

ATTN Philip Breeden

## LA RECONQUISTA

*La Reconquista* aims to present four site-specific installations and objects reflecting an historically excluded perspective regarding the impact of the European arrival to the United States since the sixteenth century. The consequences of this arrival are global, regional, relevant, and timely. They continue to shape our world view and the exploration of this historical reality is fundamental to a complete understanding of the impact of this event on the peoples of the New World. Chicanos, products of the complex merger of the Old and New World societies, have continued to amass a collective anti-colonial voice which continues to rise. Artistic expressions traditionally represent the intellectual response to this continuing process and define our focus for the future. This exhibition provides insight, direction and focus for this historically silent voice.

As we point our society into the swirling winds of 1992, the world will be celebrating the "discovery" of the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Most of the world will chime in on the "Global Party," as beckoning and haunting 500-year old questions and indictments persist. As descendants of unwilling participants in the "Discovery of the Americas," we must trust and look toward our own voices that are articulating the experience of being the "discovered." Our collective experience is distinct from those who discovered and stamped their culture through the lands of the New World.

Our forebearers endured an historical trauma embodied by the western-directed pursuit of glory, destiny and gold. History points out that conquests and a subjugation of a people is not exceptional, yet Columbus inadvertently set forth an unrelenting momentum of transformation both monumental in scope and cruel in application. The encounter gave birth to one of the most enduring legacies of conflict and subjugation in the history of mankind. It also led to the possibility of the creation of the most powerful and promising nations on Earth. The promise of the application of Democratic principles to all of its people has yet to come to pass. Recent generations fought and continue to fight for the promises held prisoner and left unresolved within the body of the European legacy.

Our nation has for centuries reluctantly participated in uneasy exercises: the forced democratization of its institutional life and a reinterpretation of its history as told by people who are painful products of the European legacy merged with the indigenous



need nor care for "official U.S. sanctioning" by having a Tribal ID #. HEADCOUNT addresses this situation.

Richard Lou and Robert Sanchez, in their installation entitled ENTRANCE IS NOT ACCEPTANCE, address the reality for many people of color in the U.S. Because of economic, social, and political barriers, many have been marginalized into invisibility. Whatever acknowledgement does take place is a negative portrayal -- criminals, drug dealers, poor and uneducated, violent and always less than equal. The border they address is not only the international border between the U.S. and Mexico, but the borders within the U.S. How sophisticated contemporary colonization has become when it exists within the mind. Then, little external pressure is necessary because the policing is done internally -- within the self. What role do the colonized play in their own victimization at that point and how do we break out of it? Thus, the importance of the repeated subtext of reclamation and recovery in all of these installations..

Miscege NATION by David Avalos and Deborah Small also focusses on the reality of people of color in the U.S. Their focus is external, and looks at popular culture (television and film) and historical painting to analyse notions of race and racial purity. For many, depending on how dark your skin is and what language you speak, there exists a daily struggle to negotiate within U.S. society. What is taken for granted by many white people such a home, job and health care is difficult or impossible to attain for many people of color -- and poor white people, since a combination of race, class and gender determines one's economic and social status in U.S. society. This installation addresses difficult subjects with humor and wit, subjects that have everything to do with a current discourse in the U.S. on multiculturalism, racism, mixed marriage and institutional racism.

The reclamation, liberation and recovery of our personal and ancestral histories is the future. We celebrate the resistance and survival of our peoples in the face of 500 years of oppression and genocide.