some of the most brilliant and famous artists to come from Mexico. Already privy to Mexico's indigenous history--Mama Luis had taught him about Moctezuma, Malinche, and Cuautemoc--and having visited Mexico City numerous times as a child, Jiménez was ready to study the work of the world's greatest Mexican artists as well as formulating his own unique aesthetic[11]. The major artists of Mexico had already made a tremendous impact on his own artistic vision and aesthetic choices.

11 Mama Luis' passionate stories about the Aztec empire and all its famous heroes, filtered into Luis Jiménez's psyche and he began to create art that told a story about indigeneity and *mestizaje*.

An heir to Mexican culture and the Spanish language, Luis Jiménez was also heir to this artistic movement, garnering for himself the unique aesthetic sensibility necessary to become a public artist. Going to study in Mexico was a “pilgrimage” for him; his father always talked about retiring in Mexico and Jiménez felt it was important to root himself in his family’s national heritage. Francisco Zúñiga, a native Costa Rican sculptor and painter, met with Jiménez several times and was impressed with the quality and content of Jiménez’s work. In fact, Zúñiga said that with the type of art he was doing, he had no business in Mexico. He encouraged Jiménez to go where “the ideas were feeding in” (Birmingham 1985), namely New York City, the financial art capital of the world.

While greatly influenced by some great artists and the social landscape of Mexico, something still did not coalesce between Jiménez and Mexico: “I really felt that it was important for me to make that pilgrimage down to Mexico. In fact, I was going to stay down there and live. When I got down to Mexico, I realized that I was an American. My whole way of thinking, my framework, etc., is American. I am an American of Mexican descent. I mean, it’s an important thing to realize at one point, I think” (1985). Identifying his framework as uniquely “American” is an interesting statement; if we engage in a retrospective of Luis Jiménez’s work, the “American” framework that he identifies as central to his work seems counter-intuitive to what many historians, mainstream critics and the art world would consider American. His art captured the essence of all working class people and honored their everyday heroics. What made Jiménez‘s “America” unique was that it did not renounce its ancient heritage, its violent histories, and its transnational lineage, but it honored,

remembered and re-inscribed the stories that for over a century had been hidden or covered up in order to protect and legitimate an “authentic” American national mythology. In short, his work compelled his audiences to think about American as something hybrid, differential, and contingent, rather than pure, “white,” or monolithic.

By the time Jiménez left Mexico, his wife Vicky was pregnant with Elisa; on their return to El Paso Jiménez landed a job teaching at a local middle school in the El Paso school system. There he taught eleven classes at three schools in one academic school year for five thousand dollars annually (Birmingham interview 1985). Jiménez’s stay in El Paso was intended to be short, with the hopes of following Zúñiga’s advice of going to New York City. But catastrophe struck Luis Jiménez which kept him in El Paso for roughly two years.

In 1965, Jiménez’s close friend planned on leaving the country to Canada in an effort to skip out on the draft during the Vietnam War and Jiménez offered to help drive across the border. One night, driving a dry cleaning van through Idaho, the friend fell asleep at the wheel and drove off a cliff, leaving Jiménez paralyzed (David Jiménez 2009). After multiple surgeries that left him two inches shorter with two compressed vertebrae and over a year of recovery in El Paso, Jiménez found it difficult to keep any job and reluctantly went back to working with his father. During this time, Jiménez was still drawing. In fact, the paralyzing accident had psychological effects on the artwork to come; much of his art post-accident involved movement. Whether dancing at a honky tonk, giving birth to a man-machine, crossing a river, or an animal rearing its legs, movement and action pervaded his

work. It is as though Luis Jiménez's brush with *la muerte* inspired him to produce art that delicately balanced movement between life and death. It was during this time that he began using fiberglass in his art; the few scholars and authors who discuss Jiménez say he received his training in fiberglass at his father's neon sign shop. However, as Jiménez stated several times, he never received any formal training from his father nor was he ever allowed to design the signs. Thus, his use of fiberglass was self taught.

Jiménez eventually left El Paso, knowing that his big chance at making a living off of his art was going to be in New York. Determined to at least try and "make it," he moved to New York City and landed a job at a local Head Start program. Working as a recruiter for the lower east side, Jiménez went door to door speaking with Puerto Rican families and signing their children up for the program.

Luis Jiménez eventually quit the program and did random odd jumps such as taking care of people's plants and animals. He drifted for a while, something he felt every artist should do--"I just wanted to do my art" (Birmingham 1985). As luck would have it, Jiménez walked into a job placement office and he was offered a job that paid very well (with a car) but it was in a "high hazard area"--that translated into the black and mexican side of New York City. He took a job working with The Youth Board Corp. His role at the Youth Board was to organize community dances that would bring together neighborhoods who were at odds with each other. "Ghetto uprisings" between communities and with the police constantly ensued in New York (Sugrue 2008) and the dances were a way to find a compromise and common ground to stop the battles. Although this job was full-time, most of the parents he met

with were only available during the early evening hours, which left Jiménez with many hours to dedicate to his art.

It was during this time that Luis Jiménez sought out mentor and American abstract expressionist Seymour Lipton (1903-1986). After researching and meeting different artists, he saw Lipton's work and was immediately attracted to him because his work with symbols. Lipton's work was primarily in metal, something Jiménez could immediately relate to; while working at his father's sign shop, Jiménez initially tested his ideas in various metals. This relationship worked well for the short period of time Jiménez worked at Lipton's studio: "it was important for me to see how he functioned in his role, you know, as an artist in society" (Birmingham 1985). Not commonly known, this period of time working with Lipton was a very unsettling time for Jiménez. He felt unsure about himself and his art. He often felt he was standing "on shaky ground" with a lot of his ideas and concepts: "I had an inferiority complex about having studied in Texas. I felt they had the best schools in New York and that everybody was really good" (Wickstrom 1977). According to Jiménez, "It's funny because I didn't get anything from [Lipton] technique-wise. It had more to with...what it meant to be an artist" (ibid).

Lipton was an abstract expressionist, a school of thought Jiménez disliked while in Austin and Mexico City. But Jiménez was able to see the powerful use of symbols in Lipton's work and combine his concepts with a different type of symbols--those that were readily identifiable within various communities. What makes Jiménez's art more "readable" than Lipton's was the fact that he did not distort or

“abstract” the symbols, but left them fully in tact to their realism; thus, Jiménez gave a human face to his symbols by creating works that dealt with human experiences.

Jiménez received his first show in 1969 at the Graham Gallery. Included in this show were *Motorcycle* (1969) [Figure 3] and several other drawings and sculptures. His first show was a huge success, selling out every single piece. Some important collectors attended and purchased work at Jiménez’s first show; Giovanni Agnelli, owner of Fiat & Ferrari, purchased *Motorcycle*, a director of the Museum of Modern Art purchased a drawing, and Matt Doty from the Whitney purchased a drawing from the first and second show (Birmingham 1985). More importantly, however, was that finally, after over 5 years of not communicating with his father, and even over 20 years of his father’s unwillingness to accept Jiménez’s dreams of being an artist, Jiménez Sr. flew into New York to see the show and gave his son a gold watch with the inscription, “To my son, the artist.” Then, and only then, did Luis Jiménez feel like he finally accomplished something great.

It was the art of his second show in 1970 that demonstrated Jiménez reached a new plateau in his creative process. The main pieces in the second show at the Graham Gallery were *Man on Fire* (1969) [Figure 4], *TV Set* (1967), *Gross TV Image* (196?) and *The Barfly Statue of Liberty* (1969) [Figure 5]. The bold use of archetypal imagery and political undertones permeated his work, offering his audiences a more critical understanding of how he envisioned himself as an artist. What was even more telling was his specific pattern of intention. Jiménez started to incorporate Mexican iconography, Chicana/o aesthetics, Pop art sensibilities, and Southwest (regional) imagery into his images, something not conceived of in the art world until

he arrived. His autobiographical experiences and vivid memories of living on the border influenced what he began to see as a new model for understanding American identity.

Although Jiménez's first show was tamer than his second in terms of concept and execution, he never neglected his desire to challenge notions of "fine art," something his father fell victim to as an aspiring artist and sign maker. In an interview with Richard Wickstrom, Jiménez said:

> I realized a long time ago I was never going to be subtle. So I try to use those things out of my culture and my background that maybe weren't considered in a fine art setting. I think that becomes a strength. Growing up on the border is really different from the general American experience. It's kind of obvious Mexican-American connections in the work. The attitude toward color, toward form, and the approach in general is Mexican-American (1977 4).

Unabashedly proud of his ancestry and bold enough to create images far from the expectations of "fine art," Jiménez reconstituted the visual imagery of one man's experience as an American of Mexican descent. What this statement implies is that although functioning as an "American" in an "American setting," Jiménez never marginalized any of his experiences, including being an American with Mexican heritage, or being an American from a region of the United States that has a unique set of histories. For Jiménez, being American was not denying one's past to embrace one's future, but it was re-inscribing all of the histories that make up this country onto the visual iconography of American art and identity.

Part of the immediate attraction of Luis Jiménez's work was his use of fiberglass. This medium was relatively new in the art world and no one else in New York was doing anything remotely close to Jiménez. His high gloss finish and use of

bold colors stood out immediately, catching the light of the room and giving off a bright sheen. The decision to use fiberglass was strategic because it made a statement about the present: “I felt that wasn’t just what you do, but it was like the time was extremely important, the time that you do it, and to make a statement about the times” (Birmingham 1985). Metal, bronze, and marble had already been used to make a statement about industrialization and the neoclassical era, but Jiménez was thinking about the political and social economy of the United States circa 1960s. Consumption, excess, “kitsch”, and color were all relevant during the Pop Art movement and plastics and fiberglass best captured the Pop artists’ critical dialogue of the art world and the country’s fetish to consume. But Jiménez was also particularly drawn to fiberglass because of the visceral response it evokes: “I really needed a material that is a statement in itself, one that can incorporate color and fluid form, *the sensuality that I like*. Somehow fiberglass seemed to do that” (emphasis mine; Sandback 1984).

Jiménez’s bold, flashy, and robust designs required a particular type of medium that would reflect his new and innovative ideas. Using fiberglass would allow him to finally mold his artistic sensibilities with his experiences working on cars and neon signs in El Paso. The “light value” was an added benefit for Jiménez; in fact, its reflective qualities became a trademark of his aesthetic practices. While many sculptures of the times were dark and heavy Jiménez’s work came alive in color, shine, and perceived movement.

With the momentum of two successful shows at the Graham Gallery and a growing sense of new creativity and iconography under his belt, Jiménez began to

work on a new set of ideas. He incorporated various icons and imagery that were different than his earlier works. What started to creep into his next series of works were Western (frontier) images, sexuality, and autobiography. This new direction did not sit well with the Graham Gallery. Mr. Graham, gallery owner, refused to showcase *Birth of the Machine Age Man* (1970), a controversial piece that depicted a naked woman birthing an adult male-machine figure with attached umbilical cord, because it seemed unpalatable for the mainstream art world. Because of Graham's decision, Jiménez left to the O.K. Harris Gallery, a newly established gallery (and only the second in Soho) ran by Ivan Karp. In retrospect, leaving Graham was not a wise financial choice; Jiménez did not sell out his show nor did he receive the same exposure at O.K. Harris. But he was afforded an opportunity to showcase his new series of works.

Grounded in images of the frontier, American iconography, and real life people, Jiménez's new works were different than his earlier ones because they dealt heavily with American national mythology, not American consumer culture. In 1970 he began sketching what would become his transition piece from New York to New Mexico. *End of the Trail with Electric Sunset* (1971) was an image Jiménez grew up with, "it was more important to me when I was growing up in El Paso than the *Mona Lisa*" (Wickstrom 1977). Having drawn many images of Native Americans, cowboys, rattlesnakes and horses as a child, it seemed relevant and timely that he return to the same images that had a profound impact on his artistic growth as a child. A revisionist perspective of James E. Fraser's 1915 plaster model of *End of the Trail*, Jiménez added neon, lights, and (more importantly) a sense of vitality would signify

a profound sense of Southwest culture and a reinvigorated view of Native American history. Jiménez stated that "...it was also, that piece was in important piece because it was already a real break with all of the pieces that were a broad look at the American culture" (Birmingham 1985). What is remarkable about Jiménez's transition from American consumer culture to American national mythology was his reversal of imagery to accent the "death" of his pop art series and his birth of his new American series. He used *Birth of the Machine Age Man*, his last "Pop" piece, to signify the end of his second series of works while he used *End of the Trail,* his first "Southwest" piece, to signify the beginning of a new series.[12]

Having heard about the Artist-in-Residency program that Donald Anderson, a local oil giant, funded and administered, Jiménez drove to Roswell with *End of the Trail* and *American Dream* in his father's neon sign shop van.[13] Mr. Anderson, a landscape artist in his own right, saw the clay model and *American Dream* and was intrigued; they negotiated five thousand dollars (the amount needed to complete the piece) in exchange for several pieces of his art (Andersons interview, 2009). Jiménez was able to complete *End of the Trail with Electric Sunset* in 1971 just before his 3rd show in New York and his first at O.K. Harris. By this time, Jiménez married Cynthia and they relocated temporarily to New York City. His third show in New York was somewhat a success; while did received good reviews on his work, he did not sell one piece of work. However, *End of the Trail* eventually sold at the Whitney Biennial in 1973 to the Long Beach Museum.

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12 In fact, Jiménez Jr. did not create any art for nine months after the Birth piece. By this time, he was fed up with the art world. It is as though he had a type of Postpartum depression with the piece and his art career.

13 Driving up to the caretaker's house, Jiménez was initially mistaken for a repairman.

But the move back to the Southwest was less about his financial situation than it was an ideological shift in his framework of producing American art. Jiménez felt he needed to be at the center of where his new set of images were coming from; this relocation, both geographically as well as conceptually, enabled Jiménez to tackle some of the most recognizable and significant icons of the American West:

> I had gone into my work as part of the American Experience. And as I started to go into it more and more, the images started to become more personal. An artist is always going through reevaluation. Let me just say, I think art can be a personal search, that is what it is for me. As you search, you search yourself, you go back into yourself. As I started doing that, the images that I felt were becoming more and more important were the images I had grown up with. I felt those were the images I should put down. Those images come from the Southwest, and that was the reason for coming to the Southwest--the images are here. I did like New York. The rich culture you could get was great. But the space in the Southwest was important (Wickstrom 1977).

The lure of the Southwest was pressing on Jiménez's mind. The images he would produce, however, were not romantic or nostalgic by any means; the Progress series and his work after subverted the romantic paradigm of the Southwest. Instead of reproducing images that constituted and reinforced stereotypes of the West (i.e. frontier, John Wayne, the savage indian) Jiménez peeled back the layers of these icons to reveal a more transnational and hybrid understanding of the creation of the U.S. West.

In the late 1970s, Jiménez left Roswell with Cynthia and purchased an old school building in Hondo, NM. Less than a mile down the road, an old apple shed studio went on the market and he immediately purchased it as well. It was here that Jiménez would embark on his early dreams of creating art in public places. Although most of his work had been exhibited in galleries, museums, and private patronage,

he hoped to one day earn commissions for public pieces: “I really wanted to eventually develop this whole concept of public art. I have notes going way back and early sketchbooks to when I was first in New York...I didn’t like the idea of having a very limited audience that the museum and gallery represent. I wanted to expand that audience” (*Man on Fire* 1994 94). His first commissioned piece was in 1980 for the city of Houston, Texas. *Vaquero* was proposed for Tranquility Park in 1977 with partial funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, across the street from the city council chambers, but because of vehement protests from a city councilman and a county constable, it was moved to Moody Park in a working-class *Mexicano* neighborhood.

Luis Jiménez’s next big commission came the same year as *Vaquero* but this time from North Dakota. *Sodbuster* (1981) honored the norther farmer in the Scandinavian Lutheran town of Fargo. Although he initially proposed a barn dance for the site, it did not sit well with the community because of their hard work ethic. After *Sodbuster*, Jiménez received commissions across the United States, many dealing with working class images. In 1981, the city of Albuquerque commissioned Southwest Pieta; in 1982, both *Steelworker* and *Flag Raising* were commissioned in Buffalo, New York and Wichita, Kansas portraying blue collar workers; in 1984 and 1986 Jiménez received commissions from California for *Cruzando el Rio Bravo* (1989) [Figure 6] and *Fiesta Dancers* (1992-1996) depicting celebrations and experiences by Mexican American of the Southwest.[14] These last works signaled a

14 After having Adán, first child with Susan Brockman, Jiménez added the new born baby to the arms of the mother in the next set of sketches for *Cruzando el Rio Bravo* to signify the birth of his new family.

new series of work that focused on the Southwest, U.S.-Mexico border, and--more implicitly--working-class America. Much of this new imagery was also inspired by Jiménez‘s involvement in the political sphere. Working with the Senate Democratic Hispanic Task Force as well as the National Endowment for the Arts, he dedicated time and energy into Hispanic issues and civil rights. Locally, Jiménez created works to document and make a political statement about issues affecting New Mexico and El Paso residents. In 1997, he created *El Buen Pastor: A Profile of a Drug Smuggler* to document the horrific tragedy in which U.S. Marines murdered a teen age Mexican boy in Redford, Texas. In 2001, Jiménez also created *Hi-Way 70 Hondo, NM* in protest of the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s intent to build a four-lane highway through small town Hondo. It was during the mid 1980s that he met his fourth and final wife, Susan Brockman.

After their three children Adán, Orion and Xochil were born, Susan and he made Hondo their permanent residency. Growing up in this small town, the Jiménez family welcomed in their home various assortments of animals. Jiménez had a strong connection with animals since a young age; his early memories of animals were of a parrot that he gave to Mama Luis. Since then, Jiménez befriended crows (Chula and José), a snake (Honey), and BlackJack, his appaloosa horse. However, most of his animal drawings were creating in a rather unorthodox manner : “I don’t use models when I work on a figure. When I started working with the animals, I

realized that I had to do studies to be able to develop a kind of freedom to work with the animals. Most of these animals were road kills" (1994 134).[15]

In 1991, Jiménez was offered a commission by the Denver International Airport to complete a sculpture that would reflect the life and experiences of the Southwest. Initially set to be housed in Terminal C *inside* of the airport, Jiménez proposed a large scale version of a mustang, something he felt would pay tribute to this country's historic relationship with the horse:

> What I've proposed for Denver is a mustang scenic overlook. I am also proposing a series of plaques tracing the history of the American mustang from the original reintroduction of the horse by the Spaniards, to the Indian pony that they developed from the mustang, then the American cow pony and quarter horse that was developed from mustangs (1994 160).

Designed to frame downtown Denver, Pike's Peak, and the mountains, *Mesteño* would have signified a magnificent accomplishment for Jiménez. Completing a monumental piece at such a public venue meant he would leave his mark in the public art scene, a dream he had for decades.

In 1994, the Albuquerque Museum, in collaboration with the Smithsonian American Art Museum, organized *Man on Fire*, an exhibition honoring Luis Jiménez. The exhibition displayed artworks from age 9 to sketches for Jiménez's next major public artwork, *Plaza de los Largatos* (1995). *Man on Fire* became the first retrospective of his career. Under the curatorial direction of Ellen Landis and Albuquerque Museum director James Moore, the exhibition showcased almost every

15 In fact, on one late drive from Santa Fe, Jiménez saw a large female coyote dragging her back on the road as she howled hauntingly. He pulled over and strangled her to death with his bare hands, attempting to put her out of her misery. This event inspired Jiménez to create *Howl* (1986), paying homage to the dead animal and the wild life of the Southwest.

public work and was intended to honor the work created thus far and spark dialogue about future works to come.

In 1997 the first traveling exhibition, *Working Class Heroes: Images from Popular Culture,* took Jiménez's work on a national tour to Texas, Indiana, Washington, and California. Curated by art critic Benito Huerta, the theme of this show was inspired by Jiménez's compassionate reverence toward working class people of the United States. This show hoped to convey the artist's intent on showcasing people across the country who work hard toward fulfilling their own American dreams. It was through this show that Jiménez also fulfilled his own American dream of becoming a public artist who represented working class values, traditions, and experiences. This show commemorated the success of a Mexican American artist who broke many barriers but still stayed true to his working class roots. Although two major shows gave Jiménez more prominence in the art world, the thirty-two foot mustang loomed heavy on his mind, proving to be a daunting task that even Jiménez was not ready for.

In a 1999 interview for *ARTLIES* magazine, Jiménez informed interviewer Susie Kalil the prospects of such a tremendous commission, stating he was experiencing burnout from the DIA project. "We all have burnout..." Jiménez stated; "And I have burnout, especially on these large pieces. I have a piece that I haven't delivered for Denver. I keep asking myself why it's taking so long to do it" (56). Part of the burnout stemmed from his inability to allow others to help him complete the piece. Similar to his father's controlling behavior, Jiménez had to be an integral part of the entire project; even with his assistant Jesús Medina aiding in the process,

Jiménez had to be in complete control of the work. Another reason for burnout was his older age and the blindness in his left eye: “I’m not as strong as I used to be! (laughs) And I don’t have the energy to go three days in a row without sleep like I used to!” (ibid). Jiménez knew from previous experience the troubles of being a public artist--controversies, deadlines, and changes in location--but even he no longer wanted to deal with this stress anymore.[16]

The lifting crane Jiménez used to rotate and sustain the three-piece sculpture had be compromised when he found sugar deep within the ridges of the crane. The metal structure allowed him to safely maneuver the nine thousand pound sculpture (Brockman, Montoya, and Jiménez 2009). With the rush of deadlines, an aging body, stress of a daunting 4th divorce, and a gruesome travel schedule, Jiménez was working toward catastrophe.

On June 13th, 2006 Jiménez passed away in the midst of chaos. *Mesteño*, the towering horse that haunted him for over a decade, took his life just before noon that day. Agonizing over his fourth divorce, his damaged relationship with Adan, Orion, and Xochil, lawsuits from the Denver International Airport, his aging body and blind eye, and respiratory issues related to the use of fiberglass, Jiménez suffered from overwhelming stress that caused him to work in haste. Against the best advice of his two assistants--including long-time friend and assistant Jesús Medina--he decided to work without the use of a crane. Pressed for time, Jiménez attempted to

16 In 2001 the Denver International Airport sued Jiménez for breaking his contract deadlines but he then countersued because the location of the sculpture was moved to the outside, something Jiménez felt was a breach of their contract. By 2004, The DIA and Jiménez reached a compromised. The sculpture would be completed and installed by October 2005 and Jiménez would receive the remaining funds to complete the sculpture.

complete the torso but the massive piece had little structural support without the crane. In one swift movement, the sculpture fell off the metal structure, crushing Jiménez against the reinforcement bar. Writhing in agony, he called out for help; the two assistants rushed to him, pushing the fiberglass sculpture aside. Xochil, only fifteen at the time, rushed down from the studio office after hearing her father's cries for help. What she saw at the feet of the sculpture was horrifying.

Jiménez had been crushed by the torso of the piece severing a major groin artery, causing tremendous and rapid blood loss. Because the two assistants only spoke Spanish, Xochil called 9-1-1. As soon as the ambulance arrived Jiménez was rushed off to Lincoln County Medical Center where he was later pronounced dead (*Rancho las Voces* 2006). News of his death spread quickly as his family, friends, and art community mourned the loss of one of the most significant American artists of our time. Memorial services across the country honored Jiménez, celebrating the success of a passion artist whose vision enlightened and transformed the visual iconography of U.S. culture.

A Mexican American artist who successfully crossed over into the American art world, Luis Jiménez profoundly influenced the Pop art scene, Chicana/o art, American sculpture, and Western iconography. Raised in a life that was surrounded by borders--geographical, cultural, political, and social--he was able to produce images that transcended these borders and showed the intercultural, transnational history of his life and the United States. Unafraid of the consequences of transgressing these borders, Luis Jiménez made it acceptable for people to understand American identity as something hybrid and ever-changing. His

sculptures and drawings provoked and shaped discourse, reminding us of his profound and powerful vision:

> I do think there is a place for art making us think, confronting us, confronting our values, making us re-evaluate things, making us look at something again. A lot of times we see things that we don't like--that actually makes us think. And that isn't to say that all art should be something we don't like, but at times it can be something new. And if it is something new, then we're not going to be used to seeing it. And we're gong to have to rethink what we knew before, whether it's the art, or the approach, or the subject matter (from *Colores* - Luis Jiménez segment 1992).

His art made us think. It forced us to confront the demons of our country's (and our own) past; it demanded we acknowledge the legacies of the historically disadvantaged--people of color, the working class; and it offered us other perspectives of history that were inclusive and at times painful to remember.

Luis Jiménez's remarkable talent enabled him to combine Pop art, European form, and Chicana/o aesthetics with the new, innovative, and relevant medium of fiberglass. His major contributions to the art world were that he he appropriated and assimilated various art forms, mediums, and methods into his artwork but simultaneously stayed true to his politically motivated and culturally based creativity. A pioneer for artists across the country, Luis Jiménez helped redefine American art of the twenty-first century.

On February 11, 2008 *Mesteño* [figure 6] was installed along Peña Boulevard in a private ceremony where art collectors, journalists, politicians, and Jiménez's divorcee gathered to celebrate the completion of the monument. Portrayed by many as Luis Jiménez's crowing achievement, *Mesteño* signified a large scale intervention in the field of Western art. But artist Luis Jiménez's true crowning achievement was

not in one single piece of art, but in the cadre of art he created that helped redefine American art and identity.

Figures

Figure 1. *Autoretrato Imaginario con la Mama de Luis*, 1978.

Colored pencil on paper, 25 3/4” x 36”

Figure 2. *Old Woman with Cat*, 1969.

Fiberglass, 40” x 30” x 33”

Figure 3. *Motorcycle*, 1969.

Fiberglass, 50” x 80” x 30”

Figure 4. *Man on Fire*, 1969.

Fiberglass, 89” x 60” x 19”

Figure 5. *Barfly Statue of Liberty*, 1969.

Fiberglass, 90” x 36” x 21”

Figure 6. *Cruzando el Rio Bravo.*

Fiberglass, 120” x 72” x 48”

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Chapter 3

Myth & Monument in Old Town Albuquerque: *Southwest Pietà* and the War of Presiding Histories

"The past is at its best when it takes us to places that counsel and instruct, that show us who we are by showing us where we have been, that remind us of our connections to what happened here"

William Chapman (1979).

On January 18th, 1983, artist Luis Jiménez walked into a crowded Albuquerque Museum auditorium to face his critics. Over 100 Albuquerque residents attended the artist forum to hear Jiménez explain his vision. On display were the sketches and maquette of the controversial sculpture *Southwest Pietà* proposed for Old Town. Rumors that the sculpture depicted the aftermath of a rape scene of a Tiguex woman by a Spanish conquistador circulated in the auditorium; however, only a handful of people had actually seen the image prior to its unveiling at the museum. The Albuquerque community was decidedly torn between the proposed sculpture: on the one hand, many Old Town residents angrily opposed a "Mexican" themed sculpture so close to their residence; on the other hand, many people praised the artistry and culturally relevant images the sculpture depicted. Aware of the ongoing turmoil created by rumors and hearsay, Jiménez opened the forum by discussing his rationale for such a sculptural presence in Old Town. For him, this image was emblematic of the Southwest and New Mexico. But many audience members refused to accept his vision of the sculpture.

To understand why *Southwest Pietà* had such a powerful impact on Albuquerque communities, we must watershed the controversy surrounding *Southwest Pietà* and explore how New Mexico's history induced so much contention. This chapter will make three fundamental claims about memory, history, and community and their ruminations in Old Town, Albuquerque. Firstly, the historical imaginings of Albuquerque and, more specifically, of a Spanish-built Old Town render invisible, discursively and visually, Native American history, Mexico's history in New Mexico, and mestizaje prevalent during New Mexico's colonial era. Secondly, *Southwest Pietà* countered this historical amnesia by carefully articulating New Mexico's transnational history aesthetically, literally, and conceptually. Jiménez enacted borderlands visual theory in order to reconstruct a social map of New Mexico history. Lastly, the landscape memory produced by, and to suit the needs and desires of, Spanish-identified residents was built on a history not of the land, but of the built environment and its semiotic language: San Felipe de Neri Church, the Albuquerque Museum, an Old Town map, and the bronze monument *La Jornada* (2005). The competing interests in controlling and/or maintaining the landscape memory of Albuquerque, Old Town and prior to its founding is necessary to the formation and consequential perpetuation of community identity of Spanish Old Town's cultural-nationalist identity.

Memory

The *Southwest Pietà* controversy prompts us to ask: What is Old Town's role in preserving Albuquerque's historical memory? Does the community Old Town represent have an advantage in writing their memory onto the land? What are the

tools necessary in rooting memory to the land? How does the landscape reconcile competing narratives? Does *Southwest Pietà* challenge Old Town's landscape narrative? These questions are necessary for understanding the production of landscape memory--the shifting narrative that obstructs the visual historical record of the land. By applying the idea of landscape memory to Old Town, we can see how Spanish-identified residents built their environment--their "memorial landscape"[17]--to legitimate a perceived cultural-national identity binding them to the past.

First, I must define exactly what I mean when I employ the terms land, landscape, and place-making in my analysis. "Land" refers to geological earth and its mountains, trees, volcanoes, rocks, dirt, plains, valleys, etc. When speaking about land, I speak to the very physicality of earth and not to any national or metaphoric impressions of it. "Landscape", as a genre of art and a discursive tool of empire, is an invented social space. Produced in order to reify a paradigm of historical imaginings, landscape serves both as ideology and as evidence of that ideology. According to W.J.T. Mitchell, "landscape...is an instrument of cultural power...it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given or inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpolating its beholder in a some more or less determinate relation to its givenness as sight and site" (1994 2). He continues by saying "Landscape [is] a cultural practice that silences discourse and disarticulates the readability of landscape in order to carry out a process of institutional and political legitimization" (1994 4). Thus landscape is an invented social space that is used to build

17 For a nuanced discussion on "memorial landscape" see Kirk Savage's *Monument Wars: Washington. D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of Memorial Landscape* 2009.

community on the differences of others. In addition, landscape serves various imperial desires such as claiming physical and ideological control over land, presenting and representing acceptable citizenry, constructing national identity, and authoring an acceptable historical record of presence in the land.

Landscapes function similarly (but without an imperialist bent) to the idea of place. Described by Michael de Certeau as “practiced spaces” (1984 117), place and place-making construct history and fashion a novel way of documenting a community’s links to the land. Keith Basso states that place-making is “a universal tool of the historical imagination” (1996 5) and that it “consist[s] of an adventitious fleshing out of historical material that culminate in a posited state of affairs, a particular universe of objects and events--in short a place-world--wherein portions of the past are brought into being” (ibid 6). Hence, place-making is central to developing a community identity and a sense of belonging to the land. And according to Ernest Gellner, “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist” (in Anderson 2006 6).

Landscape and place-making are central to nation-building. But what sustains the nation’s longevity--in addition to war and capital-- is the performance of invented traditions. Where no history or events linking people to land existed before, invented traditions make up that history and attempt to bridge the past with the present without acknowledging its fiction. Eric Hobsbawm writes that “‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly and tacitly accepted rules and or a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (1983 1).

Formalized and ritualized traditions, and their associated symbols, remind us that we are part of a larger, historical community. While proclamations such as the Gettysburg Address and documents such as the Constitution rhetorically link people to a larger (national) community, the crucial elements are not literary but symbolic and visual. As John M. Murrin states, "the contractual basis of [a] government, its legal and political origins, was merely an abstract guarantee of union. Some more immediately compelling agency was required to secure the political covenant, to root it in the daily experience and sentiments of [the people]" (in Miller 1993 6-7). Invented traditions create a very personal and familial relationship with the individual, for it is through each person's participation in these traditions that the nation and community exist.[18]

Edward Said writes, "The invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way. Thus memory is not necessarily authentic, but necessary" (in Mitchell 1996 245). Memory gives meaning to the present by invoking the past; but the process of remembering is highly political and mediated. A narrative of an event rather than its replica (Sturken 1997), memory involves a series of repetitious acts that make history durable; as Moore and Meyerhoff write, "The repetitive insists and may even persuade that its messages are durably true, now and in the future. It gives information that affairs and states, attitudes and understandings are stable; we may count on them, make plans in

18 The problem here exists when traditions compete with each other for legitimacy (for example Thanksgiving Day celebrations versus "Indigenous Day" celebrations). Although groups may contend for space and historical memory, they always, as Kathy Freise argues, "situate [themselves] in the same space, claiming it differently" (2007 233).

terms of them" (in Gonzales, 2007 201). In the context of New Mexico and Old Town, "the repetitive" embeds itself in annual Founders' Day celebrations, *fiestas*, and public art. By reviving memories in very public ways, their inauthenticity goes unchallenged, thus creating troubling views of history that, as we shall see, caused uproar for Jiménez's pietà.

To understand the relationship between monuments and memory, we must explore what monuments *do* for its public. Kirk Savage states "Monuments emerged within a public sphere that communicated between actual communities of people and the abstract machinery of the nation-state. Monuments were one space in which local communities based on geography or interest or both could define themselves and speak to or for the larger collective" (1997 6). As permanent markers of constructed identity, monuments infuse prevailing ideologies within communities who immediately relate to the image at hand. Taken together, monuments and memory, or monumental memory, shapes the cultural, racial, and social terrain of Old Town Albuquerque in implicit ways allowing for a sustainable and cohesive historical account of New Mexico.

Monuments are powerful forms of knowledge and memory production. By placing monuments in Old Town, Albuquerque city officials hoped to showcase New Mexico history. They would also be counted on to create a popular and unified voice for Old Town while circumventing the complexities of history and remembering. Kirk Savage expands on this point:

> Public monuments were meant to yield resolution and consensus…the impulse behind the public monument was an impulse to mold history into its rightful place…public monuments are the most conservative of

> commemorative forms…the monument is supposed to remain a fixed point, stabilizing both the physical and cognitive landscape… [by molding] a landscape of collective memory, [we] conserve what is worth remembering and discard the rest (1997 4).

By placing monumental value and size in *Southwest Pietá*, Jiménez confronted and challenged the surrounding monuments that silence or override Native American and Mexican American histories in Albuquerque.

History

From as far north as Bernalillo to as far south as Isleta Pueblo, Tewa Natives inhabited the land formally known as Tiguex for over five hundred years prior to the arrival of the Spanish (Fowles 2004). An agriculture and farming community located near the Rio Grande, Tewa Natives were part of an inter-village cooperative of at least twelve other pueblos (Tarcan 2005; in Weinstein 2001 50).[19] Migrating from higher ground to Tiguex in the 1300s (Atencio 1986 33), Tewa Natives established a long history with the land. Rooting themselves not in a built environment but with respect toward the volcanos, rivers, and the soil, they did not claim ownership of the land, but rather developed a reciprocal relationship with it (Hewett 2007 34).

Intertribal relations were not always peaceful, but the communities were able to coexist. Pueblos and nomadic tribes such as Navajos, Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches combatted for resources with violence as an inevitable consequence.[20] But Native people shared an indigenous philosophy of land rights and understood that

19 Office of the State Historian website: http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=492
20 William B. Carter's *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2009) offers an expansive history of inter-tribal relations and how natural resources (water, food, raw materials, fertile land, etc) prompted repeated skirmishes between Native populations.

land resources were gifts to cherish, not commodities to exploit.[21] But an unavoidable clash of cultures soon promised to unravel indigenous life in New Mexico. Although European colonization in the northeastern United States had not yet commenced, further south came foreign people with their own dreams of building an empire.

Spanish presence in New Mexico extends back to 1539 when the Spanish Crown authorized an expedition northward under the leadership of Fray Marcos de Niza.[22] Laura E. Gómez writes that according to Pueblo oral history this was the first encounter with a non-Native population (2007 48). In 1540 another expedition led by Francisco Vásquez de Coronado brought the Spanish in contact with Zuni Pueblo (Atencio 1986 34). In search of fantastic cities laden with gold which de Niza reported back to the Spanish Crown, Coronado found nothing but farming villages and thousands of Native dwellers outnumbering the Spanish settlers (Weber 1999 3). Pueblo houses were created in clusters overlapping each other connecting families to one another. Built from natural products such as sand, clay, water, and straw, pueblo houses were a far cry from golden palaces that de Niza claimed to discover. So the Spanish turned back south and came upon Tiguex people among where (at times forcefully) claimed residence with the Tewa for approximately one

21 See Marlowe Sam's "Ethics from the Land: Traditional Protocols and the Maintainance of Peace" in Melissa Nelson's (ed) *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* 2008.
22 See Jacques Lafaye's *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe* 1974 for more in-depth work on Spanish colonization northward into Native American land in the Southwestern United States.

year. After leaving Tiguex in 1542, the Spanish made two more expeditions into New Mexico, none of which established settlements.[23]

In 1598, Juan de Oñate extended Spanish conquest past Tiguex and into northern New Mexico. Ordered by the royal crown to establish a proprietary colony along the Rio Grande, Oñate set out to establish New Spain's presence in the newfound territory (Weber 1999 3). Of the 130 colonizers accompanying Oñate, there were thirteen married couples and the rest were single male soldiers (Gutiérrez 1991 103). Upon reaching the village of Ácoma, colonizers encountered stalemates, conflicts, and even some cooperation from Ácoma natives.[24] However, not all Natives accepted this new regime of power; during Oñate's tenure conflict and unrest with Native pueblos swelled. After various clashes and battles, most specifically the three-day battle in 1599, Oñate ordered soldiers to sever the right foot of twenty-four Ácoma men over the age of 25 and ordered over six hundred men to serve twenty years of slavery (Simmons 1991 145).[25] Because of his at times violent forms of subservience, Native populations resist memorializing such a tyrant. However, many Spanish Americans today celebrate his efforts to establish the first

23 The Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology commissioned an Annual Report for the Bureau that outlines Coronado's itineraries between 1527-1547. Included in this report are transcribed letters between Spanish viceroy Antonio de Mendoza and Coronado on August 3, 1540. See "Annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution ; 14th, pt. 1, p. 329-613" and George P. Winship's *The Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542.*

24 Native resentment toward the Spanish was not unanimous. Small factions did comply with the Spanish crown because soldiers were able to squelch frequent raids from the Apaches and Navajos (Kessell 1979; Garner 1974).

25 George Hammond's *Don Juan de Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico* (1927) offers close historical accounts of Oñate's and Villagrá's expeditions and confrontations with Ácoma, Moqui, and Zuni. Of importance here is that Juan de Zadlívar, Oñate's nephew, was killed in Ácoma's initial skirmish with the Spanish which drove Oñate to take such an offensive and violent assault on Native men (114-115).

Spanish capital of Ohkay Oweenge (San Juan Pueblo).[26] Remembering Oñate in such a light helps create and sustain a Spanish colonial narrative of rights and rootedness to the land; this narrative, however, is not only represented in historic buildings or regal facades, but also in inventing traditions and epic stories of discovery and civilization.

Spanish colonialism was challenged by various Native groups on many fronts. Because Franciscan priests demonized indigenous religions and forbade the practice of kiva ceremonies and ritual dances, Natives felt their community identity threatened. Between 1608-1680, Ácoma Pueblo's population fell almost by forty-three thousand (Weber 1999 5). With the onslaught of forced labor, a dwindling population, and assimilation, Ácoma Pueblo knew they had to rebel. Under the leadership of Native Pohé-yemo (better known as Po'pay or Popé), several Pueblos organized a tactical assault on Spanish colonizers (Wilcox 2009 102; Sando & Agoyo 2005).[27] The Great Pueblo Revolt of 1680, the most organized and successful revolt by Native Americans in the Southwest, forced Spanish settlers, conquistadores, and families to leave New Mexico and relocate to El Paso for at over twelve years (Espinosa 1988 37; Kessell & Hendricks 1992 22-25). Spanish presence eventually found its way back at the Santa Fe capital in 1692 under the leadership of Diego de Vargas Zapata y Luján Ponce de Leon and Pueblo resistance waned. De Vargas passed away in 1704 and in March of 1705 Francisco Cuervo y

26 The capital was eventually moved south to what is now Santa Fe, NM.
27 Taos, Isleta, Acoma, Pecos, and Santo Domingo Natives were represented in the planning and after several meetings August 11, 1680 was chosen as the date for the revolt. However, not all tribes supported the rebellion as many Natives felt their relationship with Spanish colonizers was at times beneficial for their tribes. Ramón Gutierrez writes that caciques from Tanos, San Marcos, and La Cienega opposed the revolt and informed the Spanish of the plans, pushing the revolt to August 10th. (See Gutierrez 1991).

Valdez was appointed to govern New Mexico (Atencio 1986 43; NMHCPL 2). Continuing the settlement process started by de Vargas, Cuervo y Valdez founded more towns and on April 23, 1706 the Villa de Alburquerque de San Felipe de Neri was founded.[28]

According to Tomás Atencio, Cuervo y Valdez was bound by the Spanish 1512 *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias* and the *Leyes de Burgos* that afforded the newly established Villa rights and privileges (1986). In order to be recognized as a Spanish colony, Atencio lists the criterion had to be met: "A minimum of thirty families receiving a community land grant and private lots for gardens and a dwelling were to have settled the initial Villa. A Plaza de Armas had to be laid out. A church and government buildings were to be part of the Plaza. A cabildo, town council, was to govern the new town" (1986 44). But none of the requirements were met by the settlers. In fact, no more than fifteen families were part of the original establishment of Albuquerque.

Governed by Spanish elites, politicians, and soldiers, Albuquerque became the center of Spanish traditions, customs, and community. Although there had been Tewa Natives residing on the land long before Spanish settlement, the land was carved out for community and personal interests and allotted in land grants to Spanish settlers. By 1812 Albuquerque's population reached roughly 40,000 and diversified among Spaniards, Pueblo Natives, genízaros, and mestizos (Atencio 1986 67). While New Mexico was growing in numbers, in New Spain (now Mexico)

28 The town's first name was the Villa de Alburquerque de San Francisco de Xavier, the area's patron saint. But the Viceroy informed Cuervo y Valdez of King Philip V's decree that the next town established was to be named after him (Atencio 1986 p. 45).

resistance against the Spanish Crown culminated into The Mexican War of Independence (1812-1821). After the overthrow of the Spanish Crown in 1821, New Mexico became a territory of newly independent Mexico.

With the change in power came changes with the land. The Mexican government allocated land grants to Mexican residents and other non-Spanish populations--a major change in Spanish land policy (Dunbar Ortiz 1980). This alteration came in part due to the migration of Mexicans northward into New Mexico and to encourage other settlers to help develop and expand the towns. Another major change came in the form of citizenship. According to Tomás Atencio, after the War Spanish residents and Native populations in New Mexico became Mexican citizens. Since 1540, colonists based much of their identity from the circumstances of being subjects of the Spanish Crown, but now with the changes in the political landscape they were Mexican citizens, culturally mestizo, and under U.S. administration legally white (Gómez 2007 54-56; Menchaca 2002).

New Mexico saw another change in power in 1848 when the United States overthrew Mexico and claimed New Mexico as a federal territory (in 1850) under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Because of the relatively low EuroAmerican population in New Mexico, the territory did not receive statehood until sixty-two years later in 1912. Laura E. Gómez writes that proponents for the New Mexico territory had to develop a “progressive racial narrative” (2007 64) in order to establish a legitimate claim for statehood. New Mexico’s delegate to Congress Lebaron Bradford Prince lobbied articulately for New Mexico’s inclusion into the United States by situating the land’s history not with the narratives of Mexican or Native history, but

within the competing narrative of Spanish colonialism--a more fashionable history that mirrored the colonial desires of the northeastern United States (Prince 1883 351; Larson 1968).

Over the years Albuquerque grew in size and population, especially with the advent of Spanish, Mexican, Native, and European migration. In the 1880s, the railroad brought in large populations that established local community neighborhoods such as Los Griegos, Barelas, Los Duranes, and Martineztown (Best 1959). But these were not the only neighborhoods competing with Old Town. As the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway wound its way through Albuquerque, "New Town," or downtown Albuquerque, exploded in growth; banks, shops, hotels, and business offices became a new locus of tourism for Albuquerque (Bannerman 2009). This "New Town" became a competitor for Old Town, creating yet another narrative for New Mexico history.

Spanish Americans in Albuquerque felt the pressure to maintain their community identity in the midst of gentrification and transformation. Old Town resurfaced again as the crux that reinforced their ties to the land and served as the touchstone for their community history. Phillip Gonzáles writes in *Expressing New Mexico* that "[Spanish American's or Hispano's] community of memory rose to prominence between the 1890s and the 1930s, when the Nuevomexicanos came to a sharp awareness of their ancestry, which hey compacted within the territorial bounds of New Mexico" (2007 209). More specifically, Spanish Americans' "community of memory" sharpened its focus on Old Town, Albuquerque; using the

plaza to perform their Spanish heritage helped inaugurate Old Town as a sacred space.[29]

The Spanish legacy in Albuquerque grew in strength, both discursively and economically, as Old Town became the "center" of the town. Annual fiestas were created to commemorate Coronado, Oñate, and 1706 as events that made Albuquerque what it is today. Dressed in conquistador regalia, Hispanos fill the streets to reenact the settling of New Mexico and the formation of local Hispano identity. These fiestas create what Sylvia Rodriguez writes as "a ritual event that enacts collective and individual identities while achieving communitas through a mixture of resistant and accommodationist practices" (1998 40). In the case of Old Town, Hispanos resist Native American resentment toward Albuquerque's Spanish "forefathers" while accommodating the capitalist market by allowing Native Americans to sit on the concrete floors surrounding the plaza to sell their wares. Old Town, as a "home...and a stage for the exercise of power" (Stoelje 1993 135), was well equipped to attract consumers and build itself as a formidable opponent in Albuquerque's capitalist market. In fact, Old Town itself functioned as its own capitalist market, bound by a romance and nostalgia for things remembered.

Tourism plays a tremendous role in Old Town Albuquerque's history. With the railroad opening up of the West to tourists from the eastern United States and northern Europe, waves of travelers came to experience "authentic" Native life as told through postcards, dime novels, and travel logs (Ryan 1982; Weigle 1989). The

29 Victor Turner writes that a person's sense of belonging to a larger community intensifies when afforded a sacred space where other like-minded members can come together (1978 13). This unification, as Sarah Horton (2007) states, helps Spanish Americans maintain their claim as heirs to the Spanish colonial identity.

some of the most successful companies monopolizing on New Mexico's vaulted theme of the "land of enchantment" were the Fred Harvey Company and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe (ATSF) Railroad (Nickens 2009; Melzer 2009). Together they fostered what Leah Dilworth identifies as "a remarkable coherent--and persistent--version of the Southwest as a region inhabited by peaceful, pastoral people, who were 'living ruins'" (2001 143). However, the narrative both companies constructed reflected and spoke to middle-class American desires, rather than the lived experiences of Natives, Hispanos, and Anglos in New Mexico.

In Albuquerque, the Harvey Company capitalized on the railway station to produce a controlled and systematized narrative for tourists. The "Indian Building" engineered a museum-like setting that instructed tourists and visitors on Southwestern history and Native life (Dilworth 2001; Melzer 2008). In the business of packaging and selling "authentic" experiences, the Harvey Company's Indian Building created a "hierarchy of desire" (Dilworth 2001 148) by staging museum-like rooms leading to a gift shop and "manipulating tourists' desire[s] to possess the objects" (ibid). The Indian Building constructed a believable visual narrative that tourists could literally buy into. Built by Anglo entrepreneurs, the centers were not supposed to support local ethnic and cultural heritages, but to sanitize them for visitor consumption.

This center acted as markers of authority for Albuquerque; Old Town visually represented the historic claims supported by Harvey and ATSF and provided ideological and physical proof of an existence carefully crafted, packaged, and sold for consumption. The centers also functioned similarly to museums in their quest to

preserve and authorize history. As Karen Mary Davalos states, “these institutions, I argue, instruct visitors about who belongs and does not belong to the nation, or who contributes and does not contribute to that nation’s imagined civilizing force” (2001 6). Thus, the railroad centers allowed for a fetishizing gaze upon the “primitive” cultures while not fully allowing them into the national fabric. In fact, the very railroad itself promised only a temporary stay of “going native” with a quick retreat back to civilization.

Yet Native Americans also sold their wares at the stations. In some cases, they were hired by the Harvey Company to authenticate the scenery (Dilworth 2001 96). This visibility made them living vessels of their culture and engineered a truth-making schema that allowed for both their relative elimination from Old Town history by controlling their presence and their taxidermic presence in a fabricated past.[30] Any claims to authority that Native Americans’ products and actions engendered was diminished when compared to the Harvey museum’s powerful presence. In addition, tourists strengthened their social capital as middle-class, wealthy Anglo travelers in relation to the constructed objectivity of Native Americans. In the end, tourists left with knowledge of invented traditions, fabricated histories, and souvenirs as evidence of their contrived New Mexico and Old Town experience.

Old Town maintains its stake as the original site of Albuquerque through various functions and social events. Annual Founders Day events fill the streets to

30 Fatimah Tobing Rony writes in *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and the Ethnographical Spectacle* (1996) “I call the mode of representation of the ‘ethnographic’ which emerged from this impulse [to fetishize upon ‘the exotic’] *taxidermy*. Taxidermy seeks to make that which is dead look as if it were still living” (101). Thus to make static (or taxidermic) Native American customs and traditions, Fred Harvey instructed tourists to think of Natives as merely acting out a dead or dying culture. By slowing the pulse of Native life, Fred Harvey sped up the tourists’ consumer impulse and stabilized Old Town’s compulsion to fabricate history.

honor the “thirty” families that settled Albuquerque in 1706. Organized by the Old Town Founders Group, founded my Millie Santillanes, this celebration memorializes the contributions by the Spanish Crown in establishing Albuquerque. Included in the celebration is a re-enactment of Oñate’s journey northward into northern New Mexico. Performing 1706 endows Old Town residents with a powerful claim to the land, an overriding power that subsumes Native, Mexican, and, at times, U.S. ties to the land. Today, Old Town functions similarly to what Setha Low writes about plazas as “a contested terrain of cultural meaning, providing an example of how cultural meanings of the past are presented and represented in the built environment” (1995 759).

Whose Southwest Pietà?

In 1981, Albuquerque’s Art in Public Places (1% for the Arts) board and the National Endowment for the Arts contributed a total of fifty thousand dollars for a public artwork in Old Town. With no parameters as to what the piece should encompass, the city Arts Board searched for a suitable artist. According to Howard M. Kaplan, chairman of the Arts Board:

> Luis Jiménez, internationally known artist, was selected to create a sculpture for the City of Albuquerque as part of the City’s 1% For Art Program and the National Endowment for the Arts, Art in Public Places Grant. Mr. Jiménez was chosen by a jury of Art Experts from Albuquerque and the surrounding region as approved by the National Endowment. The jurors felt that Luis’ Southwestern background and his experience with art in public places commissions in other cities made him particularly suitable for this project (1/18/1983).

By 1981, Jiménez had already completed his first public sculptures *Vaquero* (1980) and Sodbuster (1981) for Houston, Texas and Fargo, North Dakota, and had made a

prominent name for himself in New York and the U.S. art world. Relocating to the Southwest in 1971, El Paso native Jiménez long claimed New Mexico as his second home (Birmingham interview 1985).

Jiménez first visited Tiguex Park across the street from the Albuquerque Museum in 1982 where the *Southwest Pieta* was intended to go. Jiménez stood atop the berm off 19th and Mountain Rd NW. He looked east and saw the Sandia mountains and immediately made the connection between the twin mountains outside of Mexico City--Popcatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl (ABQ Journal 1983). Jiménez carefully researched his previous sites meticulously to gauge their histories, cultures, and communities prior to designing his public works. Because Texas historically had been cattle country, Jiménez wanted to pay homage to and recover the history of the original cowboy--the Mexican vaquero. *Vaquero* was proposed for Tranquility Park in Houston in 1977 with partial funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, across the street from the city council chambers; but because of vehement protests from a city councilman and a county constable, it was moved to Moody Park in a working-class *Mexicano* neighborhood.[31] Jiménez's original commission design for North Dakota was to be a barn dance, but Jiménez quickly changed it to a farmer with his oxen because of the community's Scandinavian Lutheran heritage. Jiménez had confidently and successfully dealt with conflict in the past.

31 City council leaders publicly expressed that Jiménez's *Vaquero,* which depicted a Mexican cowboy whirling a gun in the air atop of bucking Appaloosa horse, would only damage the already negative perception of Mexican American Houstonians. However the location of the sculpture, directly across from pristine City Hall, city museums, and a well manicured landscape, may have been another reason to move the sculpture to the *barrio*. For opponents of Jiménez's sculpture, Moody Park (similar to Albuquerque's South Valley and San Antonio's West Side) fit the bill in terms of context, representation, and location.

Rough sketches of the proposed sculpture were shown to a small group of Old Town residents and members of the art community in June 1982, prior to its unveiling in 1983. According to Jiménez, the majority of the viewers in attendance expressed support of the artwork (ABQ Journal 7/29/1982); stating that he "only wanted to produce a strong sculpture that embodies symbols and imagery from the Southwest" (ibid), Jiménez drafted what he felt captures the various cultural heritages of the land. In an unpublished document Jiménez states why he focused on indigenous imagery for parts of the sculpture:

> I think of my work as an homage to those Native Americans and their culture that the Hispanos and later the Anglos have incorporated into what we now consider the culture of the Southwest. This piece is an example of how these cultures relate to each other for while the persons portrayed are Native Americans, this particular image has become the most widely used Hispanic theme in the West and can be seen in popular art such as calendars, murals and custom cars (no date).

Thus, Jiménez skillfully articulated New Mexico's mestizo roots and transnationalism through various iconography and simultaneously placed Native representation as central to New Mexico history. Jiménez's statement about Hispanics and Anglos borrowing Native American culture is important here; rather than trying to exemplify a particular culture's legacy in New Mexico, Jiménez created *Southwest Pietà* to recognize a lineage of cultures in the Southwest.

Preliminary sketches of *Southwest Pietà* [Figure 1] proved difficult for a few Albuquerque residents to understand at the 1983 forum. The form-fitting cloth that covered the female left little to the imagination; details of the female's body--including breasts, abdomen and groin--were carefully rendered visible in the drawings. The female's leg is bent upward and pulled open while her facial

expression gestures arousal. An eagle, a snake, and various cacti pervade the image, but the center foreground focuses on the sexualized female body. Although the male's chest is completely bare, the woman's body appears more nude and her body blocks the viewer from seeing the male figure's lower abdomen while almost exposing her own. In the sketches, the male figure is "perched" atop of the image along with the eagle and the female figure rests along the earth with the snake, creating simultaneous dichotomies: man/woman, earth/air, and Father Air/Mother Earth.

Death is represented in various ways throughout the lithograph. The female's left arm lays lifeless and prolapsed above the slithering serpent which her eyes are fixed upon. The ironic juxtaposition of life and death are signified by the arm and the snake. Held in her mournful lover's arms, the female's limp body reminds us of Christ's crucifixion popularized through Christian iconography. The two blossoms resting by her hair also signify her passing.[32]

Although there was no resolution to the onslaught of attacks, Jiménez left the meeting knowing that *Southwest Pietà* would never find its resting place anywhere near Old Town. The city Arts Board eventually rescinded its approval to place *Southwest Pietà* in Old Town and formed a committee to review new locations. In March of 1983, the location for the sculpture was finally chosen in Martineztown, much to the happiness of most Albuquerque residents. Five years later *Southwest Pietà* rooted itself to the land in Longfellow Park.

32 According to Bram Dijkstra cut flowers adorn dead females to "show [their] equivalence to them" (1986 55-56).

The final product was installed at the northwest corner of Longfellow Park in Martineztown in 1988 [Figure 2]. At first glance, we see an image of a dark-skinned man kneeling down with a woman lying limp in his arms. Surrounding them are an eagle, cacti, and a rattlesnake. Prominent colors in the sculpture are light, bright purples, brown, with hints of yellow, orange, red and blue. The bodies structured in the sculpture form a triangular shape as the woman forms the horizontal base and the male figure forms the diagonal lines that converge at the top of his head.

Upon closer inspection, the man and woman seem indigenous by phenotype and by external attributes. The man wears a feathered headband, the ceremonial garb of some Native American tribes. A purple cloth covers the woman's body from her cleavage to her ankle; her long wavy hair is reminiscent of Native American and Mexican women, symbolic of wisdom and long life. The dead woman's body is arched, resembling a massive mountain. The eagle in the sculpture is emblematic of wisdom, nationhood, and power in U.S./Native American/Mexican cultures. One plant is a Mescál, a traditional kind of cactus popularized by Southwest Apaches (a local tribe historically tied to Albuquerque and New Mexico), also known as *Mescaleros*. The other is a Maguey, a plant associated with Mexican cultural traditions and used for food and drink.

The indigenous couple in this sculpture represent a version of the popular Mexican story about an Aztec warrior sorrowfully carrying his dead lover. According to oral history, the Aztec gods were so moved by the star-crossed lovers that they turned them into mountains so that they would be united forever. The two mountains are today known as Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl and are located just outside of

Mexico City. According to Camille Flores-Turney," [f]or Mexicans and Mexican American people, the image represents an acknowledgement of their cultures' Indian component and of the mixed-blood character of Americas in general" (1997 24). Jiménez stated that the *Southwest Pietà* "was meant as a tribute to the identity of any culture that has been lost or threatened by the dominant culture. It's the history of mankind really" (*ibid*). The mountainous mass of land beneath the man and woman pays homage to the Sandia mountains that frame the north east side of Albuquerque.

Native imagery is central to the sculpture. The story line, the characters, and the geological symbols construct a visual narrative that undermines the central tenets of New Mexico colonial history. Jiménez's vision was partly to rethink history and to refashion a more complete story about the Southwest. Jiménez did so by utilizing borderlands visual theory thematically and aesthetically in the sculpture. He incorporated an array of cultural images into *Southwest Pietà* in a successful attempt to edify historical narratives that recognize non-Spanish communities as noble and autonomous. In addition, this multicultural image resists assimilationist rhetoric and can be seen as a decolonizing methodological practice that includes--rather than excludes, eliminates, or misrepresents--historical memory.

I contend that the aesthetic elements of borderlands visual theory appear first in the title "Southwest Pietà." Jiménez juxtaposed two images--Mexico's legendary volcanoes and European sculpture--perceived to be polar opposites (East v West, fine art v folk art, dominant v subordinate, classical v "primitive") and fashioned them with fiberglass and colors unique to the genre of sculpture. By combining two

dialogically opposed ideas and geographic origins into one cohesive and poignant image, Jiménez re-conceptualized history, perception, borders, and identity as hybrid and contingent. The image allows for what Guillermo Gómez-Peña refers to as a "multiplicity of voices, each speaking from a different part of [the] self" (1993 21) or the recognition of mestizo histories as central to our multicultural identities. Jiménez does not muffle one culture, but layers both methodically into a constellation. Jiménez's method is, I argue, a firm illustration of borderlands visual theory and follows suit with what Francesca González calls "trenzas [braids] of different analytical and experiential meanings" (1998 85) that allow multiple perspectives to connect and diverge at various moments, none isolated from another. Fusing or threading variant meanings and experiences offers a more pronounced view of the Southwest and, more importantly, American history.

This braiding or multiplicity of histories, perspectives, and knowledges reifies itself visually in *Southwest Pietà*. While it may seem illogical or incoherent to link the cruxificion of Christ with a "myth" of star-crossed Aztec lovers, Jiménez links the associations between the two; rather than focusing on borders that isolate and exclude, he eliminates limitations and produces a reflection of what he sees as encompassing of the Southwest. While "History" may only reflect the story of "discovery, settlement, and civilization" Jiménez pays careful attention to other histories caught up in the chaos of discourse. As Elsa Barkley Brown eloquently states:

> History is also everybody talking at once, multiple rhythms being played simultaneously. The events and people we write about did not occur in isolation but in dialogue with a myriad of other people and events. In fact, at

> any given moment millions of people are all talking at once. As historians we try to isolate one conversation and to explore it, but the trick is then how to put that conversation in a context which makes evident its dialogue with so many others-how to make this one lyric stand alone and at the same time be in connection with all the other lyrics being sung. Unfortunately, it seems to me, few historians are good jazz musicians..." (1992, 297-298).

It is in the rearrangement of the voices of history--and not in their *forte* or silences--that *Southwest Pietà* functions as a more coherent and dynamic representation of history. Jiménez could only hope his sculpture would create a "democratic memory of their collective past" (Savage 1997 5).

Jiménez's *Pietà* closely parallels the most famous pietà sculpture created by Michelangelo in 1499 for St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. It depicted the Virgin Mary carrying her dead son Jesus Christ, the Savior, after the Crucifixion. Made of white marble, Michelangelo's *Pietà* helped create a canon of sculptures, along with *Apollo Belvedere*, whose qualities, according to Kirk Savage, were regrouped "not under the banner of antiquity but of whiteness—a whiteness emphasized by the engraver's minimally hatched rendering of the white marble..." (1997 9). Classical sculpture has always been heavily relied on as a benchmark for whiteness and racial taxonomies (Gould 1981; Lewontin 1993). Jiménez's awareness of whiteness of a marbled color and of monument building as a process of national and racial definition enabled him to create works of art that challenged our collective memory of racialized people in the Southwest.

Made of fiberglass and full of vibrant colors, *Southwest Pietà* does not follow traditional models of American or European sculpture. Jiménez's choice to incorporate fiberglass into his public works takes American sculpture in new

directions beyond marble and bronze. Popularized during the neoclassical era of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Craven 1968 218), marble promised a romance and nostalgia for Grecian antiquity. Noted for its clean aesthetic and ability to reflect Greek conceptions of beauty and form, marble linked artists and audiences with antiquity, knowledge, and history. For American sculptors of the mid-nineteenth century, marble and bronze were mediums relevant in "fine art" circles, an arena not yet penetrated by American artists.

Artists Horatio Greenough[33], Hezekiah Augur, and Hiram Powers were among the first American artists to put America on the map with their marble designs.[34] Wayne Cravens writes that between 1825 and 1835 the United States saw a surge of sculpture in plaster and marble done by Americans (1968 95); at first making imitations of European art, sculptors began to develop American sculpture as a genre and become contenders in the larger art world. But the use of bronze came at a very particular moment in American history when the United States attempted to distinguish itself stylistically from Europe and also to maintain the perceived "naturalness" of nationhood. In addition, bronze could survive outdoor weather better than marble and its lighter weight made it more popular for equestrian and figure sculptures. Bronze allowed for a "naturalness" in representing individuals, something that distinguished the bronze era from marble and the neoclassic age (Cravens 1968 219).

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33 According to Wayne Craven, "Horatio Greenough gave America something it did not have before 1825--a sculptor of international reputation. His work attracted much interest in Italy and in England, and...made America conscious of sculpture as a fine art for and by Americans, whereas before, it had been the province of foreign artists" (1968 111).

34 In 1832 U.S. Congress commissioned Hiram Powers (the first to an American) to create a marble sculpture of George Washington.

Fiberglass, a more recent and local product used in the American Pop Art scene of the 1960s, is known for its application in kitsch items and automotive vehicles such as outdoor signs, low riders, and boats. Its ability to withstand weather as well as bronze is an added benefit. For Jiménez, fiberglass made a statement about its geographic and cultural context and allowed for creative use of color and shine. An American tradition grounded in a uniquely American time period, fiberglass made sculpture personal and more meaningful for American audiences. Thus, Jiménez contested the terrain of American sculpture by forcing art critics to look beyond traditional European bronze and marble and embrace the uniquely American sensibilities of fiberglass. *Southwest Pietà,* with its own sets of challenges and standards, brought to fruition Jiménez's own understanding of America via fiberglass.

The associations between the pieta image and the legendary mountains go beyond the southwest. By coupling an iconic European, Christian image with an indigenous, Mexican popular legend, *Southwest Pietà* portrays human emotions that transcend race, class, or geography. Positioning Ixtaccihuatl in place of crucified Christ, Jiménez does double work of making sacred the woman's body and immortalizing his own vulnerabilities. A man of virtue and vice, Jiménez brought in his own trials and triumphs into his artwork.

Personal tragedies in the artist's life also influenced *Southwest Pietà*. In a number of interviews in the late 1970s, Jiménez's recalled when his marriage to his third wife Cynthia Baca fell apart. Living in New York City caused a tremendous strain on the family. With recent eye surgeries to replace a cornea, Jiménez turned

inward and angry. His outbursts toward Cynthia grew worse. Aware of her husband's rather public infidelity (Baca Interview 2009) and fed up with their fighting, Cynthia and their two daughters left Jiménez in 1980. The couple divorced in 1982. An extremely painful ending for Jiménez, he chose to portray his love and loss of Cynthia through *Southwest Pietà*: "It was not a very clean divorce; it was messy, it was awful. There was a lot of pain...[and] grieving involved. And at the very core of the piece that's what its about" (Birmingham interview 1985). While Jiménez's pieta evoked painful memories of his past, little did he know that that same image would evoke very painful memories for the city of Albuquerque.

A memorial to love and loss was not what Old Town Founders Group representative Millie Santillanes saw (or chose to see). Santillanes based her arguments against *Southwest Pietà* on "cultural" difference (although her arguments are more racial) and what she claimed as historical inaccuracies. She further registered her distaste by citing other reasons why the image was wrong for Old Town. In addition to her fear of the impermanence of fiberglass, she argued that Mexico's legacy in New Mexico was brief and therefore overshadowed by Spain's lasting presence. By questioning Jiménez's history, "How long did the Mexican flag fly over New Mexico? Twenty-four years. How long did the Spanish flag fly? Over 300 years" (The NM Sun 1/26/1983 1) Santillanes aimed to diminish the Mexico's influence relative to Spain. She did not acknowledge that even with the change in colonial powers Mexican culture, tradition, and communities thrived long after U.S. occupation.

Had Santillanes not based her argument on issues of roots, we could have taken her other issue with the sculpture (that it does not represent Old Town) as potentially viable; but by claiming "native" to the land Santillanes revealed her very personal investment in protecting Spanish colonialism in Albuquerque. If she acknowledged the mestizaje of Mexico, of the original settlers of Old Town, and of *Southwest Pietà*, Santillanes would challenge and usurp her own historic claims to Spanish heritage and whiteness.[35] Historically, Spanish Americans (*criollos*) distanced themselves from Mexican Americans and Native Americans in order to establish their claim to whiteness. The privileges of property ownership, voting rights and legal representation (among others) were contingent upon phenotypic and racial categorizations (Gómez 2007; Haney-López 1997; Nieto-Phillips 2004).[36] Laura Gómez writes that "whiteness operated as a palliative to soften the sting of changing from colonial subjects to colonial objects" (2007 86). This distancing power (still today) reproduces similar colonial relationships that sever communities of color throughout New Mexico and the United States.

But the most successful argument posed against the sculpture was not based on race or culture, but on the "depiction of rape." Santillanes recounted a sixteenth century report of Spanish conquistadores raping a local Tiguex woman and claimed that *Southwest Pietà* purposefully retold this history. Invoking rape as justification for her resentment toward *Southwest Pietà* discredited the image and made it unacceptable for Old Town. Although one may wonder why a Spanish-identified Old

35 Millie Santillanes' claim to Spanish descend goes far beyond the fact that she was born and raised in Old Town, Albuquerque. Rosalia Durán, Millie's mother, was of the Durán and Montoya families that founded "Alburquerque" in 1706. (See http://www.nmhcpl.org/Remembering_Millie_Santilla.html)
36 Carey McWilliams writes about this Spanish "fantasy heritage" in is *North from Mexico* (1946). S

Town resident would recall this damaging allegation of her cultural history, Santillanes used it as a distraction. In order to counter the story *Southwest Pietà* portrayed--that of mestizaje and cultural hybridity--Santillanes constructed a sensational narrative that would render Jiménez's history-telling questionable. Yet the perpetrator (the Spanish conquistador) is absent from the image, which would have strengthened Santillanes' claim. So in order to account for the absent third figure, Santillanes inserted herself in the narrative rhetorically by claiming offense to the image; but her anger (or victimization) is not tied to the woman's raped body, but with how her Spanish heritage was put on trial.

The absent third figure then shifts from a Spanish soldier (the alleged perpetrator) to Millie Santillanes who appropriates the role of a victim--but not of sexual rape. She implies that the "rape scene" the sculpture memorializes is that of her colonial heritage or her own ties to 1706. For her, placing *Southwest Pietà* next to Old Town would engineer a colossal rape of Spanish colonial history, culture, and traditions.

Millie Santillanes' narrative distraction kept proponents of Jiménez's sculpture busy by arguing against her interpretation. Instead of focusing on the real issue at hand--Old Town residents' rejection of an indigenous image that countered Spanish colonial history in Albuquerque--community members fought over how to make sense of the highly personalized meaning of *Southwest Pietà*. Some Native Americans used the image to recover their history in the Southwest. Some Chicanas/os and Mexicanas/os used the image to recognize Mexico's influence in New Mexico. Some Spanish Americans used the image to harden the discourse

protecting the legacy of Spanish colonialism in Albuquerque. Distracted in their attempts to “educate” each other about their views and concerns, each community lost sight of the main point of the sculpture--in the midst of difference, issues of history, community, and memory are a human concern more so than a racial or cultural one.

A dangerous tool used to separate and disempower, distractions keep communities occupied with their own marginalization. The master’s tools, as Audre Lorde characterizes them, teach us to admonish difference rather than see them as the raw material necessary for building community. As Lorde states, “The failure...to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower” (2007 112). Speaking about feminism in 1979, Audre Lorde argued that feminists were stuck trying to prove their legitimacy rather than creating new tools to dismantle the master’s house:

> Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master’s concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of women of Color to educate white women--in the face of tremendous resistance--as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought (2007 113).

Lorde’s comments help illuminate the tensions involved in the *Southwest Pietà* controversy. Hispanas/os, Mexicanas/os, and Native Americans competed with each other’s victimhood rather than seeing each other’s differences as tools to build community and to mobilize as a critical mass against oppressive structures.

Although Old Town and Spanish colonialism in Albuquerque could be seen as the dominant culture, in the large schema of race, community, and history in the United States, Spanish Americans and New Mexico have had a long and (still) enduring battle in its inclusion into the national fabric of American history.

In the end, *Southwest Pietà* found a home, Old Town preserved its image, and the master's tools succeeded in dividing the Albuquerque communities. But the story did not end here. To fully understand the controversy of Jiménez's sculpture and the divisive nature of identity politics, we must further explore the issue of "perspective" and Old Town's social map of Spanish conquest.

One Image, Many Meanings

At the forefront of the *Southwest Pietà* controversy was Emilia "Millie" Santillanes, a long time resident of Old Town who claimed descent from the 1706 founders of Albuquerque. Along with her contention that the sculpture depicted a "rape" scene, Santillanes argued against the durability of fiberglass, the fading of the colors, the obvious Mexican imagery, and the fact that Jiménez was not from New Mexico. Santillanes staunchly protected and honored her (Old Town) Spanish colonial history. Her presence was felt in the forum as she proclaimed, "I can't believe you would put such a thing up there that would make people angry every day...To me, this is not a happy piece" (Albuquerque Tribune 1/16/1983).

Ellen Landis, then director of the Albuquerque Museum, expressed her shock at the outrageous claims made about the image. Although aware of the controversy prior to the forum, Landis did not expect such an outpouring of anger and resentment toward Jiménez's sculpture. An art historian by education, Landis saw in

the sculpture a remarkable aesthetic and innovative use of materials (personal interview 2009). For her, *Southwest Pietà* was not about identity politics in New Mexico, but about Jiménez's ability to transcend traditional models of sculpture and European art.

Frank Martinez, life-time resident of Martineztown Albuquerque, attended the forum in support of Jiménez. For him, "the Mexican influence played a significant role in the development of the city...It is only fitting that the statement be made in [Martineztown] that has struggled to maintain its Mexican heritage" (ABQ Journal 1983 1D). Predominantly a Mexican-American working class neighborhood, Martineztown was created by migrant workers coming north to work on the railroads. Thus, for him the sculpture would recuperate this significant portion of New Mexico history.

Luis Jiménez, struck by the (at times) violent outbursts in and out of the museum, maintained his composure and defended his position. It was more than just a sculpture about a Mexican myth, it was about universal emotions of love and mourning. He chose an image people of several ethnic categories could relate to, something that many people have seen in calendars, restaurants, murals or heard in story telling.

The above views on *Southwest Pietà* demonstrate the very personal and political associations between history-making, memory-making, and community-making. Although three of the four perspectives are shared among one racial/ethnic group--Hispanics--their perspectives are influenced by how they *culturally* identify: Spanish in Santillanes' case, Mexicano in Martinez's case, and Chicano/American in

Jiménez's case. The way each person understood their identity and relationship to one another shaped how they made meaning of *Southwest Pietà*. It is through their experiences of the sculpture that this chapter takes shape. Luis Jiménez knew that identity is informed by our surroundings (see chapter two). His understanding of identity is better understood within the rubric of situated knowledge[37] defined by Donna Haraway as the belief that "truth" and knowledge are produced based on our position as partially-informed spectators of history. As Lila Abu-Lughod states, we are all always "standing on shifting ground [that] makes it clear that every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking, a speaking from somewhere" (2006 155). Thus, the four acts of knowing and speaking mentioned above are partial truths that must be articulated in conjunction with each other. In the case of Albuquerque, five public arenas, or five "acts of knowing," shape the landscape memory of Spanish Old Town.

Old Town is the locus of a number of memorials that remind visitors Albuquerque's Spanish colonial history. San Felipe de Neri church, the Albuquerque Museum, an Old Town tourist map, Betty Sabo's and Reynaldo "Sonny" Rivera's *La Jornada* (2005), and the plaza serve very specific ideological ends. Although catering to the tourism industry crucial to New Mexico's economy, this site serves a more important end for Spanish-identified residents of Albuquerque. A self-sustaining living monument, Old Town establishes historical ties and creates a landscape memory; it allows for a desirable loyalty and sense of belonging to the city, the state, and more importantly to the land. This "site of memory" (in Gonzales 2007) binds the

37 See Donna Haraway's "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective" in *Feminist Studies* 14 no. 3, 575-599.

Hispano community to their imagined Spanish community (Anderson 2006) and enshrines them with discursive power over the landscape.

While all five objects work together to support and sustain Old Town and the progeny of Spanish colonialism, I will focus on the map, the museum, and the monument. According to Benedict Anderson the census, the museum, and the map help shape how hegemonic powers imagine the geography of their dominion, the nature of the people it governs, and the legitimacy of its ancestry (2006 164). The tourist map [Figure 3] sets the parameters for Old Town, which includes the church, the museum, the sculpture garden, the plaza, shopping areas, and an elementary school. Not included in the map is Tiguex Park, directly across the street from the Albuquerque Museum. The map only highlights specific monuments and public places that offer a visual register of Spanish heritage.

Museums are contested spaces where multiple communities--many in the name of nationalism--attempt to write their history into the present. Most, if not all, museums are shaped and influenced by identity politics and difference. Although the Albuquerque Museum is not in question, its presence as an author and guarantor of Old Town's homogenous and "unified" history must be considered[38]. Spanish-identified residents' goals in sustaining their narrative of cultural-nationalism "require[s] that the public museum support this singularity by condensing and reconfiguring its practices, smoothing out differences and promoting unity, and ignoring contradictions that did not fit the singular image of the nation and the

38 I am hesitant to characterize the Albuquerque Museum as entirely invested in nationalist endeavors. Several art exhibitions, including Jiménez's *Man on Fire* exhibition, evidence the contested terrain the ABQ museum rests on.

citizen" (Dávalos 2001 35). Thus, the museum apparatus in Old Town hardens the discourse of Spanish heritage by ignoring difference and projecting a unified historical account of Albuquerque.

Old Town art, I argue, could be read as a census of its community. As mentioned earlier, Old town residents are highly selective of the images that represent their community and their history. The art recounts earlier Spanish communities in Albuquerque and codifies the land with a symbolic counting of Spanish residents. The Spanish colonists, setters, and soldiers of the past are re-presented via the sculptures as quasi citizens of the present. This visual census evidences Old Town's claim as a Spanish community. While the equestrian sculpture of Juan de Oñate successfully (and overtly) compounds Old Town's Spanish history, Betty Sabo's and Reynaldo "Sonny" Rivera's *La Jornada*[39] (2005) [figure 4] sculpture does double work reifying the census of Spanish Old Town--"manufacturing its own public" (Savage 1997 7)--and portraying the "harmonious" relationship between Europeans and Natives.

Partitioned into five sections, *La Jornada* reenergizes the story of Spanish settlement in New Mexico. The first section depicts a Spanish conquistador understood to represent the controversial figure of Oñate. Flanking him are two

39 In 1997, Millie Santillanes advocated for a sculpture that would honor the Spaniards' migration, known as *La Entrada,* into New Mexico. The original sixteen-thousand dollar commission was for a bust of Oñate but was later changed to a bronze monument depicting Oñate kneeling atop of a kiva with a cross in one hand and a sword in another with one moccasin leading down from the steps of the kiva. The missing moccasin implied the atrocity at Acoma Pueblo in 1599. But the arts board rejected the design and mandated that 1) the Native experience would be a part of the memorial and 2) that the memorial focus not on Oñate but on Spanish settlers who came with him. Millie Santillanes, her grandchildren, and former Mayor Martin Chavez were used as models to cast the Spanish families. After a series of proposals were submitted and rejected, *La Jornada* was approved with funding from taxpayer money and private donations.

soldiers scouting forward and looking back, a Native male serving as a guide, and a friar kneeling down for prayer or penitence. Just behind this ensemble are a Spanish man hoisting a lamb upon his shoulders (reminiscent of the iconic "good shepherd") and a Spanish woman with child riding a donkey (also reminiscent of the European image of Madonna and child). Off to the side are women tending to children while several rams and lambs follow along. Following the animals is a conquistador herding livestock, a man on horseback attempting to pull an oxcart out from the ground, and two men pushing the cart from behind.

This gendered and socially hierarchical image carefully embodies the racial and social makeup of sixteenth century New Mexico. While the monument clearly documents specific gender roles, the racial and social "roles" are implied with the Native present merely as a guide and two men dressed in civilian clothing at the tail end of the monument doing manual labor. Moreover, *La Jornada* demonstrates how art reflects upon dominant values and history while tacitly and tactfully tokenizing "other" perspectives. Taken together, this monument exemplifies the Spanish presence while rendering Native Americans' presence as singular. The journey northward, as depicted in the monument, eliminates the messy history of contact and contention and only shows a harmonious relationship between the Spanish colonizers and the Native(s).

The final monument erected in honor of New Mexico's *Cuarto Centenario*, which later included Nora Naranjo-Morse's[40] *Numbe Whageh* (2005) [Figure 5],

40 Naranjo-Morse was asked to participate in the three-artist memorial to the *Cuarto Centenario*. The Arts Board felt they needed representation from the three major racial/ethnic groups of New Mexico. After a major controversy in depicting the history of New Mexico, Rivera and Sabo continued in

reached almost $700,000 and the location was moved from berm at Tiguex Park--exactly where Jiménez's *Southwest Pietà* was proposed for--right across the street to the sculpture garden at the Albuquerque Museum[41].

The Arts Board intended the monument to represent the relationship between Natives and Spaniards prior to and post Conquest (an extension to the census of Albuquerque). Including a Native artist and "the Native experience" into the memorial for the *Cuarto Centenario* was an attempt to represent various cultures into one historical narrative. The problem was that it constructed the Native presence within (or as as actor of) Spanish history, leaving out their own historical narrative. After much controversy about matters of representation, both the bronze monument and the earth sculpture were installed in the sculpture garden. If Jiménez's sculpture had been placed in Tiguex Park directly across the street from Sabo's and Rivera's monument, then the two works would have sparked a war over presiding histories. This space could have engineered what Santillanes so fearfully projected--a dialogical battleground severing Old Town from the land and providing a more accurate historical census.

Since the Old Town tourist map does not even include Tiguex Park, the dispute over *Southwest Pietà* turned into an issue of proximity. Having an image so close to Old Town would potentially serve as a counter discourse to the town's Spanish origin story and according to Santillanes, "We founded this city...there

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creating the sculpture and Naranjo-Morse created a separate memorial from a Native perspective of the land, water, and spirit.

41 See Kathy Friese's "Contesting Oñate: Sculpting the Shape of Memory" in Gonzales' *Expressing New Mexico* (2007) for a critical discussion of *Numbeh Whageh* and the Cuarto Centenario controversy.

wasn't even a wheel here" (quoted in June-Frisen 2005). Santillanes was partially correct in her statement; prior to Spanish conquest, there were no wheels, no churches, or no monuments. Natives did not attach themselves to a built environment, but to the land itself. But Spaniards saw the land as potential for empire, not a source of identity. So if historians of Albuquerque and New Mexico want to know the story of the land, they must recognize that this wisdom sits in places[42], not the built environment. And the most enduring legacy of Old Town is in its hybridity--not its homogeneity.

Southwest Pietà was dangerous knowledge for Old Town, Albuquerque. It challenged the landscape memory, it illuminated a Mexican and Native connection to the land, and it offered a hybrid image that crossed aesthetic, historical, and conceptual borders. When Luis Jiménez accepted the commission he did not anticipate any controversies and accusations. The past was waiting for Jiménez when he came to New Mexico; a past unacknowledged, unexplored, and untold in Old Town. *Southwest Pietà* was a corrective to Old Town history. It did not claim homogeneity or "truth" as *La Jornada* or the Oñate sculpture, but it did represent the hybrid, diverse, and transnational experiences of the Southwest via culture, story, and the land. Jiménez knew he could never fully represent an entire community with his art; Albuquerque's cultural politics has divided its community for centuries. But in the end, his sculpture was a testament to the vibrance of life in the Southwest; the images and stories he told in *Southwest Pietà* meant to capture the universal emotions felt by human kind undivided by race or culture.

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42 Keith Basso 1996.

Figures

Figure1. Working Drawing for Southwest Pietá, 1983.

Oil on pastel on paper. a: 60 1/8” x 119” b: 59 7/8” x 135”
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Gift of Frank Ribelin

Figure 2. *Southwest Pietá,* 1984.

Fiberglass 120” x 126” x 72”
Commission for City of Albuquerque, National Endowment for the Arts grant and City of Albuquerque 1% for Arts Funds

Figure 3. Map of Old Town Albuquerque, New Mexico.

http://www.albuquerqueoldtown.com/map.aspx

Figure 4. *La Jornada*, 2005.

Bronze sculpture (1 of 6 photos). Various dimensions. Betty Sabo and Reynaldo “Sonny” Rivera. City of Albuquerque 1% for Arts Funds and private donations.

Figure 4. *La Jornada* (2 of 6)

Figure 4. *La Jornada* (3 of 6)

Figure 4. *La Jornada* (4 of 6)

Figure 4. *La Jornada* (5 of 6)

Figure 4. *La Jornada* (6 of 6)

Figure 5. *Numbe Whageh* earth sculpture various dimensions.

Nora Naranjo-Morse. City of Albuquerque 1% for Arts Funds.

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Chapter 4

The Campus of Enchantment: Challenging Tricultural Harmony in an Institutional Setting through *Fiesta Jarabe*

Ten yards away from a U.S.-Mexico border crossing station in San Diego, California rests Luis Jiménez's *Fiesta Jarabe* (figure 1). Full of vibrant colors and bold movements, this sculpture celebrates the dynamism that exists along and across the border. Commissioned by the federal General Service Administration (GSA) in 1984 and installed in 1991, Jiménez crafted an object the he felt would best reflected border culture. The sculpture's home, the Otay Mesa border station, is the first site that many U.S. and Mexican citizens and migrants see when crossing the border by car, bus, or foot. Although border stations are often intimidating and at times hostile, Jiménez's *Fiesta Jarabe* seems to welcome visitors and residents south of the border.

At a cost of approximately $57,000, San Diego's *Fiesta Jarabe* stands on an eight-foot tall pedestal peering across the border (Pincus 1984 D-4). While it may seem welcoming to most border crossers, some critics mainly from Mexico have expressed their concern. One Mexican business woman stated that the male figure did not look Mexican because he was too dark, "too Indian" (Hickey, 1997 32). The male's skin color caused a slight uproar for some, but for many others the two dancers brought to life a well understood aspect of Mexican culture, the proclivity to use dance as a healing and revitalizing ceremony.

The GSA committee who selected the piece was composed of professional artists, academics, and curators who had been convened to identify some of the

best American artists. Members of the regional GSA committee included Mary Beebe, curator for special collections at the University of California at San Diego; Reggie Smith, chair of the county arts council; Richard Koshalek, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; and Judith Baca, world-renowned muralist, director of Social and Public Art Resource Center, and friend of Jiménez.[43] That Luis Jiménez and his *Fiesta Jarabe* were selected to represent the United States' side of the border and, by extension, American institutions reflects the move to represent the border and border crossing as porous, multicultural, and contingent.

Six years later the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque commissioned a cast of *Fiesta Jarabe* (a fourth of its kind) that was later installed in 1996. The sculpture sits on a small plaza in between two of the most recognizable buildings on campus: Johnson Gym and Popejoy Hall. The space is adjacent to the Student Union Building, another UNM landmark, and bounded by a new parking structure, and the Center for the Arts. *Fiesta Jarabe* occupies the main gateway onto the university and thus serves to greet students, faculty, staff, and visitors walking through campus. Because of its monumental size and bold and bright colors, it is almost impossible to overlook. One cannot help but stare at and examine the cultural, physical, and regional representation "Fiesa Jarabe" portrays—that was precisely the point for Jiménez.[44] This chapter explores the impact of the statement of Jiménez's sculpture at the University of New Mexico for it challenges the perceived racial, ethnic, and cultural concord--tricultural harmony--in New Mexico and at the University of New Mexico.

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43 "Sculptor unveils model of work" *The San Diego Union*. Tuesday, July 29, 1986, D-4.
44 The sculpture is misspelled "Fiesa Jarabe" on accident by the artist.

Three important considerations shape this chapter. Firstly, I wish to demonstrate how campus art at the University of New Mexico reflects the complex and contradictory history of New Mexico in light of the monikers so often attributed to the stated. Touted as the "Land of Enchantment" this desgination is replete with notions of "tri-cultural harmony." Because public art helps shape relationships between people and the environment, this chapter will concentrate on demystifying the perceived racial accord in the state and on campus as depicted through campus art. Secondly, a close examination of two public pieces reveals the troubling ways in which the University of New Mexico's campus art perpetuates local romanticism and reproduces colonial relationships at the state's flagship university and historically under-represented groups. By incorporating student opinion from my Southwest Studies course, I will situate student voice along side a visual analysis of selected campus art as a means to gauge student opinion on the representations the campus serves up. Lastly, I contend that *Fiesta Jarabe* offers another model for representing multiple perspectives of history and culture on campus.

Fiesta Jarabe's proposed location, the crossroads of Central Avenue and Cornell Street, would have opened up a different message to a different audience; the decision to move the sculpture more central onto campus changed its meaning. A monumental sculpture of working-class *Mexicanos* directly in front of Popejoy Hall not only changes the dynamics of ethnic representation at UNM but it also creates a dialectic about inclusion and exclusion on an institutional scale. *Fiesta Jarabe*'s physical context (its location, landscape, or environment) impacts how we

understand the object; more importantly, the sculpture changes the campus context by displaying Mexican Americans prominently on campus.

A Not So Enchanting Land...

The romance of New Mexico and the Southwest, unwavering in the 21st century, has roots as far back as the mid-nineteenth century. Captured in images and text, New Mexico became a myth long before it was inhabited by European and American colonizers. As will be explored in the next chapter, ethnographic writings, landscape art, and western novels attempted to capture a nostalgic view of New Mexico untouched by human kind and unchanged by industrialization. Of the early writers, one in particular helped shape New Mexico's romantic impulse. Charles Lummis, in his 1893 book *The Land of Poco Tiempo*, described New Mexico in three words: "Sun, Silence,...Adobe" (3). For him, New Mexico was the "Great American Mystery--the National Rip Van Winkle--the United States that is *not* United States" (emphasis his, 3). A state unscathed by industrialization, popular culture, and modernity were only a few of the illustrious and romantic assertions that acclaimed ethnographer, writer, and adventurer Charles Lummis elaborated in his writings on his 3,507 mile journey from Ohio to Southern California (Lummis c. 1923 p. 12). In his several decades of writings and publications, Lummis successfully crafted the character of New Mexico as one of the last remaining embers of tranquility unmarked by external forces.

Prior to 1884, New Mexico and the Southwest were characterized as barren, untamed, and uncivilized. Written in dime novels and spoken in songs as unkept and devious, this region of the newly industrial United States became reflective of exotic

and phantasmic stories told by the likes of Lummis. Although few traveled to and through New Mexico prior to the late nineteenth century, many people claimed to know the spirit and landscape of this foreign land. It was not until the railroads crossed into the Southwest that a new myth came to the forefront. According to James W. Byrkit,

> the nation and the world understood this region to be a vast physical and cultural desert, repulsive and dangerous and totally without attraction other than its storied mineral wealth. In one year's time this negative image changed diametrically. The newly available, fast and easy transportation to the region made possible by the completion of both the Atlantic & Pacific (1883) and the Southern pacific (1881) railroads played a role in this rapid metamorphosis... (1989 xvii).

The myth of abundant desolation was overturned by the booming industries of the railroad and tourism, but it was the work of Charles Lummis that solidified the mystical legacy of New Mexico into American culture. Lummis' central role in shaping the mythic Southwest as a genre must not go understated; much writings--history and ethnographic books to name a few--rely heavily on his romantic descriptions. It was his creative yet inaccurate perspective of New Mexico's land, sky, and people that "combined alchemically to create an hallucinogenic 'Land of Enchantment'" (Byrkit 1989 xxiv). Lummis welcomed the idea of exoticism in describing New Mexico; his intent was to set up a bohemian view where the Southwest was a place to escape from the ordinary, the mundane civilized, industrial world.

Charles Fletcher Lummis was born on March 1, 1859 in Lynn, Massachusetts. Having lost his mother at a very young age, Lummis was raised by his father who worked at a local school. He attended Harvard University until 1881 (in Lummis 1894

12) where he then accepted a job at the *Los Angeles Times* (*ibid*). It was at his departure with a Cincinnati newspaper that he undertook a cross-country journey through New Mexico. This three thousand-plus mile trip would later be published in his 1892 book *A Tramp Across the Continent*. Once reaching Los Angeles, Lummis assumed the role of city editor at a time when the city experienced a population boom that almost quadrupled its size (*ibid).* At the age of 29 he experienced physical paralysis from exhaustive working conditions and temporarily relocated to New Mexico and established residence in San Mateo and Isleta Pueblo. During this time Lummis wrote about and photographed his time in New Mexico. Six books most notably track his intervention in situating New Mexico in American culture: *A New Mexico David* (1891), a book of short stories about the southwest; *A Tramp Across the Continent* (1892); *Some Strange Corners of Our Country* (1892); *The Land of Poco Tiempo* (1893) which depicted Native American and Spanish life in New Mexico; *The Spanish Pioneers* (1893); and *The Man who Married the Moon* (1894) detailing Native American folklore.[45]

Throughout the work of Charles Lummis, New Mexico is rendered silent, asleep, and unchanged. Lummis painstakingly attempts to depict this primordial land as foreign to the rest of the United States. He writes “It is a land of quaint, swart faces, of Oriental dress and unspelled speech; of polytheism and superstition, where the rattlesnake is a demigod and the cigarette a means of grace, and where Christians mangle and crucify themselves--the heart of Africa beating against the ribs of the Rockies” (1923 5). This foreignness, exhibited by the rhetoric of

45 See C. D. Willard in Lummis’ *Land of Sunshine* (1989).

Orientalism and Africa, creates a vast distance of proximity, both ideological and geographical, from other states and the American state of mind. For New Mexico to be rendered quiet and quaint goes against all the historical trauma experienced since cultural contact between (and among) Native and European populations.[46]

That New Mexico is part of the United States that is "*not* United States" speaks volumes to the historic, racial, ethnic, and cultural discord rampant in twentieth-century America. Yet Lummis' characterization of what New Mexico is *not* is further nuanced by his ability to render racialism invisible in the scope of his writings. In "The Golden Key to Wonderland," Lummis states "There is no other State in the Union of such centuried Romance as New Mexico; nor other town so venerable as Santa Fe, nor other road with half the history or a tenth the tragedies of the old Santa Fe Trail...Nor is there elsewhere in all North America another Aristocracy so ancient, so poised, so rich in ritual and drama and spirituality..." (reproduced in Meléndez et al 2001 8). Rather than invoking the material and psychological consequences of colonialism and imperialism that helped carve out and raze New Mexico, Lummis manifests a nostalgic and ancient landscape of untouched authenticity.

In his November 25th, 1884 letter to the editorial board of the *Los Angeles Times* Charles Lummis wrote "Here's looking at you from the quaint plazas of New Mexico's Ancient Metropolis. If you feel half as well-suited to be in the Ancient Metropolis of Ohio as I am to be here in the last in the City of the Holy Faith, you are indeed content. This flat little town of dry mud looked as handsome to me as the

46 Note various points of contention in New Mexico's history in the previous chapter.

New Jerusalem, when I crawled over the sandhills into view of it" (in Byrkit ed., 1989 108). Although this style of writing is not remotely different than much of his travel entries, his reference to New Mexico as the New Jerusalem is striking. In biblical writings, Jesus Christ left His followers with a promise to prepare a place for them in Heaven, He acknowledged their new place would be of unimaginable beauty and tranquility (John 4:13).[47] Paralleling New Mexico to New Jerusalem conjures very specific ideas for Lummis' audience. Both distant lands require the belief of imaginative, pastoral environments that are removed and protected from negativity and the corruption of ideals; for New Mexico that meant industrialization and modernity, for New Jerusalem that meant earthly temptation and evil. But in order for New Mexico to possess any form of resemblance to the promised land, its history of war, genocide, and racism had to be removed from the visual and narrative plane of its culture and community. More importantly, New Mexico's and the southwest's European conflict had to be rendered harmonious first, then transparent.

The perceived tranquility, peace, and stillness of New Mexico had to describe not only the landscape, weather, and fauna, but also the relationship between ethnic and racial communities. Thus, a trifecta of racial and ethnic groups was constructed to embody a unified, seamless community of multicultural accord. The infamous title of "Land of Enchantment" became New Mexico's tour-de-force the decades to come. This enchanted land conveyed to the nation and the world a mystic land untouched by outside forces. The people who live together in New Mexico are depicted as

47 In Revelations 21:2 John writes "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

communal and equitable to one another. All is well in the Land of Enchantment; there are no residual impacts of colonization on non-Europeans. In fact, the only attention brought to race and ethnicity is in naming the three groups that coexist peacefully in New Mexico.

In his discussion about New Mexico's cultural politics Michael Trujillo calls into question the notion of the Land of Enchantment. In his book *The Land of Disenchantment: Latina/o Identities and Transformations in Northern New Mexico* Trujillo offers an enlightening explanation of the term:

> Premised on the notion of Native American-Latino-Anglo 'tricultural harmony,' the popular conceptualization of New Mexico as the 'Land of Enchantment' powerfully fuses race, landscape, architecture, and food into romance and commodity (Lomelí, Sorel, and Padilla 2002; Rodríguez 2003). Precursors may be found in the late nineteenth-century writings of Charles Lummis (Gutiérrez 2002). In New Mexico, Lummis found a primitive, primordial place that compared favorably to both the Orient and the 'heart of Africa'" (2009 4).

As a social and political construct, tricultural harmony exhibits a race-free inscription of inter-group harmony. This racial accord flattens out the socio-political realities of all three groups--especially as concerns the relationships among them. Thus historical knowledge and collective memory are sacrificed to a symbolim that seeks to hide the political economy of the region. By erasing violent historical accounts and loading the past with romance and imperialist nostalgia, New Mexico gets pushed out of the center of American history.

Laura Gómez delves deeper into the myth of tricultural harmony by looking at the progressive racial narrative of New Mexico history during its protracted bid for statehood (Gómez 2007 78). Her analysis of tricultural harmony as a mechanism to lobby in favor of statehood is insightful. By her account this romantic theme did

double work of highlighting the Anglo influence in New Mexico and edifying the image of the region as it played up Spanish borderlands history by emphasizing the romance of Spanish contact and conquest. roots. The "tri*cultural*" is strategic because as Gómez writes "there is an emphasis on *cultural* difference, rather than race, allowing New Mexicans to talk about race without talking about race" (2007 78). The perceived "harmony" negates the centuries-long history of ethnic, class, gender, sexual, and racial turmoil. Her final critique of tricultural harmony is in its "implicit explanation of group-based inequality as rooted in cultural difference..." (2007 79). By peeling back the layers of triculturalism in New Mexico, Gómez points out how racial tensions and silences exist beneath the tricultural facade.

By the 1920s, the prominence of art, tourism and the commodification of cultural forms in New Mexico was ubiquitous. Colonialism is reflected and reified in various parts of New Mexico through its art and architecture. These industries have profound and lasting effects on contemporary race relations and identity politics for Nuevomexicanos. As Sylvia Rodriguez writes, the impacts of tourism and race-class relations in northern New Mexico "warrant a sustained project of critical analysis focused upon the ideological workings of the state's 'enchantment industry" (in Wrobel and Long 2001 194). By her estimation, the most prominent assessment of the impact of whiteness and tourism in New Mexico's cultural politics can be seen in an analysis of art in New Mexico as "racial inscription" (194-195). In short, the majority of art in New Mexico is injected with ethno-racial meanings that, if not questioned, can supplement the romanticism of New Mexico and can reproduce imperialist and racialist ideology through public art.

The romantic impulse of New Mexico caters to middle-class, Anglo, hetero-normative values for premeditated reasons. It allows Anglos--and those claiming whiteness--to simultaneously feel a "semi-spiritual relationship" toward the Land of Enchantment, Native Americans, and Nuevomexicanos while not having to acknowledge the histories of violence brought on by European colonization. Thus, by not calling attention their privilege as white(ened) tourists and residents of New Mexico they sustain their power and recede their whiteness to the shadows. By highlighting three important visual signifiers "composed of Indians; a vast, empty, arid landscape; and adobe architecture," (2001 196) race, and more importantly whiteness, began to dematerialize from the visual semiotics of New Mexico art.

Sylvia Rodríguez argues that one result is that whiteness as a racial category disappears from the visual field. Rodriguez roots Southwest romanticism in art to the Taos art colony and to one of the colony spark plugs, Mabel Dodge Luhan.[48] Artists such as Bert Geer Phillis and Ernest L. Blumenschein, two of the "Taos Six" who founded the art colony in 1898, attracted artists from around the nation to come and explore the rich cultures of New Mexico and create images that reflected a refined and "fine art" attitude about the landscape. An aesthetic of romanticism and nostalgia sprung forth from the art colony that had lasting effects on future art colony "residents", including the last and youngest artist Kenneth Adams whose work would later adorn the walls of the University of New Mexico. New Mexico artists retreated from the explicit racialization of communities, something that Rodriguez questions. She asks unsettling questions as to why there was relatively little to no white people

48 See Lois Rudnick's *Utopian Vistas: Mabel Dodge Luhan and the American Counterculture* (1998) for a discussion of the Taos art colony and Luhan's impact on New Mexican art.

depicted in art-colony art (2001 198). Rodríguez concludes that for Anglo hegemony and whiteness in New Mexico to go unnoticed it relied on dominance of the subaltern and also on the subaltern's co-construction of a race-neutral social arrangement (that is triculturalism). Thus, a very clear and present Anglo domination of the region was transparent while, paradoxically, the physicality of whiteness is eliminated from public manifestations of the Land of Enchantment (201). In other words, "...inclusion of the master spoils the magic" (199).

Rodriguez's most significant contribution to the study of race and tourism in New Mexico art is her analysis of what she terms the "Vanishing Anglo." In her "Tourism, Whiteness, and the Vanishing Anglo" Rodriguez writes,

> On the one hand this 'vanishing' is consistent with the invisibility or transparency of whiteness in general. As the unmarked category in the U.S. racial order, whiteness is by definition invisible. This invisibility is a product of white privilege, which involved the collective power to name or mark who is 'colored,' ethnic,' racial,' or nonwhite. It implies that to be white is none of the above and synonymous with what is normal and thus unmarked. Whiteness is usually referred to in the 'new whiteness studies scholarship' as a category, but it also involves practice or sets of practices, of what ethnic tourism, or tourism in search of ethnically exotic others, is a prime example. Whiteness has been invisible but at the same time organizationally central to the construction of art and romantic representations of New Mexican society as ethnic and exotic for the purpose of promoting Southwestern tourism (in Wrobel and Long 2001 195).

The vanishing Anglo phenomenon is not only necessary but imperative. In order to successfully mask the whiteness and racial privilege that is ubiquitous in New Mexico, representations of race had to be morphed into signifiers of culture and community.

The impact of the "Vanishing Anglo" on New Mexico has been decisive in socio-cultural terms. While racial hierarchies have been eliminated from or sanitized

in public art, it still has material impacts on racialized communities. Not only has the history of under-represented populations in official history been blighted, but now the painted representation stand in and expunge the nuanced experience of other histories might tell in the public square. The explicit removal of people of color from the visual landscape takes a dangerous step toward representational genocide. In previous eras, violent oppressors were visible and ubiquitous. Removing them from public representations makes them more lucid and violent. In the past Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other ethnic Americans saw their oppressors. But today oppression and domination continue on a number of levels even as the image of the dominant group in the pose of the conqueror is removed.

The racialization of people and landscapes in public art and the romance of New Mexico as the “Land of Enchantment” with all its salient utility in the marketplace today. New Mexico’s economy depends on the reification of such dangerous ideologies. While the cornerstone of tourism and tricultural harmony are still current, one state institution inconspicuously reproduces the imperialist nostalgia for something that was never in existence. The irony is that the one place that should work toward dismantling the oppressive structure of the Land of Enchantment and tricultural harmony is the one place that concedes to it in its mission, art, and architecture.

Founded in 1889 in Albuquerque, the University of New Mexico became the first institution of higher education in New Mexico before it was granted statehood. Although not established until 1889, by 1882 75 students were admitted to the

University and attended classes during summertime at the Albuquerque Academy on University Avenue (Hughes 1939 19). Because the territory was unreasonably poor, administrators and state legislators were unwilling to grant money to start the University. Debates whether the first University in New Mexico should be in Santa Fe (the state capital) or Albuquerque. Territorial judge Bernard Shandon Rodey, known as “the Father of the University,” lobbied victoriously in an effort to grant state aid to the University and establish it in Bernalillo county (1939 15).[49]

The University’s first president, Elias S. Stover, started two years after its founding and the first building--Hodgin Hall--was erected. But it was the University’s third president, William G. Tight, who envisioned the school’s architecture to reflect local Pueblo architectural style (Hughes 1939 25). According to Frank D. Reeves, “During Dr. Tight’s administration, the Pueblo architecture was adopted for future University buildings. The President, sometimes accompanied by Mr. Cristy, visited various Pueblos, photographing entrances, beams, lintels, niches, buttresses, and roof lines in order to acquire first hand knowledge of the Indian architecture...” (1928 158). In 1927, 22 years after Tight left his post, the University of New Mexico’s Board of Regents voted to adopt the “Pueblo revival architecture” (33). Eight years later, President James. F. Zimmerman, along with students and faculty, walked into the University’s first major library--Zimmerman library--with books in hand ready to fill the shelves (Davis 2006 53). That same day, March 5th, 1938 Kenneth Adams, an artist-

49 However, the first grant that requested state and federal aid to establish an educational institution in the territory of New Mexico was made by Congress in 1854 when 46,000 acres were set aside to establish a University in the territory (Reeve 1928 1).

in-residence at the University, was asked to paint four murals on panels behind the library's circulation desk (161).

In 2009, University President David Schmidly contracted V.B. Price and Robert Reck to photograph and write about the University in a book titled *The University of New Mexico*. In an introductory letter by President Schmidly he writes that this book "captures the essence of the University..." (Preface). This essence, captured in the beautiful photographs of buildings and landscapes showcased in various seasons, reflects architectural accomplishments by various presidents and architects. V.B. Price continues this romantic writing when he states that the University "has *querencia*, a place in our hearts, like a homeland. UNM does not impose itself on the cultural, physical, and historic landscape of the southwest. It arises from it" (2009 1). While their descriptions of the University, both visually and rhetorically, magnify the Land of Enchantment pressed upon the University of New Mexico, the book does little to characterize the complexities and contradictions that communities experience historically and presently.

Briefly mentioned in this book are the cultures that "serenely" occupy New Mexico: "People who know the cultures of New Mexico, from Pueblos and Hispanic villages to ranch lands and the National Laboratories, will find them gracefully coexisting on the main campus, with the modern world always paying its respects to the past" (2009 2). Not only is the romanticism prevalent in the description of the people and the land, but a key component to tricultural harmony is strategically left out--Anglo populations. Although the Anglo/Euro-American race is not specifically

identified, the architecture and history of the campus implies their impact in and on New Mexico.

Furthering the romanticism of the New Mexico, Price writes "...UNM has always had the pride of a triple mission--to serve and promote and well-being of the citizens of its state, to be the institutional champion of the unique richness and fascinating beauty of New Mexico's myriad cultures, and to distinguish itself as a major American research university capable of making world-class contributions in the arts and sciences" (2009 1). Tricultural harmony has now morphed into the triple mission of the University. Race is yet again subsumed under "myriad cultures" and the harmony is reflected in the "well-being" of the citizens, The group-based inequalities described by Gómez is, yet again, implied in how the races or "cultures" of New Mexico are completely left out of the equation of helping to make "world-class contributions"--according to Price, the University of New Mexico does that, not New Mexicans. What may be unintentional but very telling, nonetheless, is the fact that even the architecture seems to be at odds with each other. Mesa Vista Hall, a crown jewel of Pueblo style architecture and one of the oldest campus buildings that houses all three ethnic centers, contrasts the sleek and contemporary Dane Smith Hall, predominantly used for evening and weekend classes.

While the book preoccupies itself with romanticizing the University of New Mexico within the milieu of *querencia* and harmony, it never attends to the "work" that the public artwork on campus attempt to undertake. While much of the campus art reflects this romantic impulse, other artworks--one to be discussed below--does not cede from from the University's mission of education and diversity.

A Walking Tour of Campus Art

New Mexico's reputation as a Land of Enchantment continues to permeate the history, art, landscape, and architecture of the University of New Mexico. Race and racism are still muddled and muted on campus, but a careful examination of campus art reveals racial silences and tensions that continue to inform the experiences of under-represented students at the University and in New Mexico. What follows is analyses of artworks on campus that follow a campus art tour that I led my students through for a course I taught in American Studies. In my Southwest Studies course I introduce students to the complex structure of cultures and communities of the Southwestern United States.

This course is multicultural in content and interdisciplinary in methodology and offers a grounded approach to understanding how race, culture, and geography shape and inform how we experience various communities of people. It also helps students develop a better understanding about how the Southwest is portrayed as both a real and imagined place where multiple identities exist. It also examines cross-cultural relationships among the peoples of Southwestern America by exploring cultural expressions and experiences in art, culture, religion, and social and political economy.[50] My goal for incorporating this research project into Southwest Studies was to use UNM as a social laboratory by getting students to see the buildings and decorative environment that they inhabit during their program of study. As part of the course requirements, I guide my students on a walking tour of campus art.

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50 This paragraph was extracted from my *Introduction to Southwest Studies* course syllabus.

The art tour is my attempt to demonstrate how art can function two-fold as a powerful tool used to construct and legitimize colonialist and imperialist ideas and also as a very public way to confront and challenge these popular assumptions. I designed the art tour as a pedagogical exercise that highlights what I feel are the three most compelling examples of art in service to the image of the university: *Union of the America* (1942-1943) by Jesús Guerrero Galván in Scholes Hall (President's building); Zimmerman Library's *The Three Peoples of New Mexico* or "West Wing Murals" (1938-1940) by Kenneth Adams; and Luis Jiménez's *Fiesta Jarabe* (1992-1996). Each piece attempts to represent the Southwest, U.S. history and American culture in very different ways.

In 1942, Jesús Guerrero Galván came to the University of New Mexico as an artist-in-residence. A professor of plastic arts and education at the National University of Mexico, Galván arrived with an eight-month grant to create an artwork that would hang inside Scholes Hall. *Union of the Americas* (Figure 2) was Galván's gift before departing the University. According to *UNM Alumnus* "The fresco...was given to the University as a result of a grant of the Commission for Inter-American Artistic and Intellectual Relations of the office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs" (March 1943 n.p.). Represented in the fresco are two large desert landscapes separated by a narrow blue river. Two clothed women, one on each side of the river, monitor a transaction between two small children--one clothed and the other nude. An exchange of a small maguey plant transpires, yet audience members are unsure as to which is giving and/or who is taking. No discussion or action exists

between the couples except for the exchange. To the right a pyramid frames the scene while a mountainous mass of land frames the left.

The upper register of the fresco depicts “a large figure of Liberty holding the torch of justice, with a mother and child on each side, one group representing Latin American countries the other the North American nations” (1943 n.p.). Mr. Galván stated that the symbolism in the fresco “is composed of elements that are simple but intensely poetic and human” (ibid). Although this is a vague description of the image, we know there are clear distinctions between “Latin-American” and “North American” countries and people in the fresco. Not only do the landscapes distinguish between nationalities but also phenotype--the darker skinned people are south of the border and the lighter skinned people are to the north.

When asked to pair the course discussions with an analysis of the fresco, the students related this to the U.S.-Mexico War when the United States seized over half of Mexico’s land under the stipulations of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. They felt that “lady Liberty” seem to fly toward the Anglo portion of the image, connoting that Justice was on the Anglos’ side. Some students noted that the Latinos were more clothed than the Anglos. They interpreted this as edification of the white body as pure and artistic. Nineteenth-century neoclassical art reflected trends heavily embedded in racialized views of beauty, power, and aesthetics. Whether by pigment or marble, whiteness seemed to mediate distinctions between morality and physical purity and immorality and phenotypic corruption. In weighing the matter of racial politics in the art world, Joy Kasson calls for an appreciation that would see “art for morality’s sake” (1990 32). Her research documents this aesthetic phenomenon in

19th century American sculpture as she states that it followed suit with the use of science to classify racial difference. The use of white marble, plaster, or paint provided validation for scientific discussions about racial inferiority.[51] The students stated that the dark skin bodies were clothed because of the shame and perceived inferiority Latinos faced by Anglo colonizers.[52] Students overwhelmingly questioned Galván's intentions; being Mexican, they thought he would attempt to be more "historically accurate" about the atrocities that took place along the border. They knew that the usurpation of Mexican land by the United States was anything but kind and harmonious as the fresco depicted. I argued that this image was Wold War II propaganda for the University that aimed to unify neighboring countries toward the end of the War.[53]

I also asked the students to keep in mind the fresco's location. In 2007 Scholes Hall, the building where the University President, Board of Regents, Provost, and other Vice Presidents convene for work, recently underwent a 2.3 million dollar renovation which completely changed the look of the interior. Students related the fresco similarly to a facade of a building. They defined a facade as a superficial, exterior surface that veiled the actual interior. Students argued that *Union of the Americas* created a facade about the U.S.-Mexico War similarly to how Scholes Hall creates a facade for the University of New Mexico. Both mask what the

51 For a discussion of white marble and racial taxonomies see Kirsten Buick's *Child of the Fire* (2009); Alicia Carroll's *Dark Smiles* (2003); and Charmaine Nelson's *The Color of Stone* (2007). Buick and Nelson both address Edmonia Lewis' *Cleopatra* sculpture made of white marble.
52 By this time in the course, students had read sections from Griswold Del Castillo's *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* (1992), Ian Haney López's *White by Law* 2001) and Laura E. Gómez's *Manifest Destinies* (2007).
53 Historically, the University of New Mexico has been an open campus for US Armed Forces. In the past, various battalions trained and rested on campus before and during wartime. In fact, Ortega Hall was formally the "mess hall" and dormitory for soldiers and the UNM ROTC.

majority of students (and myself) felt were underlying issues of social inequities, structural racism on campus, and a disregard for “Other” peoples voices (in this instance, the students related their Otherness to Mexicans after the War). Students felt as though the University administration does not care about students and that it operates under a business model rather than as a non-profit organization. In short, the majority opinion voiced a concern for such a “sterile” image in an environment that purports to challenge our believes and educate future leaders.

In 1937, artist Kenneth Adams accepted an artist-in-resident position in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico. Assigned to create a series of murals to adorn Zimmerman library that depicted people of the Southwest, Adams stayed at UNM for two years with funding provided by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. University President James Fulton Zimmerman drafted a proposal for the murals which briefly dictate each piece’s purpose: mural 1: “The Indian, showing his work as the artist;” mural 2: “The Spanish, giving a general idea of their contributions to the civilization in this area in the fields of agriculture and architecture;” mural 3: “The Anglo, with scientific contributions;” and mural 4: “The union of all three in the life of the Southwest” (CSWR handout n.d.)

The first mural (Figure 3.1) depicts five Native American people clothed and participating in object-making that, according to Adams, identified their tribal affiliation. For example, “A Navajo woman has silversmith trimmings around her neck and she is working a loom. This shows the culture of the Navajo” (CSWR handout n.d.). In fact, only two people are working while the other three are at rest. None of the Native Americans have clear and visible facial features.

The second mural (Figure 3.2) depicts three Spanish-identified people at work. Two women face opposite the audience, applying adobe or plaster to the wall. A dark male figure seems to lead a tow on the land that can be seen to his right. A Spanish-style church is framed by the window frame of the building in the foreground. According to Adams, “The Spanish-American mural features a woman plastering a house of Spanish architectural style, which has evolved from the simple, primitive Indian habitation” (CSWR handout n.d.). Two parts of this quote are striking: firstly, the people in the second mural are identified as hyphenated Americans while the Native population are not once cited as American. Secondly, the words evolution, simple, and primitive, establish--for Adams and the viewers--a hierarchy between Indians and Spanish Americans. Again, no visible facial features are apparent in this mural.

The third mural (Figure 3.3) showcases three Anglo scientists busily working on things related to astronomy and biology as connoted through the various iconography throughout the mural. Two males dominate the center of the image. One Anglo male holds a large newborn Anglo baby boy. All people in this scene have blonde hair and the male figures have blue eyes. The Anglo males are what matter most to the artist as he states “Working at the sides of the doctor are two research figures...” (CSWR handout n.d.).” Ignoring the female presence (and contributions) in the mural, Adams attempts to control the audience’s gaze through text and detailed male depictions so that passersby can focus intently on the center figures. In this image, the male figures have slight facial features while the women do not.

The fourth and final mural (Figure 3.4) shows a Native male and Spanish American male brought together in unity by the Anglo male at the center. For Adams this image represents “the dawn of a new day, all the contributions combining for better living. Three figures, symbolic of their races are on the same plane, reflecting the spirit of democracy in representing the culture of the three races as socially equal” (CSWR handout n.d.). Yet the “democracy” of union falters quickly; only the Anglo make has visible facial features and is centered, bringing the other two “races” together. Sylvia Rodriguez writes that “To a feminist perspective, the androcentrism and misogyny of the last two panels are inseparable from their racialism. What the mural’s ultimate vision of futuristic-utopian New Mexico amounts to is a world cleansed of women--the only kind, by the way, in which miscegenation can never occur” (2001 200-201).

The majority of students felt an immediate disdain for the murals. They expressed anger because of the “blatant racism” each mural invoked. Native American students felt that the first mural limited their ancestors’ contribution to only art and disregarded their centuries long presence in the land and their own contributions to science and architecture. Chicana/o Latina/o students argued that the mural stereotyped their ancestors as laborers and not intellectuals. Both groups argued that science was a forte for indigenous populations in Mexico and the Southwest and that calling the people “Spanish-Americans” did not accurately highlight the ethnic diversity in New Mexico. The above comments clearly resonate with Rodriguez’s criticism that “the mural[s] perdure...in this prominent institutional venue, there for all to behold, a glowing testimony of the official, Anglocentric, New

Deal (pre-nuclear, pre-civil rights) era view of New Mexico's tricultural history and destiny" (2001 200).

The Anglo students mostly agreed with the rest of the class. Only a few Anglo students stated that science and intellect stem from ancient Europe and that it was Anglo culture that helped civilize the Southwest. Regardless of the course readings and debates, the minority Anglo students held tight to their beliefs and saw our interpretations and the course readings and bias and as forms of discrimination toward their culture. The black students questions why there were no Africans depicted in this images. They felt that African people could be in all four depictions because of the cultural mixing ubiquitous during U.S. colonization and the slavery that existed in the US and Mexico.

Students also raised concern over the location of the murals. Some felt that hanging in a library offered a level of credibility to the murals. Surrounded by books about Southwest and New Mexico history, the murals took on authorial legitimacy. The question of whether or not the murals should remain up came up in every tour. Some felt the murals should be taken down and burned. Others felt that removing the images was censorship. A few students offered an alternative: leave the murals up, create workshops, seminars, tours, and academic materials that brought forth issues of racism, discrimination, cultural representations, and context. But all students felt something should be done.

In short, these murals caused debate, anger, and enlightenment for the students and for others.[54] *The Three Peoples of New Mexico* has a long-standing legacy of racial turmoil at the University; In fact, on January 25, 1974 an anonymous person threw green paint on the Anglo man in the fourth mural as a sign of protest of the racist murals. (Campus News, 02/07/1974). In 1994 an undergraduate student senator drafted a resolution that called for a memorial plaque to accompany the mural stating that "it is not the view of Native Americans and Chicanos at UNM" (Daily Lobo 10/06/1994).[55] The students were not the first to react so vocally to the murals but they became part of a small number of informed students who could assess the murals in their proper historical, cultural, and physical context.

Our final stop on the art tour is just north of the intersection at Central Ave and Cornell Street. Surrounded by the nationally acclaimed Popejoy Hall, the Student Union Building, Johnson Gym and hourly parking structure, *Fiesta Jarabe* exudes illicit yet powerful meanings that may go unnoticed to some spectators.

Fiesta Jarabe depicts a man and woman facing each other while performing a dance or ritual. A *sombrero* on the floor partitions the dancing couple. The man and woman seem *Mexicana/o* by physical attributes; their middle-aged looks are characterized by their bone structure and aged faces and bodies. Bright and bold blue, yellow, green, various purples and red color the object. *Fiesta Jarabe* consists

54 See "Groups approach consensus in debate over 'racist' murals," (October 12, 1994) "Library murals of 1938 spark hot controversy now," (October 6, 1994 page 7)) and "Artistic library murals should not be altered" (March 1993 v 97 no 117) in the Daily lobo for more information.
55 The memorial plaque never happened. The Daily Lobo reported that the senator driving this resolution quit this student position because other senators attempted to take control from him.

of fiberglass material and a polyurethane glitter coating. At roughly 114” x 96” x 96” in height atop a two-foot pedestal, this sculpture stands towering over its audiences.

The woman wears a bright, multi-colored *folklorico* dress and flower-covered tank-top with “spaghetti-strap” sleeves hanging off her shoulders. Turquoise jewelry, including a long squash blossom necklace, earrings and a bracelet adorn her bare neck and shoulders. A bright red rose rests playfully upon her ear, pulling hair out of her face. Her hands that pull up her dress are aged with engorged knuckles, signifying that her occupation consists of manual labor. Her fingernails are decorated with light pink polish.

The man wears a blue suit with silver buttons which is similar to a traditional *charro* outfit. With a yellow bandana wrapped around his neck and a *sarápe* hanging over his left shoulder, the man seems dressed up for an occasion. His long mustache and aged facial features allow viewers to determine he is middle-aged. His body structure signifies his occupation requires manual labor.

This sculpture depicts the Mexican man and woman performing the Mexican Hat Dance--*el jarabe tapatío*. In this dancing courtship the man tries to woo the woman through his loud foot stomps and taps on the ground. According to traditional storytelling, after much flirtation the woman falls for the man’s *machismo*, giving in to his persistence and lasciviousness. Movement is further exhibited by the flowing dress, feet positioning, and contracting muscles.

This dance represents the performance of celebration, community, tradition, and romance. Luis Jiménez chose this cross-cultural subject because it would “appeal to people on both sides of the frontier” (Hickey 1997 30). For Jiménez,

fiestas are an important part of border life. It is through performance that cultural traditions continue; simply "writing" culture suspends it in place. But by engaging community members with action, we find racial silences being challenged and, in some cases, demolished. The regional and cultural emblems, along with the barriological and *rasquache* sensibilities allow Jiménez to re-inscribe people of the Southwest in a counter-narrative aimed at rewriting both collective memory and American history. *Fiesta Jarabe* serves as an innovative symbol critiquing the social dynamics that perpetuate racism and that continue to create monuments of to a history counter-intuitive to border residents.

Luís Jiménez wanted to celebrate the everydayness of Chicana/o communities through *Fiesta Jarabe*. He memorialized "the bodies of ordinary working citizens" (9), transforming them into "luminous incarnations of social democracy" (ibid). By doing so, he recreated a border experience dramatically different from popular conceptions; his work allowed for a reworking of collective memory by attesting for those racially silenced. His work brought indigenous populations of the Southwest and Mexico out of the margins and placed them in dialogue with the assumed monolithic national history. To better understand Luís Jiménez's *Fiesta Jarabe*, we must also contextualize it within a framework Guillermo Gómez-Peña calls "border consciousness" (1989 113). Gómez-Peña refers to "border consciousness" as a process of moving between several sets of cultural codes in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of border culture. From his *mestizo* inspired work to his satiric use of gender, Luís' art created new ways of visually negotiating and understanding identity and difference. While specifically tied

to Chicana/o border identity, border consciousness speaks to conceptual, social, political and artistic borders. Luis Jiménez skillfully implemented his own border conscience to portray what he felt was an important subject for border life.

The sculpture was part of a two-year competition for a campus commission. Sponsored by funding from New Mexico's 1% for the Arts Program, a committee selected five artists to present models to the UNM community (Johnson 1996 1). According to Peter Walsh, former director for the University Art Museum, "Over 100 people from UNM filled out the questionnaires and overwhelmingly picked Jiménez. It was the first choice between the public and the panel" (ibid). The models was also showcased at a nearby cultural center and again Jiménez was the overall winner. The final approval to commission Jiménez came from the President's Council that same year (ibid).

The initial location for Jiménez's sculpture was supposed to be Yale Park directly on Central Avenue. But the board of regents voted to move the sculpture to its current location in Cornell Mall, leaps away from Central Avenue, because of proposed new construction that would move the University bookstore to the Park. Had Yale Park remained *Fiesta Jarabe's* final location, I believe the sculpture would have a very different meaning. Like the *Jarabe* in San Diego, the sculpture would have also welcomed visitors to a campus that can be interpreted to be unwelcoming and hostile for under-represented groups.[56] But the sculpture's relocation had a direct impact on its meaning.

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56 In 2007, the Hispano Roundtable released an official statement against the University of New Mexico and the Board of Regent's selection of David J. Schmidly as University President. Feeling that local Mexican American Dan López was slighted from this position, the Hispano Roundtable stated

Throughout my research I asked myself why the sculpture was placed in Cornell Mall. I began to look around and noticed its location directly in front of Popejoy Hall. Popejoy Hall is home to many famous events. From “Lost in Yonkers” to “Jesus Christ Superstar”, Popejoy Hall exhibits “the very best” that American culture has to offer. As I scrolled down the 2006-20010 program of shows on its website, I noticed how only two shows, “Mariachi Christmas” and “Cinco de Mayo: Fiesta Mexicana,” related to local ethnic cultures. Did Luís Jiménez realize this as well and decide to place his statue outside as a protest? The back of the male dancer faces the hall and the woman’s eyes seem to cast a heavy stare toward Popejoy. This sculptural arrangement defiantly creates its own stage in opposition to the famous hall. Not being equally represented in the Hall’s list of shows, *Fiesta Jarabe* dances its way right in front of the Popejoy entrance. This sculpture seems to cast a visual assault upon the hall and its passersby.

When first writing about the sculpture for a Chicano Studies summer field school I noted the following: I saw pain in her eyes, power in her posture. He stared

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the following: “We are the people who have been in this state for centuries whom the great great native New Mexican scholar Dr. Jorge Isidoro Sánchez, himself a victim of the racism at the University of New Mexico along with Dr. Arturo Campa, called "the forgotten people" in his book of the same name about Nuevomexicanos. It is no accident that in over 100 years, no native New Mexican Indohispano has been selected as president of the University of New Mexico. We are sick and tired of being treated like stepchildren in our native ancestral lands and of being excluded from full parity and equal participation in the public bodies of our native state where we have paid dearly with our blood, sweat and tears for our equality, because our ancestors have fought for the United States in every war since the war of independence only to have our lands of La Florida, Louisiana and the former Provincias Internas taken from us to constitute half of what is now the United States. Like the Native Americans, we have been marginalized and made outcasts in our own native lands, because most of us as Hispanos were descended of Spanish and Indigenous blood, making us the children of four continents and natives of the Americas. Yet, our institutions are dominated by outsiders who exclude us no matter how qualified we are and allow only a token few representatives of New Mexico's native Indohispano administrators, faculty and students to be "integrated" into the hallowed halls of the "Harvard on the Río Grande." Should any of these token few dare to challenge the dictates of our colonial masters, they are severely dealt with, punished and retaliated against as were the UNM Hispanos who had finally had it and spilled the beans to the legislature.” http://www.unm.edu/~larranag/hrt/unm.html

back with angst, unwilling to have their story silenced. They came face to face, speaking their revolution through dance. Without words, their humanity revealed. I believe the tensions and emotions involved in Jiménez's work revolve around his process of uniting the cultures, histories, traditions, and people of the Southwest (Mexican/Native American/African) with the Anglo world. He viciously exploits these ironic issues which repel these two worlds throughout all his works. Luis, by no means, intends to be polite or apologetic about his work—he aimed at the heart.

This sculpture is serendipitously--in part, strategically--located on a main corridor on a Research 1 university, on a site where thousands of students and hundreds of faculty come together in the name of higher education. Whether intentional or not, the statue is a constant reminder that education is not only imparted from textbooks, coursework, and graduate degrees, but that it resides in various forms in the communities and traditions that surround us.[57] For Kirsten Buick this acknowledgement mandates that "we should never concede the center" (presentation by Buick, Ph.D. 2006). In this case, the "center" is an institution that, I argue, historically required students to purge their cultural beliefs for a "higher" form of academic truth--intellectual assimilation. Rather than succumbing to the margins or, as Buick states, "romancing the margins," this sculpture occupies the center and encourages that we do the same.

Fiesta Jarabe provides a powerful example of rubric of borderlands visual theory. For one thing it is a work of art that speaks from a critical cultural perspective. It does not essentialize a uniquely Mexican phenomenon, rather it seeks to express

57 *Fiesta Jarabe* rests at the University of Texas at San Antonio in front of the Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success.

it in a universal term. The moquette that Jiménez submitted to the University of New Mexico was transnational but also ethnic specific. The state's proximity to the border, its strong yet controversial Mexican heritage, and the University's stance on cultural and ethnic diversity made *Fiesta Jarabe* an obvious choice. But the dark skinned dancers had an even larger impact on the campus for they unabashedly invoked an ethnic-specific celebratory performance. By portraying Mexican American working-class traditions and Chicana/o aesthetics on a monumental scale in a very public place, Luis Jiménez invited the uncensored views of passersby. In fact, this sculpture calls into question how successful the University of New Mexico is at 1) making the University a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment; 2) challenging long-held colonialist assumptions about non-Anglo populations in New Mexico; and 3) dismantling the racialist and racist lens in which students view their surroundings.

Stephen J. Gould (1981) examines the use of science as a mechanism to reify racial hierarchies in the U.S. Theories such as biological determinism, the belief that "shared behavioral norms, and the social and economic differences between human groups…arise from inherited, inborn distinctions" (1981 20), determined that prevailing social/racial hierarchies accurately reflected biological traits for non-Anglos. Scientist Samuel George Morton even argued that cranial measurements could be used to rank and categorize superiority(Anglo men) and inferiority (non-Anglo males). By exaggerating physical features in *Fiesta Jarabe*, including cranial size and body structure Jiménez parodied and challenged those man-made assumptions that racially silenced historically under-represented groups. Displaying figures of dark-skinned *Mexicanos* in front of Popejoy Hall confronted the imperialist

eye of the University and created its own performative stage that, in many cases, commands more attention that the renowned Hall itself.

All my students had seen *Fiesta Jarabe* prior to taking my art tour. Most have strong opinions about the sculpture prior to my analysis that I shared above. In my fall 2008 course, a Chicana undergraduate expressed anger because the woman's body was exposed while the man was covered. She argued that the *machismo* imagery did not accurately represent Chicanas and actually negatively impacted women on campus. Claiming that Chicana/o art should work against gender oppression, this student felt that public art should combat stereotypes created inside and outside our community. See saw its location as detrimental to her/our community because it reified assumptions that Chicanas are "loose" women--or in her words, "putas."

An Anglo student in my spring 2010 class titled "Chicana/o Visual & Narrative Style" shared in his paper that "'Fiesta Dancers'...portray[s] the struggles and perseverance of the Mexican people.[58] The hard life of the dancers is apparent on their sinewy bodies, and sun darkened faces. However fatigued the couple appears, there's no hint of stopping the dance. Instead the couple may continue till dawn" (Williams 6 2010).[59] Although not of Mexican descent, this student said he could relate to the sculpture because of its working-class attitude. He understood the necessity of dance and celebration to get through hardships; stating that although it

58 Even the course content shaped their perception of sculpture. The Chicana student took my Intro to Southwest Studies course while the Anglo male student took my Chicana/o Visual & Narrative Style course. What they brought to the course and what I offered them had an impact, for better or worse, in their understand and criticism of the art.
59 I have student permission to quote his class paper in my dissertation.

did not represent what he thought was “fine art,” this student had a tremendous appreciation for the *Fiesta Jarabe*. A working class Anglo male, this student said he did not feel represented in the other Anglo artworks on campus but that he shared an affinity with Jiménez’s dancers.

Statistically, over 97% of the students stated that they “did not like the sculpture.” Their comments were generally consistent in arguing that the piece “sexualized the female body.” Depicting the woman as a “drag queen” was another prevalent comment. Another criticism expressed a localized, regional variant on *Mexicano* vernacular dance. A subset of students insisted that “the dancers did not accurately represent Spanish New Mexico.”

After the tour, students were required to write a paper about one of the three tour stops. Several students were motivated by the tour to write about the three artworks in relationship to each other and their location. The tour seemed to do the trick of helping students understand the aesthetic, contextual, and ideological power of public art. Surprisingly, while 97% of all my students expressed negative feelings toward the sculpture, over 95% of the students wrote about *Fiesta Jarabe*. At first I was not sure how to assess this incident, especially since this statistical breakdown repeated in every course I taught. I came to realize that this was not an “incident” but a testament to the power of Jiménez’s sculpture to elicit strong responses. The sculpture enticed students to revisit the sculpture, reflect on their attitudes toward the subject matter, and review the physical, cultural, and sociopolitical context. My class experiment has a corollary in the many *Daily Lobo* articles written in response

to the sculpture with students blogging and commenting about it.[60] In the case of my classes and art tours, student reactions come after a deep contextual analysis, weeks of academic readings, and class discussions, the students arrived at a new-found appreciation for the sculpture. They still may not like it, but they understand it. I started to think that sometimes art is not just for art's sake. It has meaning that we need to explore.

Fiesta Jarabe challenges perceptions of inclusion and exclusion at the University of New Mexico. The sculpture represented historically under-represented people in a historically inhospitable place and valorized working class heroes. Its placement in front of Popejoy hall challenged passersby to consider the University of New Mexico as a center of intellectual brevity, racial and ethnic equity, and cultural diversity. Jiménez's working class characters not only worked to change the visual composition of UNM's population but it also became a trademark for edifying unsung heroes of America's cultures.

Fiesta Jarabe **and the Larger Context**

The 1994 exhibition catalog for *Man on Fire: Luis Jiménez El Hombre en Llamas* art curators, critics, and scholars convened to reflect upon the breadth of Jiménez's work from childhood until the 1992 *Plaza de los Largatos* sketches for a sculpture in downtown El Paso, Texas. Although speaking in general about Jiménez's capacity to transcend borders and genres through his art, their comments address the significance of *Fiesta Jarabe* as a public monument representative of an American experience.

60 http://formstracedbylight.blogspot.com/2009/06/campus-art.html.

Critics conveged on the idea that *Fiesta Jarabe* captured a significant moment in Mexican, Mexican-American, and American cultures. Rudolfo Anaya, "[Jiménez] *es un hijo de la frontera;* he knows its people and the landscape. It is the transformation of these people into art that is his most important contribution to the art of this vast region which stretches between Mexico and the United States. He is fusing the Mexicano and the Anglo-American worlds" (1994 1). That Jiménez invoked his own personal history of living along the border and understood borderlands aesthetics addresses the profoundness of pairing border life and public art--a clear reflection of how his biography informs his practice of borderlands visual theory. In honoring the lives of the working-class, Jiménez was countering the centuries long history of edifying Anglo war heroes, presidents, and other exceptional individuals. Jiménez's own brand of public art inspired a whole new genre of artists specializing in culture-specific imagery. Anaya sang the praise of this aspect of Jiménez's artistic interventions in insisting,"he is the forerunner of a new generation of artists from this area, men and women proud of the land and the people, and bent on creating an aesthetic which reflects *la frontera*" (Anaya 1994 1).

By focusing on working-class communities, whether Anglo, Mexican, women, children, immigrants, Jiménez bore witness to people whose physical, mental, and cultural sacrifices helped shape the nation. According to John Yau, contributor to *Man on Fire*, "Jiménez consciously celebrates individuals who are not ordinarily celebrated...[he] is a populist artist who subjects...[are] the often invisible mass of individual upon which America and its success have been built...he has strived to reconstruct both this country's unfamiliar tales and those that are disregarded,

forgotten, or misrepresented" (1994 39). Through his work Jiménez demonstrates a mastery of archetypes from both the United States and Mexico. His intervention with iconography lies in his ability to adapt and reconstruct universal emotions and imagery in his images of the working-class and historically under-represented.

Rudolfo Anaya wrote that "Viewing his work is an encounter, a happening in which we come face to face with his *locura*, and it's not always pleasant, sometimes shocking, but never bland or dull" (1994 2). As explored above, Jiménez's *Fiesta Jarabe* confronted people and places on a daily basis. Whether passersby liked it or not, they had to grapple with the sculpture and its relationship to the environment. Because Jiménez knew that art comes from a place and not abstract ideas (ibid) it required that the people and even the University itself come to terms with not only what they thought of the sculpture but *why* they thought about it.

Fiesta Jarabe helped usher in a cadre of capus art at the University of New Mexico that works together to tell another story of America's public art. Bob Haozous' *Culural Crossroads of the Americas* (1996) and Youn Ja Johnson's *Tribute to Mother Earth* (1994), while both stirring controversy in their own right, compel audiences to reexamine their understanding of public art on a public institution. Both unearthed resentment as to the purpose and function of public sculpture at the University of New Mexico. Together, all three sculptures attempt to educate the public (and the University of New Mexico) about matters of parity and diversity on an institutional setting.

Jiménez's America embodied the spirit of perseverance, hard work, community, tradition, folklore, and everyday heroics. To dedicate an entire body of

work to the “forgotten” created another center in American art, culture, and history. His expressions of another center brought forth iconography of the working class and made permanent their existence upon the visual and physical landscape of the United States. In short, Jiménez rewrote history through his art.

Figures

Figure 1. *Fiesta Jarabe* (1992-1996).

Luis Jiménez
114” x 96” x 96” fiberglass sculpture
Collection of the University of New Mexico (in situ)

Figure 2. *Union of the Americas* (1942-1943).

Jesús Guerrero Galván
98” x 209” Fresco
Collection of the University of New Mexico (in situ)

Figure 3.1. *The Three Peoples of New Mexico* (1 of 4)

a.k.a. "The West Wing Murals" (1938-1940).
Kenneth Adams
dimensions unknown, Oil on Canvas
University of New Mexico Collection (in situ)

Figure 3.2. *The Three Peoples of New Mexico* (2 of 4),

a.k.a. "The West Wing Murals" (1938-1940).

Kenneth Adams
dimensions unknown, Oil on Canvas
University of New Mexico Collection (in situ)

Figure 3.3. *The Three Peoples of New Mexico* (3 of 4),

a.k.a. "The West Wing Murals" (1938-1940).

Kenneth Adams
dimensions unknown, Oil on Canvas
University of New Mexico Collection (in situ)

Figure 3.4. *The Three Peoples of New Mexico* (4 of 4),

a.k.a. "The West Wing Murals" (1938-1940).

Kenneth Adams
dimensions unknown, Oil on Canvas
University of New Mexico Collection (in situ)

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Chapter 5

A Saint or "Illegal Alien"? Immigration, Citizenship, and the Case of Esequiel Hernández Jr.

On the day eighteen year old Esequiel Hernández Jr. died, he was walking his goats down to the river. He let them out of their makeshift pens of wire and branch and then guided them down a dusty lane. The goats followed Esequiel along the ruins of an old Spanish mission, through the abandoned U.S. Army post, and down to the Rio Grande (Paulsen 1998). Esequiel, carrying a .22 caliber rifle, protected his goats like a shepherd watching over his flock. Coyotes, snakes, and scorpions threatened Esequiel's goats in the past, but on May 20, 1997 a more sinister threat maneuvered through the arid desert.

Being a *fronterizo* resident from the small town of Redford, Texas--15 miles from a major U.S.-Mexico border crossing point--Esequiel knew the borderlands very well. But he must have heard or seen something that evening. Upon his return, he looked out into the distance, raised his .22 caliber rifle and fired two shots. Fearing for the safety of his goats, he carried the rifle for their, and his, protection. No one really knows what Esequiel thought he saw. But over 200 meters away, U.S. Marines spotted Esequiel—to them, a Mexican drug smuggler with a rifle—attempting to maneuver away from their line of sight. Twenty-two minutes into the Marine's offensive tactical assault, Esequiel Hernández Jr. was shot and killed.

Two years later, Luis Jiménez created *El Buen Pastor: Profile of a Drug Smuggler* (1999), a lithograph that commemorated 18-year-old Esequiel Hernández Jr.'s wrongful death. In this chapter I take up a sustained analysis of the lithograph

so as to offer critical perspectives on Esequiel's murder and a more nuanced understanding of American identity in the borderlands. The questions that drive this chapter are: How does *El Buen Pastor* render legible the violence associated with living on the border? How does Jiménez depict Esequiel's last moments within the context of immigration and Christianity? How is American citizenship constructed visually and rhetorically? And how does Jiménez deconstruct the discourse of national belonging vis-a-vis the U.S.-Mexico border? My chapter confronts the issues of criminality and violence on the U.S.-Mexico border and reframes it within a larger discourse about race and nationalism—two social and political constructions fully dependent upon the function of art as truth-making and art as ideology.

This chapter will generate a brief historical sketch of national and transnational moments that I argue led to the murder of Esequiel Hernández Jr. It will then offer a visual analysis of *El Buen Pastor* that challenges the stock characterization of border dwellers as deviant, drug smugglers. My goal is to view *El Buen Pastor* in light of borderlands visual theory and as an example of how Luis Jiménez re-contextualizes American identity within the murder of Esequiel Hernández Jr.

Creating Imaginary Borders

U.S. expansion westward after its independence from England in 1783 incited negotiations, conflict and violence between various Native American and Mexican communities along with previous colonial powers such as Spain and France. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and the subsequent ceding of Florida by Spain in the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819 gave U.S. colonists the momentum to forge into

territories in the Southwest.[61] Native (or "First") Americans' claims to the land fell to the wayside as U.S. Congress, under the banner of Manifest Destiny, engineered a colossal shift of land ownership from indigenous populations to a new and property-hungry Euro-American immigrant population. Justin Akers Chacón and Mike Davis argue that "the notion of Manifest Destiny encapsulated a host of fabricated theories that sought to justify the nullification of Mexican and Indian sovereignty and territorial integrity in tandem to westward expansion" (2006 100). Coupled with Reginald Horsman's (1981) stance that "by 1850, the emphasis was on the American 'Anglo-Saxon' as a separate, innately superior people who were destined to bring good government, commercial prosperity, and Christianity to American Continents and to the world" (1-2), this newly "discovered" America was to be purged of its inherent heterogeneity in order to make way for a capitalist-driven, white national mythology.

Independence from Spain in 1821 left Mexico with a vast new territory far north of their centralized government in Mexico City, leaving the borderlands of their new nation vulnerable for undocumented migration.[62] As Euro American immigrants began to encroach upon land claimed by Mexico, namely the state of Coahuila y Tejas, the Mexican government saw this as both an opportunity to expand trade and as a potential threat to their territory.[63] But certain rules set in place--taxation, a requirement to practice Catholicism, pressure to become a naturalized citizen of Mexico, and the eventual abolition of slavery in 1928--struck a chord for Euro

61 See William Earl Week's *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire* (1992).
62 According to Manuel Gonzales, "The weakness of the Mexican government, together with the land hunger that characterized America's westward movement, ensured that the steady stream of Yankees during the last years of Spanish colonial rule would only swell after 1821" (2009 61).
63 Mexico's colonial process commenced under Agustín de Iturbide's rule, allowing a regulated and limited flow of Euro American immigrants into the far north border of Mexico. See Rudolfo Acuña's *Occupied America* for a more detailed history (pg 37).

Americans. They wanted to maintain their identity in Mexico and refused to follow the strict immigration laws of Mexico.[64] In November of 1835 Anglo settlers waged the Texas War of Independence.[65] After winning the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, Anglo settlers declared themselves the Republic of Texas with Sam Houston as President (Acuña 2007 41).[66]

President James K. Polk knew that in order to exert American control of this region, Mexico had to become a threat to the sanctity and safety of Texas and the United States. Sending General Zachary Taylor into the contested region was, for Mexico, a sign of war. On May 13, 1846, Congress, under the Presidency of James K. Polk, declared war on Mexico.[67] Ending in defeat for Mexico, territory negotiations commenced. Ratified on May 2, 1848 by the Mexican congress, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ceded land north of the Rio Grande to the United States.[68]

Much historical scholarship ties the creation of the border to the U.S.-Mexico War and the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. However, regulation of that border was not strictly enforced until the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Thousands of Mexican

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64 The United States, seeing this migration into Mexico as an opportunity to expand its own border, pressured Mexico to readjust its borders from the Sabine River to the Rio Grande (Acuña 2007 37). Although the United States offered up to five million dollars to purchase the Coahuila y Tejas, Mexico refused and increased its military presence.

65 This war coincided with Thomas Jefferson's earlier quest to control land west of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. His prophetic comment that the Mexican borderlands "are ours the first moment war is forced upon us" would soon come to pass.

66 Although not recognized as a separate territory by the Mexican government, the Republic of Texas received much support from the United States, thus catalyzing the desire to expand U.S. territory further into Mexico.

67 According to scholar Rodolfo F. Acuña, "By late August 1847, the war was almost at an end. [The defeat] of Santa Anna in a hard-fought battle at Churubusco put U.S. troops at the gate of Mexico City" (Acuña 2007 47).

68 This includes what today is Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, and parts of Colorado and Utah. U.S. congress in return promised to pay Mexico 15 million dollars; on May 19, they ratified the Treaty with the exception of Article X that promised to honor "all prior and pending titles to property of every description" for Mexicans now living in U.S. territory (Acuña 2007 49).

families migrated north to the United States to escape the war and the Porfirio regime. Other push factors included opportunities for employment, better living environments, and education for their children.[69] But this migration was problematic for U.S. policy makers who characterized this rush of immigrants as chaotic. According to scholar Joseph Nevins:

> The disorder brought about by the Mexican Revolution played an important role in turning the boundary into an obstacle for Mexican migrants…Even more important, the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, while exempting Mexicans (until a new law in 1921), led to a formalization of immigration control procedures as well as to an increase in the number of U.S. authorities and immigration inspection sites along the U.S.-Mexico boundary (2002 27).

The Great Depression of 1929, World War II, and the Bracero Program from 1942-1964 were used to justify the heavy regulation of the U.S.-Mexico border through military and federally sanctioned laws.[70] With the increase of immigrant populations, the decrease in economic stability, and the fear that immigrants would consume the vast majority of federally funded welfare programs, U.S. politicians and public officials waged a rhetorical war on unauthorized immigration. Joseph Nevins also writes that:

> The growing concerns of public officials and the public at large, as well as increased legislative activism surrounding unauthorized immigration, had real effects on the US-Mexico boundary, leading to an unprecedented growth in federal resources dedicated to boundary policing beginning in the late 1970s. Combined with a 'war on drugs' begun during the Reagan administration, efforts to fight unauthorized immigration in the border region had a transformational effect on the nature and scale of boundary policing (2002 67).

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69 See Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez's *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwestern United States* (1996) which details various factors that led to northern and southern migration.

70 See Ernesto Gamboa's *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947* (2000) for a more comprehensive discussion about the role of the Bracero Program and its construction of commodified labor and undocumented workers in the United States. Also, see *Los Braceros: Memories of Bracero Workers, 1942-1964* for oral histories, archives, letters, and documents that document the personal experiences of former bracero workers.

By representing immigration as a national crisis and as the catalyst for illegal drug smuggling, a campaign to regulate the border through the creation of social identities for "illegal aliens" was imminent.[71]

For over 100 years the border between the United States and Mexico became more and more ominous and real.[72] Frontier rhetoric disappeared and a firmly constructed international boundary marked its presence with Border Patrol agents, inspection sites, surveillance devices, and the ability to personify illegality via border dwellers and, more specifically, Mexicans and Latinas/os. With the onset of a new industrial complex making Mexico and the United States more intertwined and the ever present border separating the two countries, the border region became schizophrenic.

Today, the U.S.-Mexico border is characterized, on one hand, with criminality, drug smuggling, and without restraint. The media conveys the border as an uncontrolled and open doorway where illegality pours into America, corrupting it and making it unsafe for its citizens. On the other hand, the U.S.-Mexico border is also characterized as the locus of a hybridity of cultures, traditions, and communities; it is a center for American identity, not the margins or wastelands of two countries. The

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71 The Border Industrialization Program (BIP), created after the demise of the Bracero Program, attempted to address the rising unemployment on the U.S.-Mexico border brought on by jobless braceros. U.S. companies found *maquiladoras* attractive sites because of their ability to pay low wages for honest work, its relatively close locations, and the devaluation of the peso. For a more nuanced discussion of maquilas and the border see Ojeda's and Hennessy's *NAFTA From Below: Maquiladora Workers, Farmers, and Indigenous Communities Speak Out on the Impact of Free Trade in Mexico.* Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (2006).

72 Although economic factors such as NAFTA, international trade, and the creation of *maquiladoras* help maintain the presence of a "revolving door" policy for commerce and capital, people and families firmly run up against physical barriers (See Cockcroft's *Outlaws in the Promised Land: Mexican Immigrant Workers and America's Future* (1986).)

former works to tighten up the border while the latter works to dismantle notions of borders and encourages us to conceive of it as a place of power and humanity. But just how do we disassemble the discourse of illegality and invasion so prominent in mainstream media and in our federal government? I argue we must look to the local histories on and along the borders and understand how art can help us move beyond borders. Borderlands visual theory helps us trace these histories and their intervention in larger national and global history.

El Buen Pastor: A View of the Border

Luis Jiménez created *El Buen Pastor* [Figure 1] in response to the wrongful death of Esequiel Hernández Jr. The work was funded in part by the Border Rights Coalition in El Paso, Texas and the American Friends Service Committee. The lithograph is part of a collective effort to raise political consciousness about American life on the U.S.-Mexico border. My analysis is drawn from viewing the lithograph now housed in the permanent collection at the El Paso Museum of Art.[73]

El Buen Pastor is a modern day parable about race on the border; a Mexican American man tending his goats is shot and killed by war-trained soldiers mistaking him for a criminal. He becomes a martyr and his story becomes valorized in his community. How far the U.S. government will go to protect the homogeneity of its body politic and to regulate and sustain an imaginary border is a lesson explored in *El Buen Pastor*.

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73 Other versions of *El Buen Pastor* exist at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, NM, the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa, and the private collection of Filemon Vela in Corpus Christi, Texas (to name a few). I chose EPMA's image in particular because of it was one of Jiménez's first versions of the image.

The backdrop in the lithograph is an arid desert scene, which Luis Jiménez renders just before sunset. A harsh band of red sky separate the daylight from the oncoming maroon sky of impending night. Cacti pervade the image, drawing the viewers' attention to two specific sections of the lithograph: the foreground and background. In the background, six soldiers in camouflage suits huddle on the ground amid the tall cacti. Five of the soldiers appear to be carrying military rifles, four of them pointed at the sky and one pointed toward the foreground. The six men are almost completely blended into the background; their hands positioned on the rifles are obvious in sight.

In the foreground, a man is centered in the lithograph with his weight on his right foot. He is cradling a small lamb in his left arm close to his chest. The male's right arm is bent upward with his hand open and palm exposed as if waving at someone in front of him. The man's face is aged, contradicting his younger physique; his black receding hair is parted on the left. He is wearing what appear to be western style clothing, a blue shirt and jeans, a black belt with a red star centered on the buckle and black boots. Around the man's head is what seems to be a scope or halo with two lines that converge at his left temple.

Three goats grazing nearby raise their heads and stare toward the source of a threat. The goat on the right has no horns, has its left front leg bent upward, and is wearing a bell around its neck. Both of the two goats on the left have horns and seem to be positioned in such a way to suggest they are alert and sense something foreign has entered their world. The lamb in the man's left arm looks up to the sky in

the direction of the raised arm. At the bottom left of the image a scorpion crawls past the goats.

Written in the sky is the following: “Esequiel Hernández ‘*El Buen Pastor*’ a tragic consequence of this country’s insane and racist border policy was the murder of Esequiel of Redford Texas while he tended his goats. The assassins were absolved since they were only ‘following orders’, and he fit the profile of ‘a drug smuggler’ so they said.” The man’s upright arm severs the word “ASSASSINS” into two sections: ASSA and SINS. One of the “S” letters is covered entirely by the man’s hand. This separation demarcates the dramatic sin of killing an innocent person. The word Assa appears in the Christian bible as Asa, the third king of Judah and one of the only zealous kings for God. In addition to uprooting the idolatrous behavior his mother Maacah endorsed (1 Kings 15:9-14), King Asa defeated a massive one-million military force by Zerah the Ethiopian purely upon his faith in God’s power.[74] But the most lasting and powerful lesson from Asa’s triumph is captured in 2 Chronicles 15:2 “...Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.”

Thus the Asa/Sin construct amplifies the Esequiel/Marines (or United States) narrative in *El Buen Pastor*. Esequiel--the unmatched, non-violent stand-in for

74 And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valour. And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah. Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let no man prevail against thee. So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

Mexican American border dwellers--finds himself at odds with the Marines/United States who are powerful and well equipped for destruction and conquest. Although Esequiel's story ends dramatically different than King Asa's, his symbolic victory manifests in documentaries, Hollywood films, and corridos that uncover the violence associated with border life.[75] Esequiel's death bears witness to and makes personal the inhumanity of U.S. border policy. This in and of itself is a monumental testimony.

El Buen Pastor also functions as an allegory for the larger public. While allegories are meant to suggest specific moral imperatives or universal statements, they are predominantly fictional narratives. The power or thrust in these narratives lie in their ability to appeal to all communities; thus, the iconography used to convey its message must be clear, simple, and easily identifiable. Although Jiménez's lithograph uses religion-specific imagery, its iconic value resonates across cultures. The male figure cradling a lamb represents for more than just religious figures or cultural past times. The centerpiece of the image transcends Christian and pastoral narratives by invoking emotive qualities such as protection over the defenseless, love for all life, and empathy for innocence.[76]

The colors of the sky parallel a biblical story describing an instance when God spoke to Ezekiel, a priest and prophet chosen to dramatize God's messages to the people of Judah during their seventy-two year captivity under the Babylonians.

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75 PBS's "Point of View" documentary, *The Ballad of Esequiel Hernández* (2007), by director Kieran Fitzgerald offers a critical view of Esequiel's murder. Tommy Lee Jones' *The Three Burials of Malaquias Estrada* (2005) was inspired by the 1997 murder. Santiago Jiménez Jr's "El Corrido de Esequiel Hernández" (1999) offers a personal and historical record of Esequiel's tragic death.

76 In addition to the good shepherd, *El Buen Pastor* invokes pastoral traditions of sheep herding in rural locales such as northern New Mexico, colonial Mexico, and much of western United States. According to a 2007 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report, China has the world's largest number of sheep and goats at 171,961,203. See Elinor Melville's *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico*. 1997.

Ezekiel 1:4 describes how the sky changed when God appeared before Ezekiel: "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire." Just above the cacti, yellow flames meet the redness of the sky and the amber dusk towers over the earth. I contend that Jiménez portrayed Esequiel the *fronterizo* parallel to that of Ezekiel the prophet in order to signify Hernández's innocence, his role in bringing national attention to the brutality on the border, and to underscore the affinity between the people of Judah and the people of the border.[77] Further, in Hebrew the name Ezekiel means "God Strengthens."

Understanding *El Buen Pastor's* Judeo-Christian pastoral symbology in the image helps explain Jiménez's visual border subjectivity. The image of the Mexican American man holding the sheep parallels the parable of Jesus Christ as the good shepherd. An image that has lasted centuries, the Good Shepherd's popularity has roots in 2nd or early 3rd century Christian art (Jensen 2000 9). Christianity in early Rome was deemed a threat to polytheism and thus relegated to a "cult" status. Predominately a religion to lower-status groups, Christianity and its iconography had to go underground to avoid persecution. Because burial of the dead was outlawed in Rome, and with an inability to publicly express Christian faith, believers took to

77 Judah was conquered by the Babylonian Empire under King in 586 BC. Once the majority of the people of Judah were deported and their temple destroyed, Babylon reigned supreme for seventy years and carted all riches of the land for the King's empire. Jeremiah's prophecy that Judah would escape captivity from Babylon after 70 years came to fruition when God guided Cyrus into Babylon's center city and destroyed their army (Jeremiah 25).

catacombs and sarcophagi for sanctuary (Jensen 2000 12).[78] There the imagery of Christian parables--the Good Shepherd image being an example--decorated tombs and walls. Created by craftspeople and artists, the good shepherd image became the most popular icon during the "cult of Christianity." According to J. P. Richter "...there are 114 representations of the Good Shepherd in catacombs; these conform to two types only--the Shepherd carrying His sheep, and the Shepherd in the midst of His flock" (1905 290).

In early Christian representations of the Good Shepherd, the male figure is almost always depicted as young and beardless carrying a sheep on over his shoulders or is surrounded by them (Jensen 2000 127). For the creators of the image, the Good Shepherd symbolized an ethical figure, a protector, a savior, or redeemer. Because of their religious plight (having to hide their belief in Jesus Christ), this image represented an innocuous level of praise unto God and hope for a better future. During the Roman empire, artists purposefully rendered the Good Shepherd ambiguous to avoid further religious persecution. According to Robin Margaret Jensen this image is not unique unto the Christian faith. The icon has its antecedent in ancient Greek mythology as Hermes, the male figure who leads the dead to the afterlife (2000 37).

The Gospel of Saint John states: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Gospel of St. John 10:11). The image of the good shepherd also appears in Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not

78 The two most important bodies of Christian art of pre-Constantine and Christian art historical data are catacombs and sarcophagi. See Jensen's *Understanding Early Christian Art* (2000) for more in-depth information on "underground" Christian iconography.

want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psalm 23: 1-3). Esequiel is represented as a good shepherd, cradling and leading his flock. His friendly demeanor, characterized by his welcoming upright arm and relaxed stance, counters the aggressive marines in the background. He is the personification of sincerity and compassion. According to art historian Gabriele Finaldi, "The Good Shepherd images should not be understood as representation of the person of Christ but as a visual renditions of the metaphor employed by him to cast light on his nature and mission" (Finaldi 2000 p. 12). Christ's love and concern for the poor, weak, and marginalized is thus characterized by Esequiel's love and concern for his flock.

The Good Shepherd/Esequiel parallel are further explored through the dichotomous images of the foreground and background. The dark, sinister background exudes aggression, anger, and death while the foreground counters the darkness with a sense of calm, alertness, and life. The obvious darkness that lurks behind the light that shines on the main characters reminds viewers of the good versus evil, God versus Devil binary. The male figure, represented through Esequiel Hernández Jr., is surrounded by goats which traditionally implies a pastoral or idyllic scene. Yet their faces and postures invoke alertness and preparedness for battle. The goats may represent God's angels leading the battle between good and evil.

What appears to be the scope of a rifle pointed at the man's head is also symbolic of a halo or nimbus. In Christian symbology, it is used to represent sacred or divine people. According to art historian George Wells Ferguson, "In portrayals of

God the Father, of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost…the cross within a circle, the cruciform nimbus, refers to redemption through the Cross and is, therefore, used only in portrayals of Christ" (1954 268). Redemption is crucial to understanding this image. Christianity regards Jesus Christ as the redeemer.[79] In *El Buen Pastor* Esequiel is crowned with a bright halo. Jiménez depicts him as a martyr, a sacrifice of innocence in a war waged on disenfranchised border dwellers. The redness of the sky further symbolizes martyrdom because red is the Church's color for martyred saints (Ferguson 1954 273). The dark maroon sky, a color used to represent sorrow and penitence, borders the top of the page.

The Bible discusses Jesus Christ not only as the Good Shepherd, but as the lamb itself.[80] Jesus as the lamb represents the sacrifice God called upon for the forgiveness of sins. In *El Buen Pastor*, the lamb is cradled and nurtured in Esequiel's arm; the embrace is analogous to Jesus redeeming his flock from the 'hand of the enemy.' In this image, the cradled lamb signifies the redemption of the Mexican American population from the violent hand of the United States. But the lamb also represents the victor of war.[81] The lamb in Esequiel's arm serves as a visual prophecy. For Jiménez, Esequiel represents the fulfillment of racial equality and the destruction of the notion of the "illegal alien."

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79 "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me" and "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 49:15 and Psalm 107:2).
80 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Gospel of St. John 1:29).
81 In Revelations 17:14, "[The beast] shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chose, and faithful."

Christian, and in the case of the Borderlands, Catholic catechesis drives home the idea of sacrificed/redeemed characterization of Jesus Christ. Fully divine yet fully human, Jesus Christ was a metaphor and person. I argue that Jiménez is fully aware in the power of this particular symbolism. Thus, we can see Esequiel also inscribed within the divine/human nature. As the saved lamb and the good shepherd, Esequiel is doubly represented in the lithograph as the sacrificed Mexican figure and the redeemed representation of Mexican Americans and immigrants. I contend that Jiménez uses Christian iconography to counter the perception of Mexicans and Mexican Americans as "illegal," violent, and criminal and offers the idea that no human being is illegal. The Mexican body is thus used as a site of contestation to racist and unconstitutional legislation and racialist rhetoric of citizenship and Otherness.

El Buen Pastor follows the format of the Mexican American art form known as *ex-votos*. Using Catholic iconography to establish religious prominence, *ex-votos* symbolize the fulfillment of a vow between God and a petitioner. Whether grace bestowing life upon an ailing person or mercy overcoming failure or defeat, the images tell the story of a tragedy averted. A seventeenth century tradition that blends European and Amerindian votive traditions, they glorify God, Jesus, or a saint for their divine intervention.[82] *Ex-votos* use visual imagery, religious iconography, and narrative devices to offer supplication and sacrament to a higher power; but they also have a very powerful meaning for audience members. They bear witness to the power of prayer and the power of remembrance. *El Buen Pastor* closely follows *ex-*

82 See Jorge Durand *Miracles on the Border* (1995).

voto traditions with its iconography and narrative strategies. Although Esequiel's tragedy was not averted, if we consider that the vow was actually between Jiménez and God we can better understand the divine intervention--that God has not neglected His people, but has them wading in the water for His guidance and refuge.

Luis Jiménez's inventiveness not only reflects his own unique intervention in the art world, but also centuries of artistic transformation that bridge the indigenous era with American Conquest. When Franciscan friars were deployed throughout the Americas, and namely Mexico, their primary goal was to Christianize indigenous populations characterized as savage and uncivilized. Many communicative barriers existed between both cultures including languages, traditions, and religious practices. Because many indigenous tribes practiced polytheism, friars felt an immediate call to save souls and, in the process, assimilate the people.

Friars recognized early on that the most successful way to indoctrinate indigenous people was through the use of images. They used illustrated books and single-leave works as assimilative tools to conquer the minds and spirits of the tribes (Bantel 1979 31). But the Native populations did not undergo a whole-sale indoctrination of Christian faith and symbology. As a counter-hegemonic move the tribes began to interweave their spirituality and iconography into the fabric of "New World" religion. Thus, the tribespeople took possession of the colonizing visual imagery and embedded within it their own standards of understanding the process of conquest.

According to Serge Gruzinski, "this appropriation occurred along a continuum that comprised so many steps and such tiny degrees of differentiation..." (1995 67)

and allowed for a manageable--or at least negotiated--mode of religious transformation throughout Mexico and the Americas. While some Franciscan friars who caught on to the religious-mixing were angered and wanted to maintain a strict Christian conversion, some friars decided to work within this mediated colonization process. Gruzinksi states that “Instead of enhancing Mexico’s break with its pre-Columbian past, the Church aimed for a double-end: (1) to create the necessary conditions for a progressive transition into the colonial present; and (2) to facilitate better relations among the different racial and ethnic groups in New Spain” (1995 57-58). Thus while images did play a crucial role in the colonization of 16th century Mexico, this process was not entirely controlled by the Church or conquistadores. Indigenous populations found inventive ways to make sense of the new religious order, to maintain a level of cultural and religious autonomy, and to ease the violent colonization that their future faced.[83]

The art and iconography of 16th century Mexico resembles both European Christianity and indigenous spirituality in many ways. The blending of aesthetics and religious helped subordinated groups negotiate, resist, and take control of their immediate circumstance. The mestizaje, or cultural mixing, that took hold of both populations trickled into the visual representations of the times and ushered in a hybrid and contingent genre of art. As documented in the 1979 art exhibition *Spain and New Spain: Mexican Colonial Art in Their European Context*, “...the arts of the 16th Century Mexico reflect both the indigenous cultures of the pre-Conquest era

83 In her article “Christian Images in Nahua Testaments of Late Colonial Toluca” Stephanie Wood investigates the “new, hybrid or syncretic forms of belief that arose” from Toluca and how indigenous populations interpreted Christian symbols as foreign re-presentations of their own religious icons.

and the European values of the Spanish conquerors. The hybrid art of this age includes new architectural types, such innovative sculptural forms as the stone crosses that adorn many early Mexican churches, feather mosaics, and murals" (1979 18). Although problematic for its elitist stance on indigenous forms of art (calling native groups and indigenous art "naive," for example), this exhibition was headed in the same direction that borderlands visual theory leads us toward. Both seek to understand the transformative process of inter-cultural artistic appropriations that lead to artworks such as Jiménez's *El Buen Pastor*.

Cambios: The Spirit of Transformation in Spanish Colonial Art was a 1992 art exhibition that intended to continue the work of *Spain and New Spain* and tackled on the idea of "cambio," or transforming change, that allowed for new hybrid art forms to emerge from two contexts--European and Indigenous. Jacinto Quirarte comments on the process in which colonial and indigenous arts melded together to form aesthetic practices that, I would argue, can be seen today in contemporary Mexican and Chicana/o art:

> ...the process of 'transformation' by which various elements--indigenous art forms, motifs and skills; the European influences that were either imposed or absorbed; the imported artists and objects--were fused over time into new, vital artistic styles and forms...[this] complex process of transformation, to show what endures as lasting evidence of the interaction of very difference cultures: the established, highly developed indigenous pagan cultures of the New World, the conquering, evangelizing Christian cultures of the Old World. The works of art produced in this process of 'cambios,' or transforming change, are eloquent testimony to a creative force that is strong and new, a force that informs and shapes the art of the colonial period. (in Palmer 1992 7).

The *cambios* that manifested across Mexico and in other Spanish colonies throughout the Americas are important when considering contemporary aesthetics

and iconography. Whether these *cambios* grew as a result of domination or accommodation, innovations and reinventions of local and global iconography were sure to be embedded in the transformative process that swept the continents. The Good Shepherd is one of many icons--the Virgin Mother being another--that succumbed to the visual adaptations of indigenous groups.

El Buen Pastor epitomizes the *cambios* in art that helped develop contemporary Chicana/o art and borderlands visual theory. The negotiations and struggles that indigenous populations dealt with are reflective of similar circumstances that Chicana/o communities dealt with (and deal with) in the 20th and 21st centuries. Jiménez's ability to reach back from the 2nd and 3rd centuries of Rome, to the 16th century of Mexico and the Americas, and to Chicana/o and American struggles against domination are rendered legible in this lithograph. By successfully crafting an image that reaches across continents and cultures, Jiménez and the good shepherd induce important conversations about colonization and imperialism and its continuous attack on minoritized groups.

Two different yet complimentary narratives appear within this lithograph. The foreground of the image evokes a sense of peace and protection, indicated by the rescued lamb and the man's calm demeanor. The background depicts aggression and surveillance, exhibited by the soldiers' physical and symbolic presence. Positioned together, they speak to the growing concern about the militarization of the border and the criminalization of border crossing communities. The surveillance of Mexicans by the military, the general meaning of the lithograph, speaks on a number

of levels to how the racialization of unauthorized immigrants is crucial to protecting the U.S. body politic.

El Buen Pastor reconciles the harshness of history with the actuality of people's lived experience across the U.S.--Mexico border by deconstructing the myths of national belonging. The image provides new and radically different views of history that include stories that are in direct conflict with our national memory. By deploying borderlands visual theory in my analysis, I am able to unearth just how successful *El Buen Pastor* is in making convincing statements about the relationship between image, text, and borderlands experiences. Coupling Christian pastoral symbolism and Chicana/o rasquache sensibilities demonstrates the profound similarities between classical "high" art and traditional folkways. The fusion of seemingly disparate categories and the repulsion of aesthetic hierarchies abound in the image, making the image a touchstone of borderlands visual theory in practice.

Because borderlands visual theory stems from personal and community attitudes, Jiménez's decision to rely on his experiential knowledge to craft *El Buen Pastor* is telling. El Paso, Texas serves as a crux for economic, cultural, and political connections between Mexico and the United States. Along with various products and business transactions that transpire on the border, images are often transfered, often times impacting national and cultural iconography. Whether or not Jiménez witnessed the dissemination of "the good shepherd" image between countries and cultures, he participated in Chicana/o aesthetic practices that transformed iconography pervading the borderlands. His bicultural, border life subjectivity empowered him to fuse images from both cultures into a unique, transcultural, and

religious icon that stretches back to at least 2nd century Rome. By pairing the 20th century story about Esequiel's murder with the "cultish" iconography from 2nd century Rome, Jiménez resurrected Esequiel's legacy and drafted him as a martyr for Chicanas/os in America--maybe even a Saint of the Borderlands.

Borderlands visual theory offers new ways of re-conceptualizing race and identity along the border. Its progressive artistic practices create a new framework for investigating or researching current modes of insurgent expressions that resist assimilationist and violent stereotyping. As a theory of action and creation, borderlands visual theory promotes the manifestation of new and radical aesthetics and imagery that is uncompromising in its perspective. Borderlands visual theory works toward the same effect that Otto Santa Ana demands of alternative counter-hegemonic insurgent metaphors: "to criticize the working relations of institutions which appear to be neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them" (2002 254).

Anti-immigration sentiment or backlash stems from general restrictionist sentiments and the implementation of an othering process designating "illegal aliens" as undesirable and illegitimate. This American nativist approach to categorizing difference underscores how deep nationalism is tied to race and the discourse of terror. For Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003), "In a climate of fervent nationalism, the banner of counterterrorism is currently the pretext for emergent forms of state terrorism against immigrants, the poor. The state is intensifying border militarization as it develops new forms of policing and surveillance of immigrants and dissidents--

the excluded citizens of the nation" (xv). This rhetorical violence toward undocumented immigrants produces their illegality and, particularly for Mexican Americans, affixes "Mexican-ness" (understood by the nation as phenotype and geographic proximity) with criminality. Rather than producing meaningful and humane dialogue about immigrant rights and border regulation, anti-immigrant proponents exploit the hardships of immigrants in order to protect white America.[84] And the negative representations are what continue to be the indices of the operative social values of American society (Santa Ana 2002 15).

Identifying the "Other" and personifying illegality are necessary to the creation of the nation state and for proving the necessity of borders. While race-based claims to citizenship are not publicly articulated today, anti-immigration rhetoric mimics previous racist discourse, claiming "illegal aliens" to be pathological and criminal. As Otto Santa Ana writes, "The discursive construction of racism may currently be unobtrusive, but once noted, it is far from subtle...The absence of productive dominant metaphors for immigrants and immigration supports the thesis that the U.S. public discourse on immigrants is racist" (2002 103). Renato Rosaldo (1993) states that U.S. citizenship historically served as a proxy for race in legal, political, and theoretical discourses. Thus, immigration law and public sentiments become a masquerade party for racist and racialist entities vying to protect their America and eliminating the historically, culturally, and linguistically heterogenous America.

Rosalinda Fregoso advances the discussion about the fabrication of illegality and states that the cultural imaginary surrounding U.S. and Mexico depicts the

84 See Samuel J. Huntington's *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (2004) for a nativist perspective of Anglo America and its "Hispanic Challenge".

border as an alterity rampant of "outcasts and sexually hungry subalterns" (2003 53). She argues that "…the border…is symptomatic of a colonialist and racist imaginary. The product of an ethnocentric gaze, this representation of frontier territories as abject serves both to define the United States and metropolitan Mexico and to shape their respective national identities" (*ibid)*. These socially and geographically based identities are indoctrinated into our national conscious in order to naturalize how we perceive otherness and difference.

National symbols, memorials, and official narratives exist to help characterize this imagined communion; newcomers to the nation are required to fit in these norms.[85] Immigrants who do not follow suit are imagined by the larger society (both in relation to the state and to Anglo society) as deviant and unassimilable.[86] The nation is thus characterized by what it is not--what it fears to be--rather than a heterogeneous, circular community. Representations of both groups (citizens and non-citizens) are mitigated and disseminated for consumption and indoctrination.

Media plays an important role in constructing and designating "illegality." Producing a powerful context for audiences to consume "news" and images, the media create "institutionalized expectations" which make viewers consume their

85 Leo Chavez writes that "National symbols are part of the visual lexicon in a discourse on immigration and citizenship and, as such, can be interpreted as both symbols of unity and division." (2008) p. 153

86 Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) helps us understand how the United States perceives itself as a nation and, more importantly, as a people without regard to the violence, genocide, and prejudice that may exist at the bedrock of the nation. Anderson writes, "...in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...it is imagined as a community because, regardless of the actual inequalities and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (15-16.).

television experience in a particular and catered manner.[87] Joseph Nevins (2010) notes that the press also plays a formidable role in constructing Mexican illegality: "...the press played a key role in legitimating the perception of a Mexican invasion by uncritically reporting INS reports alleging that unauthorized migrants were producers of poverty, crime, and joblessness" (79-80). Otto Santa Ana also states that the media wraps immigration in political rhetoric, inculcating negative attitudes towards undocumented people; he writes "the media's selection of dada make a significant contribution to the outcome of each person's thinking...[T]he media do not control what people prefer, they influence public by providing much of the information people think about and by shaping how they think about it" (2002 50).

While I also hesitate to suggest that the media has carte blanche over public opinion, it does have substantial power over how people gather and understand the news. In addition, scholars and policy makers publicly engage in polemical discussions about national security and protecting U.S. citizenry, thereby obfuscating what I believe are the real issues at hand: 1) the belief that Mexicans are a direct threat to the homogeneity of the U.S. body politic; 2) the argument that securing the border will protect the sanctity of the nation-state; and 3) the use of racialist discourse to define acceptable national citizenship. Taken together, various media and legal discourse manipulate the lived experiences of Mexicans and immigrants in order criminalize and make deviant anything outside the acceptable notions of U.S.

87 See Chon Noriega's "Chicano Cinema and the Horizon of Expectations" in *The Chicano Studies Reader: An Anthology of Aztlán, 1970-2000* (2001) p. 183-210 for a discussion oh now mainstream media creates the context for audience members to consume Chicano cinema and the Chicano experience in general.

nationality.[88] Thus the political and rhetorical violence are more than just an "incidental correlation of words" (Santa Ana 2002 89) but real life experiences immigrant populations and Latinas/os in the United States endure.

Language plays an important role in manifesting power relations between groups of people and their government. Scott Lyons (2000) notes that setting the terms for debate--labeled "rhetorical imperialism"--allows government entities to wage a rhetorical war by constantly defining and redefining the Other (Lyons 2000 450). In the case of the U.S.-Mexico border, words such as "invasion," "threat," and "crisis" help sustain the fear of immigrants rushing over to steal jobs from "real Americans." But as Nestor Rodriguez writes "The crisis of the border is not that 'illegal aliens' are swarming across the U.S.-Mexico Border, but that the global capitalist growth is overwhelming nation-states as unites of economic development" (Perea 1996 226). For Mexicans and Mexican Americans, rhetorical imperialism fortifies anti-immigration law and engineers a powerful refashioning of Mexican--and American--identity. The term "Mexican," visually and rhetorically, has been made deviant and criminal by its re/definition as the "illegal alien." For scholar Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez:

> The discomfort that is raised by the term 'Mexican' comes from having to recognize a long and undistinguished history of economic exploitation, occupational segmentation, social segregation, miseducation, political and legal mistreatment, and cultural and linguistic erasure. Ironically, the one label that revives that history is the very word that is denied legitimacy (1996 87).

88 Suzanne Oboler in her edited *Latinos and Citizenship* (2006) writes that citizenship "is a lived experience, grounded in the negotiated participation of all groups, of all sectors and individuals within the community" (5). For Oboler, citizenship should not be viewed as a legal status but as "a measure of relative equality" that binds a nation together.

Luis Jiménez's *El Buen Pastor* counters the debilitating powers of rhetorical imperialism by creating its own discourse and media (text and image) through borderlands visual theory. Using an iconic image (good shepherd) to recast Esequiel (a stand in for Mexicans and Mexican Americans) in a positive light can work against the "illegal alien." The image requires that we reexamine how we understand Mexicans and Mexican Americans on the border. Instead of assuming that Mexicans are just another community defined by political and geographical borders, *El Buen Pastor* demands a re-visioning of border communities and a social, political, and systematic intervention in the production of citizenship and race-based nationhood. It requires us as viewers cross and violate the border, culturally, physically and politically.

Although *El Buen Pastor* is supposed to represent Esequiel before his death, I pose a second and more telling interpretation of the male in the lithograph. I argue that the man in the image is actually Esequiel's father and the lamb cradled in his arms is symbolic of his slain son. Had Esequiel Hernández Jr. lived to his father's age, maybe he would have been able to fulfill his own American Dream. Jiménez may have created an alternate ending, a temporal moment when we could imagine the "what if" scenario. Would Esequiel have successfully owned a dairy cooperative like he dreamed of? The bullet that shot and killed Esequiel also killed his dream. This alternative reading of Esequiel as the lamb suggests two troubling thoughts: firstly, the father-son image represents an indictment on the racist and racialist U.S. border politics and its violent effects on innocent Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Secondly, my interpretation is also an indictment on every U.S. citizen; at what

lengths are we willing to allow our government and military to go in order to protect the sanctity of U.S. citizenship, our freedoms associated with it, and the power of the military to violently resist foreign or “illegal” co-optation of citizenship? It is through the discourse of immigration, border control, and the politics of citizenship that U.S. citizens and “illegal aliens” are produced on the U.S.-Mexico border. This dialogue comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying a *simultaneous yet different* space (Bakhtin quoted in Holquist, 1990).

Otto Santa Ana writes that in order to combat negative metaphors and stereotypes one must create alternative counter hegemonic images that seek to dismantle the powerful and demeaning rhetoric that the media and our politicians use against undocumented and Latina/o people. He argues that we must engineer a public discourse or “insurgent metaphors” that seek to “challenge the conventional one, expressly elaborate its semantic associations to make it work as an alternative conceptualizing tool, and develop its interpretive context so that it creates a distinctive worldview with its own narratives and cultural frames” (2002 296). I believe Luis Jiménez understood Santa Ana’s call for new insurgent metaphors as recent immigration struggles took hold of our nation. *El Buen Pastor* challenges conventional models of representing Mexicans and Americans, pairs together multicultural iconography, and, with the help of borderlands visual theory, creates an alternative context for understanding how Chicana/o aesthetics are an expression of another center in American identity.

The Murder of Esequiel Hernández Jr.

Esequiel's murder took place in Redford, Texas, a small town just 209 miles southeast of El Paso. Redford's population, eighty-eight percent American of Mexican descent, is just over 130 and the average household income is roughly $18,425.[89] This small working class rural community is not surrounded by sky scrapers and large condominiums. There are no malls or movie theaters to entertain the families. All that surrounds Redford is the Rio Grande and an arid dessert.

Esequiel Hernández was only eighteen years old. The sixth of eight children to mother Maria de la Luz and Esequiel Hernández Sr, "Zeke," as he was known, was not college bound, but he was ambitious. His hope was to run the local dairy co-op and take over the small parcel of land his family owned in Polvo Crossings. Randall C. Cater, Esequiel's high school industrial technology teacher, stated that Zeke was "honest, reliable, hard working and cheerful" (1997 1.) Other teachers described him as quiet and pleasant with a smile on his face. His dance instructor stated that Zeke was never outgoing or outspoken but that his shyness disappeared in his dance classes which he loved.

Redford, Texas did not represent a threat to national security. Regardless of its proximity to the U.S.-Mexico Border, this small town reflects American ideals of family, hard work, and community. So then what were U.S. Marines doing in Redford, Texas that day?

According to the "Oversight Investigation of the Death of Esequiel Hernández Jr" report written by Chairman Lamar Smith in April 1998, Border Patrol agents

89 Information based off of 2000 U.S. census.

requested military assistance from the Department of Defense. The goal was to conduct counter drug border surveillance along parts of the border vulnerable to small scale drug smuggling.[90] The military mission, scheduled for May 1997, was supposed to establish "listening posts/observation posts (LP/OP)" to help curtail suspected drug smuggling from Mexico into the United States. Marines and Border Patrol agents were to work jointly, operating from a shared radio network so that agents could monitor and aid marines if the need arose. This mission was designated Joint Task Force 6 (JTF-6) and assigned it to Headquarter Battery of the Fifth Battalion, Eleventh Marine Regiment, First Marine Division.[91]

The second team of marines, Team 7, consisted Corporal Clemente Banuelos, the team leader, Corporal Ray Torrez, and Lance Corporals Ronald Wieler and James Blood. According to Lamar Smith, chairman to the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims of the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives, "Just before 6:00pm on the evening of May 20th, Team 7 began to move up from their hide positions to the LP/OP. The marines wore camouflage uniforms, guille suits (burlap strips sewn to uniforms to enhance camouflage) [Figure 2], and some camouflage face paint. They carried standard-issue M16A2 assault rifles" (1998 3).

90 In the past, military personnel helped build and sustain operable command posts along the Rio Grande; fences were erected and motion sensors and lights were placed in the field, aiding border patrol staff in conducting border surveillance.

91 JTF-6 was composed of eight four-man teams of marines who were to conduct counter drug border surveillance for a period of seventy-two hours each. During the day Marines were supposed to maintain their "hide positions" and maneuver to their LP/OP at night. This particular mission was to be conducted at a border crossing town called Polvo Crossing, south of Redford.

According to statements given by the four marines, Esequiel spotted them and began to bobbing and weaving for cover, suggesting Esequiel was maneuvering for a better vantage point. The marines also stated that weather conditions did not permit them to verbally communicate or warn Esequiel of their presence. After taking an offensive position, Corporal Banuelos aimed at Esequiel and fired. The bullet entered him on his right side, fragmented, and tore through organs and major vessels. Esequiel then bled to death.

According to Smith's report, there are major inconsistencies between the four marines' stories. As told by family and friends, Esequiel was right-handed. If he was aiming at the marines, as their statements suggest, he would have been shot on his left side. This forensic evident argues that Esequiel was not even aiming at the marines when he was shot. Marines also stated that they were in pursuit of Esequiel for over 20 minutes and that he was running and averting them. However, Esequiel only moved roughly 200 meters and, according to Smith, "His pace of about ten meters per minute suggests a meandering stroll rather than a combat maneuver" (1998 16). The marines stated they acted in self defense, but this also proves problematic. If they had been reacting out of defense, they would have returned gun shots immediately after Esequiel fired his single shot. The twenty minute delay between shots is insufficient to their claim of self-defense.[92]

92 After the murder, all four marines were taken to an area hotel where they were allowed to rest in a single hotel room. Rather than following protocol by separating each marine in a different room for interrogation, they were rewarded for their days' long work with ice cold beer purchased for them by local agents. The Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery Center in Fort Bliss, Texas sent Lieutenant Colonel Rennie Cory to meet the Marines at the hotel. What occurred in the room is unknown to anyone but the five men. But the proceeding interrogations suddenly took an interesting turn as all four marines' statements corroborated each other's. A criminal investigation led by Texas Rangers commenced was launched against Corp. Banuelos in the following months. Even

Esequiel died without communicating his statement to anyone. All information about that tragic evening is based upon the four marines' statements and the radio transcripts between the marines and border patrol agents. Border patrol agents, sheriff deputies, and other authorities gathered at the site of the murder. All the while, Hernández Sr, Esequiel's father, noticed the goats returning to their pens. He was completely unaware of what happened further down the dusty lane. Wondering why a crowd of police were gathering nearby, Hernández Sr jumped in his vehicle and drove to the group of men. Lance Corporal James Blood angrily approached Hernández Sr and shoved him away from the scene of the crime. But a sheriff recognizing Hernández asked he if could possibly identify the slain young man. He walked curiously passed the marines still dressed in their camouflage suits and his eyes fell upon his son, lying in a pool of his own blood deep in a well. The Hernández family paid the ultimate price at the hands of the border politics. The loss of their son Esequiel, murdered for being a Mexican on the border, shows the real effects caused by an imaginary border.

That U.S. Marines identified Esequiel as a drug smuggler based on appearance resonates strongly in the new millennium. On April 23, 2010 Arizona Governor Janice Brewer signed into law Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070) which allows local police officers to act as border patrol agents. SB 1070 requires enforcement officers to determine citizenship status for anyone during any legitimate contact made by an official or agency of the state or a county, city or town *if reasonable*

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with the inconsistencies of the statements and the compounding evidence that the four marines did not follow proper protocols, Banuelos was found not guilty. See the Coyne Report by Major General John T. Coyne (1998). http://www.dpft.org/hernandez/coyne.htm.

suspicion exists that the person is an "illegal alien" who is unlawfully present in the U.S.[93] "Reasonable suspicion" requires the development of a visual lexicon that will aid officers in stopping anyone--citizen or not--who looks "illegal." And as stated earlier in this chapter, the media has done an incredible job of demarcating illegality as Mexican.

Governor Brewer, in an interview immediately after signing the bill, was asked what criterion would be used to determine what an "illegal alien" looks like and if she herself could point illegality based on personal appearance. In response she answered:

> "[crackling voice and deep breath]...I...I do not know. I do not know what an illegal immigrant looks like. I can tell you that I think there are people in Arizona that assume they know what an illegal immigrant looks like. I don't know if they know that for a fact or not. But I know if that AZ post (Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training board) gets their stuff together, works on this law, puts down the description, that the law will be enforced civilly, fairly, and without..um..discriminatory points to it" (CNN webcast. Date accessed 05/01/2010).

The irony that racial profiling could be enforced "civilly, fairly, and without ..um..discriminatory points to it" makes Senate Bill 1070 even more ludicrous. Furthermore, SB 1070 violates the Constitution's due process clause in the fourteenth amendment which would require the federal government to protect the individual from the state.

While Esequiel Hernández Jr's story is tragic, it is not singular. On March 27, 2010, fifty-eight year old Robert Krentz--an Anglo U.S. citizen--was found murdered on his ranch on the Arizona border. Immediately, local and national media spun the story as a tragic consequence of the United States' inability to protect the border and

93 Senate Bill 1070 http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/sb1070s.pdf

its citizens. By naming the alleged culprit as a drug smuggler and illegal alien the media catalyzed Arizona's current efforts to take immigration and border patrol in its own hands. Even though the Cochise County Sheriff's office reported they had no information on the assailant, including gender, race, or nationality, the very locality of the crime--the U.S.-Mexico border--signified for the media, the Arizona government, and conservative immigration critics that the culprit had to have been male, Mexican, and "illegal."[94] Krentz's status as an Anglo and U.S. citizen helped imagine his culprit's status as opposite and thus produced a fictitious assailant characterized as non-Anglo, non-citizen. The act of personifying illegality allows for what scholar Bruce De Genova writes as "the ability to closely link crime and immigration in the public imagination" (in Oboler 2006 153).

What we can take away from SB 1070, immigrant lives, and *El Buen Pastor* is that although we may have difficulty understanding our difference we should always look to our humanity to understand them. This image encourages us to look at the border not as a locus of illegality nor as the wasteland of America's marginalized, forgotten and unwanted, but as a center filled with promises for our future and a central part of American identity. What Jiménez makes explicit in his image of Esequiel Hernández Jr. is an innocent man criminalized based on what "America" refuses to call American--Mexicans and brown culture. But a nation's most telling characteristics are not based on what it refuses to be, but what it embraces.

94 See "Arizona Rancher's Slaying Sparks Debate Over Illegal Immigration" in *AZCENTRAL.COM. Mach 29, 2010.* http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2010/03/29/20100329rancher-killed-at-arizona-ranch.html*. Date accessed 14 May 2010.*

Jiménez's America sees the humanity and beauty in the people and cultures that inhabit its land--either at the center of society or in its crevices.

Figures

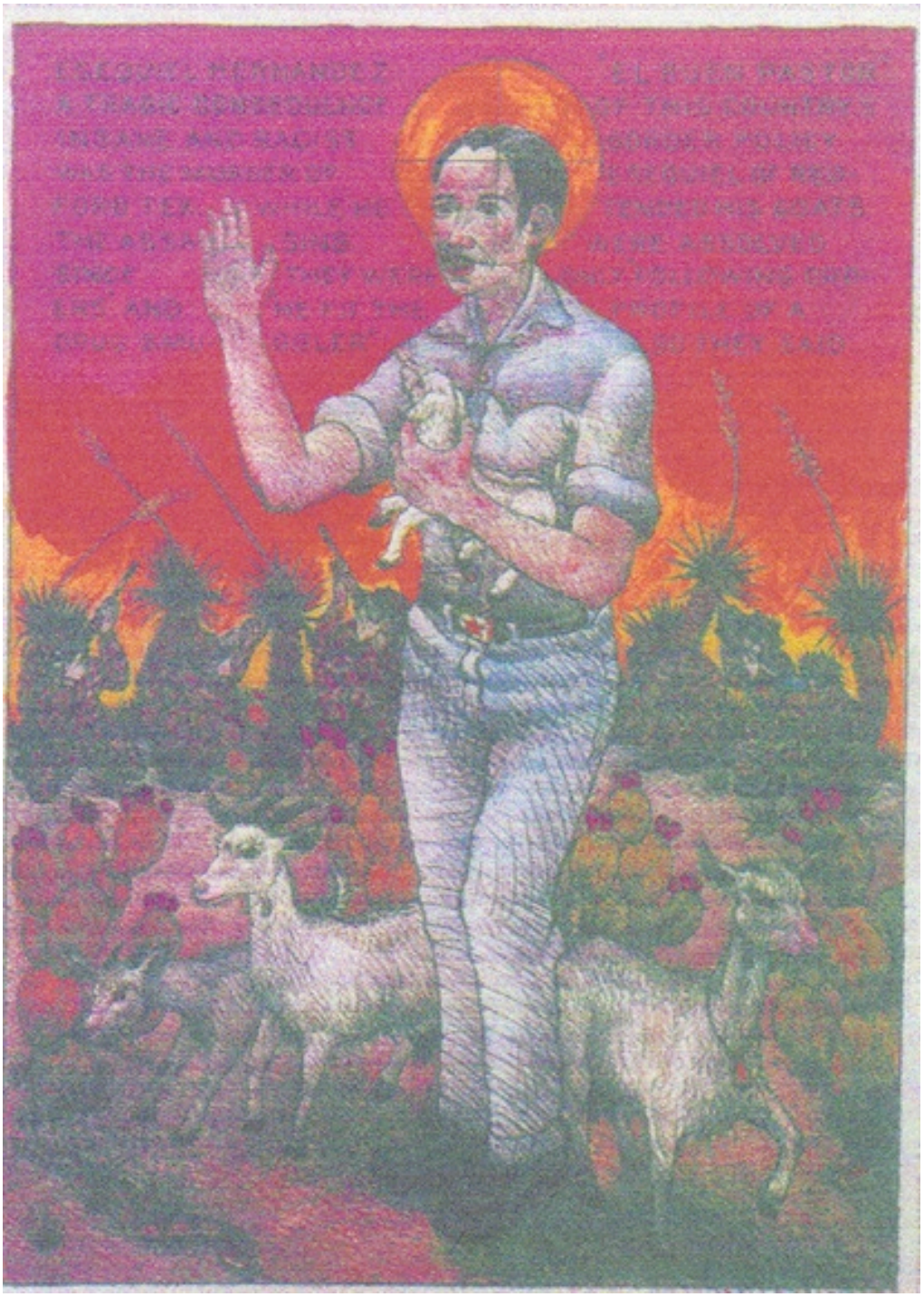

Figure 1. *El Buen Pastor,* (1999).

Copyright with Estate of the Artist.

Figure 2. U.S. Marine huddled among the brush.

Image courtesy of James H. Evans.

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Chapter 6

How the West was Juan: *Mesteños, Vaqueros*, and Expressions of Another Center in American History

Luis Jiménez was untamed and unabashedly proud of his multicultural heritage. Influenced by the spiritual, cultural, ethnic, political, and social borders that surrounded him, Jiménez used his life story as a platform to share his own unique American experience. Mexican American by birth, Chicano by choice, working-class by the dominant culture, Protestant Mexican by faith, and Pop/Southwestern/New Mexican/Texas/Revisionist/American by genre were only a few of the many categories in which Jiménez self-identified. All these perspectives (and so many others) helped shape Luis Jiménez's understanding of how he saw America. Even more profound was his self-awareness of these differential categories and his ability to render legible several categories in the breadth of his work. No other collection of work can speak as prominently to his American philosophy as his Progress (Western) series.

Representing the West has always been a complex struggle over imagination, narrative, and perspective. To craft a singular historical memory of the creation of the United States automatically implies a degree of consensus. The story of the West, manufactured by a handful of powerful individuals, condensed hundreds if not thousands of significant and minute moments, battles, reciprocities, interactions, and skirmishes into two words: the frontier. At the expense of the audience, the story of the West does not share the multicultural traditions and histories that shaped western America. Literature, film, and art helped create a remarkably coherent and

persistent version of the frontier at the almost complete annihilation of histories policed in the margins. This is where the work of Luis Jiménez makes a significant impact in the genre of American art and the worldview of America.

Surveying Luis Jiménez's western art offers us an opportunity to counter a U.S. national memory that diminishes the contributions of under-represented communities. My analysis of his Progress series reveals the revisionist nature of Jiménez's western art. In this chapter I proposes a few ideas about Luis Jiménez's intervention in America's West. Firstly, Luis Jiménez's *barriological* recreation of western iconography questions prescribed definitions of U.S. history as a singular frontier narrative. In Jiménez's work, the horse, the cowboy, and the West are transformed into el mesteño, el vaquero, and the Progress series. Thus, reading his art through the lens of borderlands visual theory provides a more vibrant and polyvocal understanding of American national symbols. Secondly, Jiménez's western images reconstruct our national memory and bear witness to the racial silences of American identity. Jiménez's *explicit* racialization of western iconography demands an acknowledgment of marginalized histories of culture and colonization as an integral part of a greater narrative emerging from other centers of history. Finally, his work aims to revolutionize contemporary "American" art and redefine Western art from an ethnocritical perspective.[95] His revisionist and subversive western iconography ultimately provide a more expansive view of America.

95 Ethnocriticism demands that we look at race "from below" and that we disrupt and demolish meta-narratives consuming our national history. From a postmodern standpoint, "the importance of … little narratives is not only that they challenge the dominant meta-narrative and the state apparatus that would prohibit or discredit them, but that they also indicate the possibility of another kind of history"

Separated into three sections, this chapter will unearth several key elements for understanding Luis Jiménez's intervention in American art and Western iconography. The first section "Constructing the West" discusses the power of images in constructing western history and representations of marginalized communities. "The Battle," section two, offers an in-depth look at Jiménez's Progress (Western) series. By analyzing his artwork within the framework of borderlands visual theory (BVT) we can understand the significant impact of Jiménez's work in academic, art, and community circles. The analysis runs chronologically starting with *End of the Trail* and ends with Jiménez's first public piece *Vaquero*. The final section "Other Victorious Moments" will showcase another successful intervention in the art world in 1991 when the Smithsonian American Art Museum (then National Museum of American Art) produced the exhibition "The West As America" which critically examined images from the frontier era from a contemporary and highly critical lens.

The terms *barriology* and *barrioization* stem from debates about the significance of the *barrio* in formulating a unique identity within working-class or low-income Chicana/o urban communities. Created to enhance our understanding of the relationship between identity and the built environment, *barriology* and *barriozation* explore both positive and negative effects of urban *barrios*. Albert Camarillo's research on Chicano communities in California offers insightful analysis of what he calls a "new reality for Mexican people…That new reality was perhaps best reflected in what can be called the *barrioization* of the Mexican population—the formation of residentially and socially segregated Chicano barrios or neighborhoods" (1979, 53).

(Carroll in Krupat, 1992, 10). It is concerned with differences rather than oppositions and seeks dialogical models of representation.

This new type of spacialized identity was, and still is, a crucial component in Chicana/o communities' survival against hegemonic practices of cultural erasure. Raúl Homero Villa writes that "*barrioization*--understood as a complex of dominating social processes originating *outside* of the barrios--was not imposed without significant response by the *Mexicanos* living within and acting on behalf of, their developing residential milieus" (2000 5). Barriozation, therefore, represents the outcome of external forces shaping communities of lack.

Conversely, *barriology* represents "a playful but serious promotion of the cultural knowledge and practices particular to the barrio" (Villa 2000 7; Ybarra-Frausto 1978 98-100). In an effort to codify and articulate the cultural practices and traditions conceived in the *barrios,* the term *barriology* works as a counter-discourse against powerful stereotypes and racialist ideology. Popularly coined in the late 1960s by the infamous art collective *Con Safos* (C/S), *barriology* became a subversive tool to convey powerful, and at times mocking, messages against the dominant Anglo culture. The term brings forth various knowledge bases within the *barrio* and helps shape community consciousness. According to Richard Griswold del Castillo, "…the creation of the barrio was a positive accomplishment. The barrio gave a geographical identity, a feeling of being home, to the dispossessed and poor" (1979, 50).

Constructing the West

Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of* Conquest (1987) outlines several moments in U.S. history that birthed the frontier narrative. Her analysis of empire and subjugation in the West illuminates how language, images, and the economy defined

a nation. Limerick's alternative interpretation of historical events negates the frontier as our official historical record; she challenges us to consider these events as part of a larger piece-meal history of the United States. Rather than embracing the romance novel of frontier life and Western American history, Limerick draws upon secondary sources to craft a counter-narrative of the "West." Her exploration of 19th and 20th century America depicts settler-colonists as naive people attempting to control their (self)manifested destiny through commercial, political, artistic, and environmental strategies.

The complexity of U.S. history mentioned above prompts us to ask the following: To what extent did the manufactured history of the West reify prevailing ideologies of national belonging? Without the myth of the West to ground Anglo American identity in the United States, what would the nation look like today? How do mythic heroes and Western iconography reproduce specific "American" ideals? And in what ways are images employed to maintain and challenge American Western Anglo heritage?

Images shape our perception of the world and convert myths into national memory. Whether produced by dominant groups or a handful of individuals, images are vested with an incredible amount of power that continues to impact world views, public policy, and official history. To the detriment of historically under-represented communities, images tend to distort their lived realities and reify stereotypes for immediate consumption. These stereotypes undergo exponential growth and acceptance that tend to replace more accurate representations of cultures and

people. Thus, images not only reify ideologies but they also construct and create new ways of seeing.

Interestingly, the relationship of images to ideology is a double-edged sword. According to Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, images tell us more about the cultures from in which they are produced rather than what the images represent (2005, 6). What becomes apparent is not necessarily the represented Other so much as the ideologies of powerful people who explicitly racialize "minorities." Renato Rosaldo contributes to discussions of culture and ideology in his book *Culture and Truth* and states that "if ideology often makes cultural facts appear natural, social analysis attempts to reverse that process. It dismantles the ideological in order to reveal the cultural…" (1993, 39). He adds that "ideologies are fictions designed to conceal feelings of guilt. In more general terms, this mode of analysis argues that the work of ideology is either deliberately to disguise real class interests or unintentionally to express underlying social strains" (73). These astute observations require that we move beyond static notions and descriptions of the Other because they are inherently flawed based on their racialist logic and political agenda. What becomes painfully obvious is that we must look for new ways of seeing and methods that account for positionality, bias, and intent. As James Clifford aptly describes,

> It is more than ever crucial for different peoples to form complex concrete images of one another, as well as of the relationships of knowledge and power that connect them; but no sovereign scientific method or ethical stance can guarantee the truth of such images. They are constituted--the critique of colonial modes of representation has shown at least this much--in specific historical relations of dominance and dialogue" (1988 23).

My work on borderlands visual theory is an attempt to redirect our gaze and expand the lens with which we see and understand the world. The U.S. West is borderland visual theory's final showdown in this dissertation.

The myth of the frontier requires powerful legitimizing factors such as a consistent set of images and social practices that maintain the myth's power and veracity. Manufactured images and invented traditions shaped America's national history. With only a handful of authors to construct the West, the myth itself had to become self-sustaining. Firstly, people had to relinquish their own specific cultures in favor of some abstract and unifying iconic national identity. Rather than claiming direct ethnic heritage (Irish, Spanish, German), the term "American" eliminated specificities in lieu of a more homogenous, imagined community. Secondly, constructed histories and traditions had to be sanctioned and repeated so that people would accept them as unchallenged permanent records of history. Finally, any form of dissent had to be negatively characterized as unpatriotic and un-American. But a critical look at frontier ideology begins to counter its pervasive and ominous nature. According to W. J. T. Mitchell, "ideology is false consciousness, a system of symbolic representations that reflects an historical situation of domination by a particular class, and which serves to conceal the historical character and class bias of that system under guises of naturalness and universality" (2). America's West, built from fabricated stories and embellished facts, veered away from lived realities for specific, premeditated reasons. Most importantly, the myth of the West stripped power away from non-Anglo communities and endowed Anglo colonizers with a sense of legitimacy (Manifest Destiny), incentives (land and independence),

and prosperity (gold and mining). By appealing to large audiences through visual images, ideologies began to sink into their psyche and replaced their own epistemology for a false conscience. By and large, art became a successful way to display and perpetuate prevailing national ideas of American identity and culture.

Nation-building relied heavily on successfully connecting identity with the land. A genre of art emerged in America with very imperialist agendas; landscape art was a highly successful medium to help construct, reify, and manifest dominant ideologies across America. What initially was thought to be a mirror reflecting the natural landscape, landscape artists portrayed an ideal representation of the national imaginary. Rooted in imperialism, this artistic practice helped shape the relationship between the land and colonial America.

Landscape art is a genre ideologically rooted in concepts of power and nationhood. Denis E. Cosgrove offers a critical historiography of the landscape art genre since its inception (1984). Understanding how landscape influences national ideology, Cosgrove writes that “landscape constitutes a discourse through which identifiable social groups historically have framed themselves and their relations with both the land and with other human groups, and that this discourse is closely related epistemologically and technologically to ways of seeing” (xiv). Further, Cosgrove states that “landscape emerged from specific geographical, social and cultural circumstances” (1984, xi) and that “seeing history [in landscape art] that can be understood only as a wider history of economy and society” (xiv). To understand landscape art, scholars must investigate how technologies of visual perception augment the realities of the land.

Landscape is not just a social product, but also an ideological concept and a form of control. It is a way for people to “represent themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature” (Cosgrove 15). What we see taking form in this discussion about landscape is the ways in which representations of landscape were manipulated to serve ideological and political goals. Cosgrove accurately links landscape art with the creation of America as he states that “since landscape is a cultural expression of social relations with the land it can be argued that America is in some respects an articulation on a continental scale of the landscape idea” (162). Lastly, Cosgrove cautions readers that landscape is not an exact replica of what we see but a composite sketch, or “a controlling composition of the land rather than its mirror” (270). Michael Baxandall (1985) complements Cosgrove’s claim and convincingly writes that when we are writing about art, we are describing a reflection of what we see, not the actual object. Thus, image writing attempts to fix the object in our minds long enough to apply meaning to it. So when we describe and explain art in its multiple contexts we must understand how our positionality affects our interpretation. The meaning applied to America’s West took a crippling grasp on our imaginations.

Angela Miller (1993) expands on Cosgrove’s findings by investigating the role of landscape painting in forming U.S. national identity. By understanding the relationship of power between painted images and the text that accompanied it, Miller states that “the literary dimension of landscape was a means of controlling the image, retaining a vivid power to hold the eye while compelling the mind and associations toward predetermined meanings” (93). Miller outlines how the visual

image and the written word functioned as interdependent discursive practices of imperialism in the mid-nineteenth century. Knowing that images of landscape worked better to indoctrinate a set of values rather than the actual landscape itself, cultural workers/landscape artists became authors of a history tied up in violence, war, and slavery but only displayed civility and utopian desires.

Miller unfolds her discussion about images and meaning by staging a dialectic between the instability of American national identity and the fixed quality of images:

> Landscape images served as an arena of symbolic action, a quasi-utopian endeavor that helped to order culturally a space inherently open-ended and unstable. The mid-nineteenth century's enthusiasm for landscape art was motivated by a complex set of associations identifying images of nature with virtue, purity, and uncomplicated harmony, as well as with national unity, pride of place, and a unique identity distinct from that of Europe. (1993 12)

Although American national identity was presented in an "uncomplicated" and natural manner, its history was anything but harmonious. Miller ultimately de-romanticizes the portrayals of the United States by deconstructing a landscape art genre that attempted to make permanent fabricated histories.

Vivian Green Fryd offers a great example of how studying images in their environment can offer a more nuanced interpretation (2001). Fryd argues that "images must be considered not in isolation but in relation to one another" (3). She discusses how the subject matter and iconography in the United States' Capitol formed an imperialist and "remarkably coherent program" of U.S. colonization. This artwork makes concrete racialized views of Native Americans while almost eliminating Mexican and African presence in the visual history of the U.S. In other words, the Capitol artwork represents a Euro-American view of the American frontier.

The artworks were strategically placed within and around the Capitol to legitimize grand notions of U.S. Empire and American civilization. The artwork was the visual proof needed to justify racist legislation:

> The art in the Capitol served to legitimize congressional legislation and to coalesce divergent beliefs into a state-supported, unified ideology to create a semblance of consensus in the face of intractable political and sectional divisions. The art in the Capitol presented a mythologized American history that allowed Americans to believe in their manifest destiny, to absorb western lands and relocate Indian tribes, to enable frontier expansion, and the development of a market economy; it justified, reinforced, and promoted white male politicians' imperialistic ideals and actions (4-5).

As Fryd describes for us, the United States Capitol and its visual imagery carved out a national historical memory of equality and freedom. Fryd points out that today we still see much of the racist and inaccurate artwork decorating the streets and halls of the United States Capitol.

According to Marita Sturken, "American culture is not amnesiac but rather replete with memory, that cultural memory is a central aspect of how American culture functions and how the nation is defined" (1997 2). Memory is a technology of history making that limits what can and should be remembered. "Memory provides the very core of identity" (1) and nations depend on memory to unite its people under a monolithic, federally-sanctioned collective memory.

In her book *Tangled Memories* Sturken examines "cultural memory's role in producing concepts of the 'nation' and of an 'American people' and explores how individuals interact with cultural products" (1). Our national history has been embedded in our minds so pervasively that even conceiving of rewriting history seems impossible. The history we are taught has been branded into our minds,

forced fed to us, and contained by fear. For Nietzsche: “[I]f something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory” (in Sturken 16). Memory and landscape share similar definitions in the sense that “memory is a narrative rather than a replica of an experience that can be retrieved and relived” (1997, 7). Sturken’s discussion on memory is most informative when she clarifies official memory, that state-sanctioned set of myths and corroborated memories, versus cultural memory which “is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning” (3). Cultural memory can thus be made or retrieved through various objects, images, and representations from people in opposition to official memory.

Landscape and memory are related to issues of place-making, nation building, and official history. As a praxis of radical thought and a theory of forceful action, borderlands visual theory works toward demolishing formal ideological landscapes that erase the histories of millions of people in the U.S. Borderlands visual theory is influenced by landscape and memory discussions in several ways. Firstly, it borrows from the traditions of progressive landscape scholars who challenge the superficial interpretations of landscape art as pastoral or exact representations of the nation. Landscape writings and borderlands visual theory both deconstruct the imperialist visual images and recode them with more accurate, relational meanings. Secondly, both areas of study take into account historical factors but recognize that history is not one-sided and that the images created from this monolithic history is inaccurate and unfinished. Lastly, both question the validity

of official record and traditional history and attempt to uncover legacies and memories of people and events that are left undocumented.

Borderlands visual theory, landscape, and memory reconcile the harshness of history and the actuality of people's lived experience across the West by deconstructing the myths of the frontier and providing new and radically different versions of history that include stories that are in direct conflict with our national memory. Woven together, these areas of study foster an atmosphere of empowerment and affirmation. Both sections focus on visual images and create radically different images that dislodge myths from the American psyche and entertain the possibility of multiple histories.

The persistence of the West as a powerful social and political force in American popular culture and national memory cultivated an eclectic and formidable set of characteristics understood as uniquely American. Born out of the expansionist era of the 1800s, the Western experience reflected particular American values that separated colonists from their European counterparts. Individualism, self-reliance, and democracy outlined central tenets of this new America. President Ronald Reagan, at the 1983 exhibition "The American Cowboy" organized by the Library of Congress, contended that America would greatly benefit from a revitalization of old western ideals:

> If we understand this part of our history, we will better understand how our people see themselves and the hopes they have for America. Tales of the Wild West men and women, from Kit Carson to Will Bill Hickok, to Calamity Jane to Annie Oakley, are woven into the dreams of our youth and the standards we aim to live by in our adult lives. Ideals of courageous and self-reliant heroes, both men and women, are the stuff of Western lore...Integrity, morality, and democratic values are the resounding themes (2001 1).

Reminiscing about heroic actors and ideal characteristics, President Reagan attempted to reinvigorate the myth of the west as the raw material necessary to make America---and Americans--better.

President Reagan understood the significance of the West for America; according to David H. Murdoch "...for three generations Americans had chosen to invest one particular episode in their past with an extraordinary significance, had turned the nineteenth-century frontier into the source of special American virtues and made its inhabitants into figures of legend" (2001 2). The crux of American identity was not formed from the entire Western epic of the United States, but from roughly a thirty year episode prominently known as the frontier period. The frontier experience had profound and permanent effects on American ideals, character, and community. Since Frederick Jackson Turner famously proclaimed the closing of the frontier at the American Historical Association in 1983, a wealth of literature, film, and media outpoured attempting to document and revive Western life.

Popular history of the United States originated from the colonial era that led Anglo colonizers from New England to California. Built into what Jacquelyn Kilpatrick calls the "American nationalist mythology" (1999 3) were mythic characters and tales that inspired Anglo Americans to believe in the "bountiful" West. With a budding relationship to the "New World" and new traditions to distinguish them as uniquely American, colonizers next needed the mythic West to justify stealing land, enslaving communities, and exploiting natural resources. William Truettner writes "For the American West to come into national consciousness as a concept it had to be

invented or defined, then explored, and then occupied and redefined on the basis of actual experience. None of these processes was easy or inevitable, and often they were accompanied by violence" (1993 1).

While "official" history should reflect the diversity of perspectives, cultures, and voices that a nation encompasses, the story of the conquest of the West is pieced together by here say, fiction writers, and propagandists. In fact, "its raw materials lay in fragments of history and accumulated legends, it was fueled by writers seeking a vernacular literature and a public seeking escapism. It was legitimated by historians and turned into immediate political use" (Murdoch 2001 17).

Some of the most enduring American icons were birthed out of the frontier. David Murdoch notes that "[frontier images] were produced in response to the doubts and fears of Americans in the two decades on either side of the turn of the century. What is remarkable is the way they have transcended the reasons for their manufacture to impulse an extraordinary and pervasive grip upon the imagination of succeeding generations" (2001 10). Not only did frontier imagery make a permanent mark on twenty-first century America (and the world), but it also had the ability to dilute the violence rampant in the West. According to Patricia Limerick "Conquest took another route into national memory. In the popular imagination, the reality of conquest dissolved into stereotypes of noble savages and noble pioneers struggling quaintly in the wilderness" (1987 19). Conquest imagery--the sanitized images of U.S. history--became a hallmark for telling the world how America was One and how the west was won.

The most notable and enduring icon in frontier history that helped define American character and ideals was the Western cowboy. Known for his rugged individualism and ability to tame the wild, the cowboy represented the spirit of freedom, democracy, and an unbridled passion for the open range. As probably the most romanced figure in American history, the cowboy became the touchstone for all things uniquely American. However, as much as the cowboy is valorized for its heroic deeds, the early history of American cowboys is not so unique, American, or heroic.

J. Frank Dobie writes that early American cowboys were young cattle thieves who were unskilled and self-willed (in 2000 3). According to Paul Carlson, “cowboys were young, inexperienced, and often new to the cattle industry. They were boys--thus ‘cowboys’. Cowboys were poorly paid, itinerant workers who went on trail drives. They were often kids, 16-2 years old on the average” (2006 4). James Wagner notes that the earliest use of the word “cowboy” in the United States was during the American Revolution; Tories who fought along side the British were named cowboys (in 2006 5). Thus, cowboys from this standpoint were not patriotic Americans at all, but fighters again American rivals.

Although characterized as strong Anglo men, over forty percent of cowboys in Kansas were men of color; this speaks to the diversity of the cowboys experience in the United States (2006 5). In *The Cowboy: An Unconventional History of Civilization on the Old-Time Cattle Range*, Philip Ashton Rollins opens the book with an homage to the cowboy and its origins in Hemispheric America.

> To the Mexicans the American cowboys owed his vocation. For his character he was indebted to no one. He obtained from Mexican sources all the tools of his trade, all the technic of his craft, the very words by which he designated his utensils, the very animals with which he dealt; but as one of the dominant figures in the development of the United States, he was self-made. His saddle, bridle, bit, lariat, spurs, and specialized apparel were not designed by him. He merely copied what for generations had been in use below the Rio Grande. The bronco that he rode and the steer that he roped, each reached him only after they, in self or by proxy of their ancestors, had come northward across that river. Long before the cowboy's advent and in A.D. 1519 and the years immediately succeeding it, the Spanish of mexico took thither from Europe small lots of horses and cattle. These horses were assuredly the first the American continents had seen since the geological Ice Age, when the prehistoric native horse became extinct; and these cattle very probably were the first upon which those continents had ever looked" (1997 1).

The irony was that the "American" cowboy was a mere derivative of various Latino cowboy characters and a mix of European culture and fauna. In the midst of America trying to distinguish itself from Europe and trying to model itself opposite of its Spanish-speaking neighbors, the country in fact co-opted objects, characters, and idioms from the two groups it aimed to separate itself from. The only way to fix this problem was to demonize the cowboy's originator and valorize their own. This was accomplished by creating images and misrepresentations that negatively impacted various populations.

Historically, stereotypes have negatively influenced an in-group's perception of foreign or out-group people. Theresa Perkins argues that "stereotypes are evaluative concepts about status and role and as such are central to interpreting and evaluating social groups, including one's own" (1979 156). Walter Lippmann, in 1922, theorized that stereotyping was a "value neutral" psychological mechanism that was a necessary and useful process in "the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities..." (1965 88). While Lippmann argues

that we all stereotype in one form or another, Charles Ramírez Berg furthers this discussion by saying that value neutral stereotypes turn negative when two elements are added to simple categorization. Firstly is the idea of ethnocentrism, “classically defined as the ‘view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled or rated with reference to it’” (from Sumner 1906, quoted in 2002 14). Berg’s second ingredient for negative stereotyping is the notion of prejudice, or “judging Others as innately inferior based on ethnocentrically determined difference” (14-15). Berg’s equation (category making + ethnocentrism + prejudice = stereotyping” (15) accurately describes the United States’ investment in placing positive value on their identity at the expense of other groups. Their lobbied efforts to centralize Euro American heritage and culture while marginalizing and judging indigenous and other ethnic groups created a negative value on Other cultures which helped validate their stereotypes.

Berg offers eleven theses about stereotypes that better define their purpose and function. The first thesis offered is that *stereotypes are applied with rigid logic*. Similar to the “you’re either with us or against us” phrase, stereotypes require a “reductive, all-or-nothing logic” that stabilize the categorization. Challenging the negative stereotype would ostracize the person from the in-group; thus a level of coercion is at play as well. The second thesis, *stereotypes may have a basis of fact*, argues that there is normally a “correlation between the stereotype and lived experience”. At the base of a stereotype is some sort of abstract truth that is embellished and often leads to gross generalizations. This leads to the third thesis which states that *stereotypes are simplified generalizations that assume out-group*

homogeneity. In this instance, a vague description turns into an overarching meta narrative about a single group.

The next two theses, *stereotypes are uncontextualized and ahistorical* and *repetition tends to normalize stereotypes*, underscore how the lack of evidence and accuracy do not undermine the power of the stereotype as long as the belief in the altered image remains and is passed on to new in-group members. The final four theses, *stereotypes are believed, stereotyping goes both ways, stereotypes are ideological,* and *the in-group stereotypes itself* all speak toward the ideological and practical application of stereotypes both in intra-personal and inter-personal dialogue. Together, these eleven theses outline the nature and function of stereotypes. Stereotypes helped engineer particular "truths" about ethnic/racial groups and solidified a homogenous--albeit, unstable--American identity.

D H. Lawrence, in his *Studies in Classic American Literature*, wrote that American consciousness was "unfinished" and incomplete (in Deloria 1998 3). Because of America's desire to purge itself of European influence, and with no future touchstone in which to establish its new self, American identity suffered from psychological and cultural deficiencies. Philip Deloria outlines two major dilemmas that he argues caused "an unparalleled national identity crisis" for Americans (1998 3). First, Americans consistently defined themselves by what they are not (3). Their identity did not exist upon positive values organic of their communities, but it manifested from "negative" traits associated with colonized groups.

The second dilemma Americans faced was that they "had been continually haunted by the fatal dilemma of 'wanting to have their cake and eat it too,' of wanting

to savor both civilized order and savage freedom at the same time" (3). While abhorring Native American lifestyles and traditions, Americans assimilated some Native practices that reflected spirited freedom, autonomy, and sustainability into their Anglo culture. These two dilemmas frame the overarching problem of American identity; according to Deloria:

> in order to complete their rite of passage, Americans had to displace either the interior or the exterior Indian Other. As long as Indian Others represented not only us, but also them, Americans could not begin to resolve the questions swirling around their own identity vis-à-vis Indians and the British. Yet choosing one or the other would remove an ideological tool that was essential in propping up American identity. There was, quite simply, no way to conceive an American identity without Indians. At the same time, there was no way to make a complete identity while they remained (1998 37).

So the future of American identity rested upon Indian existence as a precondition in the formation of America and American racial order (Gómez 2007; Deloria 1998). The duality between loving Native Americans and hating them plagued American life and culture for the next 150 years.

In Hollywood cinema, dime novels, and the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, Native Americans were often mythologized as "genuine American symbols" (Jojola 1998 12) whose various representations stemmed from one prominent stereotype: the noble savage. Philip Deloria states that the noble savage is a term that "juxtaposes and conflates the urge to idealize and desire Indians and a need to despise and dispossess them" (1998 4). John E. O'Connor's writes that the positive concept of the noble savage took form during eighteenth-century France. Based on Enlightenment philosophers such as Rousseau, the noble savage supported ideas that people would benefit greatly from being "children of nature, free of the

prejudices and conventions imposed by such established European institutions as the monarchy and the church" (1998 27). But the noble savage of the United States embodied conflicted representations that created a schizophrenic relationship between colonizers and Native Americans.

Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. contends that two basic manifestations of Native Americans emerged in the American psyche. One group was culturally accurate that spoke to the diversity of tribes, traditions, and ritual practices. The other group existed in stereotypes, art, film and literature, and popular culture (1979 3). Thus, Native Americans had been created at the intersection between both groups; and with the help of other labels, Native Americans became a distorted reality in American culture. If Native Americans were not categorized as noble savages or bloodthirsty savages, they were cast as "ruins, ritualists, and artisans...as people doomed to vanish or as living relics of the past, as performers of colorful ceremonies, and makers of pots, baskets, blankets, and lewelry" (Dilworth 1996 3). In short, they were commodified, taxidermy characters at the full disposal of American culture, values, and ideals.

Rather than acknowledge the tragic consequences of American colonization on Native Americans, EuroAmerican settlers began to romance a past filled with Native culture--from a distance, of course. Renato Rosaldo identifies this process as "imperialist nostalgia," or a sense of longing for something one has a role in destroying or erasing (1989 70). The feelings of nostalgia come from a place of innocence rather than guilt and the destructed object/subject is rendered completely lost. Thus, the blame of death and destruction landed upon Native Americans rather

than EuroAmerican coloniziers. As Paul Chaat Smith writes in “Ghost in the Machine,” “We are shape-shifters in the national consciousness, accidental survivors, unwanted reminders of disagreeable events. Indians have to be explained and accounted for, and somehow fit into the create myth of the most powerful, benevolent nation ever, the last hope of man on earth...We’re trapped in history. No escape” (1995 6). If in fact Smith saw there was no escape, Luis Jiménez found an opportunity to create a way out.

Patricia Limerick writes that an “essential skill to writing Western American history is to deal with multiple points of view” (1987 39). Luis Jiménez’s “essential skill” in dealing with multiple perspectives was in his act of witnessing-- his attempt to convey American history through his public works.

Battling the West: The Progress Series

Moving back West from New York allowed Jiménez to rethink his unique American experience as a fronterizo from El Paso. In New York he accomplished all that he set out to do--have a one-man show, sell his work to collectors and galleries, and make a name for himself in the New York art world--and knew that a return to the Southwest would prompt a new set of ideas, images, and iconography that would challenge the history of western America.[96] For Jiménez: “...feeling like I had summed up everything that I was trying to do with the earlier shows...I was beginning now to look more towards the West, to images that were more familiar to me and in a sense that I had discarded when I got ‘educated’” (1994 94). In addition

96 In his 1985 interview with Peter Birmingham Jiménez stated that he went to New York to have a one-man show in New York and to sell his work to the New York art world. See chapter 2 for more biographical information on his time in New York.

to the success in New York City, Jiménez also felt compelled to return to the southwest in order to move into a new phase of his artistic career; moving to the west in 1971 was “a conscious decision to work on pieces that were public in scale and so had that special access...and it seemed to make more sense to go West to do it. It also was going back to those visual images I know best and to a relation to that landscape, and my own background” (1994 87).

The turn toward a personal and experiential aesthetic was important for Luis Jiménez. His earlier art had accents of autobiography and social commentary, but by the 1970s Jiménez’s images started reflecting a powerful and poignant border perspective--both geographic and cultural. In his 1977 exhibition “Luis Jiménez: Sculpture, Drawings, and Prints” he states

> I realized a long time ago I was never going to be subtle. So I try to use those things out of my culture and my background that maybe weren’t considered in a fine art setting. Growing up on the border is really different from the general American experience. There are obvious Mexican-American connections in my work. The attitude toward color, toward form, and the approach in general is Mexican American. (1977 4).

In the case of the Progress series, Jiménez aimed to confront America’s West by creating new Western iconography. He also intended to capture alternative perspectives of the West by using the same stock characters but with a revisionist tone. The border perspective Jiménez showcases in his art depicts America as a complex set of impulses, imaginaries, and ideas that reveal the dynamic cultural connections that helped shape 21st century America.

This new series of work consisted of *End of the Trail* (1971), *Progress of the West* (1972), *Progress I* (1974), *Progress II* (1976), *Progress III* (1977), *Vaquero*

(1980) and *Sodbuster* (1981). The first image is not chronologically accurate but offers a powerful entry into the progress series. A depiction of a seemingly defeated Native male atop a worn horse introduces viewers to the harsh and stereotypical characterization of Native Americans. Jiménez's decision to begin his series with a downtrodden image reflects his strategic choice of re-presenting Native American history within an alternative storyline. The next images function chronologically, starting first with the Native American attempting kill a bison with a bow and arrow while riding a horse. Next was the image of a vaquero, the original "cowboy" of the West, lassoing a bull. A stagecoach, symbolizing the opening of the West by Euro-Americans, was his next installment of the series. A take off on *Progress II, Vaquero* showcased an equestrian sculpture of a Mexican whirling a gun in the air atop a bucking horse. *Sodbuster* paid homage to the farmers who helped sustain the country throughout its inception. *Progress of the West* took the concept of "progress' beyond cowboys and stagecoaches as Jiménez included the automobile and a rocket. Initially these works seem to function similarly to how the concept of "progress" has been employed by many authors of U.S. history, and this is partially true. Jiménez was influenced by the WPA murals throughout the country, specifically a mural of cowboys and horses that he remembered seeing as a child in the El Paso federal courthouse (1985).

But Jiménez's "progress" was a severe critique on the consequences of empire and colonization on nature and mankind. The exploitation of land and labor fundamentally changed human relations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Luis Jiménez offered another perspective of progress centered on ideas of cultural

connections, working-class relations, and human productivity. The Progress series captured instances in the land's history that account for life beyond--or in spite of--conquest.

Jiménez felt that his images were specific to American history and he wanted to be a part of that academic, as well as artistic, conversation that aimed to dislodge U.S. iconography from the country's ancestral relationship with Europe:

> The other thing was that in this country--and my focus was on developing an American art, because I felt, and I still feel, that we have a tremendous legacy that we are still carrying from Europe in terms of imagery--I really felt that the "Progress" murals of the 30s had really been a very uniquely American situation. Most of them were corny and hackneyed, but you'd look at one side of the mural and you would find the Indians, then you would find the early settlers coming in, and it would move on through the progress of the West until you reached the final stage, which was your 30s version of the Modern Age (*Man on Fire* 1994 94).

His attempt to shape American art started from what he perceived of as the fissure between Europe and the 13 colonies (westward movement) and the impact of the modern age on American values (technology, temporality, and consumption). Rather than situating America art within the context of European classical art, Jiménez chose to embed his version of American art within the frontier--a move that distinguished him from artists and scholars who discount Western art as unsavory to America and fine art. But he took it a step further than most Western artists; rather than mimicking traditional Western imagery, Jiménez used the "Progress" murals as his battlegrounds to counter Western iconography.

Jiménez's first step was to document the imagery of what he considered a "uniquely American situation." Once making a visual chronology of the *perceived* progress of the U.S. West, he deconstructed each image to reveal their different

meanings. Jiménez was so convinced of his concept that in 1975 he proposed a fiberglass piece for an El Paso bank. It was immediately rejected and a local newspaper reported that a ridiculous New York artist submitted a plastic sculpture for the commission (1994).

But Luis Jiménez's progress series questioned the validity of the United States' investment in fabricating a history that sanctioned the marginalization and genocide of various ethnic communities. Authors of this history justified this violence under the guise of "progress" and Manifest Destiny. Writing against this type of history, Laura E. Gómez writes: "Manifest Destiny is inexorably entwined with race and racism. At the same time, it refers to how the competing *destinies* of many groups ultimately produced...and fundamentally changed the American racial order" (2007 4). Jiménez countered the visual imagery of Manifest Destiny by revising stereotypical Western iconography that portrayed Native Americans as savage and instead displayed them as progenitors of a "uniquely American situation"-- conquerers of the "Wild West" and architects of successful intercultural communities.

Luís Jiménez created his Progress series akin to the Pop Art genre but with a Southwest bent. With this series of work Jiménez proved that his border perspective could successfully cross into genres of "fine art" that historically excluded Chicana/o artists. Jiménez's first progress sculpture, a rendition of the famous *End of the Trail,* shows a balance of Pop sensibilities and cross-cultural tensions that infamously preside over all of his work.

After moving back to El Paso, Texas with two successful shows in New York City under his belt, Jiménez worked at his father's neon sign ship so he could finish

the mold for his first Western sculpture *End of the Trail (With Electric Sunset)* (1971) [Figure 1]. Using red clay he found in Cloud Croft, New Mexico, Jiménez molded an image that resonated with him from a young age (1994 90). New York Gallery owner Ivan Karp could no longer send money to Jiménez to help complete the sculpture because of the tough economic situation in the art world. He decided to travel to Roswell, New Mexico in hopes of garnering enough money to complete the sculpture that marked the birth of a new phase of his aesthetic.

Having heard about the Artist-in-Residency program that Donald Anderson, a local oil giant, funded and administered, Jiménez drove to Roswell with *End of the Trail* in his father's neon sign shop van and the sculpture *American Dream*. Driving up to the caretaker's house, Jiménez was initially mistaken for a repairman. Mr. Anderson, a landscape artist in his own right, saw the clay model and *American Dream* and was intrigued; they negotiated five thousand dollars (the amount needed to complete the piece) in exchange for several pieces of his art (Anderson interview 2009). Jiménez was able to complete *End of the Trail with Electric Sunset* in 1971 just before his 3rd show in New York and his first at O.K. Harris Works of Art. By this time, Jiménez married Cynthia Baca and they relocated temporarily to New York City. His third show in New York was somewhat a success; while received good reviews on his work he did not sell one piece of work. However, *End of the Trail* eventually sold at the Whitney Biennial in 1973 to the Long Beach Museum.

Anderson fronted the money to complete the pieces under the condition he received one of the five casts. Under contract to produce six pieces in one year, Jiménez was at the end of the first year and had not yet completed a single work.

Jiménez carefully crafted each piece, partly because of the meticulous work of rubber molding the intricate designs; but also because he felt he was developing something different than his previous pieces: “It was a question of developing a language, also a particular kind of technology” (Sandback 1984 87). This new “language” would later become the hallmark of his unique aesthetic practices that to this day have not been matched.

While some images from his previous shows reappeared in his third exhibition in New York, the centerpiece of Jiménez’s third show was *End of the Trail*. Also in this show were *Barfly Statue of Liberty*[97], *Superstar*[98], *Beach Towel* and *Birth of the Machine-Age Man*. This eclectic mix of iconography, from national imagery to pop culture, demonstrated Jiménez’s unique perspective about America of the 1970s. By this time, southwestern images manifested in his work along with political and pop art icons. Jiménez’s aesthetic shifted toward a more critical view of American identity as he developed a powerful set of images that combatted iconic American imagery and mythic western characters. And Jiménez chose an early American image that launched a visual assault on the existence--and the attempted genocide--of Native Americans.

James Earl Fraser, an Anglo American artist from South Dakota, popularized the iconic image of a Native American slouched atop an exhausted horse. Fraser’s *End of the Trail* (1894) [Figure 2] moquette was later molded into a seventeen-foot-high larger than life plaster sculpture. Showcased in the Panama Pacific

97 *Barfly* included a blonde, curvy woman leaning against a pillar with a flag underneath her legs. See Figure 5 in Chapter one.
98 This sculpture depicted Jimi Hendrix with a polarized lighting system with musical notes coming out of his mouth like a light show.

International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, Fraser's sculpture was awarded the gold medal from a competition with more than fifteen hundred artworks (Albuquerque Journal 1968 n.p.). Although Fraser hoped his sculpture would eventually get cast into bronze, wartime's demand for metal put the artwork's future on hold. The sculpture was eventually sold to Tulare County for four hundred dollars and was placed in Moony Grove Park in Visalia, the agricultural heartland of California (McGrath 2001 9).

Fraser's *End of the Trail* portrays a malnourished and seemingly defeated Native American male slouched over an exhausted horse. The horse's right back leg is curled inward symbolizing its last step, or end of the trail. The Native male's singular, isolated, and dismal presence reflects Anglo attitudes toward Native Americans during westward colonization. Arguing that Indians lived uncivilized, barbaric lifestyles, Anglo colonizers believed that the Indian race would eventually disappear. Brian W. Dippie writes that "Indians, the tradition holds, are a vanishing race; they have been wasting away since the day the white man arrived, diminishing in vitality and numbers until…no red man will be left on the face of the earth" (1982 xi). The notion of the Vanishing American became "self-perpetuating…requiring no justification apart from periodic reiteration" (xii). The belief that Indians would no longer exist in the future was proof enough to deny Indians a future in the "New World". In short, "the belief in the Vanishing Indian was the ultimate cause of the Indians' vanishing" (71).

According to Robert McGrath, Fraser intended his sculpture to "express the despair of this conquered people" (2001 9). Wayne Craven writes that *End of the*

Trail was meant to represent “a weaker race...steadily pushed to the wall by a stronger one...drive at last to the edge of the continent. That would be, in very truth, The End of the Trail” (1968 483). Poets, writers, and advertisers began disseminating the myth of the Vanishing American, but it was Fraser’s *End of the Trail* that solidified that myth into U.S. history. For Anglo Americans of the early twentieth century, this image softened the blow to their conscience, allowing them to justifiably live on land stolen from Native Americans. In a guidebook to the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, Juliet James comments on *End of the Trail*: “Before you is the end of the Indian race. The poor Indian, following his long trail, has at last come to the end. The worn horse and its rider tell a long, pathetic story” (in Dippie 1982 218). For Fraser, *End of the Trail* signified an ideological justification for conquest, but for Native Americans this sculpture was a constant reminder of colonization, subjugation and genocide. Moved to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City from Visalia, California in 1968, Fraser’s sculpture offers a powerful touchstone for Western history and Native American’s symbolic erasure of power and presence. Later reconstituted and the weathered patina removed, *End of the Trail’s* “‘hyper-faux’ marmoreal whiteness” revealed a particular (although speculative on my part) investment in modeling the image after classical white-marble sculpture.

Luis Jiménez ‘s barriological intervention with his *End of the Trail* consisted of replacing bronze and white plaster with rasquache characteristics such as fiberglass, a glossy finish with glitter flecks, bold colors, and yellow, blue and red electric lights. The Native American’s face is visible and his eyes are open, suggesting

perseverance, not defeat. The male is muscular and wears a buffalo headdress, signifying honor and social rank. His spear is decorated with objects of cultural signification such as feathers and cloth. The horse's backside is marked with 11 skulls, possibly signifying the warrior's conquest over his enemies.

In the 1994 retrospective exhibition catalogue for *Man on Fire*, Shifra Goldman wrote that Jiménez's *End of the Trail* resurrects the scene of a defeated Indian and exhausted horse: "In Jiménez's version, a bowed Indian with a lowered spear and a helmet dejectedly rides on the curved back of a spiritless horse. Between the legs of the horse is a great egg-yolk of a setting sun in a darkening landscape" (14). Goldman comments on the satirical, Pop, and flashy exuberance of the 1971 sculpture yet interprets the image as pathetic and worn.

Robert L. McGrath offers a second assessment of Luis Jiménez's "commodified kitsch version" of Fraser's sculpture and categorizes Jiménez as postmodern and Chicano. He writes that "Jiménez's fiberglass and epoxy [sculpture] of 1975 parodies the vulgar appropriation of the theme as it transgressively negotiates the boundary between kitsch and fine art" (2001 11). McGrath furthers his argument by stating that the inclusion of the electric sunset speaks to Jiménez's belief that equestrian sculpture was approaching their own "end of the trail" in public art (ibid). McGrath's analysis provides an added dimension for understanding Jiménez's unique view on American art and pop culture.

In Jiménez's sculpture the horse's front left leg and back right leg are bent up and forward, symbolizing movement and continuation. The horse's purple hue and lean body bridge the male and the luminous sun. The sun rests beneath the horse

with bright red, blue, and yellow light bulbs accentuating its fierce presence. Coupled with the male's acknowledging presence and the horse's leg movements, I interpret the sun to be rising, not setting as Goldman states, thus negating the myth of the vanishing Indian. The male's head is turned sideways in Jiménez's piece, as opposed to Fraser's male with his head hung down; thus the male figure acknowledges his audience. This sideways glance suggests, I believe, an unwillingness to accept the attempt to eliminate his presence. The light bulbs enhance the perception of life, not death, in *End of the Trail (With Electric Sunset)*. Jiménez goes as far as creating a parody out of Fraser's internationally-renowned sculpture by using bold and bright cultures to portray Native Americans' "disappearance." Thus, he confronted a monumental icon that established a cadre of imagery that had paralyzing effects on America's West.

Jiménez's *End of the Trail* refashioned an American icon into a more telling narrative--one of perseverance. In order to counter such an enduring and persistent image of the vanishing indian, a series of other images emerged to continue the story of America. Jiménez understood that in order to dislodge the power of particular images from popular imagination, alternative images with powerful messages had to be produced. Not only did the Progress series target Western iconography, but also notions of western "progress" as inevitable, legitimate, and beneficial.

Progress I (1974) [Figure 3], the next installment in the Progress series, continues the narrative trajectory of America. Although not as popular as *End of the Trail*, this sculpture builds on the legacy of "progress" but delivers a very different

message. This sculpture presents a slender Native American atop a horse, both cowering over a bison. Aiming a bow at the throat of the large brown animal, the male figure attempts to slay the bison presumably for nourishment and for the hide. He evokes a Plains Native American as indicated by his clothing and his pursuit of an animal known to roam the land. The horse's purple hue and bright red light bulb eyes follow suit with Jiménez's Progress series; but its force and power are heightened more so than in his *End of the Trail*. While no bright or playful colors permeate the sculpture besides the red light bulb eyes, it still resonates with Pop art sensibilities and adds a stark dimension to the image.

Composed of fifty sections, *Progress I* included other animal life such as a rattlesnake, jackrabbit, a dessert wolf and various flora. The Native male figure was modeled after Jiménez's younger brother David in his teen years. Commenting on the process used to create the sculpture, Jiménez writes:

> I'll put down the initial idea in a drawing. It's only a concept. So the *End of the Trail* was this guy on horseback, etc. In this case, the *Progress One* was this Indian shooting at a buffalo. There was nothing more to it than that. It was as if I could have painted a bad Progress mural and that would have been the first chapter there on the left. And then I begin to develop the idea (1985).

Jiménez developed the subject matter by carefully and meticulously crafting the image in stages. Initial drawings of *Progress I* depict animals and the horse in various positions. In the final product, however, the scene morphs into a solid image with protruding elements. The image of a Plains male pursuing a bison represents Native life opposite of barbaric and uncivilized. In fact, this depiction provides evidence of highly skilled and entrepreneurial tribal members indicated by the cunning nature of the pursuit for sustenance and well-being.

In *Progress II* (1976) [Figure 4] the two central figures, a longhorn bull and cowboy on horse, dominate the foreground of the image. With the bull catapulting from its hind two legs and the horse bucking on its front two legs, both characters form a V-shape with a mound of purple dessert land at their base. Connected by a lasso strung between the cowboy's hand the the bull's neck, these two images represent iconic figures of the West. *Progress II* sets a trend in the Progress series because of its gravity-defying poses. Both the horse and the bull are balanced on thin steel armatures and cast with fiberglass. An unfamiliar trick in the art world and with public art, Jiménez mastered this technique by creating a base strong enough to support both weights without it becoming dense or over pronounced. Another less famous piece, this sculpture was only cast a single time for the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art in Roswell, New Mexico.

Although never made into a sculpture, *Progress III* (1977) [Figure 5] is a colored pencil drawing of a stagecoach occupied with people inside and a male controlling its course. Although there are no horses present pulling the carriage, its motion is signified by the dust clouds whirling below and between the carriage wheels. The couple in the carriage are dressed in more formal attire while the driver wears western style clothing with a locked chest between his legs. In the series of sketches prior to the final product, people in the image are drawn with expressions of fear and a desire to escape a pursuant. Yelling angrily in front of him, the cowboy seems to be wanting to escape a predator behind him and unknown to the audience. Another image depicts a woman leaning out of the stagecoach screaming in fear of what she sees beyond the plane of the drawing.

By leaving the perpetrator or predator out of the image, viewers can only guess who is approaching. In popular western history, Native American were constantly represented in artworks as violent and villainous[99]. Whereas images such as Carl Wimar's *The Attack on an Emigrant Train* (1865) depict aggressive Native Americans attacking Anglo settlers in a stagecoach, Jiménez chose to maintain the offender's anonymity. This invisible presence could in fact challenge existing claims that Native Americans were always hostile to innocent and hospitable settlers. Rather than naming the aggressor, Jiménez invites viewers to create their own narrative about the hurried stagecoach. This narrative recreation attempts to remove the guilt from Native Americans and place it upon the imagination of the onlooker.

In keeping with the Progress series (see Figures 6.1 – 6.4), Luis Jiménez intended to produce what he considered the next logical step in the history of American advancement with the land (Hickey 1997 67). As one of America's working class heroes, the farmer represents man's trials and triumphs with the land. Planting vegetation and harvesting the land were but a few of many skills garnered by the farmer. An expert agriculturalist and land surveyor, farmers did all in their power to ensure sustainable and successful seasons.

Luis Jiménez's *Sodbuster* (1981) [Figure 7] brought to the Progress series the agricultural experience of early American culture. Commissioned by Fargo, North Dakota to create an image of his choosing, Jiménez visited Fargo on several occasions for inspiration. In fact, the town held two shows of his work and purchased

99 See the exhibition catalog *The West As America* (1991) and specifically Judy Schimmel's "Inventing 'the Indian" (149-190) for other artworks and a critical discussion about constructing the Native presence vis-a-vis Anglo colonizers.

several pieces in an effort to understand Jiménez's aesthetic principles and artistic sensibilities (Bermingham 1985). With partial funding awarded from the National Endowment for the Arts, the city of Fargo raised funds to complete the sculpture. Jiménez initially drew a two-dimensional barn dance scene and proposed it to the townspeople. With almost unanimous approval for the image, Jiménez felt an awkward air in the room:

> I explained all the formal reasons to the community and they were very polite. They approved it with only one dissenting vote. But I knew there was something wrong. Finally they said, you have to understand that we're Scandinavian Lutherans--no drinking, smoking or dancing--and while all this went on, it's not the way we like to see ourselves (Sandback 1994 85).

So Jiménez went back to the drawing board in an effort to truly capture the essence of Fargo. With unanimous and enthusiastic consensus, *Sodbuster* was created.

Depicting an older man dressed in overalls with a robust upper body leading two ox through a field, the sculpture highlights a strong working class relationship with the land. The older male figure with long white hair and a beard is not only iconic of men who towed the land but also of San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers. By representing working class men and a patron saint as one character, Jiménez sought to connect the divine work of farmers with the earthly duty of saints. This bi-cultural image translates across cultures and provides a much needed correlation between land, humans, and faith.

The ox in the sculpture have been castrated literally with the removal of their testicles but also figuratively with the sawed off horns (Hickey 1997 67). Although two ox heads are carefully rendered in the image, their bodies morph into one massive element sharing the struggle of toiling the land. Harnessed together by a

yolk around their necks, their bodies bulge with bones and muscle which further express their tiring work. According to Camile Flores-Turney, “By the time *Sodbuster* appears, both the man and beast, this time an ox, have been ‘tamed.’ The animal literally has been castrated by the removal of his testicles, but also figuratively, by the cutting of the horns” (1997 67).

Of the Progress series, the most prominent and famous sculpture was Luis Jiménez’s first public sculpture titled *Vaquero*. The move from New York to the Southwest meant taking his work from museums and galleries into public spaces. While earlier progress works were still housed in galleries, they straddled between the public and private sphere because of the relative accessibility to the larger audiences. In fact, Jiménez referred to the earlier works as “a very strange kind of fish” because they were oddly in between the two worlds (Birmingham 1985). Jiménez knew that his first public work should be expressed in an accessible visual language. Visiting Washington, D.C. for inspiration, Jiménez did a series of studies on public works that focused on scale and form. Because of the equestrian sculpture’s prominence in D.C., the idea of doing an modern equestrian made sense. For Jiménez, “...[while] doing research into public art I realized that one of the most common forms of sculpture, certainly within the Western tradition, is the equestrian. So the challenge became how can I make people look at it again and how can I do something with my material--fiberglass--that bronze can’t do; that stone cant; that hasn’t been done before” (Sandback 1994 84). All of the equestrian sculptures in D.C. were created in bronze and he felt that this was an excellent opportunity to use a traditional image and transform it with his aesthetic; “I was using

a different material, I was going to try to do things with it that you could not do before with bronze...Because of the fiberglass' light weight, the Vaquero has a steel skeleton, and I was able to kick the legs up in the air and, you know, have a lot of action with the piece" (Birmingham 1985).

When the city of Houston, Texas approached Jiménez for a public work, the exact location was still under review. With $19,500 given by the Community Development Division of the mayor's office and a $15,000 matching grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, *Vaquero* (cast 1980) [Figure 8] was created. At first look, a dark skinned male in cowboy attire rides atop a large bucking bronco. With his left hand swinging a pistol in the air, the male exudes a poised and powerful stance. With chaps covering his legs for protection from harsh flora, spurs on his boots to aggravate the bronco, and a handkerchief tied around his neck to catch beads of sweat, the man grips tightly to the saddle. An aged man with mustache and protruding waving hair from under his large hat, the figure carefully renders an image of control and expertise in horse riding. Between his legs bolts a muscular and wild bronco radiating aggression with its red eyes and stance. Bucking on its front two legs, the back two legs are prepared for a thunderous kick while its tail whirls around. A cactus is situated secondarily between the horse's front two legs--a trick used by Jiménez to create a strong base without making it mundane or too purposeful. Based on phenotype and physical attributes (i.e. region-specific and culture-specific), the male figure resembles a Mexican, the creator of the American cowboy image.

The initial location proposed for Jiménez's sculpture was Tranquility Park, a park under development in downtown Houston near city council chambers and a public library. Because of park's future was uncertain due to financial hardships, the sculpture could not assuredly reside there. So the arts commission approached Jiménez and suggested an alternative site. Moody Park, at the intersection of Irvington Boulevard and Fulton Street, rests in one of Houston's predominantly Mexican American working-class neighborhoods. The park's troubling history tells a different and more provocative story to the serendipitous placing of Jiménez's *Vaquero*. In 1978 a peaceful gathering of local Mexicanos turned into days of violence and rioting near the park (Curtis 1993 1). According to Jiménez, a Houston police officer shot and killed an innocent Chicano bystander during the riot (1994 100).[100]

Jiménez wondered if the *only* reason the location switched to Moody Park was because of the lack of funding to complete Tranquility Park. City council representatives researched that federal funds could only go toward commissioned works if they were placed in an area designated for urban redevelopment such as Moody Park (Curtis 1993 2). While Moody Park was selected as the final location for *Vaquero*, controversy arose because of two key elements of the sculpture itself: the gun and the man. The controversy stemmed between two city officials, city council member and native Houstonian Ben Reyes and County constable and Mexican national Victor Treviño. Reyes felt that the sculpture showcased Hispanic heritage

100 See http://blogs.chron.com/bayoucityhistory/2010/05/social_studies_project_focuses_on_torres_case_chic.html for more information on the Houston riots in Moody Park.

and that representing a Mexican American as an important American figure honored Mexico's history in shaping the cowboy. Treviño felt the sculpture reproduced negative stereotypes because of the weapon in the Mexican American's hand.[101] Jiménez argued that "*Vaquero* has a gun because all equestrians have their weapons. We don't think of taking Robert E. Lee's guns or George Washington's sword, but somehow with the thought of a Mexican with a gun is somehow seen as a big threat to some" (1994 100). By framing the problem with the gun as racial rather than cultural, Jiménez sought to challenge the city council and encourage them to think beyond their bias and understand how the explicit racialization of the cowboy added another dimension of Texas' and Mexicans' contributions to the history of America.[102]

At the heart of the matter was how Jiménez portrayed the cowboy, a "purely American icon", as a *Mexicano*. Popular conceptions of western culture portray cowboys as rugged Anglo American men who could tame the wild west and establish order while maintaining their own order-less world. Anglo American cowboys reflected America's own construction of a racialized society while not fully embodying a racist ideology of national identity. Yet historians critical of the cowboy's representation in film and literature exhume important information about early American cowboys.

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101 In the initial moquette presented to the Houston city council, the vaquero was not waving a gun in the air. Jiménez later added it because all equestrian sculptures have weapon: "I like to rejuvenate old formats that have worked in the past...and the equestrian statues always have a weapon" (Curtis 1993 3).

102 Another city councilman took offense to the pink shirt the vaquero was wearing in the moquette--for him it represented a gay cowboy.

Dobie also states that many white cowboys were unskilled and violent, often attacking local Mexican ranches in Texas during the United States' presence in the southwest circa 1836-1845 (in 2006 13). The cowboy image cross various international borders. In Argentina they are called gauchos, in Venezuela they are called llaneros, and in Mexico they are called vaqueros. Much of the cowboy terminology stem from Spanish words: lasso, remuda, and corral are but a few words that were appropriated from Mexican and Mexican American vaquero culture.

Jiménez's *Vaquero* attempted to transform our understanding of an American icon by identifying the cowboy's cultural referent and creating a visual library of Mexico's intervention in western culture. The powerful use of borderlands visual theory helped create an alternative image of American history in regional, cultural, and racial terms. Jiménez stated "...I'm redefining an image and a myth. I'm also coming out of the new spirit of the Mexican community of Texas. Not the old yessir/nosir...The sculpture is aggressive" (1994 36). In an interview with Susan Kirr Jiménez says "I think much of the West is still somehow wrapped up in the *myth* of the West, and a lot of it is not even based on accurate history. There's a total misrepresentation of what actually took place in the West. There weren't Hopalong Cassidys or John Waynes riding into the sunset..." (1998 17).

Not only did Jiménez challenge traditional myths but traditional modes of public art. While equestrian sculptures were predominately made in bronze or stone, Jiménez created a fiberglass equestrian that would make people look and think twice about such a classic sculpture. The very positioning of the horse--reared on its hind two feet--had a purpose:

> There's a whole tradition around the position of the horse's legs. If all four feet are down, the person died in his sleep. One foot up means he died in battle. Well, two back feet in the air didn't mean anything. So putting the vaquero on a bucking bronco was a way of breaking with tradition (Santiago 1993 92).

Jiménez's work confronted stereotypes in the past, but *Vaquero* was his first large-scale intervention against the tragically powerful myth of the West. This aggressive looking and daring sculpture challenged Mexican Americans' marginality in history and confronted negative stereotypes by engaging in historically accurate image-making. Thus, Jiménez's use of borderlands visual theory as a statement of purpose and a manifesto of new public art went against the grain of traditional modes of historical representation and usurped the power of place and image in reproducing a more meaningful and differential perspective of America.

In 1990, *Vaquero* was installed in front of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. Hoping to entice passersby to visit the museum, Smithsonian officials purchased a cast of Jiménez's 1980 sculpture and placed it on a plinth directly in front of the American Art Museum. But Jiménez's sculpture did so much more than just lure people into the museum. According to Andrew Connors, "That figure stood outside the museum of our nation's art to contradict all of the mythology of the American cowboy put forth by the Marlboro Man, John Wayne, and Ronald Reagan...It was finally a correction of bad history, and it was told through really great art" (Dingmann 2002 57). The Houston *Vaquero* and the D.C. *Vaquero* were the exact same sculpture with the exact same intentions. However the context changed the interpretation of the image and allowed for the sculpture to do double

work of inserting Mexican history into our national history and also to directly challenge the American art world at its core.

While Jiménez visited our nation's capitol for inspiration, he never thought his sculpture would directly challenge existing equestrian sculptures and the U.S. sculpture canon. Its mere location confronts U.S.'s preoccupation with using public sculpture to represent specific Anglo ideals about nationhood and memory. In short, its placement in our nation's capitol amidst white marble sculptures of Anglo heroes and at the facade of our national American Art museum does something powerful that no other sculpture by an artist of color has ever done before. *Vaquero,* full of color and fiberglass, created another center of U.S. history on property intended to maintain a homogenous racial, political, and cultural order.

Another Contender for America's West

From March 15, 1991 through January 12, 1992, the Smithsonian American Art Museum (then, National Museum of American Art) exhibited *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier.* Traveling from Washington, D.C. to The Denver Art Museum and ending at The Saint Louis Art Museum, *The West as America* circled westward to the Rocky Mountains reaching audiences from across the nation. Focusing on the United States between 1820-1920, the exhibit aimed to deconstruct traditional models for understanding western America by reinterpreting images produced out of a specific time period--the frontier and westward colonization--within a new context "designed to question past interpretations" (Truettner 1991 xi). This show was unlike most Smithsonian exhibits because its intention was not to capture the spirit of American culture at face-value; in fact, as

former director Elizabeth Broun wrote, *The West as American* intended to peel back the layers of Manifest Destiny to expose and explore how frontier images define our idea of our national past. In writing about the catalogue accompanying the exhibition Broun states:

> The essays in this book trace the way artists enlisted their talents in the service of progress during the period of westward expansion in America. The story is disturbing rather than ennobling, for it goes against out desire to see art as the voice of innate goodness and high moral values. Yet the message of this book is profound, for it shows that we find one of the most complete records of a society in its art. Hopes and dreams are there to be sure, but beneath the surface we find also the hidden agendas and ambitions that demanded some mediation, some gloss, before they could be shown to the world. The authors contributing to *The West as America* have not been content to take images at face value, that is, as formal constructions of appealing composition and color. Rather, they have delved into the subjects, the intentions of the artists and their patrons, and the history of westward expansion to unearth a deeper, troubling story that poses questions for American society today (1991 vii).

In short, *The West as America* challenged American identity and America's national mythology by examining the same images that were used to construct and reproduce imperial ideologies.

The exhibition received polemical reviews. Right-wing critics accused the Museum of attempting to "demythologize the West as an affront to our national identity" (Limerick 2002 2). Left-wing supporters charged that the Smithsonian took a stand against American idealism by interrogating the images and rhetoric that helped shape American identity and culture. A few congressional delegates were so angered by the exhibit that they threatened to pull federal funds from the Smithsonian if *The West as America* remained in the Museum.

But the intentions of *The West as America* were clear. The Smithsonian stood their ground with the exhibition and received many positive reviews by museum-goers. In an article for *American Art*, the peer-reviewed academic journal for the Smithsonian, over 735 reviewer comments written in blank books placed at the show were surveyed to gather information about the successes and failures of the exhibition. Focusing on the first volume of comments between March 14, 1991-May 15, 1991, 509 comments were positive and affirming while 177 expressed negative feelings toward the exhibit. Although there is no official author, the article states:

> The level of engagement with the art works has been extraordinary. Besides a plethora of general opinion to the effect of 'great show' or 'loved the paintings of Indians' or 'wonderful art but the commentary stinks,' there were many specific comments which reflected considerable thought...For those who were positive about the show, the most frequently used word was *courageous*. There seemed to be a sizeable audience that has been waiting for a show such as this that places the part in a historical and sociological context.' (Showdown at "The West as American" Exhibition 1991 2).

The West as America engaged in a national dialogue that questioned representations of American culture. But this exhibition went a step further than what many other exhibits, books, and artworks had done in the past. Instead of merely critiquing dominant views of America, the curators and essayists offered alternative readings of the artwork and created a dialectic between the historic context in which the artworks were created and the contemporary context which allowed for reflection and deconstruction. The show prompted its audiences to challenge themselves to think of history as something dynamic and contentious and it held the audience accountable for their own interpretation of the artworks. The success of the exhibition lie in the breadth of work it covered, the audiences it reached, the

congressional delegates who felt threatened, and the fact that the show came from the Museum from which all others are measured by and judged against. The National Museum of American Art (now, Smithsonian American Art Museum) was a center in American culture challenging its only center.

But the work is not completed just because one major exhibition caused a tidal wave in American politics and culture. There are still battles to be fought and won or lost. Luis Jiménez is one of many revolutionaries who dedicated their life and work to expressing their cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial centers at the expense of a powerful and dominating center. In the words of former director of NMAA Elizabeth Broun,

> Many of the issues we still contend with had a beginning in the vast migration of easterners into the western wilderness a century and a half ago. That American society still struggles to adjust to limitations on natural resources, to grant overdue justice to native populations, to locate the contributions of ethnic minorities within a mainstream tradition, and to resolve conflicts between unbridled personal freedom and the larger sogcial good tells us that we have ignored history far too long, accepting the images of the last century as reality (1991 vii).

The most enduring changes are birthed from enlightenment. I believe that sometimes a miracle can be a shift in perception and that is exactly what Luis Jiménez intended with his work. As a public artist, Jiménez affected and informed thousands of people with the idea that difference is something to be honored and respected. While challenging dominant narratives of national and transnational histories that shaped contemporary American culture, Jiménez also offered alternative historical memories that moved outside the margins of U.S. history and created and expressed another thriving center.

Figures

Figure 1. *End of the Trail with Electric Sunset* (1971).

Fiberglass with urethane finish, electric lighting, 84 x 84 x 30 inches
Collection of the University of Texas at El Paso

Figure 2. *End of the Trail* (1915).

17 feet tall. white plaster.
National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City

Figure 3. *Progress I* (1973).

Polychrome Fiberglass. 126” x 108” x 90”
Courtesy of Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art

Figure 4. *Progress II* (1974).

Dimensions unknown.
Courtesy of the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art

Figure 5. *Progress III* drawing (1977).

Dimensions unknown. Color pencil on canvas.
Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art

Figure 6.1. *Progress of the West* (1972) 1 of 4 pictures.

Colored pencil on cardboard cutout 18” x 96”
Courtesy of the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art

Figure 6.2. *Progress of the West* (1972) 2 of 4 pictures.

Figure 6.3. *Progress of the West* (1972) 3 of 4 pictures.

Figure 6.4. *Progress of the West* (1972) 4 of 4 pictures.

Figure 7. *Sodbuster* (1981).

84” x 63” x 288”
Fargo, North Dakota

Figure 8. *Vaquero* (1980).

Polychrome Fiberglass 198” x 144” x 120”
Courtesy of the El Paso Museum of Art

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Conclusion

Reflections of Borderlands Visual Theory and the Art of Luis Jiménez

Luis Jiménez put to task the role of a public artist. His artwork reflected the complex, hybrid, transcultural, and contingent qualities of American art and identity. He was intentional about the content and context his work represented and existed within. Rather than deferring his message to the prevailing themes of his time, he allowed his art to entertain the possibility of alternative histories, memories, and cultures. As Luis Jiménez developed his aesthetic and understanding of American art and identity, his art transformed into powerful touchstones of America's past recast into a more appropriate light. But his artworks also reveal the consequences of a country torn between what it is and what it does not want to be. The attempt to eliminate peoples, cultures, traditions, and histories carved out the troubled past in which our country finds itself. But by confronting issues of memory, history, and community in our national conscience, Luis Jiménez was able to re-present (at times problematically) a national and global society of people unhinged to the land even in the face of annihilation and genocide.

What sprung forth from the work of Luis Jiménez and other Chicana/o artists was a theory of aesthetic creation that is rooted in an epistemology of the oppressed. Borderlands visual theory documents an important shift in Chicana/o and American art history. Rather than creating art "from the margins," artists invoked their sense of place--in the center of American history and identity--in order to create and establish art that challenged art canons, national history, and racism. Borderlands visual theory is thus organic from the communities that experience marginalization

on many levels. This theory arises from situated knowledge, praxis of resistance, and community consciousness. Driven by a desire to overcome domination and to write their own social histories, Chicanas and Chicanos use borderlands visual theory as a vehicle for social change.

Using borderlands visual theory as my primary analytical device to explore Luis Jiménez's life and art reveals the true dynamism that exists in American history. Each chapter applied this framework to explain how Jiménez's art reflects the multicultural and historical elements that shape our country. Living on the border and traversing cultural, social, political, and geographic borders helped Luis Jiménez understand the America he experienced. In *Southwest Pietà* Jiménez renders legible identity politics of New Mexico that continue to divide Albuquerque communities. *El Buen Pastor* articulates growing concerns about immigration and representations of illegality that criminalize innocent Mexican Americans and Latinas/os on the borderlands and across the United States. Developing a cadre of Western images known as the Progress Series helped counter the legacy and nightmare of Manifest Destiny for Native Americans and Mexicans.

The theories, pedagogies, and methodologies selected in my writings about borderlands visual theory are mostly by authors and artists of color, namely Chicana/o. It is within my community that we must find power and agency; it is within my culture that we must find inspiration; it is within my traditions that we can find an epistemology of hope. We have refused to accept our marginality and we will refuse to allow dominant culture to short-change our scholarship. It is on the foundation of great Chicana/o scholars and artists that borderlands visual theory arises. It is within

Chicana/o communities across the United States and Greater Mexico that Chicana/o aesthetics take shape. It is through a shared vision of equality, inclusion, and social justice that borderlands visual theory becomes a theory of resistance, and methodology of hybridity, and a practice of autonomy.

This dissertation explored borderlands visual theory as a praxis of thought rooted in key historical moments and public artworks that are rooted in community relations. The four pivotal historical moments outlined in chapter one contextualize Chicana/o art throughout the decades. I believe that in order to begin theorizing about borderlands visual theory we must discuss the multiple histories of Chicanas/os. The theories and methodologies I categorize as borderlands visual theory are all by artists, scholars, and activists within the community (with the exception of Fox and Rony). Their writings illustrate a profound canon of thought that engages community politics, resistance tactics, and cultural reclamation in radical ways. My belief is that Chicanas and Chicanos have created their own intellectual literature that supports an epistemology of cultural memory and spiritual empowerment. I strategically focus on Chicana/o authors as a way of modeling progressive scholarship that does not rely on authors who study us as specimens or objects of inquiry. My application of borderlands visual theory to Luis Jiménez's art is my attempt to show how it is grounded in situated knowledge.

Borderlands visual theory may seem utopian or idealistic to some people because it promises transformative thought and radical change. It challenges the foundations of racism through art, performance, and aesthetics. This may seem impossible to some, but for Chicanas/os it has been a part of their lives for centuries.

New obstacles have surfaced and old ones resurfaced; the time has come that we reexamine Chicana/o aesthetic practices, our political struggles, and our desire to create an art of change. We will no longer remain in the margins.

I include a quote from Gloria Anzaldúa because I believe it captures the spirit of borderlands visual theory and its resilient and uncompromising nature:

> *Los Chicanos*, how patient we seem, how very patient. There is the quiet of the Indian about us. We know how to survive. While other races have given up their tongue, we've kept ours. We know what it is to live under the hammer blow of the dominant *norteamericano* culture. But more than we count the blows, we count the days the weeks the years the centuries the eons until the white laws and commerce and customs will rot in the deserts they've created, lie bleached. *Humildes* yet proud, *quietos* yet wild, *nosotros los mexicanos*—Chicanos will walk by the crumbling ashes as we go about our business. Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we, the *mestizas* and *mestizos*, will remain (85-86).

If this dissertation taught me anything it was that I must not accept my place in the margins of history and culture. My ancestors lived their lives unwilling to compromise to the dominant center and chose to make centers for their own existence. As a twenty-first century Xicano activist scholar, I follow in their footsteps and carve out my own center in the world. While I recognize I may, at times, find myself at the outskirts of institutions, academic circles, and cultural paradigms, I will not be moved--I will not concede the center. This dissertation serves as a challenge for all who read it to ignore the luring call of the margins and find their own center.