

# *METAMORFOSIS*

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## **PABLO O'HIGGINS: Pintura y sociedad**

**LUIS J. RODRIGUEZ:**  
More on the State of Chicano Art

**ERASMO GAMBOA:**  
The Northwest Chicanos

**WHITE & MATHENY-WHITE:**  
NW Chicano/Latino Art and Artists

**FOCUS:** A. ARTOREZ  
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J. ORANTES

**NORTHWEST  
ARTISTS**







Frank Hinojosa;  
 “History of the Chicano People,”  
 mural 8’ x 15’, 1975  
 Northwest Rural Opportunities,  
 Pasco, WA.

## CHICANO/LATINO ART & ARTISTS: A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

**(An Inquiry Into Cultural Diversity) Sid White and Pat Matheny-White**

*The authors have recently completed a field research study of Chicano/Latino art in the Pacific Northwest. This endeavor was part of a project titled Chicano Cultural Expression in the Pacific Northwest funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Sid White, who served as director for the project is a faculty member and director of the Evergreen Galleries at The Evergreen State College. He also directs Exhibit Touring Services of Washington State. Having curated and toured a number of regional art exhibits, he is currently planning a major exhibition that will feature work by artists who are included in this review. Pat Matheny-White, resource development director for the NEH project, is an arts and humanities faculty librarian at The Evergreen State College. She has recently published two bibliographies on Chicano/Latino art and culture based on materials gathered during the project. These bibliographies are available from The Evergreen State College Library.*

*A group of scholars, artists and community leaders from this and other regions of the United States served as consultants for the NEH project. The two main consultants were Erasmo Gamboa (University of Washington) and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (Stanford University).*

*As the authors state in their introductory remarks, this project grew out of the Cultural Diversity Program at The Evergreen State College Galleries. Since 1979, this program has called attention upon the relationship, which exists between the social content of art and the forms (“personal” or “public”) that artists use to transmit such content. The problematic nature of this relationship has been briefly described by Sid White in the 1982 Alfredo Arreguín/Susan Lytle exhibition catalog:*

*“For too long there has been a preoccupation with form to the exclusion of content in mainstream American art and criticism. This dichotomy between form and content has produced a dilemma for*

*many artists who have been forced to choose between ‘being an artist’ or being true to their identity and perceptions as individuals who also happen to be men and women with particular social and cultural backgrounds... In his book The Shape of Content, Ben Shahn has given full and precise definition to the process whereby artists may use content... as the means of giving form to perceptions that are rooted in personal, social and cultural experience.”*

*The report which follows has a double significance: it is the first published study on Northwest Chicano/Latino art and it also constitutes a contribution to future interregional dialogue on Chicano/Latino culture.*

*Clearly, each of the artists whose interviews are included in this issue vocalize the need for the communication that White and Matheny-White- have so timely initiated.*

## Project Origins

The present study is an outgrowth of the Art and Cultural Diversity Program of The Evergreen State College Galleries. Featuring the work of such leading artists as Rupert Garcia, Daniel Desiga and Alfredo Arreguin, exhibit and lecture presentations on Chicano/Latino art and artists have played a prominent role in the activities of this program. Exhibits have been further complemented by the installation of murals by Emilio Aguayo and Francisco Siqueiros, which are on loan to the college. A major goal of the Art and Cultural Diversity Program has been to call attention to important and often overlooked relationships between social, political or cultural content in works of art and the personal or public forms through which this content is given expression.

Special mention must be made of two regional artists, who had major impact on this program. Extensive conversations with them provided information and sensitivity to issues that were essential for carrying out our field work.

Isaac Shamsud-Din is an Afro-American painter and muralist who has lived in the Portland, Oregon Black community since childhood. Daniel Desiga, a Chicano with a farmworker background, has spent almost all of his life in Washington State. Despite differences in cultural background and age (Desiga is eight years younger than Shamsud-Din), there are many parallels in their lives and work. Both artists present aspects of their personal environment and vision in their paintings through positive images of their people. Both of them have made important contributions to their communities through public art forms—posters and murals. They, each in their own way, have been caught in dilemmas caused by conflicting expectations and stereotypes from the mainstream art world and, to some extent, from their own communities. Both of them have suffered financial, emotional, and artistic hardship as they have struggled to survive as producing artists. Finally, both have managed to maintain their cultural and artistic integrity, and have produced significant bodies of work despite the limited recognition and support they have received.

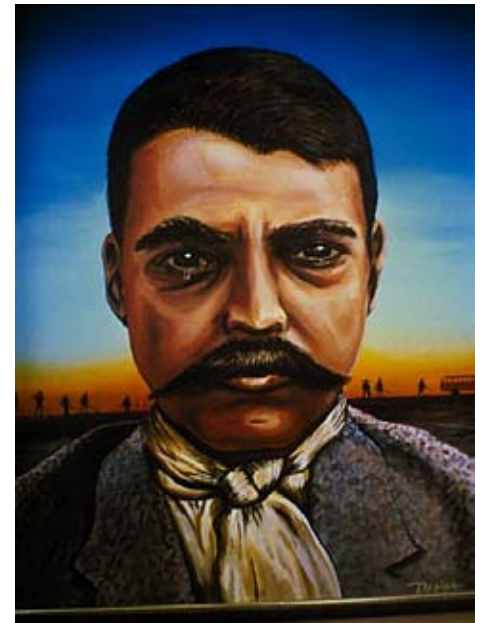


Isaac Shamsud-Din; "Image Maker", (self-portrait), 60" x 48", oil, 1978-80

Contact and dialogue with Isaac Shamsud-Din started in 1979 (a year and a half before we met Desiga) when plans were being made to organize and tour a major retrospective exhibit of his work. Titled *Isaac Shamsud-Din: Public and Personal Work*, the exhibit presented a full range of the artist's work including paintings, drawings, illustrations, cartoons, posters, and 5' x 6' photographs of his murals. Also included in the exhibit were interpretive panels presenting the social and cultural context in which the work had been produced. An extremely effective component of the project was the presence of Shamsud-Din at each exhibit site where he discussed his position as an artist and a cultural worker. A number of important questions were raised by Shamsud-Din and his work. All of these questions, which served later as the basis for the present study, began with one underlying issue: How typical or untypical is the work, life, struggle, and achievement of Isaac Shamsud-Din? Additional questions revolved around the dilemmas and accomplishments of other Third World artists living in the region, the relationships that can be found between their personal and public work, and the possibilities for making these artists and their work more visible.

During the year following the Shamsud-Din project, initial attempts were made to find answers to these ques-

tions. Information was readily available outside of the region on artists whose goals and careers closely parallel those of Shamsud-Din. But nothing could be found in print on Shamsud-Din's counterparts living in the Pacific Northwest; they were simply ignored by critics and historians. Contacts with artists in the region provided only limited and sketchy information; most artists seemed to be isolated and unaware of each other's existence.



Daniel Desiga; untitled, oil, 16" x 19", 1976

A dramatic breakthrough came in the Spring of 1981 when we had the opportunity to meet Daniel Desiga and to view his work. This meeting led immediately to a one man show in the Evergreen Galleries during the Cinco de Mayo celebration, and was also the beginning of an intensive dialogue on Desiga's work and the work of other Chicano/Latino artists living in the region. Parallels between Desiga and Shamsud-Din were immediately noted. A diversity of artistic and cultural goals among Chicano/Latino artists in the region was also noted. With Desiga's encouragement, the names of eleven artists, and information on two major mural and poster production sites, the decision was made to carry out a regional field study of Chicano/Latino art and artists with the intention of curating and touring an exhibit of their work.





Daniel Desiga: "Salud", poster, offset, 17" x 25", 1981

## Regional Field of Study

As Erasmo Gamboa has said, Chicano/Latinos in the Pacific Northwest are an "invisible minority" even though they are the largest ethnic minority in the region. This situation is difficult to comprehend since Chicano/Latinos have lived in the region for generations and have made substantial contributions to its economic and cultural life. Artists associated with this group are even less visible. It is indeed this central fact that underlies the range of concerns they are forced to face as they struggle to produce and exhibit their work. Similarly, this condition of invisibility also posed unusual challenges and difficulties for us in carrying out this project.

Our field study, essentially a mapmaking venture into uncharted territory, took us into seventeen urban and rural communities in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. We soon discovered that almost everyone we met had their own map, and that most of these maps were limited to personal spheres of activity and contact. The absence of one regionwide communal map speaks to the fact of isolation and invisibility among artists and between the community and the artists.

During our journey we were able to conduct interview discussions with over thirty artists and to view works in studios, basements, garages, social service agencies, and community fiestas. We were able to see works in public and private galleries and museums much less frequently and only on rare occasions we saw reproductions and reviews in publications. We located and photographed a



Isaac Shamsud-Din, "Vanport: the Promise", mural, 20' x 20', 1977-78  
Albina Human Resources Center, Portland, OR.

surprising number of murals, posters, and other forms of culturally expressive art.

Much time, persistence and detective work was needed to locate the artists and the personal and public work they have produced. This task was initially accomplished through word-of-mouth contacts and referrals which resulted in the accumulation of a large body of data, only a portion of which is presented in this report. Our goals have been ambitious, to say the least, and we have often felt overwhelmed by the complexity and magnitude of the challenges facing us. We have made most progress in the task of identifying artists and public works of art that, at the start, were unknown to us and to almost everyone we encountered. Based on available information and a desire to provide a representative sample, we have selected eighteen individuals for the regional profile of artists to be presented in this report.

Our study was quite obviously limited by lack of time, resources and experience. A large number of issues and problems need further identification and interpretation, especially relationships and comparisons with other regions. We must point out, however, that there are many questions for which we have no answers simply because there was no information available. Despite a number of visits and interviews in Oregon, it was difficult to

get information on art and artists in this state. Likewise, we have only met two artists and two designers in Idaho (Boise). Our contact with women artists have been relatively few, and many of those who we have met or known about have not been producing or exhibiting in recent years.

More information on various forms of photography, including family snapshots, which may be regarded as a significant popular art form, needs to be gathered. We know of a Mexican born artist living in the Yakima Valley who produces religious banners for use in processions. We also know that home altars are produced, especially in the Valley, but have not yet seen them. We have not been able to identify any crafts people who produce cultural materials (except pinatas). Despite these problems, we will continue to seek this information.

Our research was further complicated by broad-ranged goals, which committed us to surveying every conceivable form of visually presented cultural expression. Our work would have been easier (but far less significant had it been limited to the study of more conventional and widely known and recognized art forms.

Thus, our task required the formulation of a working conception and definition of such key terms as art, artist, personal art and public art, which could be used to carry out our research and communicate

our goals and informational needs. This was extremely difficult given prevailing connotations of these terms which often imply hierarchy of status, importance or artistic legitimacy. Our need, then, was to free these terms from such connotations so that we could devote equal attention to both “professional” and “non-professional” artists.

The criteria used for including artists in the survey seemed to be rather clear: they should produce and present work whose content is in some way associated with Chicano/Latino culture. But this, again, has been extremely difficult to establish since elements rooted in personal histories of artists are inevitably entwined with elements of their work that have a cultural derivation. Thus, careful analysis of the cultural content in regional art awaits further study

The concepts of *personal art* and *public art* have been used in this study to designate two major dimensions which in reality cannot be totally separated. These concepts played an important role in developing the *Isaac Shamsud-Din: Personal and Public Work* exhibit project. In the United States especially, the prevailing conception of art is almost exclusively personalistic and ignores the public or communally shared vision that is often expressed in works of art. Public art is often confused with corporate art produced by internationally famous artists (Picasso, Moore, Miro, Oldenburg, for example) which is placed in downtown sites in the nation’s urban centers.

The study has provided needed clarification to the issue of definition. Public forms of expression are those which address the shared values, history and aspirations of the community: murals, posters, and graphic logos and emblems used by local organizations. It should be noted that most Northwest Chicano/Latino art was produced in the 1970’s as part of a nationwide and international Third World upsurge of cultural and political consciousness focusing on the affirmation of cultural identity. Pedro Rodríguez has fully articulated the radical origins of this public/communal art (see the first page of his article, “Arte como expresión del pueblo,” *Metamorfosis*, Vol. 111, No. 2, Vol. IV, No. 1).



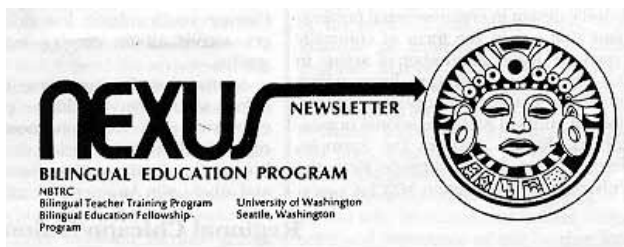
Graffiti; anonymous, Zillah, WA

### Public Art

Regional murals, posters and graphics bear a close affinity as public art forms since they share common social and educational functions and are addressed to the community in ways that are direct and immediately understandable to the public. Relationships between murals and posters in the region are very close both technically and in content. Designs in posters are often enlarged and transcribed into murals. At the same time, icons, motifs, and themes presented in Pacific Northwest murals and posters are also evident in the design of logos and symbols on publication mastheads, organizational stationery, t-shirts, etc. As we shall see later, eight of the eighteen artists presented in this article have produced public art forms.

No study has been completed on all of the murals (mainstream and multicultural) in the Pacific Northwest. There is evidence, however, that most of these works have been produced for minority communities and the largest number of them (86 that we know of) are the creation of Chicano/Latino artists. Further information on locations of murals appears in the regional map included later in this article.

The rich cultural and artistic vocabulary of Chicano/Latino public art is well exemplified by the diversity of motifs – pre-Columbian images, calaveras, flags, etc.— contained in the mural painted by Frank Hinojosa with student assistants at the Northwest Rural Opportunities (NRO) in Pasco, Washington, in 1975.



“Nexus” Bilingual Education Program University of Washington, Logo



“Chicano Self Determination”, poster, 1972



Other murals focus on particular themes. Daniel Desiga's "College Without Walls," painted at the Colegio César Chávez in the mid 1970's relates to the affirmation of education and the farmworker. Other murals at the Colegio depict farmworkers and the nobility of the laborer in the tradition of the Mexican muralists, as well as many pre-Columbian motifs. At El Centro de La Raza there are more strongly multicultural political images, many of them affirming solidarity among Third World Peoples.

A distinctive characteristic of poster art is immediacy; posters capture and commemorate events of importance to the community. A notable example of this significant social function is the production and use of "Chicano Self Determination," a poster produced in 1972 (a critical point in the struggle) and distributed to establish El Centro de La Raza. The period following the creation of El Centro up until 1979, was a time when many murals and posters were produced. The poster and mural production at the Colegio was at its peak for a shorter duration, from 1975 to 1977 when Daniel Desiga was head of the Art Department.

There is a widespread regional use of graphic design in organizational publications that are in the form of culturally expressive logos. A number of artists in this study have produced logos which provide a graphic identity for publications

of cultural and educational organizations. Emilio Aguayo, for example, designed logos for El Teatro del Piojo, the University of Washington MEChA newsletter and Calmecac in the 1970's. At a later date, Alfredo Arreguín designed a logo for *La Voz*, the publication of the Concilio for the Spanish Speaking of King County, and Daniel Desiga's logo for Northwest Chicano Health, "Salud," received widespread recognition in the region and is an exemplary use of a comprehensive design approach coordinating poster, brochure, stationery and other related organizational printed materials.

### Popular Art

As stated above, our study has focused on cultural dimensions of artistic expression, which are often overlooked because of prevailing conceptions of art. This applies especially to another form of public art, the anonymously produced popular art that is enjoyed by and is an integral part of the daily life of the Chicano/Latino community, and is displayed at community gathering places (restaurants, *tortillerías*, churches) and at *fiestas* and celebrations. The traditions of *la familia* are perpetuated through cultural images on calendars, religious banners and icons, home decorations and altars as well as displays of family photographs. A dominant theme in religious popular expression is that of

the *Virgen de Guadalupe*. It appears in all forms of popular art. Other forms are part of the Chicano youth culture: low riders, posters, record album covers, decals, and graffiti.

As stated earlier, we have not been able to identify any significant culturally expressive craft work produced in the region. However, such crafts are imported into the region from Mexico and other Latin American countries.

### Personal Art

The content and form of artists' personal work bears a close relationship to public and popular art. Examples of this overlap are representations of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, *cholos*, *mujeres*, or motifs associated with Pre-Columbian or modern Mexican folk art origins. Most of the personal work we have examined is either social realist, figurative, or expressionist in style and humanist in content. A small number of artists produce work, which is non-representational, abstract, conceptual, and more closely related to trends in contemporary mainstream art. We have also found that most Chicano/Latino artists in this region express themselves through painting and drawing, and also do small sculpture. Only a small percentage "specialize" in other media, one each in sculpture, printmaking and photography.

### Regional Chicano/Latino Artists

NAME	BORN	RESIDENCE IN NW	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	PRIMARY MEDIA	PUBLIC WORKS**
Aguayo	1939, Colorado	1961-	B.A., M.A.	Graphic Designer	Painting, mixed media, sculpture	M/PG
Alvarez	1950, California	1975-	B.A.	Academic Counselor	Painting, printmaking	
Arreguín	1935, Mexico	1961-	M.F.A.	Artist	Painting, small sculpture	PG
Artorez	1940, Mexico	1976-	B.A. +	Artist	Painting, small sculpture	M/PG
Calderón	1949, Peru	1968-	B.A.	Photographer	Photography	
Clavo	1946, New Mexico	1975-	M.A., M.D.	Physician	Painting	
Contreras	1943, Mexico	1976-	B.A.	Art Museum Guard	Painting, mixed media	PG
Desiga	1948, Washington	1948-1982	B.F.A.	Graphic Designer	Painting	M/PG
Guillén	1926, Texas	1960-	Self-Taught	Farm Supervisor	Painting, small sculpture	
Hinojosa	1939, Texas	1965-	B.F.A.	Graphic Designer	Painting, printmaking, sculpture	M/PG
Lara	1939, Colorado	1963-1979	B.A. +	Artist	Painting, mixed media	M/PG
Olivas	1934, California	1975-	B.A.+	Consulting Engineer	Painting	
Orantes	1953, Guatemala	1978-	B.F.A.*	Welder	Painting, sculpture	
Pérez	1951, California	1979-	M.F.A.	Artist, Professor	Painting, mixed media, printmaking, ceramics	
Reynoso	1948, Texas	1962-	B.F.A.	Artist	Printmaking, painting	
J. Rodríguez	1953, Mexico	1969-	B.A. +	Gallery Owner	Painting, printmaking	PG
P. Rodríguez	1936, Texas	1973-1981	M.F.A.	Cultural Arts Supervisor	Painting, printmaking, mixed media	M/PG
Trejo	1937, Minnesota	1973-	M.F.A.	Artist, Professor	Sculpture, drawing	

\*equivalent degree \*\*Legend: Mmurals PGPoster & Graphic Design

## Artists

More differences than similarities are evident in the backgrounds and works of the artists we have met during the course of our study. This diversity can be seen in the biographical information that is provided on eighteen representative artists at the end of this report. Except for the ages of the artists, most of whom are in their thirties and forties, these backgrounds reveal wide variations in prior residence, length of residence in the region, educational training, occupation, and means and quality of artistic production and presentation (see the chart we have included).

This broad diversity can also be seen in the cultural and political identities of the eighteen artists. Half of them call themselves Chicano or Chicana and identify either with cultural-nationalist political positions or limit their identity and expression to cultural roots and motifs (such as the farmworker) which have no explicit political connotations. One fourth of the representative artists identify themselves as Mexican-American (Americans of Mexican ancestry) and hold allegiance to an image of America as a melting pot or pluralistic society.

Four Latino artists, all of whom were born outside the United States, have had varying degrees of involvement with the Chicano community through production of murals, posters, graphic design, and by showing their work at community celebrations. However, since the struggles of the Chicano community are not part of their personal histories, there is little or no evidence of Chicano identity in their artistic productions. As artists, their identities can perhaps best be characterized as international though also expressing their cultural roots.

## Issues Raised in the Study

Chicano/Latino is used in this report as a term denoting a range of differing cultural and political identities, and as a continuum of identities that cannot be easily separated into distinct categories. This condition of diversity can be interpreted as a source of strength or weakness. The potential for strength, with diversity seen as a source for positive action in the 1980's, will be discussed later. The present situation, however, seems to be one of weakness as seen in the relative absence of

shared values and goals that could provide the basis for mutual support and common action among artists.

A significant number of artists (nine of those represented here) have come to the region as recently as ten years ago, and only four have had extended residency of over twenty years. The absence of a community of artists with strong ties, combined with such factors as geographic isolation, account for the limited communication that exists among artists in the region.

The issues of isolation and invisibility, and the absence of dialogue and reinforcement from other artists are closely related to other concerns expressed by regional artists. The major concern is that of survival as actively producing and exhibiting artists. Economic pressures are severe, especially among artists with families, and the difficulty of finding a market for their personal work is enormous. Commissioned public work has been virtually non-existent in the 1980's. In contrast, the 1970's seem to have been a period when Chicano/Latino art flourished and reached a high point in production and community involvement. Interaction among artists and between artists and the community was much closer and mutually supportive. This dialogue and collective action produced results which, in retrospect, seem to be most impressive. The O'Higgins mural was rescued from oblivion, carefully restored and made publicly visible; major exhibits were displayed in leading galleries and museums; almost all of the 86 murals in the region were painted during this period.

The murals of the 1970's were painted by professional artists, students, and self-taught artists. It is important to note that all of the murals created by professional artists were produced with city, state, and federal funding. It should also be noted that this important body of public art could not have been produced without the commitment of the producing artists and the active support of such organizations as El Centro de La Raza, Colegio César Chávez, Concilio for the Spanish Speaking of King County, Northwest Rural Opportunities, and Idaho Migrant Council.

The role and impact of artists working in close cooperation cannot be overestimated. A notable example of this collaborative effort was the creation in 1978

of La Extensión Cultural, which aimed to promote and foment the artistic and literary endeavors of Chicano/Latinos in Seattle. Even though this organization was short-lived, it represented both a valiant effort and an indication of the potential for the cooperation and unity of artists. Lara, Artorez, Siqueiros, and Arreguín produced public art works during the brief duration of this group. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto has reviewed the goals and activities of this group and other regional Chicano/Latino literary and performing artists in his unpublished work "Abriendo Surcos: A Socio-Aesthetic Chronology (1965-1982)."

## Conclusion

The issues and concerns presented in the foregoing overview have been repeatedly expressed by the artists we visited and interviewed. This presents a rather bleak view of the regional situation. Many talented and committed artists who come to the region do not stay. Artists who have left – Daniel Desiga and Pedro Rodríguez, for example – have left a void as teachers, cultural workers and producers of public art. The amount and quality of public art in the region has declined (an important exception being Alfredo Arreguín's Fiestas Patrias and El Centro De La Raza tenth anniversary paintings/posters). Some public work is being produced by students who need guidance and instruction by artist-teachers who can serve as role models. But in general, there are no artists under thirty years of age to build on the accomplishments of their elders or to initiate new directions and give vitality to regional Chicano/Latino art.

While the 1980's are seen as a period of decline in the production of public art, signs of vitality remain in the production of artistically and culturally significant personal art. Of the artists remaining in the region, Alfredo Arreguín (full-time artist) and Rubén Trejo (artist-professor) are the two who are currently receiving the most recognition within and outside of the region. Their accomplishments and those of others can be noted in the regional artists profile.

The presence of actively producing artists in the region who remain committed to the presentation of cultural content in their work suggests exciting potential for the

future. *The Isaac Shamsud-Din: Personal and Public Work* exhibit project, described at the beginning of this article, serves as a model for other projects. It provided wide visibility for the artist and his work, and it also provided context and clarification for the multiple artistic, social, political and cultural dimensions of his personal and public work. The example of Shamsud-Din's and other regional artists' efforts and achievements, as artists who have maintained and affirmed their cultural identity, gives definition and confirmation to a role that has been long ignored in the Western World: the artist as cultural interpreter.

The artist as cultural interpreter is a person who translates and infuses memories and experience of one culture into that of another. As interpreter, this artist also has the role of helping members of his or her own culture, especially the young, to remember, understand or appreciate their own heritage.

Thus, it can be said that artists in this region want and need access to what are in reality two communities: the community that wants to preserve its cultural values and roots, and the larger mainstream community that needs to have its values broadened and its multiple, pluralistic roots acknowledged and celebrated.

Clearly, visibility is the central issue and need. Works must be seen. They also must be interpreted so that they can provide their fullest value and meaning both as artistic and cultural statements.

As persons with experience as curators, researchers, and educators who have a personal and professional commitment to the sharing and networking of exhibits and information, we see a number of specific means for making effective use of the diverse perspectives of artists now living in the region. Most of these means were articulated in 1978 by members of La Extensión Cultural Art Collective which called for organization of exhibits and the use of educational approaches as a further means for promoting awareness and understanding of Chicano/Latino art and culture.

The present study has provided valuable contacts, materials and information that will be used in organizing a major exhibit to be titled *Chicano/Latino Art of the Pacific Northwest*. Following the personal/public format of the Isaac

Shamsud-Din project, this interpretive exhibit will feature a catalog and will be toured through an already identified network of exhibit sites.

This touring exhibit will at best be only a small step in meeting the needs that have been noted. More art criticism and articles such as those that have appeared in *Metamorfosis* need to be written and published in other journals as well. More research must be carried out and reported by art historians, cultural anthropologists and folklorists. Nothing has been published by scholars working in these disciplines. Symposia need to be organized to promote dialogue between artists, scholars, and community leaders in this and other regions. Instructional materials featuring slides of artists' personal and public work, along with information providing artistic and cultural context for understanding such work, need to be developed.

There is much to be done.

## **Regional Map of Chicano/Latino Art**

This map shows the locations of sixteen of the eighteen representative artists, their public and private works, and the organizations that present their work. As would be expected, the urban centers of Seattle, Spokane/Cheney, and Boise are the areas where the largest proportion of Chicano/Latino artists live and exhibit their work. The size of the region (248,730 square miles), and the distances between Seattle and Boise (490 miles) and between Seattle and Eugene, Oregon (281 miles) shows a geographical basis for isolation and invisibility.

Artists who are profiled in this study have displayed their work in one or more of the sites identified in the accompanying map. The works have been shown in thirteen private galleries, ten exhibits sponsored by community organizations during fiestas and celebrations, six college and university galleries, six regional group invitational shows (not limited to Chicano/Latino artists), and five individual and group shows in museums featuring Chicano/Latino artists.

The figures may be misleading since only a few of these sponsors have held more than one such exhibit during this period of time. The only organizations which have maintained a continued

involvement in the presentation of this particular type of art are those sponsoring community celebrations.

Examples of different kinds of exhibiting organizations that have shown Chicano/Latino art since 1980 are: Jackson Street Gallery, Seattle; Art Attack Gallery, Boise; Diane Gilson Gallery, Seattle; Yakima Valley College *Hispanic Awareness Week Exhibit*; Concilio for the Spanish Speaking in King County *Fiestas Patrias Exhibit*, Seattle; Evergreen Galleries, The Evergreen State College, Olympia; Viking Union Gallery, Western Washington University, Bellingham; Seattle Urban League annual exhibit (3 Chicano/Latino artists represented in 1982); and Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue.

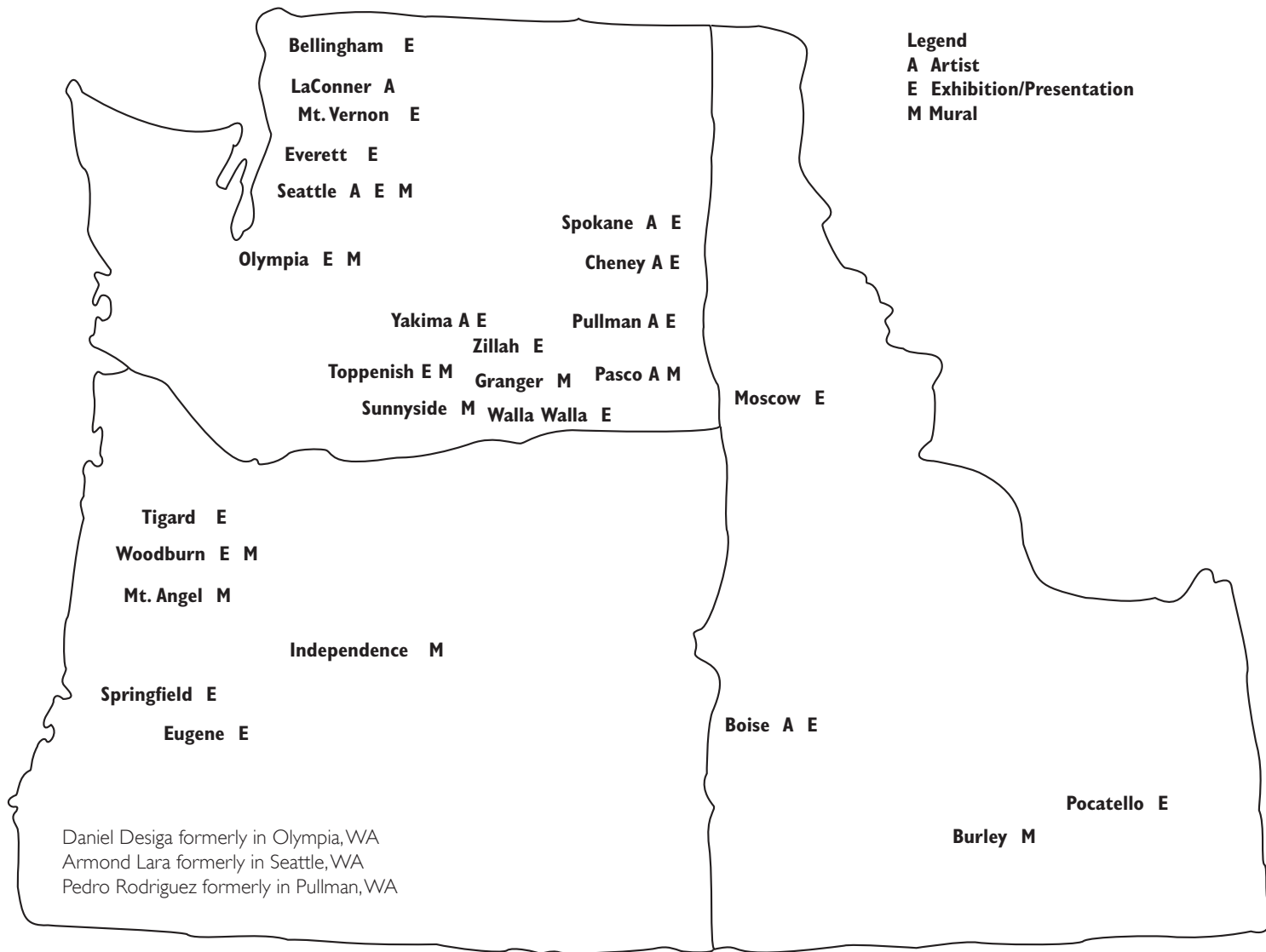
Popular arts and crafts are also presented to the public at celebrations and in places where items imported from Mexico and Latin America are sold.

Chicano/Latino publications have also played a role in the presentation of art work. *La Voz* and *Metamorfosis* (Seattle), and *La Voz Chicana* (Boise) have included information about and reproductions of regional art and artists' work

The two major regional centers for mural production in the 1970's were El Centro de La Raza, Seattle, (28 murals), and Colegio César Chávez, Mt. Angel, Oregon (20 murals). Other murals have been produced in Seattle (14), the Yakima Valley (7), Oregon small communities (14), and one mural in Idaho (Burley). All but two of the murals are located inside, which may account for the lack of awareness of their existence in the Northwest. The murals are located for the most part in social service agencies, colleges and universities, public schools or other educational institutions. In addition, two major murals produced by Daniel Desiga and Esteban Villa are in La Puerta restaurant in Seattle and two portable murals are located in Eduardo Alanis' home (his garage) in Woodburn, Oregon. Eduardo's murals have been exhibited at the University of Oregon as well as used for graphic design for publications and posters at the university.

The two major sites were also the sites for production of posters and graphic design. Other sites for graphic design production are not indicated on the map.





**ARTISTS**

**LaConnor**  
 Jesus Guillen

**Seattle**  
 Emilio Aguayo  
 Alfredo Arreguin  
 Arturo Artorez  
 Maximon Clavo  
 Carlos Contreras  
 Jose Orantes

**Yakima**  
 Richard Olivas

**Pasco**  
 Frank Hinojosa

**Pullman**  
 Norman Perez

**Cheney**  
 Cecilia Alvarez

**Spokane**  
 Ruben Trejo

**Boise**  
 Jose Reynoso  
 Jose Rodriguez

**EXHIBITION/PRESENTATION**

**Bellingham**  
 Viking Gallery, Western Washington University

**Mt. Vernon**  
 Skagit Valley College

**Everett**  
 Everett Community College

**Seattle**  
 Henry Art Gallery—University of Washington  
 Ethnic Cultural Center—University of Washington  
 Women’s Cultural Center—YWCA, University of Washington  
 Other locations—University of Washington  
 Chicano Studies—University of Washington, Metamorfois  
 Concilio for the Spanish Speaking in King County, Fiestas Patrias, Seattle Center; La Voz Jackson Street Gallery

**Salon des Refuses**  
 Urban League  
 Seattle Central Community College

**Diane Gilson Gallery**  
 El Centro de La Raza  
 La Tienda Folk Gallery

**Olympia**  
 Evergreen Galleries-The Evergreen State College

**Yakima**  
 Yakima Valley College

**Toppenish**  
 Fiesta Mexicana

**Zillah**  
 El Ranchito  
 West of town (graffiti)

**Walla Walla**  
 Walla Walla Community College

**Pullman**  
 Washington State University

**Cheney**  
 Eastern Washington University

**Spokane**  
 Cheney Cowles Museum  
 Lloyd Gallery

**Boise**  
 Art Attack Gallery  
 Boise Gallery of Art  
 Boise State University  
 La Voz Chicana

**Pocatello**  
 Transition Gallery

**Moscow**  
 Idaho State University

**Woodburn**  
 Fiesta Mexicana  
 Mexico Lindo

**Tigard**  
 Human Development Corporation

**Eugene**  
 University of Oregon

**Springfield**  
 Adelante Si, Cinco de Mayo Celebration

**MURALS**

**Seattle**  
 El Centro de La Raza  
 Kane Hal—University of Washington  
 Lander Hall—University of Washington  
 Ethnic Cultural Center—University of Washington  
 Concilio for the Spanish Speaking of King County  
 La Puerta Restaurant  
 Chief Sealth High School  
 Seattle Central Community College

**Olympia**  
 State Capitol Museum  
 The Evergreen State College

**Toppenish**  
 Heritage College

**Granger**  
 Northwest Rural Opportunities

**Sunnyside**  
 Migrant Education Office

**Pasco**  
 Northwest Rural Opportunities

**Burley**  
 Idaho Migrant Council

**Mt. Angel**  
 Colegio Cesar Chavez

**Woodburn**  
 Marion County Learning Center Parking Lot

**Independence**  
 La Amistad Juvenil

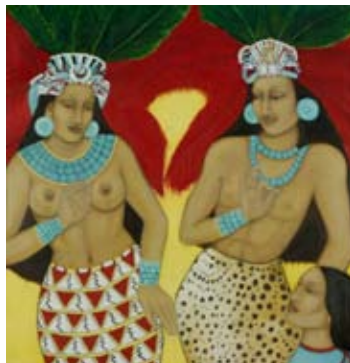


“Spirit of Summer-Yakima”; felt pen, 5” x 7”; 1981

**Emilio Aguayo** has produced in a wide range of artistic forms and has been a spokesperson for Chicano art in the region for over twenty years. He created one of the first murals in the region (“Aztlán,” Ethnic Cultural Center, University of Washington, Seattle) in 1961, and has produced four other major murals. He renders numerous drawings each day and uses this “image bank” for his work in other media. Through influential contact with the RCAF of Sacramento in the late 1960’s, Aguayo formulated an aesthetic in an unpublished paper “Chicano Art: A New Art Style of the Future” in which he describes his images: “Though they appear Mesoamerican in nature, they are not. They have been produced by stimuli in prison and poverty life experiences of the artist, surrounded by a constant exposure to industrialized life of the 20th century.” He, along with Daniel Desiga, Frank Hinojosa, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and others, formed a regional branch of a projected National Chicano Academy of Arts and Letters in 1975, the first artists’ group to attempt to gain collective support in the region. Numerous group shows in the region since 1968 included a two-person show with the Mexican artist José Luis Cuevas in 1976, and the most recent group exhibit at Western Washington University, 1983.

“El eterno sueño del danzón de la unidad”; oil, 30” x 32”, 1982

**Cecilia Alvarez** portrays a strong Chicana identity in her work. In a recent exhibition brochure (Women’s Cultural Center, YWCA, University of Washington, Seattle, 1982) her work is described: “Alvarez does figure painting which depicts Latina imagery and myths —forged in the Western hemisphere. Alvarez’s richly colored oils proudly depict her Chicana/Cubana heritage.”



“Tulín”; oil, 72” x 48”, 1980

**Alfredo Arreguín** is another artist who has been in the region over twenty years. He came to the region to study at the University of Washington where he received an M.F.A. A highly prolific artist, Arreguín has exhibited widely within and out of the region. Most recent individual and two-person shows: Bellevue Art Museum, 1981; Mexican Museum, San Francisco, 1983. Major group shows include the Seattle Urban League Exhibitions (1979,1980); Henry Art Gallery shows, (University of Washington, 1980-1981); the International Festival of Painting (Washington D.C., 1979); and the Musee d’ Art Moderne, (Paris, France, 1979). Currently represented by Diane Gilson Gallery, Seattle, he has participated in Chicano/Latino community events through exhibitions and poster production. Arreguín is the only artist in this profile who makes a living as an artist. The following has been said of the mainstream “decorative” and “pattern” painting aspects of his work:

“...in contrast to frankly decorative work whose effects occur on a broad scale, Arreguín’s work employs patterns to reveal a synthetic, unique context distinct both in inspiration and in continuity. His development of a ‘pattern’ style as early as 1964 firmly establishes him as the first American painter in this mode.” (David Scaff, Exhibition Catalogue, Bellevue Art Museum, 1981). In the exhibition catalogue for Arreguín’s Evergreen State College exhibit, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto says: “The folk art of Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico ... has particular resonance in Arreguín’s work. Michoacán lacquer ware is noted for recurrent layers of design where the repeated animal or floral motifs of one color are superimposed over the background of another color ... In his personal trajectory, Alfredo Arreguín has selectively maintained and transformed elements from his Mexican heritage...”





**“La casa de los sueños”;**  
mixed media, 13” x 17”,  
1976



**“Penitentes”;**  
acrylic and water colors  
21” x 27”,  
1972

**Arturo Artorez** is a more recent resident of Seattle, coming from Mexico in 1976. In his work one can observe images of his Mexican heritage and artistic training in Mexico City. “His work reflects a taste for the ‘good things in life’ stated in sensuous sonorities of color and line; inspired by the exotic, the ancient and the primitive, the strange art of other civilizations and cultures...” (from a quote included in his resume.) He exhibited extensively in Mexico and other countries prior to coming to the region. Most recently he exhibited in Boise, Idaho and in 1982, he received an award in the Seattle Urban League exhibition. Artorez has exhibited regularly at Chicano/Latino celebrations, painted a mural at El Centro de La Raza, Seattle, and was a cultural coordinator along with Carlos Contreras at El Centro from 1976-1978.

**Maximón Clavo** balances his work as a medical doctor with his personal artistic production. He releases images from a fantasy world, with an often biting commentary, in a style he calls his own *New Mexican expressionism*: “The themes I paint vary with the moods I’m in and the situational stresses I’m facing, or problems I’m trying to solve at a particular time. One theme coming up is my Catholic-Hispanic upbringing. Other themes are ones basic to New Mexico life. And then the third theme is Mujer. A fourth theme that reoccurs is death. When I look back on these themes, they are powerful emotions basic to all existence, and the ones I like to express.” (*Nurture Magazine*, Spring 1982). Clavo has exhibited in the region and one of his paintings was reproduced on the cover of *La Voz* in July, 1982.



**Untitled;**  
photograph,  
1978



**“Indian Angel”;**  
acrylic and pastel,  
13” x 18”,  
1980

**Eduardo Calderón** is the only Latino photographer actively exhibiting in major museums and cultural institutions who combines his artistic vision with an education in anthropology. Most recently he has carried out a research project funded by the NEA Folk Arts program to photograph Northwest Native American artists in Washington State, which resulted in an exhibit at the Thomas Burke Memorial Museum, Univ. of Wa. (1982). The display has traveled in the state to major Native American exhibition sites. Eduardo has also exhibited photographs of his native country, Peru, and other documentary and personal work.

**Carlos Contreras**, another artist coming from Mexico in the mid-1970’s, produces work in the contemporary Mexican *humanismofigurativo* style. A dominant theme in his mixed media canvases and sculpture are anthropomorphic beasts. Contreras was the founder and Executive Director of La Extensión Cultural in Seattle. He has had exhibits in the Seattle area.



“Chicana Farmworker”;  
oil, 16” x 19”,  
1981

**Daniel Desiga** comes closest to epitomizing a truly regional artist. Born in Walla Walla, Washington, he has lived 33 of his 35 years in the region and has been closely associated with artistic and cultural developments both in Washington and Oregon as well as California. Desiga is well known in the region for his public work both as a graphic designer for the Washington State Employment Security Department, and also as a graphic designer, poster artist and muralist for the Chicano/Latino community. His Northwest and farmworkers’ background is reflected in his mural at El Centro de La Raza, one of the first murals produced in the region. In another mural located in La Puerta restaurant, Seattle, he collaborated with Esteban Villa of the RCAF of Sacramento. Desiga was an influential teacher in the art department at Colegio César Chávez in Oregon where he and his students produced murals and posters. Desiga’s paintings are social realist in content. In addition to presenting images of farmworkers; women, youth culture, and such cultural symbols as peppers are also depicted.



“La Virgen Guadalupe del Tepeyac”,  
pastel,  
12” x 14”,  
1981

**Frank Hinojosa** is currently exploring the *Virgen de Guadalupe* theme in his paintings. This was one of the many motifs depicted in the mural he designed in Pasco, Washington. Hinojosa only occasionally exhibits and is relatively isolated in the Southeast area of Washington where he works as a graphic designer and Equal Opportunity counselor for the Army Corps of Engineers.



“The Migrant Family”;  
oil, 24” x 35 ¾”,  
1975

**Jesús Guillén**, a self-taught painter and sculptor, is the oldest artist in the region who depicts farmworkers and realist/idealist Mexican motifs. “I prefer to paint people,” says Jesús. “I choose people because that’s what the area has inspired. There are people who work the fields, people who work with their hands.” (*Channel Town Press*, La Conner, Washington, May 25, 1983). Guillén’s paintings also reflect his having lived fifteen years in Mexico and his years traveling throughout the United States as a migrant farmworker before settling in La Conner. He shows his work in local exhibitions in Skagit County, north of Seattle.



“The Field Workers”;  
acrylic, 30” x 24”,  
1965-66

**Richard Olivas** regularly displays his paintings in the Hispanic Awareness Week exhibits at Yakima Valley College. His large canvases depict farmworkers in a very lyric, abstract style. Olivas actively exhibited in California prior to coming to the Northwest.





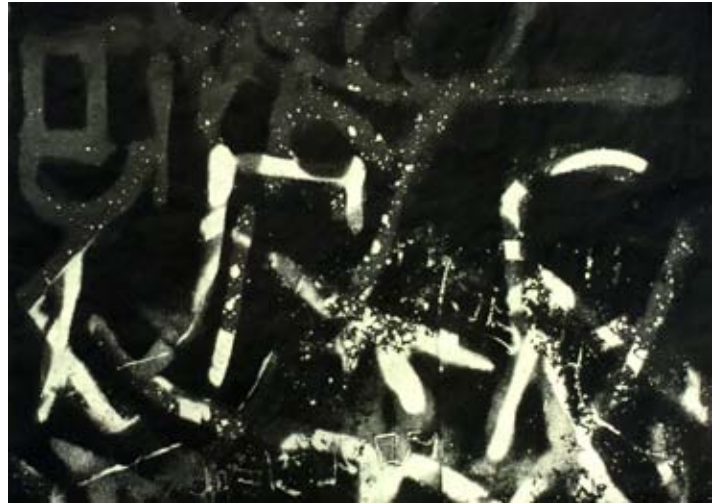
“Nomad 4, 1882”; dystych,  
mixed media, 65” x 72 1/2”, 1983

**Armond Lara** was an active artist and arts administrator in Washington from 1963 to 1979. He currently lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico and exhibits throughout the United States and Europe. A major work of Lara’s in the Northwest is his mural “El Rio” located at the Concilio for the Spanish Speaking of King County, Seattle. Lara worked with Pablo O’Higgins on the restoration of O’Higgins’ mural, now located at the University of Washington. In an article in *The Santa Fean* magazine (Aug. 1982), Don H. Jones says of Lara: “Armond Lara’s mother was Navejo, his father Mexican; he was raised in an Anglo environment in Southern Colorado, and he studied with Asian art instructors in the mid ‘70s while living in the Pacific Northwest. His collages, mixed media paintings, and recent work in graphics draw upon all four cultures for their inspiration and disclose an artistic style not easily categorized as strictly Indian or Southwestern. “I consider myself an Indian artist,” said Armond. “I also consider myself a Mexican artist, but primarily I think of myself as an *artist*. My work is an accumulation of past experiences.



“Seattle”; acrylic, 24” x 36”, 1981

**José Orantes**, originally from Guatemala, is the newest arrival of the group of artists presented here. His paintings are surrealistic, colorful, and touched with a wry humor. Orantes exhibits with Artorez and Contreras in the Seattle area.



“Más placas”; etching, 24” x 32”, 1979

Norman Pérez has recently received his M.F.A. from Washington State University, Pullman, where his art has been exhibited. He works in a variety of media and his *Placas* series of etchings are the most culturally expressive.



“Las masas”; lithograph, 16” x 20”, 1981

**José Reynoso** is the only Chicano/Latino artist in the region who specializes as a printmaker. He regularly exhibits in Boise, Idaho. His work is humanistic, using an individual style based on personal and cultural themes.



“Farm Worker 12”; conte crayon, 11” x 15”, 1982

**José Luis Rodríguez** also is producing and exhibiting in Boise. He is co-owner of the Art Attack Gallery, where his work has been exhibited as well as Artorez’s and other regional artists’ work including that of Eddie Maurer, the owner of the Jackson Street Gallery, in Seattle, where Chicano/Latino artists have also exhibited recently. Attempts at creating a network between the two galleries is in progress. One of Rodríguez’s themes derives from his experience as a farmworker in the Treasure Valley. Reynoso and Rodríguez were included in the *Mexican-American: Idaho* exhibit at the Boise Gallery of Art in 1977; it accompanied the national exhibition *17 Artists–Hispano/Mexicano–Americano Chicanos*. One of Rodríguez’s favorite works, “The Hoe”, portrays a man and a woman with Mexican Indian features doing stoop labor in a field. This painting has received strong and favorable reactions. “It really means so much to me. For me, it is a profile of the Mexican-American.” (*The Idaho Statesman*, March 11, 1977.) Rodríguez has worked for the Idaho Migrant Council and was art director for their publication *La Voz Chicana*.



“Migra II”; acrylic, 36” x 32” 1980

**Pedro Rodríguez** was an influential teacher at Washington State University since 1973 until he returned to Texas in 1981. In addition, his presence and influence was felt in Seattle, and in the Yakima Valley where his mural “El saber es la libertad” is located. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto has this to say about Rodríguez: “Pedro Rodríguez, an art professor at the eastern campus, had recruited a talented group of Chicano artists from throughout the Southwest who came northward bearing the socio-aesthetic goals of the Chicano Art Movement. In the isolated and politically conservative communities east of the Cascade mountains, artists like Pedro Rodríguez, Carmen Lomas Garza and Rudy Fernández functioned as cultural workers.” (“Abriendo Surcos, 1982.)



“El valiente”; wood and paint, 26”, 1970

Sculptor **Rubén Trejo** has been an artist-professor at Eastern Washington University since 1973. He has exhibited primarily at the University and in the Spokane area. His works have also been displayed at the Seattle Central Community College *Cinco de Mayo* celebration. In addition, Trejo has exhibited in Minnesota prior to coming to the region and most recently at the Mexican Museum and the Galería de La Raza in San Francisco. The following is an excerpt from a brochure for one of Trejo’s exhibits held at the University of Minnesota: “Trejo’s sculpture consists of laminate wood, glass, metal and plastic, skillfully crafted and highly conceptual. –‘My sculpture is born out of various traditions. The subject matter is not always easily identified. Underlying the visual statements are Mexican Indian and Mexican muralist traditions along with European and American sources. The problems and solutions are by no means simple, but then, is Art a simple endeavor? —Three major themes can be seen in the works. The skull, the pepper, and the heart. The skull borrowed from ancient Aztec and Mexican culture reflects a positive attitude about death. The heart and pepper themes, universal intercultural symbols, have come to have special significance for Trejo and he incorporates them with wit and humor in most pieces.”