



Sandra de la Loza poses in front of her wall of redacted poems. Photo by Nicole Funes.

COLA artist Sandra de la Loza highlights forgotten history



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Sandra de la Loza, a Northeastern Los Angeles-based artist incorporated themes of culture and social justice into her multimedia historical exhibition at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park.

De la Loza is part of the 2018 City of Los Angeles (COLA) Individual Artist Fellowship Exhibition on display until June 24. The installation included multiple elements such as a black and white video compilation of mirrored, kaleidoscopic bicyclists and footage of protesters from various demonstrations.

As a second generation Mexican American, de la Loza's parents were raised during an era of extreme segregation in Los Angeles, she said.

"They [parents] intentionally did not teach me Spanish because they were physically hit in school when they spoke Spanish so they just felt... that speaking Spanish was a detriment not an asset," de la Loza said.

that the speaking Spanish was a dominant Mexican asset," de la Loza said.

Loza considers herself an unconventional archaeologist — a history aficionado who digs up the bones of stories untold. De la Loza said that more often than not, history is controlled by those in power. In her perspective, the power dynamics of the past have a large influence on the current understanding of history.

In the midst of her research, de la Loza began to find primary examples of the erasure of marginalized people. Meanwhile, her own city underwent gentrification at the hands of a transportation system that displaced and segregated communities.

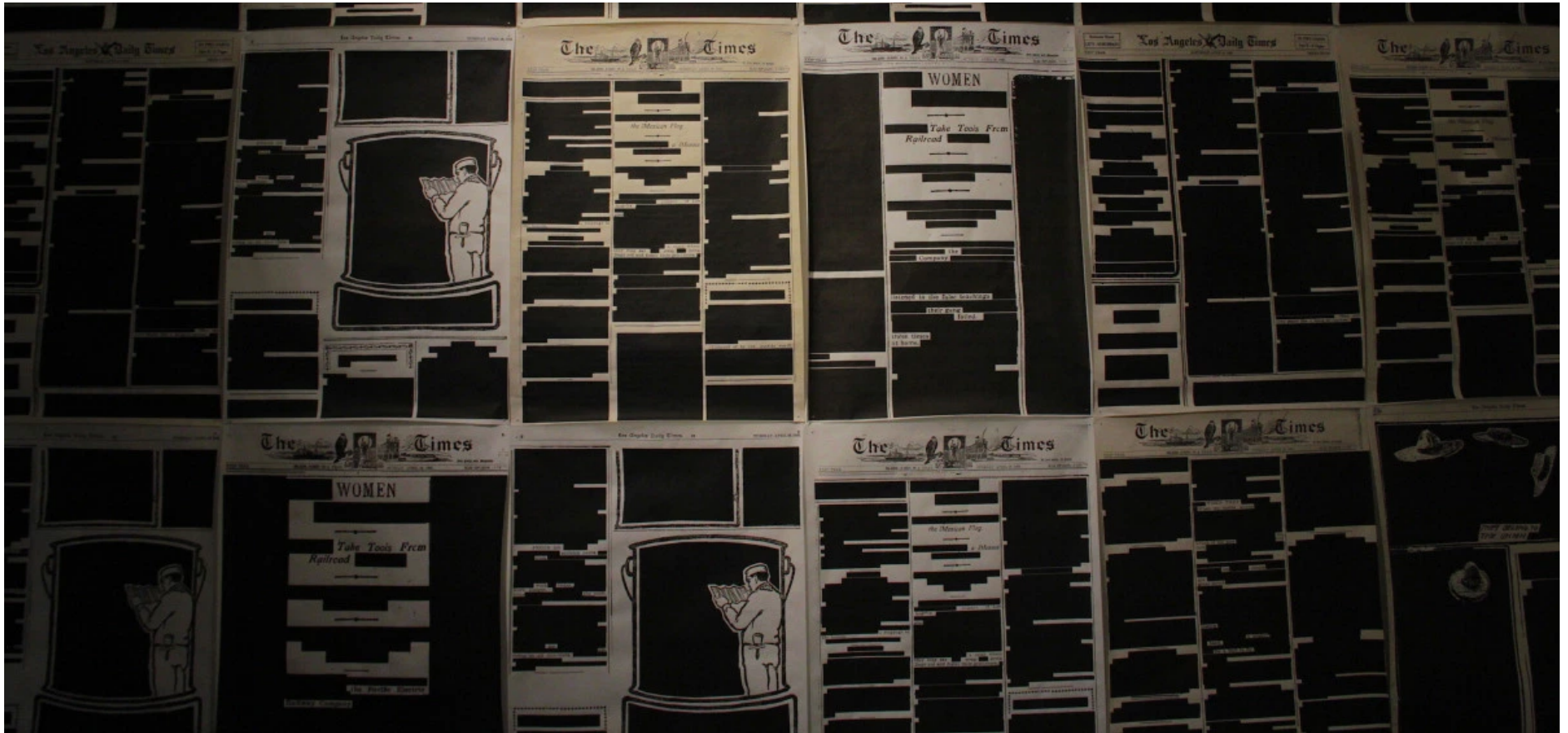
She came across information regarding the little-known Pacific Electric Railway strike of 1903, in which Mexican railroad workers demanded equal pay to that of their European immigrant counterparts. De la Loza discovered the interconnectivity of transportation infrastructure and marginalization.

Motivated by what these strikers symbolized, de la Loza aimed to uncover the unknown history of generations of Mexican Americans before her. De la Loza believes that looking at transportation infrastructure is one of many avenues to explore these stories.

“This installation is really just a scratch in the surface of that history, but it reveals a lot,” de la Loza said.

Walking into de la Loza’s exhibit, adorning the wall of a dimly lit room lies the wall of redacted poems. De la Loza meticulously selected six articles from the two most prominent LA-based publications at the time, which encapsulated the blatantly racist sentiment at the time. In an attempt to shift the tone of these articles, de la Loza created poems by means of erasure.





A series of six articles from the Los Angeles Daily Times and The Los Angeles Times that Loza blacked out to create poems. Photo by Nicole Funes.

Accompanying the poems stands an elaborate recreation of a float from the Fiesta de las Flores embellished in monochromatic white flowers. Following the color scheme of the flowers, an array of suspended picket signs devoid of text surround the float.

This grayscale theme is an intentional choice made to pay homage to the past and the original archives Loza discovered.

“I didn’t want to invent anything. I’m not inventing slogans for the picket signs, I’m not inventing anything about the float, I’m just recreating as

best I could based on photos,” de la Loza said.

<http://highschool.latimes.com/granada-hills-charter-high-school/cola-artist-sandra-de-la-loza-highlights-forgotten-history/>



best I could based on a photo, de la Loza said.

Ultimately de la Loza illuminates the nonlinear, cyclical nature of history and how to utilize the past to envision the future. Her work is complex and multifaceted and tells the history of narratives that are long overdue.



For her birthday, de la Loza asked her friends to help create flowers for the recreation of a float from the Fiesta de las Flores. Photo by Nicole Funes.