



In the Spirit of a New People: The Cultural Politics of the Chicano Movement

By Randy J. Ontiveros

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Reexamining the Chicano civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, *In the Spirit of a New People* brings to light new insights about social activism in the twentieth-century and new lessons for progressive politics in the twenty-first. Randy J. Ontiveros explores the ways in which Chicano/a artists and activists used fiction, poetry, visual arts, theater, and other expressive forms to forge a common purpose and to challenge inequality in America.

Focusing on cultural politics, Ontiveros reveals neglected stories about the Chicano movement and its impact: how writers used the street press to push back against the network news; how visual artists such as Santa Barraza used painting, installations, and mixed media to challenge racism in mainstream environmentalism; how El Teatro Campesino's innovative "actos," or short skits, sought to embody new, more inclusive forms of citizenship; and how Sandra Cisneros and other Chicana novelists broadened the narrative of the Chicano movement. *In the Spirit of a New People* articulates a fresh understanding of how the Chicano movement contributed to the social and political currents of postwar America, and how the movement remains meaningful today.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1528765 in Books
- Published on: 2013-11-04
- Released on: 2013-11-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .61" w x 6.00" l, .85 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 241 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"The book's strengths lie in its reading of cultural texts, especially the visual work of Barraza; performances of El Teatro Campesino; and the writing of Cisneros, Rodolfo 'Corky' Gonzales, Enriqueta Vasquez, and others. Analyses of these varied works offer compelling support for Ontiveros's larger argument that at least culturally the Chicano movement 'didn't die at all.' Contextualized in a broader history that dates to the Mexican Revolution of 1910, these examples provide persuasive evidence for the movement's legacy beyond just demographic and electoral politics."-*The Journal of American History*

"[...] In the *Spirit of a New People* succeeds in its argument for recuperating elements of Chicana/o cultural nationalism from the 1960s and the 1970s as it was and continues to be embedded in Chicana/o art as a framework and impetus for contemporary Chicana/o political action in the present."-*MELUS*

"Elegantly demonstrates the Chicano movement's irrefutable influence on a politically astute and enduring legacy of expressive culture. Randy J. Ontiveros persuasively argues that *movimiento*-inspired art and literature offer a crucial dose of historical consciousness required for sustaining struggles for social justice. A game-changing intervention in Chicano/a and American studies, Ontiveros's book moves us beyond reductionist claims and rehashed debates to reinvigorate Chicano movement scholarship." -Richard T. Rodriguez, author of *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics*

"*In the Spirit of a New People* provides a thoughtful analysis of how the Chicano movement—and social justice struggles more generally—can influence politics and culture."-*The Journal of American History*

About the Author

Randy J. Ontiveros is Associate Professor of English and an affiliate in U.S. Latina/o Studies and Women's Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park.

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