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## Exhibition Explores Ethnic Studies at UCLA over Past Forty Years

### *Art, Activism, Access: 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA*

February 28 – June 13, 2010

Ethnic studies emerged as an intellectual movement in the wake of societal transformations associated with the Civil Rights Movement. The controversial 1969 firing of professor Angela Davis, the tent city erected in support of South African divestment in the 1980s, the Chicano Studies hunger strike of 1993—for forty years UCLA has played a key role in our nation's continual struggle with diversity, access, and inclusion. *Art, Activism, Access: 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA*, an exhibition on display at the Fowler Museum from February 28–June 13, 2010, explores UCLA's role in voicing the most significant issues of underrepresented communities in the fabric of American life. This lively display of murals, graphic art, films, ephemera, and photographs from the archives of UCLA's American Indian Studies Center, Asian American Studies Center, Bunche Center for African American Studies, Chicano Studies Research Center, and other campus collections captures key moments in a remarkable history.

#### **A powerful history, a visual array**

This exhibition explores the first forty years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA, showcasing their roles in decades of campus and community activism. Four main sections explore the Centers' roots, their vast and important archives, and their roles in struggles for academic freedom, self-determination, justice, and civil and human rights. A wide array of art, film and seldom-seen artifacts tell these stories, including:

- Two large murals and a study drawing of a third, all of which graced the walls of UCLA's Campbell Hall. The earliest was created for the Bunche Center for African American Studies around the late 1960s or early 1970s and suggests a communal protection of black youth that is both spiritual and physical. A drawing by Eduardo Carillo, Saul Solache, Ramses Noriega, and Sergio Hernandez from 1970 is a study for the 12 x 30-foot mural that was located at the Chicano Studies Research Center, credited with being the earliest Chicano mural painted anywhere in the United States. A third work, a mural painted by Darryl Mar and his students in 1995, was created to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Asian American Studies.
- A new site-specific mural to be painted by famed Chicano artist Gronk, which visitors can observe being created beginning in April.
- Original photographs from the series, *Life in a Day of Black L.A.: The Way We See It*. These seventeen images taken in 1992 by well-known African American photographers

documenting their own communities in the aftermath of the L.A. Uprisings include portraits of familiar personalities, like young tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams and journalist Pat Harvey, as well as anonymous people going about their daily lives.

- A screening area with an ongoing sequence of films including the experimental *Frontierland* by Jesse Lerner and Rubén Ortiz Torres; Marco Williams' personal documentary *In Search of our Fathers*; and *Hito Hata: Raise the Banner*, a chronicle of the contributions and hardships of Japanese Americans from the turn of the century to the late 1970s. Also presented is the 1984 film *Bless Their Little Hearts*, directed by UCLA MFA grad Billy Woodberry, which explores the life of a family in South Central Los Angeles driven to the breaking point by the father's shame at being unable to support his family.
- An impressive compilation of hundreds of books and journals produced by the Centers and/or written by their faculty, including many of the earliest and most important volumes published on the subject of diversity in America. These include *Amerasia Journal*, the leading multidisciplinary scholarly journal in Asian American Studies; *Black Folk Here and There* by St. Clair Drake, arguably the single most important work published on the black diasporic experience in the 1980s; *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil* by Pierre-Michel Fontaine, the groundbreaking study on Brazilian race relations; and *Old Shirts & New Skins* by Sherman Alexie, which when published in 1993 was one of the first books of poetry written by then little-known Spokane/Coeur d'Alene poet Sherman Alexie.
- A wide array of posters and handbills from each of the Centers, which reveal an era of striking graphics tied to political action. These are accompanied by documentary photographs of events that galvanized the campus and brought student bodies across the nation into conflict with the status quo.

### **Background**

In the late 1960s with civil unrest growing across America—in protest of the Vietnam War and in support of global struggles for self-determination and equality—UCLA faculty, students, staff, and community members pressured the University to institute a program of Ethnic Studies that would reflect the presence, history, and contributions of underrepresented groups on campus. In response, Chancellor Charles E. Young guided the establishment of four distinct Ethnic Studies Research Centers in 1969 to foster study and research concerning African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Chicanos, and their respective communities.

Campbell Hall—vacant at the time because the Economics Department had moved—became the home for the new centers. Early program goals remain the foundation of the Centers today; these include studying ethnic minorities in American society to provide a framework for research and community action, instilling racial pride, developing a community action program, building diverse holdings for Center libraries and archives, and recruiting faculty in these areas.

### **Additional Information**

*Art, Activism, Access: 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA* has been organized by the Fowler Museum, the Institute of American Cultures, and the four Ethnic Studies Research Centers. Generous funding has been provided by the Office of the Chancellor; Office for Faculty Diversity; Office of Vice Chancellor for Graduate Studies, Graduate Division; and Institute of American Cultures.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Ethnic Studies at UCLA, Chancellor Gene Block has dedicated the 2009-2010 academic year to the theme of "Celebrating 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA."

**The Fowler Museum at UCLA** is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$10 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit [fowler.ucla.edu](http://fowler.ucla.edu).

**Opening Day Event:**

Sunday, February 28, 2010 12–5 pm

**Family Festival: Art, Activism, Access: 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA**

A free, opening day festival for all ages, including musical performances, art workshops, poetry readings and gallery discussions featuring local artists and performers celebrating forty years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA.

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