

Postdoctoral Colloquium Series



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"Visualizing Memories of Space and Belonging: U.S. Central American Art of San Francisco's Mission District"

Wednesday
October 13, 2021
4:00-5:30pm
1024 Chem Annex



This talk explores how U.S. Central American artists of San Francisco's Mission District enact a politics of visibility and memory in their visual art. As new condos, houses, cafés, restaurants, and businesses have displaced longtime Latinx businesses and residents, the physical characteristics of space have changed the neighborhood. I examine how the work of three U.S. Central American artists visually represents memories of the Mission District and offers a new lens on the neighborhood's future. In 2016, Josué Rojas exhibited "¡Gentromancer!" as a response to the violent gentrification occurring in the Mission District and how it affects the Latinx community. Rojas questions the policing and displacement of Latinxs through paintings and murals while highlighting their resiliency to endure struggle. Two years later, in 2018, Natalie Aleman and Jasmin Cañas exhibited "Ode to the Barrio: A Tribute to the Mission by Dos Centroamericanas" using realist gestures in their paintings and photographs, they depict their intimate connection to urban space, architecture, and culture of the Mission District. I posit that these two exhibitions, presented at Acción Latina's Juan R. Fuentes Gallery, represent a politics of memory from the perspective of U.S. Central Americans growing up in the Mission District of San Francisco. Their art examines the contrasting relationship between Latinxs and U.S. Central Americans in a gentrifying neighborhood while highlighting the aesthetic, cultural, and political dimensions of U.S. Central American identities through visual art.

For those who would like to view the talk over Zoom, register in advance:
https://illinois.zoom.us/join/register/tZcudeisqDouGNG7jP0oWfhtB0Euleq_v8cU

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.