

Linda Vallejo
Censored: Immigration USA 2008
Artist Statement

Immigration USA (2008), a recycled newspaper collage, chronicles the 2005 Los Angeles May Day Immigrant Rights March, juxtaposing images of the march with compelling photos of human rights leaders, marches, triumphs, and offenses. The collage includes images of American civil rights abuses, victims, heroes, and triumphs. Heroes include Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Martin Luther King, Rodney King, Joan Baez in free speech movement, Chicano civil rights marchers, the students that lost their lives in the Kent State uprising, as well as slaves and farmworkers. These images create a montage of the history of the civil rights movement in our country and draw attention to our common rights and needs.

At the center of the work is a portrait of Cesar Chavez as the leader of the immigrant rights campaign. An image of Rodney King being attacked by police officers and appearing before the press with his statement, "Why can't we just get along?" is also present. Joan Baez appearing in a march for the Free Speech Movement and images of the deaths at Kent State represent another era of struggle. Martin Luther King appears walking from Selma to Montgomery arm in arm in peaceful assembly. There are many other portraits including multicultural workers, slaves, and detainees.

Reading the newspaper and watching television are daily, mundane events, with images appearing in an incongruous mixture of toxic photographs, deadly headlines, frivolous advertisements and commercials, sexualized sales pitches, and mixed political messages.

The dichotomy of these unending images and curiously opposing thoughts creates a mixture of humor, disbelief, guilt, and horror, in part creating the postmodern psychological condition and conundrum and begging the question: "What next?"

Alma Lopez, independent curator

"The struggle for legalization is vividly expressed in Linda Vallejo's *Immigration USA* (2008): immigrants march, united by a common cause, accompanied by words such as 'Hope and Desperation' and 'One March, Many Journeys.' This work captures the aspirations of millions who want to live in this country without fear of the authorities."