

When I first noticed Guillermo Martinez's *The Chicano Mind* in the C Building staircase, I was surprised at how big and colorful it was. The mural covers the entire wall between the second and third floors, and it's covered in faces, shapes, and bold lines that seem to orbit a central figure. The more I looked at it, the more I realized that it's not just a piece of art—it's a powerful expression of identity, struggle, and culture. Martinez uses color, movement, and symbol to tell the story of the Chicano experience, and the deeper I looked at it, the more it made me think about history, memory, and how our brains hold pain and pride.

The mural revolves around a giant figure resembling a man with his arms outstretched, as if he's being crucified. The figure is not realistic; it consists of colorful orange, yellow, and pink forms resembling muscles or organs. To me, it seemed like the man was being torn apart or opened up, making me connect it to suffering and sacrifice. All around the figure, it goes out in arcing lines, everything full of fists, faces, and patterns that create a lot of motion. It is as if the whole mural is turning, the inside of one's head or memories.

One of the most powerful things about the mural is the color. Martinez uses bright, deep colors—purple, red, orange, green, yellow, and so on. The fists surrounding the figure are multicolored, resembling almost a rainbow, and that made me think about diversity and strength together. I know the raised fist is a symbol of opposition, especially with civil rights movements, so to see so many of them at once gave me an instant sense of power and unity. The red and white stripes behind me made me think of the American flag, but they also seemed like prison bars or something closing in on you. That contrast struck me really hard—how the Chicano experience is created by America and contained by America too.

There are also a million faces in this mural—some wear hats, some angry-looking faces, some peaceful faces, and some tired-looking faces. On the left, there are plenty of faces wearing sombreros, which reminded me of Mexican revolutionaries or farmworkers. On the right, there are other faces that resemble colonizers, politicians, or soldiers. These various groups appear to reflect the conflict between the Chicano community and those in power. Many of the faces are serious or even somber, and that made me feel as though the mural is sharing the tale of numerous generations—of struggle, survival, and resistance.

One section that particularly caught my attention was the circle formation above the center figure's head. It sort of looks like a crown or a mandala, and inside there are red, white, and blue patterns and stars that make me think of the U.S. flag. It actually does look like it's pinning down on the figure, or maybe it's the oppression within your brain to be Chicano in America—to exist and preserve your culture but also be among systems that want you to change and vanish.

Overall, the mural left me with a mix of feelings. I was initially overwhelmed since there is so much happening visually, but the more I sat with it, the more distinct its message became. It shows how the Chicano mind carries not only history and trauma but also strength, pride, and resistance. As a student, this mural taught me the importance of learning about where we are coming from and respecting the hardships that the individuals before us had to go through. It taught me how education is not necessarily just the process of teaching us facts—it's also teaching us about identity and about culture.

Personally, I was inspired by this mural. I don't always get to view artwork in school that is so heavily culturally rooted, especially from the perspectives of oppressed people. Being able to view this on the wall made me feel like voices that are often not heard are being heard and

being respected. It also made me want to learn more about Chicano history and art because I could tell that every bit of this mural was done for a purpose.

In short, Guillermo Martinez's *Chicano Mind* is a powerful mural that uses color, movement, and symbolism in how it paints the complexity of the Chicano experience. From the crucified figure at the center to the swirling fists and faces, it shows how culture, memory, and struggle become entwined. For me, this artwork isn't just something to look at—it's something to learn from. It's a reminder that identity is deep, emotional, and something worth fighting for.