

**The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education  
Oral History Project**

Name of Interviewee: Teresita Romo

Name of Interviewer: Alondra Cruz

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Name of Transcriber: Destiny Carrasco

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- 1 BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION
- 2 [00:00:03]
- 3 Well first of all I wanted to start with, “what is your full name?”
- 4 Teresita: It’s Teresita Romo.
- 5 Alondra: When where you born, like what day?
- 6 Teresita: November 15<sup>th</sup> 1952.
- 7 Alondra: What is your marital status?
- 8 Teresita: Single.
- 9 Alondra: So, you don’t have any children?
- 10 Teresita: No, but I raised two [laughs].
- 11 Alondra: Where were you born and raised?
- 12 Teresita: Guadalajara, Jalisco.
- 13 Alondra: Were you also raised in Guadalajara?

14    Teresita: No, we came to the United States when I was about three, so I basically grew up here,  
15    in Sacramento.

16    Alondra: What did your parents do for a living?

17    Teresita: My dad, when he first got here, worked a little bit as a farm worker but then he got a  
18    job at the Saint Mary's cemetery doing maintenance and so he did that most of his life. And then  
19    my mom was, she stayed home with the nine of us.

20    Alondra: So you had nine brothers and sisters?

21    Teresita: Yeah, I have six sisters and I had two brothers. One passed away when he was 17.

22    Alondra: Oh, can you please describe your experiences as a child and your youth, and like your  
23    family and your neighborhood?

24    Teresita: Well we moved around a lot because every time there were more kids, [laughs] it was  
25    harder to stay. And then we were also in the neighborhood around 4<sup>th</sup> and T. Then when the  
26    freeway went through there, we were displaced. Finally, ended up living on T street, which was  
27    our home for most of my growing up period. Before that I always remember being in  
28    neighborhoods where the extended family, like my grandparents, were always around the corner.  
29    My aunts and uncles moved close by. We had relatives that were either related through either  
30    through *compadres* [godfather of one's child] or they were actually related to us  
31    [00:02:03]

32    somehow as cousins, so I always remember being able to go to different people's houses and  
33    within walking distance, which was really nice. That all changed when we moved to T street cuz  
34    we were the only Mexican family in that area. So, that was kind of interesting growing up in that  
35    area. And I was, I did find out later from the neighbors, that when they heard that we were  
36    moving in, [laughs] they were concerned because it was a big family. They thought we were

37 gonna make a lot of noise and you know cause a lot of problems. But they were always happy.  
38 And I always made a point of saying that, you know, we were very well behaved and that they  
39 liked having us as neighbors.

40 Alondra: You said that you had like nine siblings, how did that affect you? Cuz like a big family,  
41 like did they make you more outgoing or because it is obviously a lot of children, so like you had  
42 to like make your voice stand out. So how did that shape you in a way?

43 Teresita: Well, I was the oldest, so a lot of times I got. Sometimes my mom, especially when um  
44 my dad was working. He was, I remember he was working at an office, cleaning offices, so she  
45 would go with him, and then I would stay with the kids. So I think, you know, a lot of  
46 responsibility. I mean to me I never felt like it was a lot because like I said other, we were,  
47 always close to other families that had more kids as well. So, it didn't seem like a big deal at the  
48 time.

49 Alondra: Were you ever involved in the Felos, Felitos, or in the Mexican American Education  
50 Project?

51 Teresita: No, but I knew José Montoya who was involved in it. That's where I heard a lot about  
52 it. And then later on, I did actually work for a time period, with the Cross-Cultural Resource  
53 Center. I knew from Steve Arvizú who ran that, that he was a Felito as well.

54 [00:03:56]

55 Alondra: Do you know anything about the mission of the project, I know you were not involved,  
56 but you said you knew people?

57 Teresita: I think from what I got from José and Steve, was that it was really like a leadership  
58 development program. A way to bring together other Mexicans American persons in different

59 educational fields to form like a cohort, to be able to learn from each other and then do projects  
60 and things together that would develop them and help them in future careers.

61 Alondra: Do you think this was like helpful to, get Chicanos out there and like you said that it  
62 was like an educational program. Do you think this gave them a sense of leadership and make  
63 them know that people do value them?

64 Teresita: I think it did that because it. My understanding was that you were chosen to be in it. So  
65 there's that feeling of belonging to something that was special. And then also the fact that there  
66 were different people from different sectors in it. Even though I think there was a strong  
67 education focus in it and to learn from each other but I think also to feel like they weren't alone,  
68 that they could talk to each other. That if there were things going on, especially during that time  
69 period cuz it's the beginning of the Chicano movement. It was a time period where you kind of  
70 look to each other to see what else was being done, who else was doing things and learning from  
71 each other and feeling like there was a sense of belonging. So I think it really did develop that.  
72 And I know that a lot of them kept in contact even after the program. You know feeling like  
73 even though the cohort was over, that they still belonged to this Felitos. Program and I know  
74 José and Steve both talked about it, about being very proud that they were a part of it.

75 Alondra: Did your study of cultural anthropology or your knowledge of cultural issues influence  
76 your belonging in the Movimiento Chicano [Chicano movement]?

77 [00:06:02]

78 Teresita: I didn't study cultural anthropology [laughs] so, no. I actually began looking, when I  
79 started my college career, I was really looking at history and psychology. When I came back to,  
80 because I went to school in San Francisco and I did my BA there. When I came back, I was  
81 going to do social work. Until I discovered, the La Raza bookstore and the RCAF and then that

82 sort of got sidelined [laughs]. So, I didn't really do a lot of cultural anthropology, I was really  
83 more on a track of social work when I started at Sac State.

84 Alondra: Did your social work influence like your involvement in the Movimiento Chicano  
85 [Chicano movement]?

86 Teresita: No, I think the influence actually came when I was. I went to USF, and I think at that  
87 time it was the beginning of the UFW movement. So, one of our professors said that as part of  
88 the class we had to do volunteer work and he didn't care who we did the volunteer work with.  
89 So, I actually went and volunteered for the UFW office there in San Francisco. And I think that's  
90 what really made me, gave me much more exposure. And cuz I knew about it, I mean I knew  
91 about the civil rights movement, about Martin Luther King and what was happening in terms of  
92 the African American civil rights movement, but then being able to be more exposed to what it  
93 meant to be a part of a Chicano movement. And that's where I learned more about not only,  
94 César Chávez, and what he was trying to do, but also, Tijerina, in New Mexico, Gutiérrez, in  
95 Texas. It was as more, just learning more. At the time I think we were, because it was a college  
96 course, and because of the fact that this professor who was a Chicano as well exposed us to more  
97 literature than we were finding out about.

98 [00:08:01]

99 What could we read? Not only in history but also poetry and literature. So, I think that really  
100 helped to kind of open up my perception of the Chicano movement, being yes it was very  
101 political and social economic, but also literary. But there was this renaissance going on in terms  
102 of the arts and that there were poets and there were writers and there were visual artists,  
103 performers, Teatro Campesino [theatre] was one of those examples of coming out of the UFW  
104 movement, but using the art to be like an organizing tool but not losing sight of the fact that he

105 also wanted it to be artistic. I think that's what really opened it up for me in terms of my  
106 perspective on the Chicano movement.

107 Alondra: Do you know of any specific memories of events that attracted you to Movimiento  
108 Chicano [Chicano movement] specifically?

109 Teresita: Specific events...[pause] I think for me it was going to the boycotts and joining people  
110 there. You know especially Safeway, and even now I still don't go to Safeway, just because I  
111 can't [laughs]. I think for me that was one of the biggest events because it was not only being  
112 there with a lot of other people, but also knowing that we were doing something that had  
113 ramifications because you know if the boycotts succeeded, then it was going to be able to bring  
114 about these major changes. Not only for the farm workers in California but it was really about a  
115 national movement as well, for farm workers across the Southwest. So, I think part of that really  
116 for me made it not only just attending and doing a small piece but being event but being a part of  
117 something bigger.

118 Alondra: Do you think the fact that your father was a farm worker influenced you to get more in  
119 the Movimiento Chicano [Chicano Movement], especially the UFW, the union for....

120 Teresita: I think at the time, I didn't really make that connection cuz  
121 [00:10:02]

122 he had already been at the cemetery for so long. It was really more about, like I said here was a  
123 Chicano professor telling us that there was this movement going on and to be offering us, the  
124 opportunity to be part of it and for me hearing about what the farm workers were trying to do. I  
125 felt that, I could you know make a contribution that way.

126 Alondra: You probably heard the term Chicano used like a lot in Movimiento Chicano [Chicano  
127 Movement]. How you think other Mexican Americans and Latinos reacted to the term  
128 “Chicano”?

129 Teresita: Well, I don’t remember my parents having any problem with it. To me, I think and I  
130 don’t know if I haven’t really talked about to any other parents about it. But for me I think they  
131 saw it as an extension of being Mexican. Because for us I mean the way we grew up, it was very  
132 Mexican, you know we went to church, we went to the *tardeadas* [gatherings]. I mean there, we  
133 spoke Spanish at home. The only music we heard in the house that we didn’t bring in was you  
134 know mariachi music or norteno music because that’s what my dad liked. So in a way, when we  
135 started being, and when I say we, it was because my sisters as well got involved about the same  
136 time I did. They saw it as an extension because I’ll give you an example. When I got to Sac State  
137 I was able to meet a woman who was on the student senate, Chris Cervantes, and so she told me  
138 about you know there was money, they wanted to do cultural events, but they just needed  
139 somebody to present the idea about what it could be. So, at the time that’s when, uh, Daniel  
140 Váldez was you know, he was having a lot of touring and he had just put out that album *Mestizo*  
141 which was, you know, everybody was playing it. So, I wrote a grant to the student senate and  
142 asked for some money to do it, and they said yes.

143 [00:12:03]

144 So we brought the- group Danny Váldez and the group to Sac State for I think it was the  
145 *dieciseis de septiembre* [September 16<sup>th</sup>], *septiembre* [September] or *Cinco De mayo*, I don’t  
146 remember which one it was. So afterwards they needed a place to stay, so I brought them over to  
147 the house [laughs] and I told my parents they need a place to stay and you know where can they.  
148 I was surprised that they said yes, you know that they could stay there. My mother cooked food

149 for them they had a chance to talk and, so I think for them it wasn't here's a Chicano event and  
150 here is a Chicano performer coming to stay at our house the group and meeting the group. I think  
151 they saw it as, oh, this is Daniel Valdez, he singing in Spanish, he's singing about things that  
152 relate. So they didn't really see that something, negative. But I don't know if other families  
153 probably thought well why are you calling yourself a Chicano and why are you cuz I have heard  
154 other people in the past, have said why do you not want to say you are Mexican. You know why  
155 do you have to make up another term? So, then it's a process of letting them know. It's more  
156 politicized term and why it was important to do that, but I think in my family, it wasn't such an  
157 issue.

158 Alondra: At that time, have you heard about the civil rights movement, like during that time?

159 Teresita: Yeah. Yes, Martin Luther King and like I said the, you know what was going on in  
160 terms of the South, voting rights, and all of that. And I think for me because I did go to college in  
161 San Francisco, which there was students from all different kinds of cultures there. Because of the  
162 Chicano movement I actually started hanging around more with African Americans and Latino's  
163 and less so with whites because I felt more of an affinity and I think because San Francisco and I  
164 don't know how much

165 [00:14:03]

166 you know about. There were Third World Liberation Fronts, strikes that happened at Berkley and  
167 San Francisco State, so I think there was already a history by the time I got there because those  
168 were in '68 and '69. That students from different cultures related much more about what were  
169 the affinities between the struggles as opposed to, I'm just going to be a Chicano and I'm only  
170 going to care about Chicano things, it was really more about strength in numbers and



171 understanding that if we could all work together then we could all accomplish something bigger.  
172 So, I think for me it was it was really more about that.

173 Alondra: Do you think that your involvement in the Movimiento Chicano [Chicano Movement]  
174 changed you personally?

175 Teresita: Oh, I always talk about how I'm a product of the Chicano movement [laughs]. Yeah,  
176 because I really do see where I am now is a direct relationship, because like I said when I got to  
177 Sac State, and I met people from La Raza bookstore because I was interested in the arts already  
178 in terms of literature, and writing and history. For me it was this great opportunity, here's a  
179 bookstore that has all these books and, you know, the main idea was to get the literature out to  
180 the people to have a center where if I wanted to learn more about Chicano history or I wanted to  
181 read another Chicano poets' work, I could go there and actually see an array of the work. It was  
182 volunteer-run, the persons who were, who I met at the time, Philip Santos, who was one of the  
183 founders, along with, I met Louie González, Louie "the-foot", I met Gilbert Gamino, I met Peter  
184 Hernández, who was also another one for the founders. So, for me it was like here's a group of  
185 people who are very dedicated and committed to  
186 [00:16:03]

187 doing this very, like I said, it was all volunteer run. But they felt it was important so I felt like I  
188 could contribute and the good thing was that I think they were open to having someone come in  
189 with a certain sets of ideas about how to do things maybe differently. I think they welcomed it  
190 so, you know like setting up files for the invoices [laughs] and the bills and you know some  
191 things that for me was like basic, but for them because they were doing all these other things, it  
192 was, it wasn't a priority so, eventually, I did become the director. And then when we did have an  
193 opportunity, because the bookstore was located in a very small little space, and then at a certain

194 point the space next store which had been run by this older Chicano couple, it was a dry cleaning  
195 business. They decided they were going to retire, and so we contacted the landlord and said you  
196 know, “can we take over the space?” and he said yes. Gave it to us for 100 dollars a month  
197 [laughs] which was, for us was a lot of money cuz you know we were paying 65 in the other  
198 space, but it offered us the opportunity to expand. And so then that’s when I talked to Philip  
199 Santos who was still the director at the time and I asked him if I could start a gallery because by  
200 that time I had met all the other RCAF artists, I had seen the work, they were doing this great  
201 output of posters, prints and paintings and then they couldn’t show them anywhere because none  
202 of the galleries were interested in Chicano art, the museums less so. So, I asked Phillip so can we  
203 start a gallery because it seemed to me it was like a natural extension of here’s all these art  
204 books, and poets and writers, now we need the visual arts component of it. And so, he said yes, if  
205 you can find the money, because the reality was like I said none of us were getting paid  
206 [00:18:03]  
207 neither was he. So, you know to take on an extra responsibility, it needed more funding. And at  
208 the time we were lucky that the California arts council had become an entity that was going to  
209 regrant funds, so I put together my first proposal, I didn’t really know how to write a proposal  
210 [laughs] but I figured, you know I answered the questions the best I could. We got the grant, so I  
211 was very happy. It was 8,000 dollars but that was a lot of money for us and so we started the  
212 gallery. And we ended up calling it “Galería Posada” after José Guadalupe Posada who had been  
213 this great Mexican print maker and who had been also big influence on the RCAF artists and  
214 other poster makers. So, we felt it was a good way to honor him and also pay tribute to the  
215 influence he had on you know the artists as well. So I think if it hadn’t been for the Chicano  
216 movement, I wouldn’t have gotten to that point and then that’s when I got interested in curating,

217 putting shows together, writing about Chicano art, looking at different aspects of it, looking at  
218 other artists outside of Sacramento, bringing in artists from other parts of California so that the  
219 artists here could see what other artists were doing and then taking our art to other places as well.  
220 We set up a collaboration with “Galería La Raza” in San Francisco so we can take shows and  
221 you know, take our shows there and they could send shows to us. So it was a nice relationship  
222 that then led to, participating in the Concilio De Arte Popular which was coalition of all the  
223 different cultural centers in the state, so then now we were able to take shows to San Diego, to  
224 the Central Cultural de la Raza, to Self Help Graphics and it really opened up bigger world about  
225 what were the similarities of the art that we were doing here, what kind of art work was being  
226 done, you know, in other places.

227 [00:20:03]

228 And then, wanting to write more about it and put it in a historical perspective within the  
229 mainstream artworld so that eventually now, I think, I’m more interested in figuring out how  
230 Chicano art can be positioned within American art because we’re all here in the United States  
231 and to amplify the idea of what American art is and be able to then show that we have as much  
232 right and that our aesthetics is just as valuable and that our artists can have something to say and  
233 it can still be considered art. So, I definitely see it as there’s a direct connection there.

234 Alondra: What role do you believe Chicanas played in the movement?

235 Teresita: Well I’ve talked a lot about and I’ve written articles about Chicana artists and their art  
236 because I really feel that a lot of times, and I’m not going to say all the artists, but there were  
237 certain male artists who didn’t think Chicanas could do Chicano art because it was, sometimes  
238 they thought it was too, it wasn’t political enough, that it was maybe too religious especially like  
239 some of the artists that started doing *ofrendas* [altars] or they would do art about you know the

240 home, and that it wasn't considered Chicano because it wasn't so political and I think that was  
241 sometimes used as a way to exclude it. And also to not have it not be considered, but I think they  
242 were really not understanding how important it was to have that perspective and I think what the  
243 Chicana artists did and I think especially the early ones like, Carmen Lomas Garza who grew up  
244 in Texas, but I met her when she came to Galería La Raza, and was an artist there. Patssi Valdez  
245 in LA who was with you know Asco which was this  
246 [00:22:03]  
247 crazy group of high school students she was you know the only women in the group, and  
248 Yolanda López you know who has done some of the most iconic pieces in terms of Chicano art.  
249 She's the one that did the one about you know where the, the Aztec and it says "who's the illegal  
250 alien pilgrim?" Right, which a lot of people recognized now. But didn't know it was actually a  
251 Chicana who made that piece, Ester Hernández from Dinuba who did the Sun Mad poster, so all  
252 of these artists from that time period I think some of them maybe did more things that were more  
253 political like, Ester and Yolanda, but then when you look at Carmen Lomas Garza's work, it's  
254 these, it's almost like these little narratives, these stories and it's all stories about her growing up  
255 in South Texas, in Kingsville, and trying to hold on to the, the more positive memories because  
256 of just the overt racism and just what she had to go through and, and a lot of the Chicanos who  
257 still live there go through because it's a very racist place and there was a situation where she felt  
258 I need to be able to show the positive things that are in the culture and the things that I grew up  
259 with that I know made me who I am and that will give others a sense of pride and also that you  
260 can relate to. So, she had this great painting of a Tamalada, she has another one, where the  
261 family is out on the porch and you can tell it's almost night fall and they're all sitting around and  
262 the grandmothers cutting the watermelon cuz, it's very hot and humid in South Texas. So those

263 kinds of images for her was a way of reaffirming, the fact that these are experiences that we, all  
264 of us share somehow even if we didn't grow up in Texas, but to be able to say this is important  
265 for us to remember this because this is a form of resistance as well  
266 [00:24:03]  
267 to be able to show the positive aspects as well as to be able to say you know, yes you can think  
268 you have a right to call me illegal or whatever but you came over on the May Flower so what's  
269 the big difference, right? For her it was that important to do both of those things and I think  
270 sometimes that gets lost in terms of looking at Chicano art.  
271 Alondra: Did you personally help initiate or initiated in this Chicano Movement?  
272 Teresita: I'm sorry I didn't hear the first part?  
273 Alondra: What did you personally initiate or help initiated in the Chicano movement?  
274 Teresita: Well, the Galería Posada for sure. I'm just trying to think. I know that I worked with a  
275 lot of people, I'm not going to say I initiated myself but I think when we were part of the RCAF,  
276 looking at some of the exhibitions we did at the Galería in terms of curating I wrote a book on  
277 Malaquías Montoya which I'm really proud of because I think he represents a lot of the work  
278 that I've been talking about. Then also I know when we had the cultural affairs committee, I  
279 worked with a lot of great people, like Rosemary Rasul, David Rasul, a lot of the artist, Gina  
280 Montoya to begin a whole series of cultural events that hadn't been done before. Including Día  
281 Del Los Muertos [Day of the dead] which also Armando Cid had been a key initiator of that and  
282 then also we did Fiesta de Colores, we did Fiesta de Maíz, which a lot of communities are now  
283 doing up and down the state. So being part of that group  
284 [00:26:03]

285 I'm still very proud of that because like I said you could still see there's persons in other places  
286 that have come in and taken it over as well.

287 Alondra: What significance do you think these groups and organizations you were part of helped,  
288 what played in Movimiento Chicano [Chicano Movement]?

289 Teresita: For me the biggest role has been the RCAF because it grew out of just being mostly  
290 visual artists because it was the Rebel Chicano Art Front. It started here in Sacramento and so it  
291 was something that we could be proud of. It was also something that started on a university  
292 campus at Sac State. And then it grew so it became a group that also had writers, poets, scholars,  
293 it had organizers. I mean Joe Serna who became the mayor twice here in Sacramento was a part  
294 of that. So there was also organizing, working to help the UFW as well, but I think what was  
295 really good about it was that because it was so inclusive, it really was a model in some ways that  
296 a lot of people then looked at. So I think there are some places internationally that know about  
297 the RCAF, they may know only a certain component of it, they may know the visual artists, or  
298 they may know that there were literary people in it: José Montoya, cuz he did both. He was an  
299 artist and he was a poet and he always referred to himself as an RCAF artist so I think there's a  
300 lot of institutions that know about it. Like I said, even nationally and internationally that I feel  
301 like that was an important part of the movement because I think it took it from being very local  
302 and then also gave a lot of the Chicano art

303 [00:28:03]

304 much more emphasis internationally. And the interesting part of it was that because a lot of  
305 people knew about it, they were invited to a lot of Floricantos (cultural art events), they had  
306 exhibitions in other cities. So, I think it was really important to also as a way to influence other  
307 artists to be able to think about themselves as we can come together and be part of a group and

308 work together and do different things rather than just being in our studio and do art but and I  
309 can't talk to the poets or writers because I'm a visual artist. That you really could come together  
310 and do something much bigger that not wasn't just artistic but also it could be political it could  
311 be organizing, it could actually get people elected and be part of the UFW. So, it made it a lot  
312 more feasible for others to look at that as a model.

313 Alondra: How did the Movmiento Chicano raise your consciousness of social, cultural, and  
314 political lines?

315 Teresita: Well, I think that it by itself it didn't do that. I think in conjunction with all the other  
316 movements, it's changed American history. I mean I don't think that you could look at now with  
317 the legislature that we have with all the different Latino elected officials. The fact that you have  
318 Obama as president, I mean Latinos had a big part in doing that and I don't think it would have  
319 happened without the Chicano movement because Chicano movement had all these layers. So,  
320 there was the cultural, the social, and the political, and so I think all of that together changed the  
321 course of American History. I don't think we're through yet, [laughs] but even though I think it's  
322 still very hard right now to look at how that's going to play out because we're still

323 [00:30:03]

324 even with an African American president, it's still very racist out here and you can see it in terms  
325 in just the way you know who are the ones who are in the prisons? It's mostly Latinos and  
326 African Americans. Who are the ones that are not graduating from high school? Who are the  
327 ones that are always getting sent home for suspensions and all of those different aspects? I mean  
328 who's getting killed out in the streets? Gangs and killing each other along with the police are  
329 killing us. So, I think it's still part of a lot of work that still needs to be done. But I don't think  
330 we can ever go back to the way it was in terms of people thinking that somehow or another we're

331 going to go away or be invisible or be put back in our place. I don't think that's gonna happen.

332 So in some ways its really more about how we can go forward to look at how we can work

333 together and I think as Chicanos we're starting to find that out, that we can try to do things by

334 ourselves but that its not's gonna work and we really need to look to how we can work together

335 to do things that are going to not only help us but help everyone else as well.

336 Alondra: How did these changes impact your personal relationships with your families, your

337 peers, or your significant others?

338 Teresita: I think, I mean I feel like it expanded my family. So I now, I have friends who are a

339 part of my family. I think for me, like all of the members of the RCAF became part of a family.

340 It was like my second family. I still consider them that way so I think for me it just expanded

341 my relationships with other people in a much more deeper way.

342 [00:32:03]

343 Alondra: Can you please describe some of the impacts that the Movimiento Chicano, like your

344 involvement in the Movimiento Chicano like shaped your career or your career choice?

345 Teresita: Well as I mentioned earlier it really did put me on a track to be a curator and a writer so

346 I can write about our history. And then I think also it helped me to understand arts in culture in a

347 way that helped me to get a job actually giving money to arts organizations and then being able

348 to help the organizations, Chicano organizations get more funding. So now I work at a

349 foundation and I oversee all of the funding. It's the San Francisco Foundation and we're a

350 community foundation so we get funding. And then we give it back out to the community. So,

351 the portion I do is arts and culture and I'm lucky because now that foundation has had a director

352 and a new director that both believe in social justice and equity. It's allowed me to look at, "okay

353 how can I get these funds that I have to organizations of color especially to organizations, Latino



354 organizations, Chicano organizations to do their work so I can help La Galería La Raza.” I can  
355 help La Peña, those organizations to get stronger and they’ve been but they been there forever  
356 but always struggling. So, in a way having gone through this and understanding the importance  
357 of support and resources I can help those organizations get not only more funding but some  
358 technical assistance so they can get stronger so that hopefully the communities won’t lose out  
359 because these organizations at some point don’t have enough resources to keep serving the  
360 community.

361 Alondra: Looking back at your experiences from the Movimiento Chicano [Chicano Movement],  
362 are there any issues that were left unsolved, that you believe are still there?

363 [00:34:03]

364 Teresita: Like I said earlier it’s still developing, I still think we have a lot to do. I think we’re still  
365 trying to figure out how do we make sure that our culture doesn’t get lost and that we’re still  
366 fighting. I mean what happened in Arizona where they wiped out the ethnic studies and Chicano  
367 studies and we can’t read the books about our history. I mean it’s like thinking that you know we  
368 that somehow or another all the problems were solved, it’s not right and I think we still have to  
369 be cognizant of the fact that we’re still dealing with a lot of these issues. As Chicanos, I mean  
370 like I said how do we deal with the education issues, and prison issues and I mean all of that is  
371 still unresolved because that was the dream, was that somehow or another we would be able to  
372 not only have political power, but also not have to be in poverty and not have to be in the same  
373 situations that farm workers have now, even with the union. I mean I was reading a story last  
374 week about, you know, whole families in Tulare County who don’t even have water. I mean  
375 this is like 2015, how many years after the Chicano movement and yet, those families are yet still  
376 in some ways, same situation that we were trying to deal with. So there’s still issues that still

377 have to be resolved but you know it's not all I don't think it's all negative because we can also  
378 look through the successes of having more representation having more scholars and professors  
379 and people in positions of power. But I don't think we've met our goals yet.

380 [00:36:00]

381 Alondra: Many Movimiento Chicano [Chicano movement] activists have passed on, can you like  
382 identify any individual or individuals that you feel has shaped your impact on the Movimiento  
383 Chicano [Chicano Movement] and like their significance?

384 Teresita: Some of the ones I mentioned earlier Tijerina, all the work he did in New Mexico  
385 Gutiérrez, José Angel, starting La Raza, the Raza party. I mean all of these people did  
386 something, it seemed really outlandish at the time. You know like taking on the government,  
387 saying you know these land grants were ours saying and you have no rights to this and being able  
388 to do that legally. Then of course César Chávez, what he was able to accomplish is amazing. I  
389 mean to organize farm workers, I mean I still don't know how that happened [laughs]. I'm glad it  
390 did but I mean it's really amazing when you think about it. Some of the artists that we've lost,  
391 José Montoya who was a big influence in terms of being part of the RCAF and getting to know  
392 him and his work. We lost Gilbert Luján, we lost in Los Angeles "Magu," who was an amazing  
393 artist as well. Carlos Cortez an artist in Chicago who was a print maker, I mean he lived a long  
394 life and he actually was one of those conscientious objectors during the Vietnam war and got put  
395 in prison. I think there's a lot of people I think I look to and I still get inspired by.

396 Alondra: What do you see our current or future challenges for the Chicano community and how  
397 do you see yourself staying involved and trying to defeat these challenges? You mentioned  
398 Tulare doesn't have water and the you mentioned Chicano's still live in poverty.

399 [00:38:03]

400 Alondra: So do you feel you can stay involved in trying to do something or change?

401 Teresita: I think part of it is like I said working at a community foundation trying to help those

402 organizations that are working with the communities and then also within the arts, also arts

403 education because I think a lot of times people don't understand how important arts education is.

404 But arts education that's culturally relevant. So, having Chicanos that can go to school and have

405 classes and Mariachi or different kinds of music so it's not just European music, that they get to

406 be exposed to all these different artists that I just talked about and not just Picasso and mostly

407 Western European artists and that they can have a sense of their culture being important and that

408 that is something worthy of being not only expressed in terms of what they know about it but

409 also that other people get exposed to it and understand how important it is and be able to use it as

410 a bridge to other cultures as well. I think that that would help a lot in terms of the education

411 system which, for me is the key to the whole thing is that if we don't have an investment in the

412 future, then that to me is the biggest challenge because you can't keep this pipeline of school to

413 prison. It's really one of the biggest challenges that we have. Right now when you think about,

414 especially California, we're already where the rest of the country is going in terms of the

415 demographics and the Latinos are the biggest population here and in Texas, Arizona and in New

416 Mexico, the Southwest. But if we can't get the education system down then,

417 [00:40:03]

418 I don't see how we're going to be able to make a better society, if we don't deal with that. And I

419 think the arts are a part of that because I do believe the arts is really what makes us human.

420 Because animals don't have art. I mean humans are the ones that can express themselves, and I

421 think if we don't get it right, it's because we don't see how the arts can really be a way to bridge

422 that and have people talk about the arts within, because those are also a part of our culture. So, if

423 we can't do that then we're always going to be thinking that other people do the arts and other  
424 people have value that we don't have and that our culture doesn't have value. And if we don't  
425 make those connections, then the kids who go to the schools and learn just Western European  
426 History or somebody else's culture are always going to be feeling like there left out that they  
427 don't belong that they don't have a place here, that they're not smart enough, that they can't  
428 really be who they are, and be successful. So for me, that's gotta be one of the biggest challenges  
429 is how do we make that shift so that then all of the Chicano, Latino kids, African American kids,  
430 Asian kids can feel like, this is exactly where they belong and they have a place here.

431 Alondra: Thank you so much for your time.

432 Terestita: You're welcome.

433 [00:41:26]

434 END OF TRANSCRIPT