Let’s Get Personal

Cultural Heritage: Our cultural heritage is rich and varied. Our ancestors come from the Yaqui Peoples of the Sonora Desert, Jalisco and Durango (Jesus) and many generations of women come from the area of Dolores, Guanajuato as well as Michoacan (Melanie).

Mentored by: I was encouraged by or mentored by my journalism teacher Jan Glenn, my professor Velia Garcia, artists Juan Fuentes, Michael Roman and Calixto Roman, Celia Herrera Rodriguez. (Jesus) I was encouraged by or mentored by my professor and artist Celia Herrera Rodriguez (Melanie).

Education/Training: Jesus worked as a graphic designer at Mission Grafica at the Mission Cultural Center in San Francisco, earning a Bachelors Degree in Raza Studies from San Francisco State and is currently working on a Masters in Visual Critical Studies and a MFA in Social Practice from California College of the Arts. Melanie’s education includes an AA degree in Chicana/o Studies, a BA in Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley and a community college course in screenprinting.

Influences: Our major influences have been our artist mentors as well as other visionary graphic artists and print makers including Rupert Garcia, Emory Douglas, Ester Hernanadez, Malaquias Montoya, Yreina Cervantez, Barbara Carrasco and Los Brothers Hernandez.

Tell Young Artists: We tell young artists to keep making work and find ways to work with your community to keep the tradition of arts alive.

Here’s the Artwork

Art Medium: This piece integrates photos we shot during our 2008 visits to cultural spaces in Ecatepec, Mexico into a collage. During our visit to Ecatepec we learned that each zone of this rather large municipality had adopted a space for collective cultural expression from basket weaving to murals. Three collectives participating in this exchange were given the opportunity to participate in an amazing campaign. They included the Taller Tupac Amaru, Favianna of Yo What Happened to Peace and Just Seeds Collective. There has been an effort to openly declare art and culture as human rights in Ecatepec.

We included photos of the people we met in Ecatepec in the poster as a mirror for them to see themselves. We also used the slogan ‘la cultura cura’, widely popular in the Xicanx community, to emphasize how culture heals and contributes toward wellness. The posters will be reproduced in editions of 1000 and will be wheat-pasted throughout Ecatepec.

Intent of the Work: We believe that art can be an empowering reflection of community struggles, dreams and visions. Following principles of Xicanisma and Zapatismo, we create work that translates people’s stories into art that can be put back into the hands of the communities who inspire it.

Unique Skills: We have developed a way of working and collaborating with community groups and organizations to help them include cultural strategies in their work.

Art Impacts Life: The history of the majority of people worldwide is a history of colonialism, genocide, and exploitation. Our art is grounded in Third World and indigenous movements that build people’s power to transform the conditions of fragmentation, displacement and loss of culture that result from this history.

Let’s Look Closely

Look: Notice people and places. What stories of how culture plays a role in people lives do you see? Culture is then connected to the places people have for this activity. These become important places for communities to create and share what they have made.

Notice: What contemporary issues are being explored?

Discuss: How do Jesus and Melanie convey through visual art societal struggles. In what ways does it inspire solidarity among communities worldwide?

Get a Fuller Picture

Look up information about Ecatepec and their role in Mexico and migration patterns that pass through their communities.

For the full transcript visit http://museoeduardocarrillo.org/
http://www.pajarovalleyartscouncil.org/