The artists in this exhibition are dreamers and changemakers. They are of Mexican American heritage—self-identified as Xicanx. The term transcends borders and gender to encompass the Xicanx people’s multi-generational experiences of social difference.

Xicanx artists, working across all mediums, are part of a rich tradition of combining visual art and activism. Some began their work as part of El Movimiento, the Chicano civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s that had its roots in the United States. Others define themselves as Indigenous, drawing upon their origins in Aztlan, the ancestral homeland referenced in Mexican códices and oral histories. The next generation is expanding the idea of Xicanx art while continuing to address the personal, social and political issues of our times.

The fight by Xicanx artists for social justice began generations ago and continues to this day. Their art and their activism remain vital in the movement towards social justice for all.

Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio was co-curated by Jill Baird (MOA Curator, Education) and Greta de León (Executive Director, ARENET). The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Americas Research Network (ARENET). ARENET works to promote and foster international exchange and collaboration among scholars, students, institutions, existing organizations, and communities within the framework of innovative programs in research, education, and outreach throughout the Americas.

For more information about this exhibition, visit moa.ubc.ca/xicanx.
**Greta de León** is the Executive Director of ARENET since 2001. She has curated and organized exhibits at the NMNH of the Smithsonian Institution, the Museo Nacional de Antropología in México, the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington and San Antonio, and the City of San Antonio to name a few. She serves on several international boards and has been a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution since 2003. She is also an award-winning poet.

**Dr. Jill Baird** is the curator of education and head of the department of public programs at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA). She led the development of innovative education and public programming collaborating with a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and communities. Moreover, she teaches in the Master of Museum Education program at the University of British Columbia.
PLANNING YOUR VISIT

BOOKING INFORMATION

School groups of various sizes can pre-book a timed-entry, self-guided visit to explore the museum without a guided tour. Elementary school groups require one supervisor for every five students. Museum admission student rates apply to each student; groups of 10 or more students receive the discounted academic rate. Supervisors receive free museum admission.

Specially trained Volunteer Associates are available upon request at no extra charge, based on availability, to welcome school groups and support students’ self-guided learning.

Self-guided visits must be requested two weeks in advance, subject to guide availability and/or museum capacity. To book, contact MOA Bookings at 604.822.3825, bookings@moa.ubc.ca.

XICANX: ART MAKING AS CHANGE MAKING

Looking for a guided experience? Designed for grades 7–12, this 90-minute program will begin with a tour of selected works in Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio, focusing on themes of identity, borders, and activism. Students will learn how Xicanx artists use their art to advocate for their communities, document their lived experiences and histories, and make visible their unique perspectives and concerns.

After the guided tour, students will participate in a zine-making workshop inspired by the exhibition. Zines are self-published works using diverse media, including text, drawing, collaging, and more. They offer a vehicle for their creators to independently express and distribute alternative ideas and knowledge. Students will take inspiration from the artworks in through Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio to make zines that represent their own stories and perspectives, considering the power of art-making to effect change.

For more information or to book this program, contact education@moa.ubc.ca.
GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISING ADULTS

Please share these guidelines with all adults who will be supervising students on their field trip to the Museum of Anthropology.

All supervising adults are responsible for the conduct of their group throughout their visit to MOA, including visiting the galleries, MOA Shop, and outside grounds. Supervising adults must remain with the group at all times.

• Please respect all visitors. Please moderate voice levels.
• Please assist with student needs, such as taking students to the washroom.
• NO running, jumping, or shouting.
• Some objects at the Museum are touchable (look for "Touch Gently" signs). All others are not to be touched.
• Food, drinks, and gum are not permitted inside the galleries (including water bottles).
• Pencils and pencil crayons can be used. Oil, acrylic, pens, and felt pens are not permitted anywhere in the galleries.
• When outdoors, please ensure that students respect the shell and pebble beach at MOA. Students are not to pick up or throw rocks or other items into the pond.
• Cellphones, cameras, iPods, and other electronic devices are not permitted during school programs. Photographs are encouraged after the programs.

In case of medical emergency: Notify Museum security staff, who are all trained in First Aid.

Storage Facilities: Storage for schools is located on the ramp to the right of the Admissions desk. MOA is not responsible for lost or stolen items placed in bins.

Lunch Facilities: The Haida House is available for groups who pre-book. Others are welcome to picnic on the grounds or at other campus locations.
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC. MOA is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. Take a moment to reflect on whose territories you have travelled from and through to visit the Museum.

This exhibition features artworks by thirty-three Mexican-American artists, self-identified as Xicanx (pronounced Chi-can-X). The first 'X' reflects the Spanish transcription of the 'ch' sound in Náhuatl, one of the major Indigenous languages in Mexico. The last 'x' makes the word the gender-neutral version of 'Chicano/a.'

These artists are dreamers and changemakers, imagining and advocating for equity and justice for their communities. This self-guided tour spotlights a small selection of works to illustrate core themes of Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio. As you move through the exhibition, reflect on how the ideas, experiences and issues expressed through the artists’ works connect to your own.

Throughout the exhibition, you will find quotes from Xicanx thinkers and authors intermingled with the artworks. As you approach each piece, read these quotes and consider how they enrich your understanding of the artwork. Begin with the poem by author Sergio D. Elizondo, displayed at the entrance of the exhibition. What is this poem suggesting about Xicanx experiences and identity? Why do you think this quote is placed here?

Entrance to Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio.
Photo by Amina Chergui.
Murals in the Community
Various artists
Visual Documentary
Photo by Anna Nielsen

Take a moment to watch part of the visual documentary displayed at the entrance of the exhibition. Refer to the accompanying text on the wall. How could a mural act as "a tool for resistance" or "a vehicle of empowerment?"

This visual documentary shows images of murals by Xicanx artists from a number of cities across the United States, all provided with permission from the artists. Vibrant and beautiful, these murals represent calls to action, community memory, and assertions of complex Xicanx identities. They show how public art can make the issues and conditions of a community visible. They refuse to allow the inequities experienced by the Xicanx community go unnoticed.

These murals also represent a multi-generational artistic tradition tied to El Movimiento, the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. In this movement, Xicanx activists fought against discrimination and advocated for the social and political empowerment of Xicanx people. In many ways, El Movimiento mirrored the rights movements of other racialized groups at that time, including the Black Civil Rights Movement and the Red Power Movement. With roots in the muralist tradition of Mexico, El Movimiento artists used muralism to advocate for equality and social justice while proudly asserting their Mexican-American identity.
STOP 2

Citlali: Cuando Eramos Sanos,
2012
Debora Kuetzpal Vasquez

Acrylic on canvas
Collection of the artist
Photo courtesy of the artist

There are many visual symbols in this painting. What images can you find, and what do they say about the woman depicted? How does the quote from Sandra Cisneros add more context to your understanding of this figure?

The woman in this painting is Citlali, a Xicanx superhero created by San Antonio-based artist Debora Kuetzpal Vasquez. Citlali appears in many works by Vasquez, always in resistance to state violence and inequity. The image on her chest is the Virgen de Guadalupe, an apparition of the Virgin Mary in Mexican Catholicism, set ablaze in all her power.

Citlali is depicted in a kitchen, the setting where oral traditions are shared between Indigenous women, safekeeping knowledge over generations. On the table and stove are ancestral foods, including frijol (beans), maiz (corn), maguay (agave), calabaza (squash), chile (pepper), nopal (prickly pear cactus), and amaranto (amaranth). Citlali is the embodiment of matriarchal strength and the Indigenous Mexican roots of Xicanx people.
How are these two artworks similar? How are they different? What stories are they telling?

These two artworks both use images of maps, and both reveal stories about life at the border between Mexico and the United States. Created by artist Carlos Frésquez, *Salon de los Ilegales* depicts silhouetted figures running across landscape paintings he has thrifted and collected over many years. Frésquez wanted to disrupt the utopian landscapes with these representations of families fleeing across the border. Framing this collection of paintings is the outline of the continental United States.

The map used in Alfred J. Quiroz’s *Muneefist Destiny* depicts what was once the territory of Mexico. In 1846, U.S. President James Polk initiated a war with Mexico, accusing Mexican troops of staging an attack on what he claimed was American soil, but was in fact south of the existing border of the time (at the Rio Nueces). By making this claim, he effectively moved the border north to the Rio Grande without Mexico’s consent, alienating the Mexican communities in that region from their home country. Quiroz’s painting style feels like a cartoon or graphic novel, using bold and caricatured images to draw attention, poke fun, and satirize what was happening. The title of the work is a play on the words “manifest destiny,” the belief that the expansion of U.S. territory across North America is inevitable.

Both of these artists are drawing attention to the problematic nature of the United States/Mexico border. Their work is showing how borders control and alienate people, divide communities and disrupt longstanding ways of living and patterns of movement. Some people are able to cross borders without any issues, while others are interrogated and often denied access, even if their life depends on it.
Justice For Our Lives Project, various dates
Oree Originol

100 graphic art portraits printed on paper
Collection of the artist
Photo courtesy of the artist

Take a moment to focus on one portrait. How is the subject represented? What statement is the portrait making about the individual person? Step back and look at the works as a whole. What statement is made by this collection of portraits?

L.A.-based artist Oree Originol launched the Justice For Our Lives project in 2014. He created digital portraits of 100 people of colour killed by US law enforcement since the beginning of the twenty-first century, working with families of the victims and racial justice activists. By making these portraits, Oree Originol is bringing visibility both to victims of police violence and to the issue as a whole. He is reaffirming their humanity and individuality despite the violence that strips them of both.

These images do not live exclusively in galleries. The portraits are open-source templates that can be downloaded for free at oreeoriginol.art/justiceforourlives. This access allows for expanded visibility of these individuals and their stories. Many activists and students use and remix these portraits, including them on protest signs, printing them on banners and t-shirts, and expanding and projecting them onto walls of buildings. They can be easily printed in the hundreds and plastered over walls or mass-distributed. These portraits demand that these individuals be remembered and that the issues leading to their deaths be addressed. Although this exhibition showcases works about Xicanx experiences, the inclusion of these portraits demonstrates how oppression experienced by racialized communities is connected.
This series of photographs was taken during a 1976 performance by Judith Baca, titled *Las Tres Marias*. Baca is a very well-known Chicana artist who has had a major role in the muralism movement. In 1974, Baca led The Great Wall mural project in Los Angeles (depicted in the visual documentary at the entrance of the exhibition). This mural is over half a mile long.

In the performance captured by these photographs, the artist dressed as a "Pachuca," a woman who wears the 'pachuquismo' fashion originating in Xicanx communities in the 1940s. This style is characterized by teased hair, tight skirts, heavy makeup, and – in some instances – the zoot suits worn by their male "Pachuco" counterparts. Grounded in a vibrant youth subculture, the Pachuca style represented a femininity that was in-your-face, tough, loud and unapologetically young and Mexican-American. Baca is also referencing the Chicano civil rights movement that too often focused on the work of men, though women were and continue to be central to this social and political justice work.

**CONCLUSION**

As you wrap up your self-guided tour, consider how the issues these artists deal with – including borders, identity and activism– could connect to your own communities. We encourage you to visit the rest of the works in *Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio*, and we hope an appreciation of Xicanx art and culture leaves with you.
IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

These activities and resources can be used before or after your visit to Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio to extend your students’ learning.

XICANX DIGITAL

Access this digital exhibition catalogue to expand your students’ learning about Xicanx art. Read critical essays from renowned Xicanx authors, view additional works by artists featured in the exhibition, and explore the artists’ favourite music, recipes, literature and movies. Find episodes of Xicanx Speaks!, a video podcast series with artist and curator interviews.

xicanxart.com

LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

Learning for Justice (learningforjustice.org) seeks to uphold the mission of the Southern Poverty Law Center: to be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people. They offer a range of lesson plans and educator resources focused on social justice topics.

The 'Borders and Boundaries' lesson challenges students to consider how invisible borders impact people’s lives and lead to "us versus them" oppositional thinking. Connect this activity to the theme of "borderlands" featured in Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio.

learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/borders-and-boundaries

The 'Defining Activism' lesson introduces the joint concepts of activism and community. Have your students reflect on how the artists featured in Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio fit into these definitions and embody these concepts.

learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/defining-activism

WHAT IS THE VIBRANT CHICANO ART ALL ABOUT?

This article from Widewalls Magazine provides an overview of Xicanx artistic traditions, situating Xicanx art within the Chicano Civil Rights Movement (El Movimiento).

widewalls.ch/magazine/what-is-chicano-art
IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

CLASS MURALS

With roots in the Mexican muralist tradition, Xicanx muralism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement (El Movimiento). Xicanx muralists across the United States continue to express complex identities, document histories, and advocate for their communities’ wellbeing through their practice. This activity will encourage students to reflect on the power of muralism.

Begin by sharing images of Xicanx murals from the Xicanx Digital exhibition catalogue. Ask students to analyze and interpret the images, making inferences about what the murals are trying to communicate. Explain that multiple generations of Xicanx artists have created murals – public, large-scale paintings that directly decorate a wall – to represent their communities, experiences, concerns, and histories.

Option 1: In advance of the lesson, select a wall in your classroom, school or neighbourhood, and take a photo of the wall head-on. Create copies of the photo on ledger-sized paper (preferably cardstock) and in small groups, have your students design a mural on the image of the wall to represent your class. Have your students consider how they can emulate the way Xicanx muralists use symbolism, colour, text, etc. in their murals to communicate their own ideas messages.

Option 2: Choose a blank wall to display a mural collectively designed by your class. Brainstorm ideas for what the mural will look like and how it will represent the shared identities, experiences and concerns of your students. Attach blank sheets of letter-sized paper side-by-side to the wall and sketch the design directly onto the paper. Remove the pieces of paper, numbering the backs of each sheet so they can be returned to the wall in order. Have individual students colour one piece of the mural each, and reassemble the mural on the wall.

After finishing either option, lead a class discussion or written reflection using the following questions:

• What does this mural say about your group/our class? What images, symbols, and/or words were used to create this message?

• Who is represented in this mural? Who might be left out?

• What are the strengths of using muralism to represent a community or issue? What are the challenges?
IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

BLESSED ME, ULTIMA

First published in 1972, Bless Me, Ultima is one of the most critically acclaimed and widely read works of Chicano literature. The novel is both a coming-of-age story and a powerful narrative about spirituality, place, and identity. As recently as 2017, it was banned in parts of Texas. Author Rudolfo Anaya asks, "What was its threat, I've asked myself over the years. Why did censors burn Bless Me, Ultima? I concluded that those in power in the schools did not want a reflection on my way of life in the school."

Share Bless Me, Ultima with your students, and use the following questions to lead a group discussion or individual reflection:

• The author makes frequent use of symbolism throughout the story. What are some key symbols, and what do they represent?

• What is the role of dreams in the novel?

• What are the differences between the Márezes and the Lunas? How does Antonio experience or navigate those differences?

• How can literature be used to understand diverse worldviews? What about Antonio's story is different from your own experiences? What is similar?

• Bless Me, Ultima has been banned in parts of Texas as recently as 2017. What does this say about how Xicanx perspectives are viewed by mainstream society?

MEXICAN AMERICA: GLOSSARY

Available in both English and Spanish, this glossary was developed by the Smithsonian Institution as part of their Mexican America online resource (si.edu/spotlight/mexican-america). Use these terms to support your students' understanding of Mexican-American history and culture, explore the digital collections, information and other resources available on the website.

si.edu/spotlight/mexican-america/mexican-america-glossary
The following artists are featured in the self-guided tour of Xicanx: Dreamers + Changemakers/Soñadores + creadores del cambio available on pages 6–11.

Debora Kuetzpal Vasquez

Debora Kuetzpal Vasquez (b. San Antonio, Texas) describes herself as a “home girl” from San Antonio. Vasquez works as a multi-media artists/activist, educator, and business owner. She comes from a long line of curanderas (Indigenous healers), but her method of healing is through her art. Currently she is re-imagining and re-imaging through a Xicanx feminist lens the patriarchal cultural myths that position womxn as unscrupulous characters. She also addresses the lack of representation of Xicanx and womxn of colour in the arts and education. Vasquez states that she makes art because she possesses no better method to open minds and hearts.

Vasquez was shaped by El Movimiento, the Chicano/a civil rights movement. Her creation Citlali: La Chicana Super Hero links her ancestral past with her activist present. Her work was recently featured in the LGBTQ+ group exhibition 10,000 years of love and resistance at Bihl Haus Art, San Antonio. Vasquez is an Associate Professor and Visual Arts Program Head at Our Lady of the Lake University. She received a BA from Texas Woman’s University in Denton, and an MFA from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She also received a certificate in traditional culture from Universidad Nahuatl in Ocotepec, Mexico.

Carlos Frésquez

Carlos Frésquez (b. 1957, Denver, Colorado) is inspired by cartoons, comic books and psychedelic posters. As a painter he loves bold colours. He uses his sense of humour to focus attention to critical issues and to poke fun. He was born in Denver, where he still resides. He received a B.A. from Metropolitan State University of Denver (1980) and an MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder (1995). Frésquez has lectured widely about Chicano art history and his own artwork at many colleges, universities, galleries, and art centers, and is currently a Professor at the Metropolitan State University of Denver. He has exhibited his drawings, sculptures, prints, installations, and paintings in at least 30 U.S. states and ten different countries.

Frésquez's work has been included in many regional and national touring exhibitions, including Arte Caliente (2005-2007), The Colorado Artist Fellowship Awards Exhibition.

### Alfred J. Quiroz

Alfred J. Quiroz (b. 1944, Tucson, AZ) began his art training at the San Francisco Art Institute after serving in the military, including in Vietnam from 1964 to 1966. He continued his studies at the Rhode Island School of Design, and completed an MFA at the University of Arizona in 1984. Quiroz tackles injustices with a sense of humour and an edge of satire. Deeply researched, the events he highlights in his works are often forgotten traumas or racial stereotypes offered up with glossy garish paint.

Now a Professor Emeritus at the University of Arizona, Quiroz has enjoyed a long history as an art educator, joining the University in 1989 as an Assistant Professor and retiring in 2008. He has been featured in such publications as *Redefining American History Painting*; he was a visiting artist and guest professor in Mexico, Slovakia, and China; and he had a solo exhibition in Barcelona, Spain, among other international venues. In 2006 he was commissioned by the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago to create a piece for the travelling exhibition *African Presence in Mexico*, and he has also designed theatre sets and community murals nationally and internationally. Among his many honours are the Chicano Hispano Student Affairs Teaching Excellence & Exemplary Service to Students Award (2001), the League of United Latin American Citizens Latino Artist Lifetime Achievement Award (2007), and the James Anthony Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching (2016).

### Oree Originol

Oree Originol (b. 1984, Glendale, California), born Daniel Aguilera Jimenez, grew up in Los Angeles where, inspired by street culture, graffiti became his outlet. He used OREE as his "tagger" name, derived from an inside joke with childhood friends who poked fun at his big ears. In 2009, he moved to the Bay Area in pursuit of a career as an artist and social activist. He began painting colourful abstract compositions of various shapes, and these became his identifying style of work.
Originol expanded his skills into digital art and, in 2014, launched Justice For Our Lives, a digital portrait series of people killed by US law enforcement. Over the ensuing seven years he created 100 black-and-white portraits that would become the visual backdrop to numerous Black Lives Matter protests in the Bay Area and beyond. His portraits have been reproduced and shared worldwide in public demonstrations, classrooms, museums, and online. In 2016, his project was exhibited at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, and in 2020 at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC; the latter also acquired digital copies for its permanent collection.

Judith F. Baca

Judith F. Baca (b. 1946, Watts, Los Angeles, California) has been creating public art for four decades. Her murals are powerful in size and subject matter, and bring art to where people live and work. In 1974, Baca founded the City of Los Angeles’ first mural program, that has produced over 400 murals and employed thousands of local participants. It has evolved into the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC). Baca continues to serve as SPARC'S artistic director, focusing her creative energy on the UCLA@SPARC Digital/Mural Lab, where she employs digital technology to promote social justice and participatory public-arts projects. Baca is a Professor Emeritus at the University of California Los Angeles, where she was a senior professor in Chicana/o Studies and in the World Art and Cultures Departments from 1980 to 2018. In 2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District named a school after her: the Judith F. Baca Arts Academy, located in her birthplace, Watts. She is also a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, the United States Artist Rockefeller Fellowship, and over 50 awards from various community groups. Baca's work is held in many private and public collections, with her mural projects hosted in cities across California and beyond.