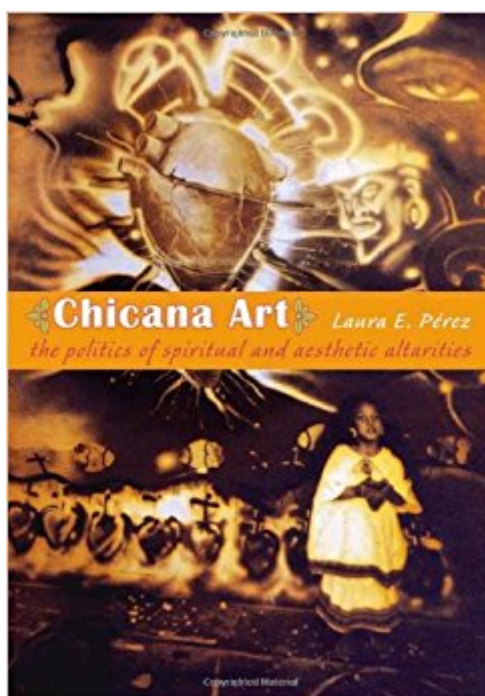


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# Chicana Art: The Politics Of Spiritual And Aesthetic Altarities (Objects/Histories)



## Synopsis

In Alma Lopez's digital print *Lupe & Sirena in Love* (1999), two icons—the Virgin of Guadalupe and the mermaid Sirena, who often appears on Mexican lottery cards—embrace one another, symbolically claiming a place for same-sex desire within Mexican and Chicano/a religious and popular cultures. Ester Hernandez's 1976 etching *Libertad/Liberty* depicts a female artist chiseling away at the Statue of Liberty, freeing from within it a regal Mayan woman and, in the process, creating a culturally composite Lady Liberty descended from indigenous and mixed bloodlines. In her painting *Coyolxauhqui Last Seen in East Oakland* (1993), Irene Perez reimagines as whole the body of the Aztec warrior goddess dismembered in myth. These pieces are part of the dynamic body of work presented in this pioneering, lavishly illustrated study, the first book primarily focused on Chicana visual arts. Creating an invaluable archive, Laura E. Pérez examines the work of more than forty Chicana artists across a variety of media including painting, printmaking, sculpture, performance, photography, film and video, comics, sound recording, interactive CD-ROM, altars and other installation forms, and fiction, poetry, and plays. While key works from the 1960s and 1970s are discussed, most of the pieces considered were produced between 1985 and 2001. Providing a rich interpretive framework, Pérez describes how Chicana artists invoke a culturally hybrid spirituality to challenge racism, bigotry, patriarchy, and homophobia. They make use of, and often radically rework, pre-Columbian Mesoamerican and other non-Western notions of art and art-making, and they struggle to create liberating versions of familiar iconography such as the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Sacred Heart. Filled with representations of spirituality and allusions to non-Western visual and cultural traditions, the work of these Chicana artists is a vital contribution to a more inclusive canon of American arts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A landmark text for understanding recurring concepts and themes of the spiritual, the political, and the aesthetic in Chicana art theories and practices. Tom Ybarra-Frausto, independent scholar, New York City "For Laura E. Pérez, spirit is a twenty-first-century method of analysis. This book transforms cultural productions into portals through which academic disciplines are linked. This daring objective is achieved through Chicana and U.S. third-world feminist technologies. The work of Chicana Art makes spirit visible. Chela Sandoval, author of Methodology of the Oppressed "In light of the very real difficulties of engaging the spirit within the largely secular Enlightenment discourses in the human sciences, Laura E. Pérez's work on the realms of the spiritual and the political in art alters the frame of reference, of what can be seen and known. Rosa Linda Fregoso, author of mexicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands "Laura E. Pérez illuminates the connections between the heterogeneous forms and themes cultivated by Chicana artists, filmmakers, and writers connections that have been floating in the air for some time but never brought together in a concrete way until now. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, author of The Wounded Heart: Writing on Cherríe Moraga "Chicana Art is the first book of its kind that preserves a long history of outspoken Latinas using their talents to change family traditions. With their richly colorful artwork, these Chicanas successfully show the Western world who they are and why they aren't just another Spanish-speaking minority. Pérez not only examines the different stories behind many Chicana's religious installations, but she encourages her audience to empower themselves by altering their self image and embrace the future that awaits them. (Stephanie Nolasco Feminist Review blog) "Pérez offers a rich analysis of a vast array of artistic works. . . . Pérez's arguments are theoretically sound and always consistent with the organizing category of politicized spirituality. . . . Pérez's notion of the politics of the spiritual as generative of tangible political and social effects is a critical contribution to the epistemological frameworks that inform Chicana/o studies and extends further to enrich this category's management within art history, literary, and American studies. (Victoria Fortuna Aztlan) "The first book-length study

of Chicana art, this long-anticipated volume surpasses expectation in breadth, depth, and presentation and begins to fill a noticeable gap in feminist scholarship. We applaud Duke University Press for having done an exceptional job in the production of this book. Beautifully designed, it is printed on heavy paper with high quality graphics and carefully chosen fonts. This high production value pays respect to the quality, depth, and diversity of the Chicana arts movement, which—as Pérez argues—encompasses a rich array of literature, essays, film, and fine arts including prints, silkscreen, painting, photography, murals, textiles, mixed media, digital art, conceptual art, and performance art. (Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel Signs) “With her encyclopedic study of Chicana art, Laura Pérez broadens reader’s perspectives significantly. . . . Her theoretical approach, clearly explained in her introduction, is consistently at work in every chapter, considering a rich variety of media and a multitude of artists. Chicana Art . . . is an intelligent and highly creative study that has laid the groundwork for scholars from a variety of fields and for those art aficionados who wish to enter into a rich terrain. (Lynda Hoffman-Jeep Women’s Art Journal)

"Laura E. Pérez illuminates the connections between the heterogeneous forms and themes cultivated by Chicana artists, filmmakers, and writers--connections that have been floating in the air for some time but never brought together in a concrete way until now."--Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano, author of *The Wounded Heart: Writing on Cherríe Moraga* --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The first book-length study devoted exclusively to Chicana art, this groundbreaking book makes a key contribution to Chicana Studies, art history, and popular culture. Highly recommended.

This is a must read for any one seriously interested in understanding the politics of Chicana spirituality and art. Great quality book with awesome color images.

This book takes Chicana feminist thought to the next level--you will be sure to enjoy!

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