

CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives

Volume 5 *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*

Article 28

2022

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Recommended Citation

Page, Mia (2022) "Art in the Humboldt Community," *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*: Vol. 5, Article 28.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos/vol5/iss1/28>



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Art in the Humboldt Community

By Mia Page

Throughout Humboldt County there are countless murals for our residents to enjoy, as well as other public art such as electric box paintings and decorative benches. Two local Latinx artists use their art to convey political messages to our community. Both of them use completely different techniques in their creative practices, but they both effectively convey their ideas through the beauty of art.

Anna Sofia Amezcua

Anna Sofia Amezcua is an abstract painter based in Humboldt. She has contributed three murals in the past few years to the walls of Eureka and has been an active participant in the annual Eureka Street Art Festival. Her murals are abstract compositions full of warm hues of pinks, peaches, and blues swirling together into soft shapes. Through these murals, she aims to make a feminist statement, wanting her feminine art to take up space in the patriarchal world. She takes inspiration from political events such as Christine Blasey Ford's testimony against the Brett Kavanaugh nomination to the Supreme Court and says her art is "about continuing to love fiercely, joyfully, and playfully, even while expressing anger and outrage."



Amezcua's 2018 mural near Clarke Plaza in Eureka, CA



Amezcuca's 2019 mural near the Morris Graves Museum of Art in Eureka, CA

Jose Moreno

Opposite to Amezcuca's abstract tendencies, Jose Moreno creates murals with concrete imagery to make political statements. He has created two murals for the Eureka Street Art Festival as well as a utility box for the city and a series of paintings outside Carson Mansion. His art is inspired by the culture and language of indigenous peoples in Mexico. His mural Malinali features a monarch butterfly to openly discuss ideas around migration. Moreno intended to "represent the migration of all living creatures on the planet," calling to the fact that borders did not exist for most of human history. Animals and other creatures like the monarch butterfly will continue to migrate freely regardless of imagined barriers held up by humankind.



Moreno's set of murals near the Redwood Capital Bank in Henderson Center in Eureka.

The mural on the top is Malinali and the one on the bottom is In Lak'ech - hala Ken (I am you. And you are me). Both created in 2020. The monarch butterfly has become a symbol for undocumented immigrants and immigration activists since they represent the right to migrate and move freely across borders.

Conclusion

Whether through abstract or concrete imagery, these artists have used these walls as places for political discussions. They have helped to bring out these important messages to the Humboldt community and are using their art to make a difference. Moreno says, "I believe each public piece I create should have a message in response to current events or a personal message to connect with the viewer. It's the role of the artist to illustrate the best they can the current culture they live in."