

of **POWER**

BY ELENA SERRANO & GREG MOROZUMI

"Trane's music...represented, for many Blacks, the fire and passion and rage and anger and rebellion and love that they felt. He was their torchbearer in jazz...

It was all about revolution for a lot of young Black people. Coltrane was their symbol, their pride—their beautiful Black revolutionary pride."

-Miles Davis

In every era, the most innovative artists impacting the cultural scene have allied with radical social change.

In the revolutionary 1960's, a new third world consciousness permeated everyday life in the Black, Chicano, and Asian communities, while Native Americans raised long-standing demands for sovereignty. These forces gave rise to progressive cultural movements in all communities of color. Today, third world artists and cultural workers are on the battlefield to keep a vital history and soul in the urban centers.

Oakland, CA is a prime example of the cultural confrontation lighting up across American cities, changing the face of the urban populace. A white liberal mayor replaces the static administration of an incumbent Black bureaucrat; he sponsors an insidious agenda of displacing local neighborhood people of color only to retrieve white flight suburbanites to occupy the inner cities. The process of gentrification redefines the local cultural environment. It consumes culture without sympathy. It dismisses history for ambition. Gentrification does not look back.

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Third World

**A SPECIAL ISSUE ON BUILDING
ALLIANCES THROUGH COMMUNITY ARTS**

Cultural Activism



Photo by Guy Le Querrec.

At one time, the exclusively, and still predominantly Eurocentric arts (Opera / Symphony / Ballet) reigned in cities like Oakland. Today, a neo-colonial, more 'benevolent' incursion shrouded in bohemianism sets us up with the same results: colored folks being marginalized, disenfranchised, disempowered.

Oakland's mayor Jerry Brown has been encouraging middleclass artist settlements which serve as the forerunners to gentrification. Brown's "elegant density" plan which calls for 12,000 monied emigrants to repopulate Oakland, is guided by an Arts for Business philosophy. Add to that a popular 'mandate' to end crime by sweeping the streets of its down-and-out 'riffraff,' including the young, unemployed and homeless, and we have sterile white sidewalks devoid of life or vibrancy. Skyrocketing real estate thrives and picket fences line 'good neighborhoods' in Oakland again.

Another feature of our new city government is its manifest destiny which defines 'multiculturalism' as white people +

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others. The melting pot multiculturalism that has become a prerequisite for community arts funding really only asks this question: does it also serve white people?...with the implication that anything primarily Black or Latino or Asian or Indian would endanger white culture (!?)...(This is the same insane logic of 'reverse discrimination' which dislodged the incremental gains of affirmative action).

Mostly white-run institutions, including 'left'-liberal cultural centers and radio broadcast stations fulfill their multicultural obligation by serving their white liberal monied constituency with a taste of ethnic flavor. Third World culture and third world American culture is primarily an entertainment for our 'enlightened allies,' and an occasional showcase from the 'hood legitimizes their existence for funders.

But what about Arts for the colored masses? Where are the cultural centers in these neighborhoods, run by third world artists / activists / residents. Where is the commitment,

aside from white tokenism, towards these communities?

It is vitally important to recognize the role of grassroots arts programs and organizations in the political struggle for community empowerment and the direction of local economies. Back in the day, the demands for cultural autonomy and recognition of history was central to 'self-determination'. Such demands gave rise to the Black Arts as part of the overall Black Liberation struggle, which in turn inspired third world arts movements around the country and globally. The program of Malcolm's OAAU (Organization for Afro-American Unity) called for 'a cultural revolution to unbrainwash an entire people', and affirmed culture as an 'indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle'. In a similar spirit, *El Plan de Santa Barbara* of the Chicano movement noted that "Chicanismo reflects self-respect and pride in one's ethnic and cultural background."

From the inceptive Black history murals in Chicago inspired by the Mexican Masters Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco to the guerilla theater on flatbed trucks occurring on both coasts, in Delano for farmworkers and in Harlem, there has been a tradition of progressive third world cultural dialogue and interchange. New music, poetry, theater, dance and public art reflected the new mass movements for social change.

The legacy of those transformative years should be revived today as reactionary political forces work to keep communities of color defending against harsh mandates such as backward propositions that chip away at basic rights. We have to ask ourselves key questions - How can the arts serve communities of color?

And what is the responsibility of third world artists to our communities?

The baritone great Paul Robeson said this: "The artist must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice."

The history of cultural activism is at odds with an art-for-arts-sake or arts-as-business model, obligating the artist to take on the role of providing an alternative voice and vision to that of the power structure. This call invariably results in the true artist-activist being a threat to the status quo.

This is why the revolutionary artist must be based in a community that supports and advances the work. They are mutually obligated and accountable to each other in order to survive. To be effective, the artist has to understand the demands of the community; the work is rooted in these demands.

Community-based artists are the voice of the community; lending words and images to the issues that affect the people.

Ethnic communities are typically pitted against each other over meager funds - token artists of color are celebrated while the majority are kept invisible. But we still fall for these same tired divide-and-conquer tactics. While we speak the rhetoric of coalitions and alliances, there still hasn't been a sustainable vehicle to build such vital bridges, and

to keep the real privileged class culprits at bay. In order to build an effective movement there are essential components that must be in place, including: a program with a protracted overview and strategy; an organization that builds necessary

alliances; a regenerative staff and structure; ongoing political education and discussion; and a permanent space in the neighborhoods. Cultural centers should exist in each of the respective communities, and in multi-racial neighborhoods like Oakland's San Antonio. All of our cultures should be celebrated and mutually respected in an ongoing collaborative process of arts programs, workshops, public projects, political education and struggle.

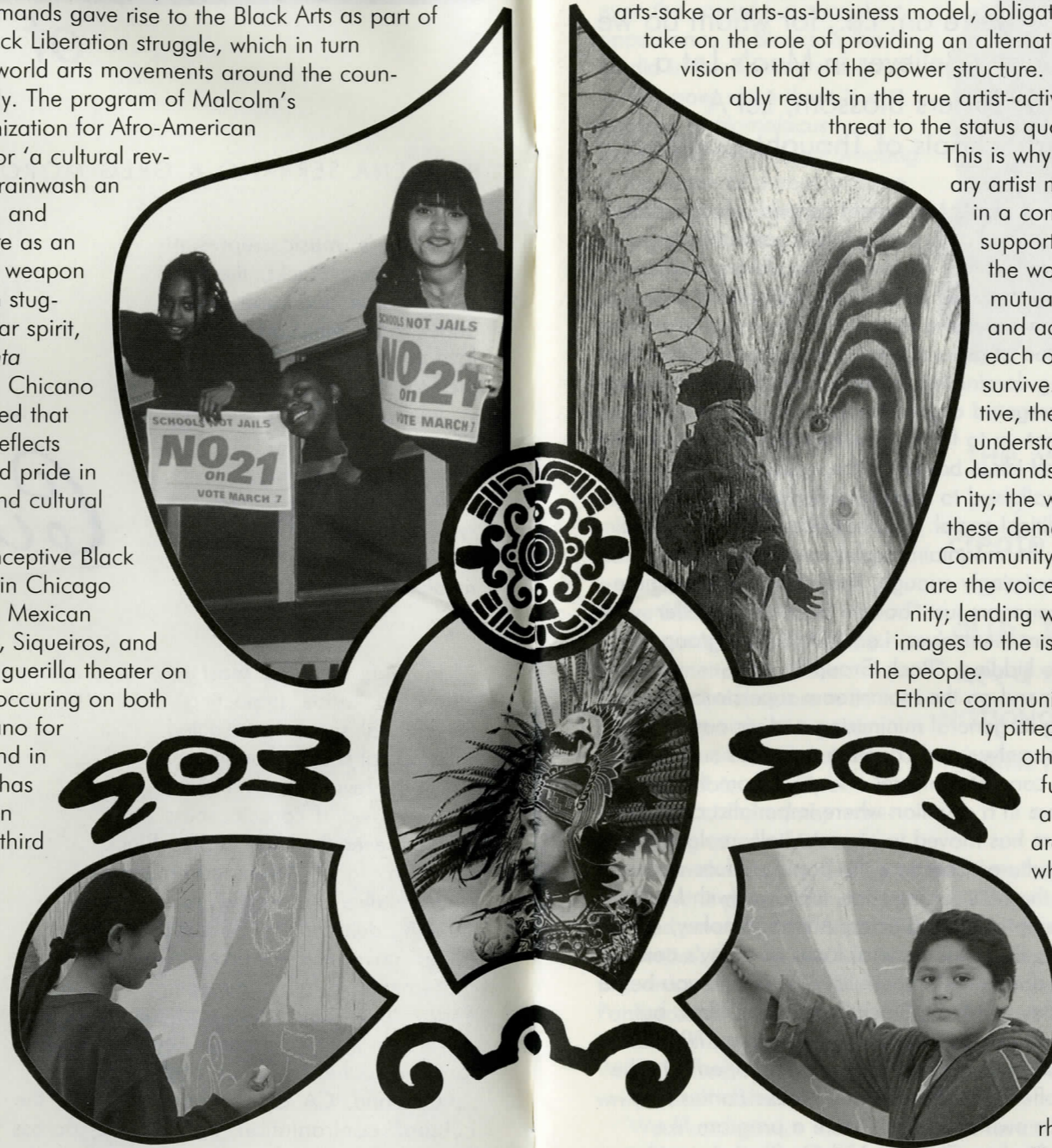
There is a movement underway in the Bay Area to secure independent community arts spaces that will regenerate progressive artist/activists. Many new young artists are part of an emerging leadership who connect political issues such as the criminal justice system, educational reform, health services, immigration rights, and housing to the fight against racism and systemic national oppression. There is a lot to be hopeful about, despite the racist rightwing political assaults aimed at our youth. Community-based arts programs should be recognized as a critical part of the resistance, and particularly focused on youth of color for the cultivation of creative new ideas and fresh leadership. They are the most inclined to build critical bridges between communities of color and to unify them around concrete agendas and strategies for

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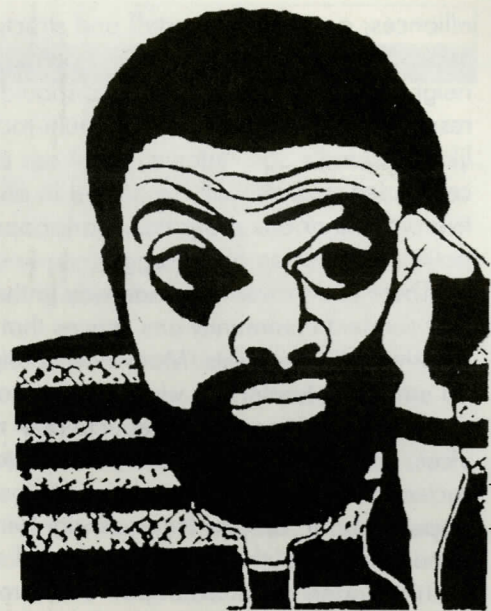
change; coming together across national lines to confront a common enemy.

The rebelliousness of hip hop culture has revived overt political expression coming from the grassroots, especially through the spoken word. But class struggle exists within hip hop as well, with the more politicized innovators resisting the corrosive trends of commodified sellout culture, from graffitied Nike ads to gangsta'-ruled MTV.

The American cultural landscape will continuously evolve, and third world communities will always, of necessity, be at the forefront in inventing new ideas and styles resistant to the mainstream because we are, inherent to the maintenance of capitalism, kept on the outside. New cultural activists must always challenge and counter the bankrupt values generated by capitalist think tanks and struggle vigilantly to keep it real. We can't afford not to. ✊



Clockwise: [upper left] San Francisco students cheering during a No on Prop. 21 Hip Hop Concert in Oakland. Photo by Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzzi. [upper right] Woodprint art piece by Keba Konte. [lower right & left] Students of Calvin Simmons Middle School's Urban Arts Academy sketch plans for a graffiti mural. Photos by Favianna Rodriguez. [center] A Danzante blesses a gathering at Martin Luther King Park in Berkeley. Photo by Jesus Barraza.



emory douglas

BY AMIRI BARAKA

Who are our enemies and who are our friends. Whose side we're on, i.e., for whom do we write. I am a believer in Mao's Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend.

The Civil Rights Movement created a larger Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, some of whose task is to tell us that all struggle for democracy is ended now that they got their porkchop and can make more expensive feces.

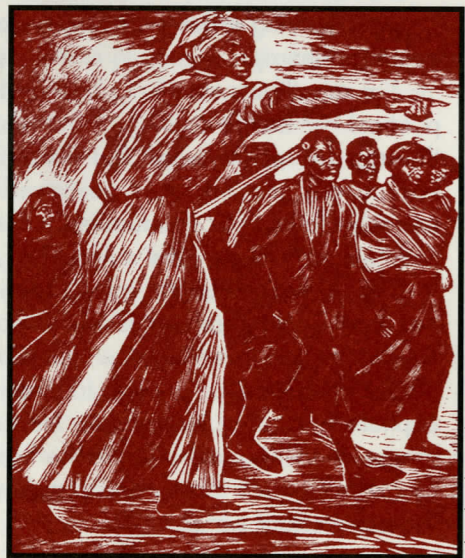
The idea of cultural revolution is to overthrow the continuing domination by the imperialist-generated, racist segregated oppressive institutions. The ideas they are set up to forward in the superstructure (institutions and ideas based on the imperialist economic model) if allowed to remain unopposed, will force the entire political-social Sisyphus-like "rock" which we rolled up the mountain to plummet back down as it is now. (Interestingly enough, Rockefeller's new generation of managers just "bought back" Rockefeller Center from themselves, i.e., SONY. The group is called, no kidding, "Rock Group"!)

To depend on the mainstream superstructure, lamenting its general minimizing and vicious distortions of ourselves and counting ourselves successful when we can get a morsel of rhythm from the lmps, is why we are in a situation where imperialist commercial culture has moved to almost totally replace the popular culture. Compare the popular blues-derived genre of the 60's for instance, Motown (with Marvin, Stevie, Temptations, Miracles, Aretha, Smokey, Supremes, JB) to the general focus of today's commercially dominated imperialist culture and you begin to see. They call them Black Exploitation films, but compare *Buck and The Preacher*, *Across 110th St*, *The Mack*, *Nothing But A Man*, even *SuperFly* to the general offering of *Booties* and *House Parties* and make your own analysis. Is there a program like Haizlip's *Soul* on Channel 13? Or *Black Journal*, which introduced Afro American filmmakers Greaves, Bourne, Harris?

The 60's news and interviews were filled with Dr King, Malcolm, Rap, Stokely, Huey, Angela, Fannie Lou, Muhammad Ali, and see who is on today—Crouch, Juan Wms, Armstrong Wms,? Only the Republican Tony Brown remains on Ch 13. That array of more positive figures was possible only because of the struggle out of which they came and the respect the owners of the economic base had for it.

A CALL FOR A UNITED CULTURAL FRONT

creating a NATIONAL structure



elizabeth catlett

Now the media is filled with prostitute Negroes who agree to sell their hines in order to get more permanent residence at the institutions and media glams available to them. But even the NAACP cd Stevie Wonder that...Match the Oprahs, Cosby Shows, Irkles, Negro talk shows against even the casual but consistent appearance of Blacks in the media in the flaming sixties.

But now, since there is a phalanx of *Homolocus Subsideres* (Near-Man) whoring in the name of democracy, we must focus on using an alternative superstructure and overthrowing the almost exclusive ideological hold the imperialist commercial culture has on the people, from Rap to Literature. Dun & Bradstreet publish a report saying the largest incremental leap in buying books is among young Black people. The next minute they open a Sylvia franchise and will soon have a magazine maybe called "Love Slavery Anyway".

The only so-called democratic penetration of the "Large" superstructure is by sworn Negro reactionaries, toms, *Homolocus Subsideres*, whores, idiots, anti-Black neurotics, compradors, masquerading as proof of American democracy. Telling us that the struggle is over, that Black shit is passe, that art is not political, that we self-proclaimed revolutionary artists are trying to dictate what everyone writes, that we are not artists. Like Encyclopedia Britannica sd about Dr Du Bois...He cdda been in the Pantheon of Great-ness (their 100 Greatest Writers Canon, in which there were no people of color and one woman, Willa Cather) but what disqualified Du Bois is that he wanna write about real shit all the time.

We must fight for inclusion and influence in the existing institutions and orgs dealing with the arts. Fight for the venues, grants, publishing, and productions, i.e. wage the revolutionary struggle in the superstructure for a People's Democracy and Majority control of these institutions and processes. At the same time, we must be working to create our own People's institutions, networks, distribution, publishing, galleries, films, theaters and raising a new international audience for these, creating both the economic bases and political connections to sustain, develop and expand them.

The major problem with the Black Arts Movement is that we did not create institutions that were permanent.

Particularly in the Arts, but also the Afro American people still need a National Black Assembly, a National Black United Front, and certainly a Teachers, Artists, Cultural Workers United Front to challenge and muffle the vicious influence of the imperialist superstructure, not just by complaining, but building an actual material alternative.

We offer Newark again as we did in the 70's with the Gibson campaign [the first Black mayor of a Northeastern city carried by a Black-led grassroots campaign -Ed.] as a "staging area" for mobilization and organization of the people toward a more stable and consistent form of revolutionary democratic struggle, upward towards the eventual People's Democracy of Majority Rule. We are at that stage of pretended Democracy where we can, concomitant with our principal task of this period, Propaganda and Agitation, create a kind of "post apartheid" renewal of broadened democratic struggle. We can do this with the continued successful development of the Lincoln Park / Coast Cultural District through its Four Sites Project; and proposed developmental



elizabeth catlett

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"cash cow", The Newark New Jersey Store, scheduled to open soon in Newark City Hall; and Gateway, a franchiseable idea applicable in any city and state.

The Four Sites Project of the Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District includes: The Krueger-Scott Mansion, (proposed to become *Central Ward Center for the Preservation of The History of Newark's People*). The Bridge Club (Lunch & Dinner Theater,

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malaquias montoya



Unity Newspaper Presents

A CELEBRATION OF BLACK & CHICANO LIBERATION

featuring

AMIRI BARAKA
(LeRoi Jones)
poet and playwright,
Father of the Black Arts Movement, and a
leader of the League of Revolutionary Struggle

ALURISTA
acclaimed Chicano poet and
author of the historic
El Plan Espiritual
de Aztlan

DOMINIQUE DIPRIMA BARAKA
Host of "Home Turf"

RUMBAFROSON
African-Cuban Dance

Thursday, February 4, 1988
7:00 P.M.

International House
2299 Piedmont Avenue, UC Berkeley
\$5.00 general/\$2.00 students
Child Care Provided

continued from pg.5
United Cultural Front

Music Room, Bed and Breakfast, Newark New Jersey Store), Symphony Hall (Hansberry-Robeson Stage Repertory of the Arts, Savoy Sultans Terrace Ball Room & the Sarah Vaughan theater), South Park Presbyterian Church (to become The Lincoln-Douglass-Betances Civil Rights Museum) and the transformation of an entire section of the city controlled by people's cooperatives, as well as by public private partnerships. We have a chance now to popularize both the idea of and develop a people's superstructure as the expression of an alternative approach to urban renewal, based on the mobilization and education of the people, the creation of new sources of economic stability and distribution, and a unique and largely self-determined arts and cultural district. If developed by input and support by the twenty-seven cities [with the largest concentration of African Americans -Ed.], as a parallel paradigm of organization and mobilization, the same process can go forward on those other sites. And add a power package of bodies, brains, and courage to the local mix, which wd be a center for research and development training and practice of this cultural revolution and headquarters for recruitment, outreach and training.

Advanced Workers, Revolutionary and Progressive Artists and Cultural Workers, Teachers wd involve themselves, whoever is deeply concerned with this process. What Du Bois learned from Garvey, how to use both aspects of the

"Double Consciousness," not as neurosis but as the double edged sword striking for Democracy and Self Determination. Such a United Front cannot be but Anti-Imperialist, Anti-National Oppression and Racism, Anti Women's Oppression and Anti-Homophobic. To begin to create such an alternative superstructure would actually develop the depth and resources necessary to support an arts and cultural district and then many such peoples' arts and cultural districts in the major cities of the US. It would have enormous impact on the whole world. In addition, it would remove the heinous influence of money from art and the suicidal choice of prostitution to ugliness and lies too many of our intellectuals, artists and cultural workers succumb to, even while claiming to be bringers of truth and beauty.

PRACTICAL POLITICAL ADDENDA

The relationship and organization of political culture to create a YENAN [where Mao adapted Marxism to the Chinese peasant reality -Ed.] potentiality as to the furthering of a Cultural Revolution, can only succeed and be the actual contemporary key link. It in turn creates the whole principal resistance to imperialism, by its own inner and visible growth. It is in important ways at base an economic task, which must be guided by its political principles. 100 FLOWERS 100 SCHOOLS as dimensioned by the Principles of Unity and material strength of its organization.

Cultural Revolution must mean that a *United Front of Artists, Teachers, Cultural Workers*, which would see as its mission the creation of an entirely but integrated self determining, as stated in the politics, economic base and what the unities are and how the disagreements must be dealt with.

The aesthetic connector will be the will of the majority, educated through activities that would create an alternative

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social, political and economic base out of the organization and strengthening of an alternative superstructure.

The ideological mission is to create an aggressively improving material life through the act of educating, involving and organizing the broad mass of all the democratic classes. We do this fundamentally by letting our art and our thought develop by the act of creating with all of our under-

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Where's the "Alternative" CULTURE?

BY GUILLERMO GÓMEZ-PEÑA

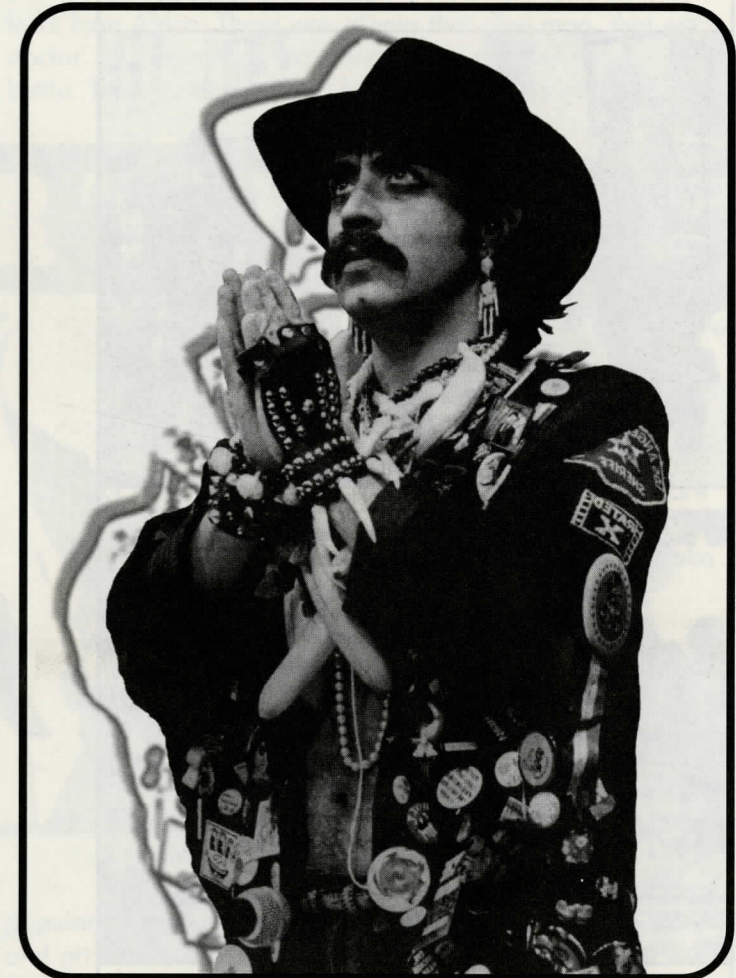
Note: The author is the internationally outrageous Mechicano performance artist whose latest book is Dangerous Border Crossers from Routledge Press. This article was adapted from a radio commentary broadcast on "All Things Considered" by National Public Radio combined with remarks at a town meeting at La Peña in Berkeley, California in 1998.

One of the strangest characteristics of the 1990s was that the so-called "mainstream" finally devoured all margins and the more exotic these margins, the better. In fact, we can say there are no margins left. "Alternative" thought and fringe subcultures have actually become THE mainstream.

The most obvious examples of this inversion can be found in fashion and pop culture. While white suburban teens have adopted the early clothing style and slang of "gangsta" rappers and Chicano lowriders, Black and Latino teens are dressing in expensive sportswear and mimicking the Anglo upper class. The young white hipsters of the 90s selectively borrowed from numerous Third World cultures to create their own designer tribalism. From San Diego to Manhattan, they gather for post-industrial pow-wows in a desperate attempt to recapture a lost sense of belonging to a larger "spiritual community." They wear Rasta dreadlocks, Indian braids, or shave their heads. They cover their pale ex-Protestant bodies with Celtic, pre-Colombian, Native American and Maori tattoos, not knowing or even caring why except that it makes them look more stylistically marginal and sexier.

To pierce oneself is no longer a bold statement. Fashion models, pop singers and sportsmen now wear their piercings ostentatiously, and so do weekend Bohemian yuppies and students from Yale or Harvard. In the porn industry, the kinkiest videos and hotlines are being marketed to average, middle-class people with unfulfilled lives. No biggie. Sexual festishes, hardcore S & M, and theatrical sex are regular subject matter on Cable TV.

Afternoon talk shows have become more outrageous than any performance art piece I ever saw. Lonely housewives and senior citizens are daily spectators of ritual confrontations between rapists, serial killers, white supremacists and their victims, relatives and fans. Just one more day in the life of middle America. The logical result of this spectacularization of the bizarre is that the borders between real life, performance and media have become indistinguishable.



Gómez Peña as "Border Brujo" prays to La Virgen del Cruce.
Photo by Becky Cohen.

In the millennial culture, words like radical, extreme, original, bizarre, and alternative have lost their meaning. A performance artist like me is practically out of a job. In comparison to mainstream pop culture, we look and behave like altar boys. We have to redefine our objectives and strategies as practitioners of so-called 'radical' behavior and 'alternative' thought. The great question for us today is how to promote meaningful forms of personal and cultural freedom, and raise thorny issues that no one else is willing to discuss, in an era when people have a hard time differentiating between the Unabomber (now a cyber cult-hero) and Marcos, the Zapatista leader. Or between Princess Diana

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hip hop theses

a talk with the underground



Shades of Power recently gathered a small circle of Oakland-based arts activists who are in the forefront of shaping the direction for a new third world cultural movement... Greg Morozumi of Shades of Power spoke with Jorge Garcia from Taller Sin Fronteras, Raymond 'Boots' Riley from The Coup, Favianna Rodriguez from Olín, and Marcel Diallo from Black Dot. They share their thoughts on hip hop, subversive culture, youth leadership, and the potential for renewed organizing. Following are excerpts from that conversation...

SHADES: There is a history of third world arts movements. During the 60's the Black and Chicano arts movements were linked to broader political organizing. How is that tradition being carried on today? Specifically, how are youth of color utilizing culture in organizing?

FAVIANNA: The arts movement is part of a bigger movement. After the passing of many repressive propositions in California we have learned that we can't be issue-based in our organizing. We can't solely react to proposed legislation. Our work is more about building our own communities, getting our land back and getting our own space. Much of this work has always been done by the artists, because we are visionaries in the sense that we translate the realities of the people into tangible forms, such as music, writing, graphics. Our role is to get the message out to help our communities survive.

BOOTS: I'm always looking for models to learn from - what are some examples of artists doing this type of work?

FAVIANNA: For example, musicians like Victor Jara in Chile and Silvio Rodriguez in Cuba. Their music talks about the struggle, it talks about the people. So when the military would come to invade a town, a lot of times it was the musicians who were the first to go. It was the musicians that were getting the message out.

Today it's often the graffiti artists and the visual artists. We are the ones that have to get that message out - even if it's

just making some flyers. A lot of our people rely on visuals to understand, so these images become very important.

BOOTS: Everybody is an artist. People say artists are visionaries because we are the ones, that for whatever reasons - luck, circumstance - people encouraged us and gave us the confidence and opportunity to keep at it. We are just folks who have the confidence to see ideas and figure out how to put those ideas into motion. So artists are seen as being more visionary but it's just the fact that they have more practice putting their ideas out there.

MARCEL: Artists are seen as visionaries because art is the place where there is room for vision. For example, if you are a doctor, lawyer, teacher there are strict rules that you have to follow. I know teachers who try to be visionaries but their ideas get beat down every time. As an artist I am able to incubate and manifest my visions. People can listen to a poem of mine and think that it's tight poetry - but for me the poem is really a manifesto for something that's real and workable for a human situation. The artist is the visionary because in this society that's one of the last frontiers that we are able to claim.

BOOTS: Unfortunately, that linking of artist and visionary allows some artists to stay in the realm of the idea and the vision instead of actually doing real work. The artists end up being in the same place as the intellectual - separate from the people.

I think the role of the artist now is to take creativity beyond the realm of the idea and the vision and to make it something real for people. Instead of saying I have this tight picture that really illustrates gentrification, the artist needs to get involved and be part of an actual struggle for rent control, get people to come to an action where people are moved back into a house. With this type of involvement, that graphic that you create will reflect just where people are at, and what is needed to move to the next step - instead of the art being just a singular reflection of where the artist is at and how he or she feels about the situation.

SHADES: What are current examples of artists getting involved and using their art to advance the struggle?

FAVIANNA: It's happening here in Oakland with the young people. We are a part of a community, a circle of elders, spiritual people, healers, children and artists. We are

all working in collaboration so, as artists, our projects reflect a larger circle and our art is used to further the work of the whole circle.

SHADES: Given the history of this country, what is the role and responsibility of artists of color in our communities?

MARCEL: We all are people that got taken. We got stole from our spots and ended up in a whole different foreign space. I am someone that came from Black folks from Louisiana, that came from folks from Haiti, that came from folks from Africa. There was always that glee man, that witch doctor, that drummer, that song leader that led people into battle. Traditional roles had to find themselves within a colonial situation - so now that's

the person that knows how to play the banjo on his knee, or lead field work songs, or knows how to make dope rhymes. The glee man and the witch doctor are now the rapper and the mc and the poet.

There was respect for that person that was able to bring the word. The storyteller, the preacher, the poet - these are people that bring the word. In the 60's they put Amiri Baraka and Marvin X up on the pedestals right along with everybody else. Articles about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. have poets right up there with the leaders. There has always been a connection between art and resistance.



favianna rodriguez

BOOTS: I don't know of any popular movement of resistance or revolution where culture and art were not a part of it. Art and culture were the driving force that kept people feeling like this was something that people were doing together. Art is just a way to talk with someone - you can either do it as a one-to-one conversation or a 1 to 5000 conversation. The question becomes how to make the work of the artist relevant to the needs of a mass movement. So, are the artists those people that work in their studios and crank out art all day saying "here, use this for the revolution"? Or are they going to have to be artists who are involved in the movement, involved with the people, doing the work, so they know what to put out there? That is what makes your art relevant and effective. I rap and I listen to what's out there - there are artists out there who are revolutionary and technically might have the same line on what kind of revolution they want to see and how they want it to happen but there is a difference in that they are not out there

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From top to bottom: [top] "Boots" of The Coup rapping at Oakland City Hall during No on 21 Hip Hop Concert on Feb. 21, 2000. Photo by Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzzi. [middle] Students from Los Angeles walkout of their schools to protest Prop. 21. Photo by Joe Fera-Galicia [bottom] City Hall, Oakland, Feb. 21. Photo by Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzzi.

working with people. Instead they end up telling people what they need to do and their raps come out preachy and they end up alienating people instead of being with the people.

JORGE: Until the people, the grassroots, become the artists, whatever movement there is, the art will not be relevant. I recently heard Daisy Zamora speak, she was a Sandinista commandante and became Vice-Minister of Culture in Nicaragua after the Sandinistas took over. She explained the historic relationship that the word has to people in Latin America. The revolution happened in Nicaragua because it was a nation of poets. I have heard similar things from activists in Nigeria - saying, for example, that they are a nation of dancers. Art is an expression of really visceral feelings. Until we can identify what is happening here as a very basic form of genocide and until we can express that, then I don't think we can really define what we are fighting for or how we are going to get it. Art and culture become more than just supplements or sideshows to a movement, a form of genius, separate from the masses, or on a pedestal. Art has to be of and come from and be about the people, - it's the most basic form of expression...culture is the movement.

BOOTS: That is why this is a good time - hip hop allows everyone to be an artist. I know very few people that don't rap. These are not all people that consider themselves rappers, but they rap. When we go to high schools there will be 20 people that want to get on the mic and they are not even thinking they want to do this as a career, as an "artist," it's just something that people do.

MARCEL: Rapping is talking.

BOOTS: People are rapping about things that are important to them - it might be selling dope or getting through school. It's about surviving and that's where the struggle is and that's where the movement should be. The challenge is to make those connections so people can see their survival connected to the larger struggle. We have to make it so that in order to survive you have to be a part of a larger movement. The movement is going to have to bring something materially. For example, if we were to do a campaign tomorrow where we took a whole block of people down to the welfare office and we did a sit-in and we said we ain't leaving until

everybody walks out of here with \$200 worth of food stamps. When people come home, their kids are going to rap about that. The idea is that people can come together and get something to survive and it's attached to the larger struggle.

SHADES: Are you saying that the fight for short-term gain has to be attached to a consciousness-raising against the capitalist system?

BOOTS: Well, I'm talking about it the other way around. Because right now we are talking with people that consider themselves involved in a revolutionary movement, but what they are talking about is something real vague like fighting racism - or fighting for justice. This needs to be attached to something real, so it's clear what we are fighting for, something that we can see and possibly achieve in a year - or even two years. So the rap about everyday survival gets linked to the idea of survival as part of a broader struggle.

SHADES: Every new revolutionary art form subverts the mainstream culture and challenges mainstream values, but eventually becomes subverted itself. It gets commodified and co-opted. Do you think this is what is happening with hip hop?

MARCEL: It has already happened with hip hop. We are in the post-hip hop stage. Whatever the new shit is, it is already here, but it's not being acknowledged, it's not named yet. It is the reiteration of ceremony, the reiteration of ritual, the reiteration of everyone having a voice. Before it was named hip hop it was just the drum and including people in the ceremony. Now we have to throw some chants in the mix, maybe bring back some blues - we are doing that now in the underground.

People try and put it in a box and sit it up there next to the last thing. That is the process of commodification. But whatever that new thing is, it's already going on. Anytime you come to see me on

stage I'm coming up off the stage and turning the mic on the crowd and saying y'all got just as much to say as I do. Just that action alone, that is the responsibility of the so-called artist. Anyone calling themselves an artist right now needs to turn the energy back to everybody else. Any time the energy and the pedestal is put in your face, bring everybody else up

on the pedestal with you or knock the pedestal down. The problem is that people are living in the shadow of what hip hop has become, but now the glee man and the witch doctor are back, we are trying to bring the spirit back. We are in the middle of a transitional stage.

SHADES: How does culture raise consciousness? How do you take up issues? A lot of you took up Prop. 21, for instance. What was the intention?

MARCEL: Educating the youth. Having some kind of continuity. The only reason I was fooling with Prop. 21 was the opportunity to work with folks like Boots, J.R. and Kali on a regular basis. We argue and struggle and disagree, then we draw people younger than us in on that and they get to watch that exchange between us. We get to pass down our way of being with each other to another group of folks. I would always tell the youth that it wasn't about Prop. 21, it was about us getting together to form some kind of community organization.

SHADES: Meanwhile, Prop. 21 passes, overwhelmingly. This fascist measure. That's what it is, because facism doesn't just drop on us, it comes in little increments. That's why we have to fight attacks like this as they come up.

FAVIANNA: We can't be issue-oriented. It is urgent times like these when we get opportunities to pull all the youth in and train them how to organize and how to do outreach. You start letting them know that there is a war against them. Then whether or not it passes, we have a conscious group of young people to work with and to continue training.

BOOTS: I'm with that. I've been involved in a lot of campaigns and I'm down for revolution. But I think sometimes we don't look at how to win. Sometimes we are saying all that matters is revolution and shit isn't going to change otherwise. That makes us get involved in more struggles where we just don't win. In order to build a mass movement, a revolutionary movement, we need some victories. Otherwise people get burned out.

FAVIANNA: We have to figure out what to win and what our goals are. Having Raza on the school board or the

city council is not a victory if they do nothing for us. Working with youth over a sustained period of time and affecting their lives, this is a victory. Just because it doesn't translate into a material victory doesn't mean we are not winning.

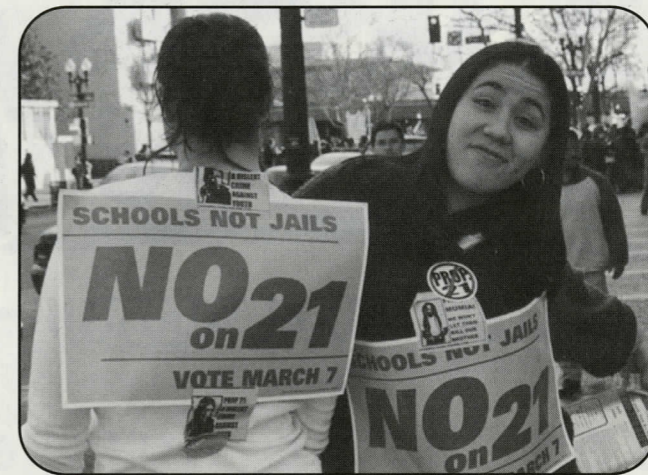
SHADES: But Prop. 21 really does translate into a material defeat.

BOOTS: We were fucked even before Prop. 21. But if we had won, people would see that as a victory because it was something they fought for and won. Otherwise revolution breaks down into some kind of personal dialogue without mass numbers of people being part of it. We should have figured out what to do to win. Not so much because these victories are going to make life so much better, but it would be a victory that a bunch of people set out to do something and they did it. That encourages people to see that organization does something. That is a lesson.

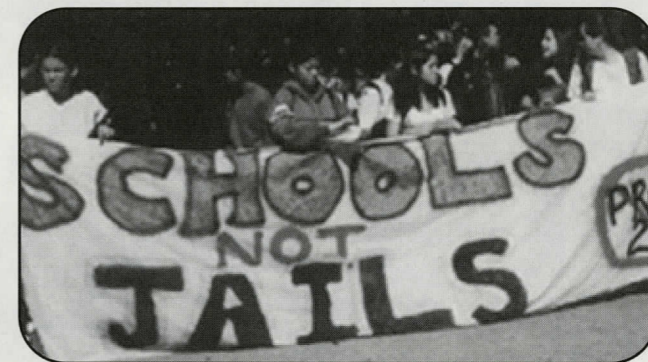
SHADES: We have to create a conscious arts movement. It could happen within the respective national movements or be a base of third world artists that attaches itself to, and reflects, the mass movements. What will it take to have a cultural movement? Are there reasons for specific cross-national alliances?

BOOTS: Its not either or. It's not all separate or all multinational. We will do what works, case by case. Sometimes we will need an Asian-Latino alliance, sometimes Black-Asian, sometimes just Black people need to work together. It's a tactical question as opposed to a philosophical question.

SHADES: Maybe it's both tactical and strategic. Strategies are broader - there needs to be a broad strategy because the fundamental reason that native lands were taken, people were brought here as slaves and indentured servants is that that was the basis for creating this political system. Therefore there is an objective basis for those people to come together to work on things. The philosophical reason for alliance-building is the understanding that there will be no getting rid of racism for Asians, for example, or for anyone else unless they hook up with the Black liberation struggle and vice versa.



Hip Hop Show, Downtown Oakland, February 21, 2000. Photo by Kahlil Jacobs-Fantuzzi



San Diego high school Blowouts, February 22, 2000. Photo by Joe Feria-Galicia



BY SPIE ONE

Dream started writing in 1983, and soon became recognized as one of the Bay's stylistic innovators. He pioneered the art form of 'grafitti' on the West Coast while hip hop's various elements began taking hold around the globe. Inspired by the New York City originators, Dream always acknowledged the roots of the 'writin' game', and reminded us that "getting up is one thing, but to get up with style is a whole different ball game".

His pure love for this creative expression also attracted

"DREAM"
"ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR ROOTS!!!"

raised in the hustle,
enlightened by the struggle...

hundreds, if not thousands, to appreciate the artistic freedom of spraying their 'name'. The line, color scheme and symmetry of his kick-ass burners often had kids flocking around him, but a modest Dream always asked to see their black-book style progressions.

As Dream earned respect for his innovative form through the aerosol medium, he realized the power of conveying messages to the broader society, especially among young people. He understood the power of art reached beyond aesthetics, and used it as a political weapon to fight injustice.

He helped organize controversial gallery installations which took stands against police violence, nuclear proliferation, imperialism, and corruption in the health industry. Dream produced artwork in defense of political prisoners and people's basic rights. But his real gallery was in the streets and on public walls for all to see. 'Dream pieces' connected with a broad community, raising the sights of people from vastly different backgrounds. He was determined to school kids to preserve an historic culture of resistance and to determine their own pathways in life. He would drop books by Malcolm X, Assata Shakur, George Jackson, Carlos Bulosan, or even an Iceberg Slim to pass the knowledge on.

With a firm pride in his Pinoy roots, Dream embraced other cultures as well. He built important bridges between the Black and Asian / Pacific Islander communities. The spirit of fallen brothers Plan Bee and Pak One continued to be expressed through his work.

For some, life ain't nothing more than grindin' and pimpin' on the east and west sides, but Dream had a passion for life

that was large. He created art which sometimes paid, more often did not. But his art wasn't self-seeking. His works were gifts to the community. His folks were in the flatlands and his greatest possession was a real love for the people.

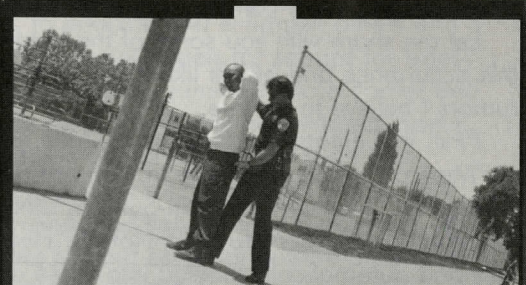
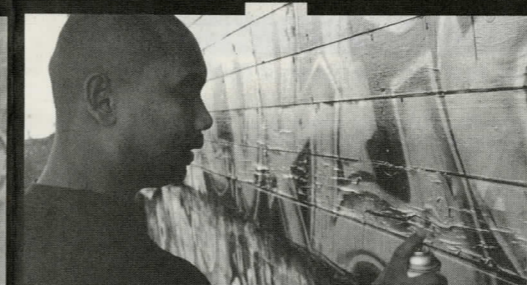
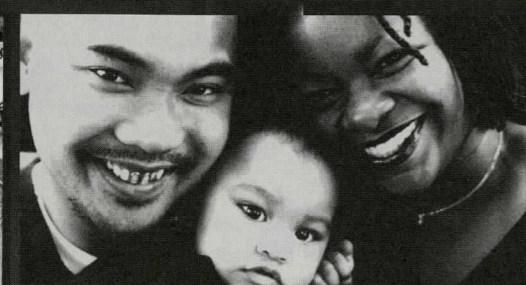
Dream was a visionary, and what better could explain his persona than an analogy of our own dreams... somehow they are never memories of past events, but inspirations to create future works... Forward ever, backward never. Peace, and a safe journey into the next... Dream's spirit lives forever.

Spent alot of time with some crazy ass crooks
and at the same time, built my mind...
readin' red books

Scope so broad
you'd think I'm observin'
from a mountain top
When I'm just speakin truth
from a flatland block...

- DREAM

Michael Francisco, Filipino artist better known to the world simply as "DREAM," was tragically murdered on the night of February 17th, 2000. Oakland's twelfth homicide this year claimed one of the West Coast's premiere graffiti artists. Hip hop in the U.S. and internationally is suffering a great loss. We all mourn the passing of a great friend and comrade. "AKIL'S DREAM FUND" has been created for his infant son, Akil Francisco. Donations can be sent to: Sanwa Bank, 2127 Broadway, Oakland, CA. 94612. Routing No: 122-00-3516. Payable to Akil Francisco. Call 510-337-1252.



NO JUSTICE NO PEACE

BY G. MOROZUMI

When society begins to fear its own future, and obsesses with safeguarding its propertied elite, the political system is in deep turmoil. Criminalizing youth through initiatives such as Proposition 21 only further alienates and divides our families and communities. Working class youth of color, already pushed up against the wall, are the obvious targets of repressive police tactics, the criminal justice system, and now blatantly fascistic legislation to seal their fate.

Basic democratic rights, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and dissent are dissolving in incremental measures (or leaps!) towards a technological / industrial military state. Prisons (not schools) are integral to consolidating that rightward control.

With the passage of California's "Juvenile Crime Initiative" (Prop. 21, and the abbreviation is appropriate as each of these measures is simply a 'prop' on the grand stage

of rightwing fascist theater), children as young as 14(!) can be tried as adult felons. And there are numerous idiotic details, including the tracking down of graffiti artists as big-time criminals (now making \$400 property damage a felony, down from \$50,000!). It's an obvious attack on fundamental rights of creative expression and political dissent, literally whitewashing the rebellious sentiment of the grassroots.

We should be especially hip to these devious legislative

schemes as being simply diversions, scapegoating the poor and third world and the youth for the real crimes of imperialistic, profit-driven capitalists. But the rapid massive construction of prisons is very real, and designed to contain the inevitable resistance coming from the disenfranchised and disillusioned. Like the bold statements spraypainted by Dream across the urban landscape, the new youth movement is issuing a wake up call: Resist! Organize!

WHO SETS BROWN AGAINST BLACK AT PELICAN BAY?

BY LUIS RODRIGUEZ #C-33000

NOTE: Luis Rodriguez, an activist in the Chicano movement of the 1960's-70's, was arrested in 1978 for the alleged murder of two California Highway Patrol officers. Based on false witnesses and tainted evidence, he was convicted and sentenced to death. After a long legal struggle, the original trial judge finally threw out the entire conviction in 1988. But Luis Rodriguez has remained in prison. One of his main concerns there is combating the divide-and-control policies of prison authorities, who pit Black and Brown prisoners against each other.

You have probably heard about the major, violent conflict that erupted here at Pelican Bay Prison on Feb. 24, 2000. From what I've learned, the southern Mexicans (Sureños) attacked Blacks of all groups, leaving 16 inmates shot, one Mexican dead, one Black in critical condition, and 32 stabbed.

Let me share with you some of the hidden facts behind this occurrence and others like it, and a few unconfirmed rumors I believe to be true.

First, in California prisons as a whole, if you are identified as "Mexican" when you come in, you are automatically labeled as "Southern Mexican-Sureño," "Northern Mexican-Norteño" or "Border Brother." Not all "Hispanics" are forcefully and automatically labeled into those allegedly violent gang groups (not Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Hondurans, etc.)-- just "Mexicans!". Innumerable prisoners with new 25-to-life sentences are forced to get involved in group violence or suffer the consequences imposed by that group. Such practices are racist and I've battled the prison officials for years over this, as a "mestizo" fighting to force recognition of my indigenous- Spanish linkage.

Now to the recent events here.

Over the past year or so there have been at least 5 known serious assaults on staff of "A" facility. Each of these was committed by Blacks except one, which was by a southern Mexican. Second, it is well-known among prisoners and staff that the increased frequency of these assaults has become a major concern to staff. Conversations overheard between staff as well as between staff and inmates have revealed fear, insecurity, intimidation and increased racial hatred. Staff have stated unequivocally that they were upset



Artwork by Seth Tobocman.

when all the northern Mexicans (Norteños) were removed from Pelican Bay mainlines last year because it took away their natural ally.

Keeping prisoners fighting among themselves takes the focus off the staff.

Let me now outline the unconfirmed rumor portion of what I've heard. Guards in the SHU (Security Housing Unity), opened a ranking Sureño's cell door and a Black's cell door, and 3 or 4 inmates got into it. Of course the opening of two cell doors is not supposed to happen in the SHU. The rumor goes that this created a chain reaction on "B-facility," resulting in the major conflict. If true, then we must not look at the puppets, but rather the hand that controls the puppets and the face behind the hand. I know that various guards in the SHU attempted this same kind of setup with me several times, but found it didn't work because the other inmates did nothing and instead signed affidavits for me concerning the events.

One of the biggest concerns of staff is the possibility that all the prisoners could at some point unite on common ground for a common cause -- i.e., against the oppression, racism, and removal of so many rights and privileges over the past 5 years. And then what could happen? Keeping

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YOU CAN'T STOP WHAT IS RIGHT

(For DAMO, Harambee, LA FAMILIA and disabled people of color everywhere)

It's not surprising
It's not shocking
It's not even amazing
It's right and nothing will stop it.

Fourteen years
Studying and writing
Organizing and now forming a community
From South Africa to the Bay Area

You can't stop what is right
Parents, advocates, artists, poets, youth and the elderly
finally coming together
Celebrating, educating and empowering each other
Do you understand?

You can't stop what is right!
Oppressed people can't stay oppressed forever
Disabled people of color and their parents are rising with the sun
Good morning! It's a new day!

Regaining our voice, culture and history
Teaching our youth about Frida Kahlo, Horace Pippin, and Wilma Mankiller etc.
Writing about our experiences
Speaking what is on our minds

Do you feel me?
You can't stop what is right!
It's all good
Disability Advocates of Minorities Organizations, Harambee, La Familia and New Voices
Welcome home

Many, many, many and many
try to stop it
but many are realizing
you can't stop what is right.

-Leroy Moore

Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization provides consultation to disabled youth and organizations of color in the Bay Area. It also formed a group of disabled poets and artists called New Voices. For more information, email DAMO at DAMOSFOAKL@hotmail.com or (415) 695-0153.

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Pelican Bay

groups of prisoners at odds, at war, is a well-conceived security tactic utilized by prison officials.

The continued divisiveness is so detrimental to any real progress toward positive change in prisoners' rights, human rights, the law, and just daily existence for us. The immediate, adverse effects on all prisoners in here when things like this happen is like a strangle-hold on every possible privilege and right that prisoners have, from daily outdoor exercise, visits, work, religious observation, telephone access. Even access to the law library is cut off (yet prisoners have court deadlines they must meet to fight for their freedom, especially when the new federal habeas corpus law sets a 1-year deadline-if you don't make it, they cut you off).

People running these institutions are not as stupid and incompetent as they pretend to be. They throw up civil rights as mandating 'no segregation,' when it's really an excuse for not separating adversarial prisoners. The prison officials know group separation, which is legal, would greatly decrease violent eruptions but they don't do it.

Those of us who struggle from every possible angle to

expose such things, to educate and enlighten others and fight back, are made primary targets for set-ups for extermination. When we're seriously jammed into a corner and need crucial, outside help, it's almost non-existent. Some of us continue to survive by the skin of our teeth. We sometimes must retreat a few steps and take cover, then slide back up to continue the fight or try a new angle, all the time reaching out for that essential outside assistance that can make a world of difference.

I am at a critical point in terms of needing that outside support. My health: ringing in both ears for the past year, MRI shows fusion of lower back vertebrae and disc problem, degenerative bone disease, blood pressure problems. I requested transfer to Vacaville last October and have waited much longer than usual for a response. My friends in Europe have been diligently at work with Amnesty International, so things are building. I may be moved to a better location soon. Above all, I need an attorney to help on my criminal case, civil rights actions and other efforts.

For direct contact: Luis V. Rodriguez #C-33000. Political Prisoner, P.O.W. Pelican Bay Prison, P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532-7500. www.humanrights.de/usa/luis/poems.html.

LOCO BLOCO

rocks the Bay Area



[left] "Howling at the Moon." March 4, 2000, San Francisco - Loco Bloco for International Women's Day. Photo by John Pilgrim.
[right] From "Volando con Nueva Vida."



AS YOUTH OF ALL COLORS ACT, DRUM, DANCE REVOLUTION

There's nothing like the Loco Bloco ensemble, now 6 years old and with over 20 members. Whether they march through the streets of the Mission District for Immigrant Pride Day, open an event featuring Maya Angelou or perform a new play about resistance struggles led by women, they inspire you with their rhythm, motion, color and passion. They invade conferences and cultural spaces with funky, booming beats, high-energy dance and breathtaking costumes. Of many nationalities and ethnicities, they're from 12 to 18 in age (one active member and constant show-stealer is just 6: Myela, daughter of founder Jose Carrasco and his wife Karla Castillo, Loco Bloco's associate coordinator.)

Loco Bloco has roots in Education for Liberation, a youth program of the early 1990's started by Jose and Karla, and has maintained links between community activism and the arts. Loco Bloco members come in all colors, and so do the cultural themes. In dance and drumming, youth are introduced to mostly Brazilian and Afro-Cuban rhythms along with some West African and popular U.S. styles. Tanya Mayo, Loco Bloco's theater instructor, works with students to develop their own dramatic sketches, and again there's a rainbow of ideas.

A central commitment for Loco Bloco has always been passing on the struggles of past generations to youth and connecting them with young people's issues today. For sever-

al years they have performed "Speak Their Names," written by youth, with the script changing its focus each time. The first year it dramatized revolutionary women like the Trung Sisters, who freed Vietnam from Chinese domination in 800 A.D., and Micaela Bastidas of Peru, who led and fought in the Inca uprising against Spanish colonization in the 1500s. The play's theme:

*"They walk in the footsteps of ancestors
talk the language of drums
sing and dance honoring spirits
as they lead the path of warriors."*

Talking with the teenagers themselves -- whether Latino, Senegalese, Apache--many speak of the home they have found in Loco Bloco and getting out of gang life; learning about different cultures and respecting them; girls coming to respect themselves as female; "learning to put out everything that's inside me"; "everyone welcoming everyone, the love."

And so, yes, when they drum you can almost hear their hearts beating -- so loud, so strong.

-Beita

For further information, contact the Loco Bloco Drum & Dance Ensemble at 450 Church St. #19, San Francisco, CA. 94114. (415) 626-5222, ext. 30.

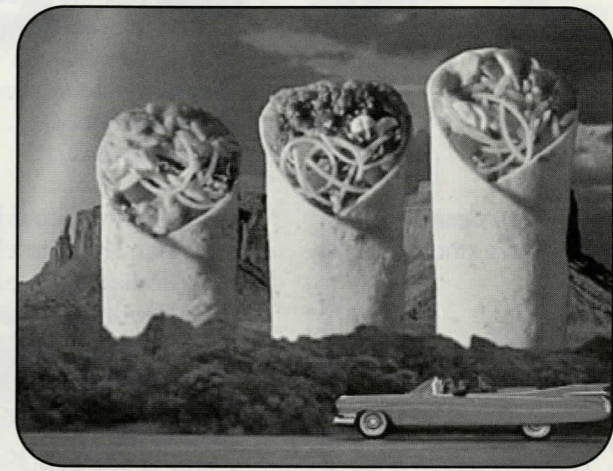
continued from pg.7
Alternative Culture?

and Mother Teresa. Poor Marcos, poor gothic vampires, poor sex workers, poor lowriders, if they could only have a tiny percentage of the profit generated by the appropriation of their images and activities by the insatiable mainstream.

What must we do then to remain politically astute and uncompromisingly 'radical'? Is it fair to say that for the moment all we can do is practice creative skepticism-question everything in hopes that tomorrow the storm will be over and we can see the horizon again?

Or should we turn our gaze inward and engage in so-called 'radical spirituality'? Turning the gaze inward carries its own risks, of which America is a prime example. A society that has chosen to favor the psychological over the social, and the personal over the historical, also happens to be the society with the highest rates of psychosis, sociopathic behavior, and crime. The risk of looking at oneself too much is the loss of a social contract, of a shared sense of being and belonging. The possible consequences include disconnection and isolation.

Paradoxically, in this land of loneliness and rabid individualism, 'community' has become a conscious goal and a



Advertising from Taco Bell.

national obsession. Since everyone wants to "belong" (precisely because no one feels they are organically part of any larger whole), Americans are always ready to embrace those who are racially, sexually, religiously, or aesthetically like themselves. They reject, exclude or condemn those who aren't. This is completely out of touch with the times and excludes the possibility of building a more complex and holistic sense of community. The elements that designate membership in an alleged community tend to be quite narrowly defined: age, race, sexual preference, hobbies, geographic location, a shared illness or condition. These overlook the fact that nowadays we are all members of multiple communities, at different times and for different reasons.

Most communities in the 90s were fragmented, ephemeral, dysfunctional and insufficient. They can only contain selected aspects of ourselves. Given these complexities, I ask you: what are the binding elements that will help us to share a new, more enlightened model of community in the 21st century?

The great challenge is clearly to establish cross-racial, cross-cultural and transnational alliances with peoples and communities engaged in parallel struggles.

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United Cultural Front

standing and ideas something here, now, and living that will be of deep and transforming social significance. Like the art that emerges during revolutionary periods it will be as daring and beautiful and absolutely free of the compulsion to submission and prostitution as the people themselves

Art is to create, oh magician, but what?
If the Devil buys your ass he becomes your ass.
And takes your ass to the Butcher Shop, next to the other Niggers' knees.

The alternative superstructure fully emerges only in the process of becoming alive with its own purpose and not the gift of corporations or reactionary government and its organizations and propagandists. This is the grand task of the intellectual. To struggle to understand reality and transform it with our practice into the highest art, humanity itself.

The economic necessity is to utilize the common wealth of the people and the offices of democratic and public or private institutions, but also to create a living (viable developing, creating), entering the actual world struggle with our best weapons! Education, Thought, Art united to be free of impe-

rialism to the extent that it would compete with Imp but as a huge and huger coop org inst. schools theaters...

Beggars is what the artist is, fools marginalia of important things. So that means you do not understand the power of art, which must seek to derive its highest creativity in the creation of worlds!



Still kneeling at the foot of the Sovereign with bells on our hat. Jingle is the pennies thrown us by the drunken kings. And we strut haughty with our whore act. Bragging like foolish slaves about who got the best slave master. Warner or Disney or IBM.

Newark puts out a call. We have to take it higher. And strike at the assemblies and city councils. Attack with Art and Letters. AGGRESSIVELY, not weeping spare parts, rusty from tears.

The Call is to build a people's democratic alternative and the smallest but continuously evolving force and an ability to control the destiny of the most needed aspect of the society in this period, the ideological and superstructural.

Amiri Baraka, a central figure of the Black Arts Movement and political activist, is considered to be one of the most influential Black literary figures of our time.

We, the dangerous

- Janice Mirikitani

I swore
it would not devour me
I swore
it would not humble me
I swore
it would not break me.

And they commanded we dwell in the desert
Our children be spawn of barbed wire and barracks

We, closer to the earth
squat, short thighed,
knowing the dust better.

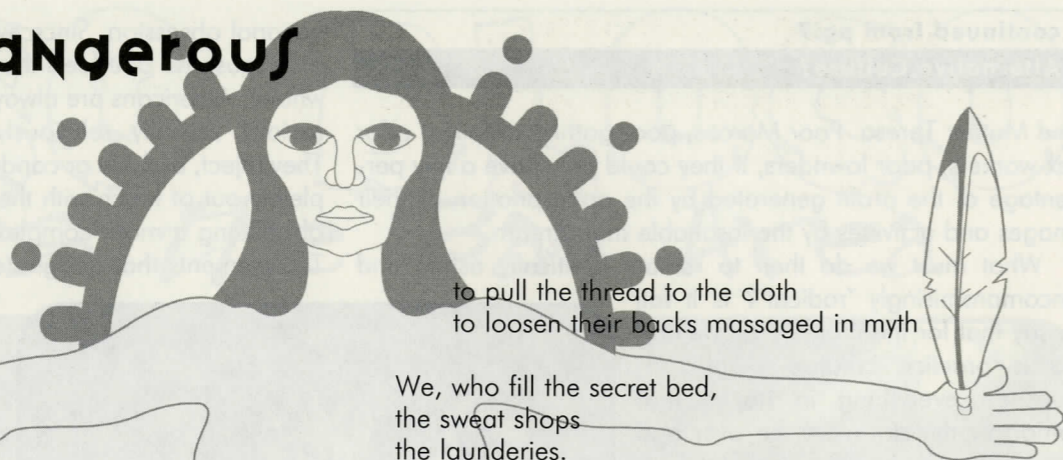
And they would have us make the garden
Rake the grass to sooth their feet

We, akin to the jungle,
plotting with the snake,
tails shedding in civilized America.

And they would have us skin their fish
deft hands like blades / sliding back flesh / bloodless

We, who awake in the river
Ocean's child
Whale eater.

And they would have us strange scented women,
Round shoulders / strong and yellow / like the moon



to pull the thread to the cloth
to loosen their backs massaged in myth

We, who fill the secret bed,
the sweat shops
the laundries.

And they would dress us in napalm,
Skin shred to clothe the earth,
Bodies filling pock marked fields.
Dead fish bloating our harbors.

We, the dangerous,
Dwelling in the ocean.
Akin to the jungle.
Close to the earth.

Hiroshima
Vietnam
Tule Lake

And yet we were not devoured.
And yet we were not humbled
And yet we were not broken.

Janice Mirikitani, recently named Poet Laureate of San Francisco, has been published in numerous third world anthologies, including Time to Greez!, Third World Women, Aion, Counterpoint and others.

KAHLIL ON TRIAL



In July of 1999 Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzzi was attacked by the police for attempting to act as liaison between police and protestors at KPFA, an alternative radio station struggling to retain its community character. Kahlil goes to trial by jury on April 17th. He is being falsely charged with "resisting arrest."

If you are in the Bay Area, tune into KPFA's (94.1) HardKnock Radio, M-F, 4-5 p.m. for daily updates.

Call to send contributions to his Defense Fund
For more info: KPFA FM (510) 848-6767, ext. 619.

Tribute to Albert "Nuh" Washington

A Benefit in Honor of a Revolutionary, Political Prisoner, Imam.

Saturday, April 22, 2000
Oakland YWCA
1515 Webster St.
7-10 PM

\$10 -25 (no one turned away for lack of funds)

Albert "Nuh" Washington is former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army. Nuh has been unjustly imprisoned for over 28 years for fighting for Black liberation. Nuh was diagnosed in Dec. 1999 with liver cancer. Proceeds from this benefit will go to Nuh and his family.

Join the Campaign to Free Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin!

"...They say I am an outlaw....I am a political prisoner, jailed for my beliefs--that black people must be free....I do what I must out of love for my people. ...History has shown that when a man's consciousness is aroused, when a man really believes what he is doing, threats of jail and death cannot turn that man back...."

-H. Rap Brown, "Letters from Jail," from his political autobiography, Die Nigger Die! (1969)



emory douglas

Imam Jamil Al-Amin, formerly known as H. Rap Brown and Chairman of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), is an avowed freedom fighter for Black Liberation. He was arrested and is currently held on highly suspect charges.

A fund has been set up to assist Imam Al-Amin's public and trial defense, as well as to assist his family in coping with this ordeal. To support this effort, send contributions to: "Coalition to Support Imam Jamil Al-Amin Fund," c/o Karim & Judd, PLLC, Attorneys, Lobbyists & Counselors, 1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1142, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 331-5552.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the time is critical!

For Mumia Abu-Jamal, the time is critical!

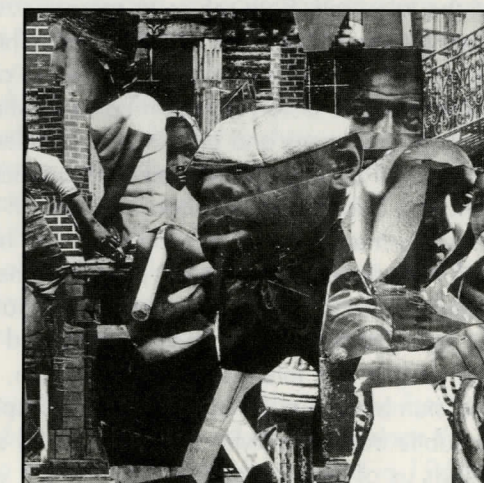
Judge Yohn will decide in April or early May whether he will grant Mumia an evidentiary hearing and a new trial. Mumia needs your support now more than ever! On May 13th, there will be a massive demonstration in San Francisco demanding that Mumia be granted a new trial, your presence is urgently needed. Demand that all the evidence be heard!

For more information on how you can get involved, contact the Jericho Amnesty Movement at JerichoSFBay@hotmail.com or the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement at MXGMOakland1@hotmail.com or call (510) 433-0115.

HEATHENS

- Amiri Baraka

- 1 They Ugly on purpose!
- 2 They get high off Air Raids!
- 3 They are the oldest continuously functioning Serial Killers!
- 4 They murder to Explain Themselves!
- 5 They think Humans are food.
- 6 They imitate conversation by lying
- 7 They are always naked and always dirty the shower & tuxedo don't help
- 8 They go to the bathroom to have a religious experience
- 9 They believe everything is better Dead. And that everything alive is their enemy.
- 10 Plus Heathens is armed and dangerous.



romare bearden

THE STORY OF COLORS

La Historia de los Colores

A Folktale from the Jungles of Chiapas

By Subcomandante Marcos

Cinco Puntos Press, El Paso, Texas. \$15.95

A REVIEW BY ELIZABETH (BETITA) MARTINEZ

This enchanting bilingual book for children (and adults with the imagination of children) is a story in more than one way. As told by old man Antonio in the jungle to his friend Marcos, it's the story of how the world, born black and white with gray in between, took on a rainbow of color. For this, as Antonio relates, we can thank a bunch of cranky gods who got bored with the way things were so they went looking for other colors, to brighten the world for the people. Red, green, blue, and on they go, finding new colors in ways both goofy and supremely logical. My favorite is how yellow was born: from a laughing child. One of the gods stole that laughter, making it the seventh color.

Today we see the macaw bird with every color in its feathers, representing this bright new world. As Marcos tells us, it struts about "just in case men and women forget how many colors there are and how many ways of thinking, and that the world will be happy if all the colors and ways of thinking have their place." With that reminder of the wisdom so often found in indigenous cultures, the book says "FIN"—The End—in a swirl of pipe-smoke (what else, from Marcos?).

The illustrations by Domi (Domitila Dominguez), an indigenous artist born in Oaxaca, are as original and unpredictable as the tale itself. Both refuse to romanticize, westernize, or stereotype the culture and worldview of Chiapas' indigenous people. Anne Bar Din's English text is on the same wave-length; she is very adept in her resolution of translation-defying phrases and presents no problems other than an occasional Spanish-ism (better than anglicisms!).

Appropriately, Subcomandante Marcos stays in the background while old man Antonio tells the story. But he is there in meaningful small ways: lighting his pipe, commenting on human idiosyncrasies, and dropping reminders that people often make love ("a nice way to become tired and then go to sleep"). The gods in this tale are often un-godlike, as they bumble and stumble around. Refusing to be pompous and enjoying a subtle irony, the style of this wonderful story constantly reminds us of who the author is.



From The Story of Colors.

That figure leads us to another tale; the story behind the story. In November 1998 Cinco Puntos Press, a small publisher in El Paso, Texas, won a \$7,500 National Endowment for the Arts grant after going through a yearlong approval process including several review committees. With these funds, Cinco Puntos planned to pay half the cost of printing *The Story of Colors*. But NEA Chair William Ivey abruptly cancelled the grant just hours after receiving a telephone call from *New York Times* reporter Julia Preston asking about the book for an article she was writing (she later apologized for having sparked Ivey's action by her inquiry).

Ivey said he was "concerned about the final destination of the money"—meaning, some might go to Zapatista rebels or Marcos himself (even though the grant proposal had stated no part of the grant would go to Marcos, who had formally waived his rights). Recent attempts by Congressional Republicans to eliminate the NEA were obviously in the front of Ivey's mind. The NEA had barely survived rightwingers' charges of supposed obscenity and other forms of "offensive" values in art work it supported.

But Ivey's blatant censorship backfired. News articles about it appeared in major media and Borders put in an

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Story of Colors

order for 1,000 copies of the book. Another grant came almost immediately from the Lannan Foundation, a public arts organization, and it was twice as big as the cancelled NEA grant. The book went back to press for a new run.

Like the Zapatistas themselves, *The Story of Colors* has become a symbol of truth overcoming lies, courage overcoming cowardice, and passion overcoming prejudice. Ever since they rose up on New Year's Eve of 1994 in armed rebellion against 500 years of brutal colonization, naming themselves for the hero of Mexico's 1910 revolution, they have stood for all indigenous peoples. They have also stood for the universal dream of human liberation and true democracy. Subcomandante Marcos, their main spokesperson, has been that most dangerous kind of leader: a soldier with the soul and voice of a poet.

The NEA, trying to disclaim political censorship as the motive for canceling its grant, said the book didn't fit into the "mainstream" of children's books. True enough—and grounds for celebration. Its originality, its voice coming from a culture so long ignored or despised, is its great strength. There may be parents concerned about the references to smoking or love-making. Let parents talk with their children about these issues, if they wish, and never forget that this is a folktale—not MTV (thank the gods). *The Story of Colors* is about the joy of seeing the world around us with new eyes. It is about the way that very ancient peoples can often see very far. It is about the power of balance between the many forms of life on our planet.

We the orphans of opportunity have dared to pass through the door opened by the Zapatistas and cross to the other side of the mirror where everyone can be the same because we are different, where there can be more than one way of living, where rejection of the present system exists together with the desire to build a new world in which many worlds will fit.

—from the Zapatista movement



art without borders

Meditations on Self-determination



Marty Aranaydo.

A REVIEW BY PHIL HUTCHINGS

The experiences of peoples of color in Asia, Africa and the Americas inspired a unique exhibit of work by 26 community artists, organized by third world arts collective, Taller Sin Fronteras (Workshop Without Borders) and held at Oakland's Asian Resource Center gallery during January-February, 2000. Entitled "Meditations on Self-Determination: Altars from Third World America," the show's unifying theme was people of color rising up and fighting oppression against great odds and setbacks.

Various forms of collage and assemblage told stories of struggles against colonialism and racism along with popular movements for sovereignty and independence. Among them were Native Americans from 1492 to the contemporary Puerto Rican independence movement, the Japanese internment camps during World War II, struggles for immigrant rights, and the fight against NAFTA and globalization. European support was reflected in a nice piece on the legendary San Patricio Battalion of Irish soldiers who fought with Mexico against the U.S. invasion of 1846-48. One work stood out for its theme of unity: Jesus Angel Perez's marvelous print of figures heightened by the words "niggers-mexicans-puertoricans-niggers."

Some of the collages featured elegant calligraphy, others included huge displays of photos and drawings in brilliant color, and still others were similar to handicraft, constructed with photos, slogans and artifacts grafted onto them. Together the works in this show conveyed a manifesto from the Taller Sin Fronteras artists that people of color have fought for generations toward greater solidarity and unity with each other in order to determine their own freedom, on their own terms. As a quotation from Ellen Bepp's simple but eloquent collage commemorating the Heart Mountain Internment camp said, "Each stands only by help of the other."

To see the show at home, log on to www.favianna.com.

Phil Hutchings, co-founder and former co-chair of the Institute for MultiRacial Justice, has been working for social justice since the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which he headed in 1968.

U.S. NAVY out of Vieques

SUPPORT PUERTO RICO'S RIGHT TO INDEPENDENCE

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL



Equipment used by the U.S. military for Vieques training, stopped by the resistance camps. Photos by Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzzi.

For 60 years, the U.S. Navy has used Vieques, an island off Puerto Rico's coast, as a major training site. For 60 years it has bombed, shelled and strafed Vieques with few restrictions, devastating the fishing industry and the environment. The use of depleted uranium and other toxic substances in the bombing runs has riddled the people of Vieques with ailments, including cancer. Last April, David Sanes, a civilian security guard, was killed by an aerial bomb dropped by the U.S. Navy.

Protests escalated. Thousands of Puerto Ricans marched, demanding the Navy leave. President Clinton proposed that the Navy resume use of the range in exchange for \$40 million in U.S. financial aid to residents; Puerto Rico's Governor agreed to this last January. But residents and supporters set up civil disobedience "Resistance Camps," blocking the Navy. The result: as of April 1, no bombings had taken place for 347 days.

As we go to press, military and police action against the camps may start at any time. Support actions are scheduled from now until April 19 all over the U.S. Call (415)495-6334 or 550-0893, or (510)389-5660.

African American political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal wrote the following commentary,

Vieques Shows the Arrogance of Empire


To many in America, the word 'Vieques' is virtually meaningless. To Puerto Ricans, both on the island and on the U.S. mainland, the word 'Vieques' is a reason for rage, and a stimulus to anger. Why? Because the history of the island of Vieques, a smaller neighbor of Puerto

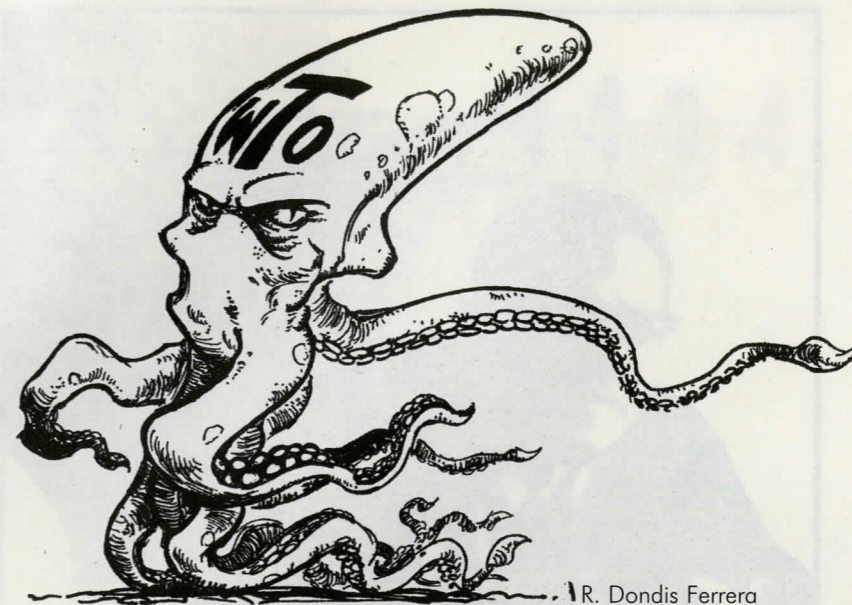
Rico, proves clearly that Puerto Rico itself, and her territories, are mere prettified colonies of the U.S. Empire.

Vieques, a municipality of Puerto Rico, was expropriated - taken - by the U.S. Navy in 1941, and 3/4th of Vieques became a military bombing ground. Tens of thousands of island residents were forced off their farms and land. Some settled on the "Big Island" (P.R.), and others took up life in the Virgin Islands, leaving the land of their birth. Acclaimed Puerto Rican nationalist Pedro Albizu Campos would aptly accuse the U.S. Navy of carrying out a campaign of genocide against the people of Vieques, noting that "Vieques society is dying due to a cold, deliberate and intentional attack by the U.S. government." The proud nationalist would also lambaste the Puerto Rican colonial government for 'collaborating with Yankee despotism in the island by maintaining silence regarding the cold hearted destruction perpetrated by the U.S. in Vieques.' Albizu Campos was right when he wrote those words in 1948; he remains right. An empire doesn't ask, it takes. A colony has no choice in the matter; it gets taken.

The fate of Vieques is insolubly linked to that of the big island (Puerto Rico) and lies at the very heart of the imperial-colonial relationship. A truly independent Puerto Rico would be able to protect her municipalities and territories from U.S. misuse, and expropriation. Let us join our voices to the call for an end to the U.S. military occupation of the island of Vieques! Let us also support the right of Puerto Ricans to independence!

¡Para libertad e Independencia!
Ona Move! LLJA! U.S. Navy Out of Vieques-Now!

 -Mumia Abu-Jamal, 1999

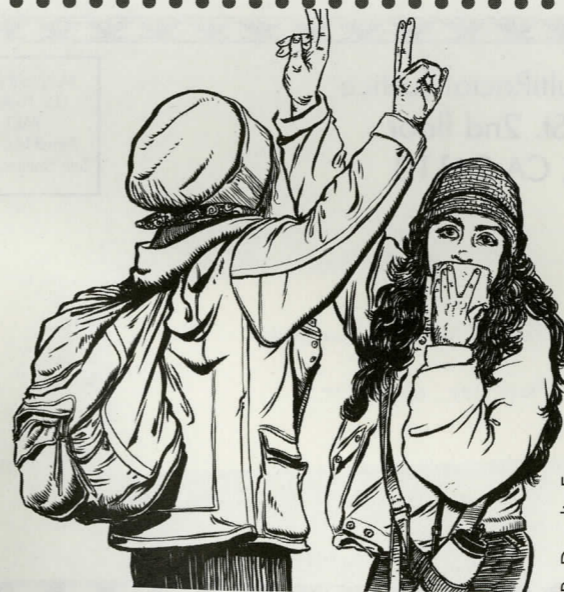


R. Dondis Ferrera

Artists at Work THE UNFORGETTABLE IMAGES OF WTO

Among the 40-50,000 people present at the protest against the World Trade Organization in Seattle last Nov. 29-Dec. 3 were many cultural workers: dancers, singers, hip-hop performers, and drummers—along with photographers, videographers and graphic artists. Together they took inspiration from, and gave it to, an unforgettable mass action whose target was a major enemy of Third World people.

Among the graphic artists was R. Dondis Ferrera, who grew up in Puerto Rico and now lives in San Francisco where he works in an animation studio. Dondis has collaborated with Global Exchange and Third Eye Movement. His vision of WTO as an octopus has been seen everywhere; we also include here a symbolic image of WTO victims and an on-the-spot image of demonstrators who rebelled victoriously against the WTO meeting despite police repression that turned Seattle into an armed camp.



R. Dondis Ferrera



WHO WON THE BATTLE OF SEATTLE?

Tear gas, clubs, and police terror could not turn back the power of the people.

Photos by IndyMedia.

With thanks to Media Alliance for its exhibit of WTO art including these drawings.

THE INSTITUTE FOR MULTIRACIAL
JUSTICE INVITES YOU TO THE

MALCOLM X JAZZ ARTS FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2000
11AM-7PM
SAN ANTONIO PARK
18TH AVE & FOOTHILL BLVD
OAKLAND
FREE



Celebrating the 75th Anniversary
of the Birth of Malcolm X.
Neighborhood Fair & International
Crafts and Food Marketplace.

shades of power

ABOUT SHADES OF POWER

Shades of Power is published by the Institute for Multi-Racial Justice. Founded in 1997 in the Bay Area, the Institute aims to strengthen the struggle against white supremacy by serving as a resource center to help build alliances among peoples of color and combat divisions.

Shades of Power brings you news of Institute activities, reports on current efforts to resolve conflicts and build alliances between communities of color as well as analysis of the issues at stake and historical examples of linkage between different communities of color.

Bulk copies are available to community organizations, teachers, youth groups and others working on relevant issues.

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The first Malcolm X Jazz Arts Festival celebrates the spirit of internationalism, honoring the martyred Black liberation leader with a neighborhood concert in lower east Oakland's San Antonio Park on May 20th.

The universality of the classic American music expression called "jazz" reflects the diversity of this mostly third world community with creative interpretations by Latino, Asian, and African musicians. Jazz, evolving from the African American experience, evokes individual and collective freedom, and is a common language that can bridge all cultures.

Malcolm's fiery polemic against white supremacy inspired a new national consciousness and cultural pride which gave rise to revolutionary third

world arts movements in the late 60s and 70s. Rebellious messages in the form of music, dance, theater, literature, and visual arts mirrored the widespread social unrest.

With the current resurgence of protest and organizing in the midst of an adverse political climate, a renewed cultural movement is in order.

The Malcolm X Jazz Arts Festival is initiated by the East Bay arts collective, Taller Sin Fronteras (Workshop Without Borders), and endorsed by an umbrella of local community groups including the Institute for MultiRacial Justice. The event is a part of a protracted effort to implement ongoing cultural programs to work for grassroots empowerment in Oakland neighborhoods. 

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