



Arte Público: The Inland Empire as a Transnational Art Public

The term “art public” is a historically contested area of the humanities. The ideal viewer, connoisseurial dilettante, and refined listener are evoked as cultural codes of social distinction. According to Pierre Bourdieu’s writing on “habitus,” taste cultures ingrain social systems sustained by institutional pillars of fine art, such as: museums, archives, sound repositories, and music conservatories. In the Inland Empire, a region defined by its transnational labor histories, economic hardship, agricultural production, and post-industrial landscape, the exhibition infrastructure is lagging placing more significance on alternative art spaces. How will the establishment of the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano art, history and industry (or “The Cheech”) stand to redefine the city as an art capital?

To understand this rearticulation of Riverside as a Chicano art steward, this faculty project will stage public dialogues and engage in archive recovery initiatives to document the historical recesses of an “arte público” in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. What were the longstanding creative networks, social collaborations, and art scenes in the Inland Empire and how will they conjoin, reshape, or collapse as a result of this tourist attraction? By using a socially engaged method, this interdisciplinary research group brings forth new perspectives into art publics from the vestige of visual arts, performance, music, education and policy and will rethink LA’s status as a cosmopolitan art center. Findings will be presented in different forums over the academic year organized in conjunction with Riverside Art Museum and San Bernardino Garcia Center for the Arts.

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