

***The Chicano Mind (1973)* by Guillermo Martinez - Visual Analysis**

The Chicano Mind (1973) is a painting by Guillermo Martinez that illustrates Chicano resilience and power amongst state oppression. Situated in Pasadena City College's C building, its wall-length size is a testament to its immense significance and purposeful assertion of Chicano presence. It depicts a presumably Chicano, Mexican - American man naked and tied by ropes, a nail to his left arm, and a crown. He powerfully strives and fights these restraints for the relinquish of control and for his autonomy and freedom. His fists repeat, circulating the painting, as if to convey "the fight." Around him, circles of Mexican people gather, some in Indigenous attire, some in Mexican - American stylized outfits, professional dress, etc. (all are representative of Chicano pride, respect, and tradition). At the bottom of the painting reads "Viva la raza" a historically protest statement in Spanish that translates to "Long live the people," meaning long live the Mexican people and their livelihoods. Furthermore, the painting showcases multiple references to the American flag, especially in reference to an Indigenous woman and with a Mexican flag. Ultimately, the painting demonstrates Chicano power, resilience, and self determination.

First and foremost, the detailing of this restrained Chicano man is quite central to the story-telling of this painting. The audience can view what is assumed to be his organs through this style of drawing - this reflects the fight of the whole body and soul, and the idea of breaking apart while staying together with the strength of your ancestors' work before you.

The combination of the nail and crown upon this man signifies the comparison of the Chicano man to Jesus Christ - depicting Christian and Catholic imagery. This imagery could have a variety of meanings, for example it could have the implication that the Chicano man is targeted by the state and hated/violently pushed into repression. It could be an allusion to the widespread religious beliefs of Chicanos in Christianity and Catholicism- either under the guise of martyrdom/admiration or historic allusion to the brutal colonialization and cultural genocide of Indigenous Mexican people in the name of Catholic conversion.

Moreover, there is a sense of movement about the painting, and in the circles there is a long line of ancestors, blurring/evening the line between past and present in time, or rather reminding of the past's relevance in the present. Mexican style and color imagery present in these ancestors (through distinctive styles of hats, natural color schemes and patterns) proclaim Chicano pride and beauty as a form of authenticity and resilience. The audience understands the sentiment that Chicanos are not alone in this fight, as Viva La Raza is written in ribbon outlining the bottom of the painting. This historical protest phrase means "long live the people," and represents a long history of the Chicano movement. Additionally, the Chicano man's fists may not only be repeated for emphasis but also to represent the endless solidarity of those with the fight. Furthering the solidarity of the Mexican ancestors are depictions of Indigenous Mexican people and the Mexican flag combined with United States imagery in the form of the blue, white, and red flag. This may be a potential critique to

Indigenous Americans (including Chicanos) as the real Americans, owners of their rightful land though not accepted as real Americans, and as the U.S. being the Chicanos' oppressor.

This work represents Chicano resilience amongst oppression, pride, and strength in community. As a student, I know the alarming hypocrisies evident in today's political climate that pay no attention to history. For example, racist mass deportation and the scapegoating of Mexican immigrants as the cause of economic hardship in the United States ignore Chicano's native right to their Indigenous land stolen in early colonial periods, in the Mexican - American War, and/or to imperialist America. Mass deportation in 1930s Los Angeles and sportswashing due to city planning for the Olympics plants grave shadows of what we see reflected in today's mass deportation and upcoming 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. I am consistently reminded that the only reason there is Chicano ethnic studies curriculum, improved school systems in Latino communities, improved farmer workers rights, etc is due to endless protests on the account of Chicano people throughout history. These people were often faced with life-threatening violence and many people died in the midst of each cause. Nothing would have changed if it were not demanded through an organized people. Today, we commemorate, honor, and learn about Chicano history and art such as *The Chicano Mind* by Guillermo Martinez in an attempt to both understand and apply this knowledge to present threats to Chicano self-determination.

