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City of Los Angeles



American Dream
Chicano Artists from the Cheech

Marin

Collection (1980-2010)

Exhibition of **Cheech Marin's The Chicano Collection/**
La Colección Chicana at **Musée d'Aquitaine**
(Summer 2014)



‘I feel a bit Chicano, a bit Mexican-American, and I’m also an American artist. [...] I feel richer for being all that at the same time.’

Eloy Torrez, 2000.

‘In reaction to the dominant culture and the implied distinctions between “fine arts” and “popular art”, [Chicano] artists attempted to break down borders and mix genres. Real life is the main source of this new aesthetic.’

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, 1993

The Musée d'Aquitaine has chosen to exhibit the private collection of Richard Anthony “Cheech” Marin, the Los Angeles-based film director, actor and screenwriter. Over the last 30 years Cheech Marin has supported the greatest Mexican-American



artists of Los Angeles. Carlos Almaraz, Gronk, Harry Gamboa, Patssi Valdez, Frank Romero, John Valadez... All feature prominently in this collection, which has been on show in several international exhibitions: Chicano Visions, the travelling exhibition that debuted in 2001 at the San Antonio Museum of Art; and Chicanitas and Papel Chicano, which serve as a reminder that Chicano artists are also brilliant draughtsmen and pastel artists. Very recently the smaller exhibits in the Chicanitas exhibition were put on show in the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego.

And yet in France, Chicano artists are still relatively known. In 1989 the Centre de Recherche pour le Développement Culturel de Nantes (C.R.D.C.) and the Centre Arts Santa Monica in Barcelona co-produced a pioneering exhibition presenting sixteen Chicano painters, sculptors and poster artists. The Musée d'Aquitaine is now extending this presentation, the first of its kind in France. However, it is enlarging the range of artists and pictorial trends represented, and adding a significant introduction to the painful history of Mexican-Americans since the Second World War.

Some 70 major works from the Cheech Marin collection have been selected to bear testimony to more than forty years of pictorial creation. Additionally, important loans from artists and private collectors have extended the exhibition to include contemporary screen prints, but also to represent the youngest form of Chicano creation.



Carlos Donjuan, -
Portrait of Cheech, 2012



John Valadez,
in residence at the museum

John Valadez: a great muralist in California

Born in 1951 in Los Angeles, John Valadez first emerged on the Californian scene in the 1970s, in a collective of four artists calling themselves Los Four, in reference and in tribute to the Tres Grandes – Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco. At the time art was above all a political weapon, and Chicano artists were collectively part of a huge equality and civil rights movement. In Highland Park in northeast Los Angeles, Valadez and others set up a Centro de Arte Publico (public art centre) where creations were born of a process of collective emulation between artists and inhabitants, and where the work of female Chicano creators was particularly prominent. There, Valadez produced his first human-sized sketches of cholos and homegirls, those two emblematic figures of the barrios, but also of Latino gangs. In the 1980s John Valadez gradually moved way from collective projects and followed his own path: he carried out photo reportages and drew inspiration from the techniques of hyperrealism to produce a highly original body of work. Strongly marked by references to the octopus-like city of Los Angeles, Valadez' paintings



John Valadez in his workshop.

Los Angeles, September 2013.

denounce the ultra-violence of urban life while mocking the steamroller that is the American way of life.

An internationally acclaimed artist, Valadez is particularly well known for his extraordinary murals, vast frescoes for which he regularly is commissioned both in California and elsewhere in the USA.

At present he is exhibited in around fifteen American and Mexican museums, and recently had a retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego and the Vincent Price Art Museum of Los Angeles.

Musée d'Aquitaine
20 Cours Pasteur,
33000 Bordeaux, France

June 27 - October 26, 2014

Museum is open from Tuesday to Sunday, except holidays.

From 11am to 6pm.

<http://www.musee-aquitaine-bordeaux.fr/>

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