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Chicana artists speak on their work

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As the Latin American community grows in Los Angeles, members who identify themselves with particular ethnic groups are beginning to emerge as leaders of social adjustment. Visual arts is one of the many fields in which "minorities" are finally beginning to achieve recognition. To enlighten people of the Cal State L.A. community, four successful Chicana artists brought slides of their artwork and spoke about their chosen form of expression. The lecture was held last Wednesday evening in the University-Student Union.

Moderated by Karen Mary Davalos, a Chicana/o Studies assistant professor at Loyola Marymount University, the lecture gave each artist about twenty minutes to show their pieces and talk about them. Afterward there was a question and answer session between the audience and the artists.

Eyebrow-ringed Alma Lopez spoke first. Her art, which is mainly digital, has earned her many honors, and has enabled her to found several collections of art. Her pieces often-times consist of various photographs juxtaposed with one another to create a completely new and unexpected image.

"When I was creating these images, I would start cracking up ... they're serious on a certain level but they're also very funny," she said of a series of pieces which incorporated the Virgin de Guadalupe.

Many pieces depict the Virgin in an untraditional light, and due to this, Lopez acknowledged the fact that she has received negative feedback to her art. In an exhibit for the television show *Vista LA* as well as on Olvera Street, people criticized her as defacing the Sacred Mother. Lopez offers no apologies, but an



Photo By Andrea Giacomini/University Times

Artists Alma Lopez (left), Linda Vallejo, art collector Anita Miranda, moderator Karen Mary Davalos and artist Yolanda Gonzalez speak on Chicana artists in the millennium last Wednesday at the Alhambra-A room.

explanation, "I wanted to be able to identify with her ... have her be a full woman, a sexy woman ..."

Yolanda Gonzalez was the second to speak. With dyed red hair, a cow hide choker, and fur-collared coat, Gonzalez looked the part. Raised in Pasadena, she has been a recognized artist since the late '80s. Her work has been exhibited around the L.A. area as well as in Africa, Spain and Japan. In addition to producing art, she also teaches at Inner City Arts, a program for underprivileged children.

Gonzalez brought in two portraits done by her grandmother (whom she cites as the reason she started doing art) to show the contrast between the traditional art forms and her own.

Gonzalez' Picasso-esque paintings employ a lot of black-and-white rather than color to illustrate the dynamics of the pieces.

"A lot of these paintings are records of my past relationships," she said. "Now that I'm married, I don't know what to do with them!"

Linda Vallejo said that it was her goal as an artist to "share with you my lessons as a Chicana Indigena. This has been my mission for the past 20 years."

Growing up in Germany, Spain, and all over the United States, including the deep South during the civil rights movement, Vallejo has led a very traveled life. Her art is influenced by the Chicana Indigena ideals.

"I was smitten. I took a dive

head-first into Chicana Indigena and never came back," she recalls of her experiences. Her pieces often depict nature's metamorphosis with women.

Last to speak was CSLA alumna, Anita Miranda. An art collector, Miranda said that she attends art galleries and receptions as religiously as one might go to church each week. She showed the audience various pieces of her collection, mostly done by Chicana women; many friends of hers.

The audience asked questions of the four women, all who were very well spoken. They responded thoroughly to the numerous inquiries. Following the two-hour discussion, the artists attended a reception.