

Los Angeles Snapshots

ROBERTO TEJADA

1. [COVER STORY: “SOUTH OF CHU LAI”]

“A huge section of Los Angeles was virtually a city on fire,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*, “as flames from stores, industrial complexes and homes lit the night skies.”¹ On August 11, 1965, when “rocks, bricks, and bottles” first erupted at the corner of 116th Street and Avalon Boulevard, and desperation unleashed scenes of uprising in Watts and elsewhere—with firebombs setting storefronts and overturned cars ablaze and law enforcement barricades confining the throng, followed by an escalating storm of tear-gas missiles, mass arrests, and slayings in what the *Times* at first called a “melee” and later “virtual guerilla warfare”—that day found staff reporter Rubén Salazar en route to his assignment in Vietnam to dispatch from the paper’s Saigon bureau. One of two Mexican Americans at the *Times*, Salazar found opportunity in Vietnam to remark on the crisis in Los Angeles. (A glaring omission during the Watts rebellion, the newspaper had never hired any African American journalists.) In an August 23 report, Salazar interviewed twenty-nine-year-old Marine Sergeant Harrison Madison, “a Negro formerly of Long Beach,” stationed in Chu Lai, South Vietnam, on the “racial trouble in Los Angeles.” The Marine at first denounces the revolt as unfounded: “Violence is never justified,” he claims, “when peaceful settlement is possible.”² The wartime irony is not lost on Salazar, who in the same first paragraph describes the sergeant ordering his mortar section “to fire on nearby Viet Cong guerillas.” The rhetorical nuance builds with each paragraph in this brief report from the combat zone. Sergeant Madison tells of the remote position he and his men have secured in the village of Guong, about twenty-five miles south of Chu Lai. “The only way in or out is by helicopter,” he specifies, and so the isolation has granted him time to think about conditions in Watts. Reading newspaper accounts of the National Guard’s deployment in Los Angeles, Madison recalls the days when he was stationed at Camp Pendleton and—recently married at the time and with a first child—was unable to rent a house in Oceanside because of housing discrimination. As mortar fire rages in the background of the interview scene, Madison bares his conflicted feelings.

As for the men in his troop, Madison confirms he is capable of keeping his command free of interracial strife, “no matter what’s going on in Los Angeles.” But he admits feeling trepidation at the prospect of going home: “I thought things were getting better there between the races. Then I think about

being able to rent a house in Oceanside and I think about our being here to stop communism from spreading to the United States and I get confused.” Having served in the armed forces for eleven years, Madison relates that by the time he left Camp Pendleton in 1963, California’s Rumford Act had enabled him to secure a house in Oceanside and that “Gov. Brown had done a lot to improve race relations.” Salazar reminds the sergeant that the Rumford Act—the so-called Fair Housing law—had since been repealed. “I have no way of knowing,” Madison reacts, “but perhaps that helped foul things up in Los Angeles. . . . Being cooped up like we are here, surrounded by hostile forces, makes you uncomfortable, naggy and frustrated.” At this juncture, a visual pause in the newsprint appears with a subheading, DIRECTS WHITE CREW, absorbing some of the impact of what follows, even as it drives the newsman’s perspective home to Los Angeles. As Madison voices commands for his crew to supply additional mortar support—and with the phrase “uncomfortable, naggy and frustrated” still hanging in the air—the sergeant turns aside and to Salazar suggests, “Maybe that’s what happened in Watts.”



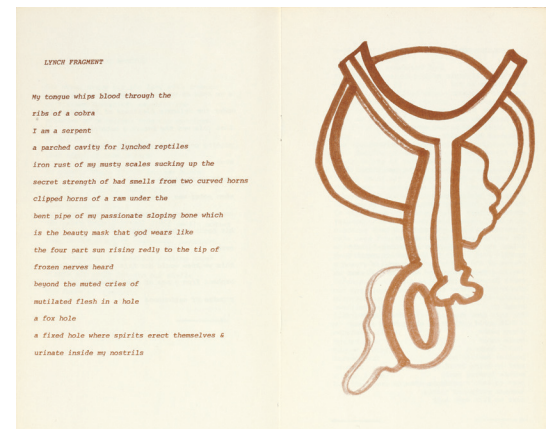
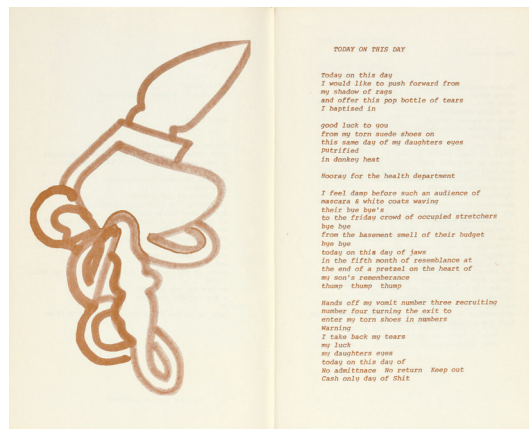
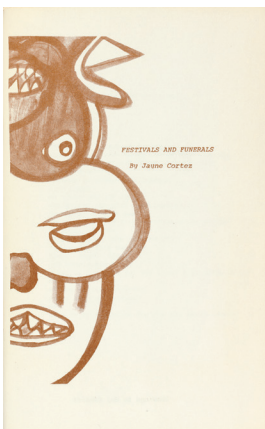
Jayne Cortez in Los Angeles, 1960s. Courtesy of Jayne Cortez.

2. [DOUBLE EXPOSURE: “TODAY ON THIS DAY”]

Jayne Cortez has claimed to locate her poetry in the unconscious and its concrete objects, employing visceral citations and a language of the lower body to render syllables immediate to their action. “I guess the poetry is like a festival,” she remarks. “Everything can be transformed.”³ In 1971 Cortez printed *Festivals and Funerals*, a self-produced limited edition composed on an IBM Selectric II. At forty-four pages, the saddle-stitched book, a rare object, was an extension of her Phrase Text imprint and a forerunner to her long-standing Bola Press. The volume establishes a space of relation between the twenty-five poems by Cortez and seven drawings produced for the edition by artist Melvin Edwards, each class of line remarking on its adjacent medium. The collaboration furthermore hinges its two

media in concrete spatial and temporal terms: expectations and real time cut back and forth between typographic lines and ink markings. Cortez's poetry, unflinching insofar as it seeks to explore the brutal underside of expressive acceptability, makes such zones of interdiction possible in language that explodes with joyousness, even as it is capable of collapsing spaces at once social, psychological, geographic, and economic.

One of the opening poems in the collection, titled "Initiation," submits, with no small amount of cruel irony, what the book as a whole exults. The "health department" appears to be shorthand for the institutional effect of municipal agencies, antipoverty programs, and other bureaucratic spaces not always able in actual objective to ensure public well-being. Parallel leitmotifs include those of injury and amputation; flesh in its various states of combustion or breakdown; diseases congenital or infectious; and pathologies acute or chronic. Pan-African rituals blur into the violence of transatlantic slavery and again into the brutalities of the modern-day clinic. In this, her poems already shared elective affinities with Edwards's recombinant structures made of metal tools, stand-in body parts that amalgamate to resemble ceremonial masks rising from the junk heap of modern consumption.⁴



Jayne Cortez, *Festivals and Funerals* (New York: Phrase Text, 1971). Poetry by Cortez with drawings by Melvin Edwards. Private collection.

Following their involvement in respective Southern California art scenes, Edwards and Cortez were living in New York when they embarked on this poet-visual artist collaboration, whose narrative clearly points back to its origins in Los Angeles. In their collaborative working method, Cortez first sent the complete manuscript to Edwards, living at the time in upstate New York, who returned to her a large number of drawings grounded in the book's argument, structure, lexicon, and subject matter. Cortez then proceeded to select and visually order the drawings into the sequence of the book. The cover drawing to *Festivals and Funerals* relates formally to that on the interior title page. Positioned to the left is an upturned masklike set of triangular teeth that forms a grimace-flashing mouth.

An eye-nipple nestles on a pair of breast-lips, overlapping vision and voluptuousness in a totemic ascent of glands, eyes, and nose. Although indistinguishable and in partial view, the configuration is rendered in solid bold lines and confident strokes, the marker's flat tip allowing Edwards to create thicker curved segments with a downward mark, and narrower lines on the horizontal and diagonal. These chain formations, prompted from the unspecified space of the blank page, materialize into long- and short-phrased gestures. Equally stressed between the flatness of the marking and the volume of the recommended form is what Cortez submits as a "second headed face" in an adjacent poem ("Initiation"). Together there emerges a chilling traction between the visual body parts and the ritual geography of cause that nominates "an arm for a rapist? / a leg for the servant?"⁵

This prologue poem is followed by another riveting vision in "Today on This Day." An inauguration takes place, invoked by a subject in corporeal tatters, a baptismal offering in a fluid of tears. Proximity of terms, however—as "rags" to "pop bottle"—suggests that the liquid is combustible and that the object launched is a firebomb like those unleashed in 1965 on the streets of Los Angeles. The speaker bids sardonic well wishing from a place of destitution, and the blistering temperatures turn progeny into corporeal decay. A single line, an eerie cheer for the "health department," invokes spectators to watch "the friday crowd" of injured bodies spread out on stretchers as they are made to tumble into some storage place underground; these cadavers serve as surrogates for the decomposing foundation on which future admission is contingent.

The sexual excitement and farewells at mid-poem are a defiance to spite the beau monde or scientific elites ("audience of / mascara & white coats waving . . ."), and some of the visual citations are continuous in mood with the drawings by Edwards. The words *jaws* and *pretzel* betray oblique relation to the markings evocative of flaps and loops under an obtruding brush tip or traditional spearlike tool. This interlacing submits that likeness is to remembrance as the commemoration of a son or a daughter is to History. The institutional or hallowed spaces proscribed to the speaker ("No admittance No return") recall, together with the drawing's archaic lines, that in the economics only of manufacture and consumption, money and human waste are of a piece. Several pages after this, precisely in the poem "Lynch Fragment," the conspiring visual and verbal poetics escalate. References to "whips" and "bone" and "mutilated flesh" communicate across the page—but never in direct, one-to-one relationship—with analogous noose, harness, and branch figures, aligned in the foreground of a midday sun or full-moon formation. Staged here are various affinities and incremental transmutations—of serpent into ram, of a divine mask into gashed tissue either defiled or consecrated with bodily fluids. If terror is the historical cause, and panic the internal root, of abjection—translated into animal odors and urinous cavities—the result is a body brutalized and thereby foreign to its own cultural and sexual figuration in the field of vision. For a strand of surrealism that saw picture and word as

indivisible, the abject is a pageantry not of things that degrade but of all that we treasure. It appears as a bodily orifice—legitimate opening onto the world—and as the site of explosive impulses, as when the mouth is an organ of “muted cries,” demented hilarity, or tortured screams.⁶

As with his small-format relief sculptures, Edwards creates pictorial enigmas in these drawings that activate surplus liveliness in the depiction of black histories, even as they ask where one linear idea begins and another ends in visual metaphors composed of patterns, profiles, and appendages. *Festivals and Funerals* is the effect of a meeting place between argument and image whereby no perfect fit is possible. That alliance, however—together in crisscrossed depiction, as voice to embodiment—is better able, using the celebratory occasion as defiance, to articulate the taboo descriptions of a history shaped by American racial violence. Its intermedia picture of U.S. society, for which Los Angeles was a blueprint, is at once a form of interment that estranges speech and the achievement of a partial task: to act in the world by rearranging its relations.

3. [OBLIQUE SHOT: MORATORIUM]

Even though by midcentury Los Angeles had largely disowned its eastern and southern sections, home respectively to Chicanos and to African Americans, after the Watts uprising of 1965 those formerly excluded citizens now claimed their “right to the city”⁷—to seek, that is, what Edward Soja has called “the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.”⁸ Assimilating Mexican Americans and politicized Chicanos alike found much to validate their brand of citizenship in the journalism of Rubén Salazar. After his assignment in Vietnam, he was for many years a *Los Angeles Times* staff reporter, later chief of its Mexico City bureau, and finally news director of KMEX, the Spanish-language television station in Los Angeles. During his tenure at the *Times*, as news writer and guest columnist, he reported cultural stereotyping on television, specifically the damage it can cause to “the self-image of young impressionable Mexican-American minds” while endorsing prejudice among “young, impressionable Anglo minds.”⁹ He covered the 1969 Chicano Youth Liberation Conference held in Denver, where, most notably, Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzalez had outlined the manifesto of a cultural politics in his “Spiritual Plan of Aztlán.”¹⁰ Salazar addressed repression and its alienating effects in the barrio.¹¹ He wrote about *pachuco* folk heroes;¹² about *bato locos* and their potential in organizational politics;¹³ about the need for jobs in unemployment-ridden ghettos and barrios; and about the lack of equal opportunities for education in the geographically overdetermined spatial layout of Los Angeles.¹⁴ Born in Mexico and educated in the borderlands of El Paso, Salazar wrote about the bilingual experience; about growing Chicano nationalism;¹⁵ about border crossing and employment issues in the shift from agricultural to factory labor;¹⁶ and about the demands of Chicano and Latino groups at UCLA concerning education, the entertainment industry, and communications media.¹⁷ He spoke to the vicissitudes of the word *Mexican*

as a maligned expression,¹⁸ and, perhaps most notably, he gave historical nuance to the name for those who so self-identified: “A Chicano is a Mexican-American with a non-Anglo-image of himself.”¹⁹

In the process, Salazar identified a new style of Chicano leadership that looked, now optimistically, now ambivalently, to antecedents in the Black Power movement: “The new breed of Mexican-American leaders, some anxious over strides Negroes are making with public monies which they consider should be going to Chicanos, are trying to emulate the more militant Negro leaders.”²⁰ Salazar did not shy away from reporting on black-brown friction, but instead remained unflinching when comparing the ways in which blacks and Chicanos were the subjects of racism. Finding it difficult to suppress resentment in their “scramble for better jobs, housing, and education,” many Mexican Americans began to express feeling “short-shrifted” by all the antipoverty programs aimed at African Americans.²¹ Whereas Chicanos were rapidly becoming the largest ethnic group in Southern California, it appeared to them as though African Americans were making greater strides.²²

For Salazar, the ethos of Chicano identity—as conveyed to Mexican Americans and Anglos alike—was open to comparison with the African American civil rights movement; the social demands of the latter made it possible and desirable to articulate brownness and other styles of positive selfhood in the forging of Chicano empowerment. Salazar reported on the turn away from “Spanish surname” identity to a self-confident ethnic pride in being of Mexican descent. This formed but one part of a broader cross-cultural identification and alliance that found symbolic and political partnerships in the burgeoning Chicano Arts Movement. Antonio Bernal’s 1968 mural at the Teatro Campesino headquarters in Del Rey, California—canonical in the image archive of El Movimiento—featured historical figures from the Mexican Revolution, including Emiliano Zapata and an *Adelita* (female insurgent), in line with Cesar Chavez waving the United Farm Workers flag in a defiant stand, joined also by Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

The everyday discrimination, desolate living conditions, and incidents of police brutality facing families and communities in South and East Los Angeles prompted Salazar to begin reporting on collective discontent and resistance. With the founding of the Chicano Moratorium Committee, an upsurge of organized protests—first against conscription and then against the Vietnam War, for a year’s total of eighteen demonstrations in the Southwest²³—culminated in the National Chicano Moratorium, held on August 29, 1970, in East L.A.’s Belvedere Park. KMEX, where Salazar was now director, helped to promote the rally, for which an estimated twenty thousand peaceful protesters made their way from Belvedere Park, down Whittier Boulevard, to Laguna Park. At first imperceptible to the demonstrators at large, panic at a nearby liquor store had led its proprietor to lock down the establishment, with rally patrons caught inside. Police arrived to form skirmish lines, and hostility rapidly escalated:

rocks and bottles hurled at law enforcement were met with tear-gas retaliation. The outbreak resulted in considerable property damage, four hundred arrests, and three fatalities. Most shocking was the death of Rubén Salazar, who in the Silver Dollar Café had sought respite from the mounting violence being waged against the protesters outside. In the already disproportionate police offensive, Deputy Sheriff Thomas Wilson made Salazar's head the target of a tear-gas projectile; the journalist was killed instantly.²⁴



View of street during Watts rebellion, Los Angeles, August 1965. Photo by Melvin Edwards, courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates.



Soldiers on Arlington Avenue during Watts rebellion, Los Angeles, August 1965. Photo by Melvin Edwards, courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates.



Soldiers on Western Avenue during Watts rebellion, Los Angeles, August 1965. Photo by Melvin Edwards, courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates.

4. [GROUP PORTRAIT WITH LACMA]

Nearly four years after Salazar's death, his colleague at public television KCET, Edward Moreno, was the one to cover *Los Four: Almaraz, de la Rocha, Luján, Romero* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). This milestone exhibition at the city's premier culture palace was the labor of Cecil Ferguson, a lively museum-world protagonist. James Tartan's 1974 documentary *Los Four* traces the days leading up to the exhibition and the group deliberations among the four members of the Chicano artists' collective—Carlos Almaraz, Gilberto Sánchez Luján, Roberto de la Rocha, and Frank Romero—as they struggle with this unprecedented opportunity for legitimation within the art establishment. The opening scene finds the quartet around a kitchen table anticipating what will qualify as the first presentation of Chicano art in a major U.S. museum. It is here, at Romero's house near downtown Los Angeles, "an informal meeting place for many local Chicano artists," that Los Four had instituted an alliance to meet and exhibit collectively. As a founding member, Romero describes in voice-over the close association he and Almaraz have shaped for more than twelve years—with the subsequent incorporation of Luján and de la Rocha—and how the group's iconography and ideas, when painting collectively, require the kind of exchange and compromise enacted now before the camera. Romero had studied art at Otis Art Institute and California State University, Los Angeles (then called California

State College), but it was the combined efforts of Los Four that brought Chicano street art to the attention of the Los Angeles mainstream community. Finding inspiration in everyday Mexican American working-class objects, folk imagery, and discarded items that they transformed into the raw material of assemblage art, Los Four's practice was one of *bricolage*, making-do. They eked the most out of a bare minimum in sometimes flamboyant, unapologetically shabby, but always colorful and joyous domestic cadences of *rasquachismo*—an attitude more than an idea or a style. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto later summarized the poetics of *rasquachismo* as that which embraces “the worldview of the have-nots” even as it represents “a quality exemplified in objects and places.”²⁵ For the LACMA exhibition, the group decided to contribute individually as well as collectively with the shared use of spray-can techniques, overlapping display, and a riotous accumulation of popular debris arranged into a pyramid altar.

In Tartan's film, the camera lingers on Romero as he wanders the streets of East L.A., photographing vernacular displays of residential front yards. In voice-over he affirms: “One of my private interests is collecting folk art in East Los Angeles, and I go out and drive, just to places I grew up around, park the car, walk the streets, talk to the people, and I'm basically involved in the kind of thing people with no art training do. . . . They decorate their gardens and what I find in East Los Angeles is a distinct Chicano style [cut to: a cactus plant and ornaments that include a bright yellow piggy bank atop a plaster cast elephant fronted by a plastic figurine of Daffy Duck], and I can only relate that to my own life experience the way I live: it's loose. What I'm saying is that these things had a strong influence on me as an individual and as an artist and I'm just now learning to reflect that input.”²⁶

The narrative curve follows the four artists moving materials from Romero's residence to the museum, installing the work on scaffolds in situ around the gallery assigned to them—“the back room,” according to Romero's voice-over. The various scenes culminate with a KCET crew preparing to tape Moreno in an interview for his television magazine *Ahora!*, a series intended to “increase awareness—inside and outside the Chicano community—of the problems, contributions and potential of the Mexican-Americans of Los Angeles.”²⁷ Following the “5 seconds” signal from the production team, Moreno intones the following in his graceful accented English: “Cecil Ferguson is especial curator for this exhibition of Los Four. Cecil, how did the museum become interested in Los Four's art?” Moreno's gray glen plaid suit and Ferguson's amber-orange tie and formal black shirt stand out against the bright pink pyramid constructed by Los Four. Ferguson punctuates: “For quite some time now, Mrs. Jane Livingston, curator of modern art, had been looking at a great deal of Chicano work, and works of other minority groups, such as black, women's movement, and that sort of art concept.” The Mexican journalist and the African American curator pause in front of the pyramid's stepped ledges packed with festive handcrafted articles: Mexican masks depicting humans, devils, and fantastic

beasts, statuettes of saints, freestanding crucifixes, woodcut prints, church candles, paper flower bouquets, and *papel picado* streamers. Together with Los Four's individual works, all this must have struck some temperaments as a muddled assault on the institution's devotion to the alleged "purity" of modernist form . . . and such an attitude is captured by Tartan's camera at the opening-night events. The guests, a family affair comprising East Los Angeles and Hancock Park art patrons alike, mingle amid the Mexican music, food, and dancing, while a few dour faces—and a partial view of Frank Stella's *Hiragla Variation I* (1969)—otherwise eclipsed, appear from time to time in the background.

If any advances were made in the L.A. museum world for people of color in the 1970s, it was largely thanks to Ferguson's defiant efforts at LACMA. His affiliation had begun at the institution's earlier incarnation, part of the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art at Exposition Park, where Ferguson worked as a custodian. Promotions led him from janitor to exhibition preparator and, at the museum's eventual Wilshire Boulevard campus, a member of its curatorial staff in the division of modern and contemporary art. Throughout his LACMA career, Ferguson took the institution to task for its false assumptions, silences, and contradictions—kinder words for what amounted to structural racism. He was unambiguous in challenging the authority of a "white" institution whose aesthetic values were conclusive in determining art-world economies of reward and prestige. With a reputation for being irascible, he was also, in the elegant summation of a more recent *Times* feature, an "assemblage of enigmas and grace notes only the mind of God would have the wit and effrontery to propose."²⁸ Interviewed for that same article, Ferguson notes how his "rise in the hierarchy of the museum" coincided with changes there: "The curators went from snobbish sons of rich white people to guys who got outta college who weren't necessarily born with money. . . . [Curators] Maurice Tuchman, James Elliot . . . they all had a liberal kind of funkiness to them. Different from most of the white people that I met when I first got there and who would walk up and down the hallway all day long and wouldn't speak to you." In a profession that tended to draw from the gray and feeble, Ferguson had vitality and drive, and he soon fell in with the cultural elite connected to the Chouinard Art Institute and Ferus Gallery. Ed Ruscha recalls that "Cecil was not of the hierarchy, but everybody knew Cecil . . . he was the ambassador over there. Any artist who was working over there would always seek him out, [and] Cecil was right there to help them."²⁹ Together with Claude Booker, a museum shipping clerk, Ferguson had formed the Black Arts Council in 1968. The council sponsored *Los Angeles 1972: Panorama of Black Artists*, a large group exhibition that signified the first museum showing for many of its fifty-one artists—Betye Saar, Noah Purifoy, David Hammons, and John Outterbridge among them. Even though the works had to be installed in LACMA's small rental gallery in the lower recesses of the museum, it was a platform for a "sort of art concept" that Ferguson was able to extend, two years later, to include Chicano artists. And there is no overstating their indebtedness to Cecil's efforts.

The *rasquachismo* of Los Four's 1974 exhibition conveys an affinity with Jayne Cortez's *Festivals and Funerals* as a parallel Chicano performance of the joyfully abject—the poet's "pop bottle of tears," "torn suede shoes," and "donkey heat" in alignment now with the art collective's cactus paddles, spray paint, and pink pyramid, as though "from the basement smell of their budget." The labors of Fergerson and Salazar overlap into a portrait whose double exposures provide a transcultural glimpse into the function of minority journalists and curators working as agents of social change. By seizing opportunity within the institutional framework, they altered policy within the newspaper establishment, the museum world, and beyond.

5. [LANDSCAPE: LIFE IN THE PARK WITH DEBRIS]

"Astrobrite melon" is the commanding silk-screen color. Two fields of vibrant orange-pink divide the poster into upper and lower planes, one in a diagonal pattern, held together over an area of the underlying paper as though attached by two black strips that resemble electrical tape on which letters appear to spill. They reiterate the bannered moniker above, a high-pitched announcement—"PLUGZ"—broadcast in radioactive-yellow typeface. A slanted inset over the cantaloupe backdrop features photographic material, the headshot of a male youth sporting a spiked coiffure, his eyes bulging, mouth open, and teeth firmly chomping on a spiral telephone cord. Over the purple and black dot pattern of yet another tilted bar below, the typeface in jukebox brush-script reads: "Nuevo Wavo," transposing "new wave" into Spanish. By 1978, the year artist Richard Duardo created this poster, the Plugz, a punk-inspired trio fronted by Tito Larriva (the poster's likely photograph subject), had gained much admiration among critics, peers, and fans alike as one of the most exciting outfits playing the Los Angeles club circuit. With its underground origins linked at first to short-lived venues like the Masque (1655 North Cherokee Avenue) and Larchmont Hall (180 North Larchmont Boulevard), the scene gradually surfaced to include other locations: in Hollywood, the Whisky a Go-Go (8901 West Sunset Boulevard) and the Starwood (8151 Santa Monica Boulevard); in Chinatown, Madame Wong's (949 Sun Mun Way) and the Hong Kong Cafe (425 Gin Ling Way); and downtown, Al's Bar (305 South Hewitt Street). In 1980 the all-age performance venue the Vex began to operate in East L.A. as an extension of Self Help Graphics and Art (3802 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, formerly Brooklyn), the community art center founded by a Franciscan nun, Sister Karen Boccalero.³⁰ Duardo, after graduating from UCLA in graphic design, had begun working in the early 1970s with several art collectives. One of these was Self Help, which served East Los Angeles's primarily Chicano and Mexicano community by offering print facilities so local artists could create silk-screened works such as *Plugz/Nuevo Wavo*.³¹



Richard Duardo's poster *Plugz/Nuevo Wavo*, 1978.
Richard Duardo Collection, California Ethnic and
Multicultural Archives, Department of Special
Collections, Davidson Library, University of
California, Santa Barbara.

Cultural as well as geographic distances separated the worlds of Hollywood and East L.A., but if there was any band capable of bridging those gaps, it was the Plugz—for example, when they headlined “East L.A. Night” at the Roxy on Sunset Boulevard, together with the Brat, Thee Undertakers, and Los Illegals.³² Tito Larriva’s oft-remarked charisma was matched by the calibrated musicianship of bandmates Chalo Quintana and Barry McBride (later replaced by Tony Marsico). Talking to *Times* writer Kristine McKenna, McBride summarized the sound of the band as “an amalgam of rhythm and blues, heavy metal, and traditional Spanish music,”³³ whereas McKenna herself described them as playing “hard driving punk with a melodic edge,” with Larriva as the riveting exemplar of “elegance, humor, and conviction.”³⁴ With his lyric minimalism, Larriva skewered the media-driven “mindless contentment” looming over the new creative class of Los Angeles (“All of the normals want to be on TV”). He sang about desires and discontent, too, in the emergent “scene” of which he was a participant-witness, all of it taking a toll on everyday selfhood: “A gain a loss / No matter the cost.”³⁵ With rare emotional tenor, their songs—recorded on two albums, *Electrify Me* (1979) and *Better Luck* (1981)—belie those U.S. promises that do not distribute equally, especially if you are socially marked in the spatial disconnection of Los Angeles itself: “When things look closer / that’s when they’re furthest away.” To the actual distances separating parts from the whole of the city—indeed, so often keeping the various scenes asunder—came the increasing price of oil throughout the crises of the 1970s. Duardo’s silk screen includes the numbers intoned by Larriva and the Plugz in a secret-agent punk tune titled

“Gas Line,” referring to price hikes at filling stations in Los Angeles from 1975 to 1979. At a time when fuel was still counted in cents per gallon—“55 to 61 / 61 to 84 / 84 to 90”—the song conveys a historical moment whose continuation was at best precarious: “We’re all tapping gas . . . Don’t light a match.”

The posters for upcoming shows at venues throughout the city reflect a public culture that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s around nighttime concert settings. This culture satirized fantasies of the status quo, and Hollywood’s image engineering was one of its particularly dependable targets.³⁶ By the early 1980s there emerged in Los Angeles a phantom version of Hollywood that included the Groundlings Theatre’s 1981 midnight skewering of children’s television, *The Pee-Wee Herman Show* (created by and starring Paul Reubens in the title role, Tito Larriva as his friend Hammy, and actor-by-day nightclub-bouncer-by-night Laurence Fishburne as Cowboy Curtis). There was Peter Iver’s cable-access delirium known as *New Wave Theater* that hosted bands such as the Plugz, the Suburban Lawns, the Blasters, the Circle Jerks, and Fear.³⁷ Its intrepid editing and gonzo variety-show format both aped and indulged in late-night kook philosophizing, the drone of advertising culture, and Southern California transcendentalism. The vernacular assemblage art that was punk fashion lampooned the glamour of Hollywood by pillaging secondhand stores for its own rough-and-tumble spectacle, unwittingly *rasquache* through and through, even as its manifold styles shared, as McKenna pointedly observes, a “quality of studied amateurishness.”³⁸ If so much depended upon “How to Look Punk”—in as much as a “simple T-shirt, punk-style necktie, a few chains or safety pins, and jeans is getting it on”—corporeal expressiveness proved at best to be a form of nonconformist swagger linked to misfit pragmatism.³⁹ In this culture’s patterns of looking and being seen, photocopied flyers, promotional shots for bands, and ‘zines such as *Slash* and *Flipside* all captured a style that made it possible for idolaters to individuate and connect by way of insider distinctions that mapped you among the happy few. What Fred “Phast Phreddie” Patterson dubbed the Underground Rock Elite of Los Angeles⁴⁰ was as much involved in staging the nightmare aspect of Sunset Strip glamour—John Doe and Exene Cervenka’s dissonant vocalizing to “Sex and Dying in High Society”—as it was committed to spoofing industry ennui and showbiz exceptionalism. One need only consider the Circle Jerks (such trinkets of sentiment as “I’ve got the world up my ass”) or, more darkly, the stream-of-consciousness lyrics to X’s “Nausea”—“like a candy bar wrapped up for lunch that’s all you get to taste poverty and spit poverty and spit”—to see connections pointing back to the proto-punk poetics of Cortez and her critical dissociation from the beau monde and other elites in the kind of exuberance that can intone “No admittance No return Keep out / Cash only day of Shit.”

Video maker and performance artist Ulysses Jenkins described also the precariousness of racial and ethnic experience in the shadow of Hollywood. “What [it] represents, especially in my work, is the classic plantation mentality. Although people aren’t necessarily enslaved by it, people enslave

themselves to it because they're told how fantastic it is to help manifest these illusions for a corporate sponsor."⁴¹ While artists and musicians scrutinized *that* Hollywood and its detrimental effects, the actual Hollywood district became, if not entirely a zone of social détente, then at least a place where "punk" as an identity in its broadest sense, and shorthand for L.A.'s avant-garde, was prone to trump other (at times limiting) social and sexual identities. New modes of musical performance emerged from those initial inflections in an extended Hollywood field that included venues such as Club Lingerie (6507 Sunset Boulevard), the Anti-Club (4658 Melrose Avenue), Cathay de Grande (1600 North Argyle Avenue), China Club (8338 West Third Street), and especially Club Lhasa (1110 North Hudson Avenue). It comprised the heady high jinks of an avant cabaret style, such that brassy chanteuse Magie Song of the Fibonaccis ("Fellini-circus-chamber-mobile-home-park-Muzak from hell")⁴² could vamp about interethnic sexual politics ("Disgusting Man") and confront audiences with radical cultural difference, as in the number "Rice Song," alternately growled and cooed in Korean. There were also enactments of a "Third World video vision,"⁴³ combining the sounds of soul and art-rock with a political critique of U.S. global ascendancy during the Reagan era.

It is in this latter configuration that Jenkins's work comes into panoramic view. *Times* journalist Don Snowden wrote that Jenkins looked to combat "cultural stereotypes and the media saturation of modern society."⁴⁴ Earlier, the abjections enacted in Cortez's *Festivals and Funerals* had been meant to underline and redirect "visceral feelings about black bodies fueled by sexual myths of black women and men . . . as threatening creatures who have potential for sexual powers over whites, or as harmless, desexed underlings of a white culture."⁴⁵ For his 1978 art video *Mass of Images*—produced while completing an MFA at Otis Art Institute⁴⁶—Jenkins appears before a draped backdrop in a recording studio. A transparent mask forms a bubble covering his face, over which he wears large tinted glasses. From behind a pyramid of television sets, the artist swerves toward the camera in a wheelchair. He wears a bathrobe or hospital robe, with a knitted scarf in an American flag design pulled around his neck, and he wields a sledgehammer. As captured by cameraman Bob Dale, Jenkins begins to recite a set of rhyming verses: "You're just a mass of images you've gotten to know / from years and years of TV shows. / The hurting thing; the hidden pain / was written and bitten into your vein. / I don't and I won't relate / and I think for some it's too late!" Subsequent editing splices the single-take performance with jarring images from a variety of sources: D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*; *The Little Rascals*; Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*; vaudeville minstrel Bert Williams; and Laurel and Hardy in *Pardon Us*. Just as Jenkins prepares to lift the heavy implement and demolish the TV sets, there's a "break" in the performance and a burst of laughter, and the performer heckles: "Oh, my Lord Jesus . . ." [a gasp for breath: more laughter] "What the hell does *that* mean!?" Jenkins seamlessly transitions back "into character" and continues to recite verses again as he draws close to the camera for the final blackout. The deeper inference from that eruption—whether scripted or

unscripted, a moot point—is the possibility of regaining composure and self-possession within the mass of images that work to contain black bodies in representation.



Video stills from Ulysses Jenkins, *Without Your Interpretation*, 1983.

In the early 1980s Jenkins expanded cross-culturally in ways that were consistent with the public culture of those post-punk intersections of genre and social constituency. Life in the Park with Debris was a music-dance troupe formed when Jenkins, then working for a video-rental reproduction company in Hollywood, met guitarist Michael Delgado. Life in the Park's choreographed art-wave, jazz-inspired compositions originated in a "riff" the artist had presented to Delgado for a performance-art class Jenkins was teaching at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Jenkins added his vocals—part of the "Debris"—to Delgado's ensemble. The resulting sound also highlighted futuristic computer-blip coloring on synthesizer by Vinzula Kara, a leading figure in the L.A. underground music scene who later collaborated with politically driven conceptualist Daniel J. Martinez.⁴⁷ In *Without Your Interpretation* (1983), Jenkins experimented with the emerging music video format, based on footage from a performance that took place on September 18, 1983, at the Art Dock in downtown Los Angeles (112 Center Street). The video features Life in the Park performing in the urban open air, an afternoon musical presentation intercut with Debris's twilight choreography staged with members of the Rudy Perez workshop.⁴⁸ To these were added scenes assembled from the news media in what Jenkins describes as "a critical examination of mid-80s American culture and global issues through musical performance." The video's reliance on multilayered content, at once documentary and experimental, connected to the aims of fellow makers such as Senga Nengudi who shared an interest in generating "an image tapestry of sound, movement and sculpture."⁴⁹ The opening sequence begins with Life in the Park's acoustic drifting, with tonal qualities referencing Jimi Hendrix

("Drifting," *Cry of Love*), Pere Ubu ("One Less Worry," *New Picnic Time*), and Tuxedomoon ("East/Jinx/ . . . /Music #1," *Desire*)—musical gestures contemporaneous as well with ideas explored by the New York M-Base jazz collective. The video's opening footage transitions in a sequence—sliver of moon, planet Earth, an aerial topographic view—that gives way to the 1983 downtown Los Angeles skyline and finally to the band in free-flowing preamble. Rapid edits show the Rudy Perez troupe as each dancer alternates shoulders and hands outstretched against a wall, evoking arrest or entrapment by law enforcement. Pendant flashlights illuminate the futurist totem face-paint designs of Patssi Valdez, a founding member of the Chicano conceptual art collective ASCO—to be sure, Jenkins was exceptional in his cross-cultural prescience and in foregrounding women of color in his multimedia works. Majestic landscapes, snowcapped mountains, pristine rivers and waterfalls: intersecting scenes of natural beauty return to shots of Jenkins vocalizing at the microphone or kneeling over an East African xylophone, the singer clad in a gingham-print pantsuit, the Stars and Stripes forming a sash tied at his waist. "Somehow you feel, somehow you feel, what's going on. For our ancestors say, somehow you feel that they're not getting a fair share. . . ." The ensuing chain of images includes an Asian mother grieving for a son killed in combat, the *Columbia* space shuttle and Spacelab astronauts, a heart-replacement surgery, anchorman Charles Gibson in a financial news report, the civil war in El Salvador, Ronald Reagan and Gorbachev ("Still not talking / Starting to talk") during a disarmament summit—as Jenkins, in song, implores, "Don't let them push that button." Scenes of U.S. pleasure economies (Venice Beach Rollerbladers, a Miss America pageant) fluctuate with images of political protesters, law enforcement crowd control, and a stack of South African Krugerrands: "Let's scream and holler for the earthquake, what's going on?"

The piece was restaged that same year as *Without Your Interpretation 2*, at Hollywood's Club Lhasa, "a popular alternative performance art venue." In Jenkins's description, the work was "directed at the insensitivity of middle-class attitudes towards the Third World. As a yuppie couple barbecued an evening's meal, chilling & drinking their wine, oblivious to everything. . . . primal states of movement evolved into the robotic movements reflecting societies [*sic*] lack of concern." A TV set on the couple's picnic table functioned as "an 'omnipotent eye' looking back and forth on the screen watching them."⁵⁰ Tito Larriva of the Plugz had sung, in *Better Luck's* track titled "American," of U.S. global interventions and the sinister side of naiveté: "American took the bait / American took the gun. . . . He watches he waits he takes / He watches he waits he takes." That same evening, as *Life in the Park* with Debris performed *Without Your Interpretation 2*, on the twilight of yet another U.S. effort to gain ascendancy, Ronald Reagan sent troops to occupy the island of Grenada.

As Snowden has written, only "a handful of local outlets, ranging from museums to underground rock clubs, exhibit[ed] fine-art videos and Jenkins' political thrust and Third World perspective often encountered stiff opposition there."⁵¹ *Los Angeles Times* writers from Salazar to McKenna and Snowden

have been essential in making public “the creative scene that is seldom seen or written about,”⁵² remarkable for a mainstream print publication. City nightclubs and journalistic prose, like the interart relation of poetry and drawing, give way to each other as defiant locations for experimentation, commonality, and action. Geographer Edward Soja recalls that social space—human exchanges enacted over a concrete landscape—and such writing that submits place for legible view join to constitute the ground and consequence of an amalgamated process for mobilizing urban stories.⁵³ In visual and written arguments against a backdrop that connects the Vietnam War to the U.S. occupation of Grenada, bodies in public prompt awareness of internal and external differences that make a subject distinguishable in evolving sequences of social crises and survival. Salazar, Cortez, Edwards, Los Four, Ferguson, Duardo, Larriva, and Jenkins: they telescope in time and the historical uncanny. Secretly familiar, their practices here collapse spaces of ethnicity, global geography, and working method. They ghost claims to an alleged city essence or ethos for Los Angeles by exposing what some versions prefer to keep concealed and out of sight.

¹ Art Berman, “Eight Men Slain, Guard Moves In,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1965, 1.

² Rubén Salazar, “But He Recalls Race Problems,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1965.

³ D. H. Melhem and Jayne Cortez, “A *MELUS* Profile and Interview,” *MELUS* 21, no. 1, “Poetry and Poetics” (Spring 1996): 74.

⁴ In a 1965 interview with Los Angeles County Museum of Art curator Maurice Tuchman, for the exhibition catalogue to *Five Younger Los Angeles Artists*, Edwards likened his work to “icons or fertility figures [in] contemporary materials like steel and junk metal” and acknowledged that he drew from his “social background to give [himself] the impetus.” The found objects included a meat hook in *The Lifted X* and “a blackball that came from a fireplace, in the same sculpture.” *Five Younger Los Angeles Artists: Tony Berlant, Melvin Edwards, Llyn Foulkes, Lloyd Hamrol, Philip Rich—Contemporary Art Council New Talent Purchase Award Recipient, 1963–1965* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1965), unpaginated.

⁵ Jayne Cortez, *Festivals and Funerals* (New York: Phrase Text, 1971), unpaginated.

⁶ Georges Bataille, “The Solar Anus” and “Mouth,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 5–9, 59–60.

⁷ Henri Lefebvre, “The Right to the City,” in *Writings on Cities*, trans. and ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 158.

⁸ Edward W. Soja, “The City and Spatial Justice,” paper presented at the Spatial Justice conference, Nanterre, France, March 12–14, 2008; *Spatial Justice*, no. 1 (September 2009).

⁹ Rubén Salazar, “Latins’ Image in Advertising Held ‘Inferior,’” *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1969.

¹⁰ Rubén Salazar, “Anglo ‘Integration’ Rejected by Chicanos,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 7, 1969.

¹¹ Rubén Salazar, “Attack on Barrio, Ghetto Units Helps Explain Rising Alienation,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 1970.

¹² Rubén Salazar, “Pachuco Folk Heroes—They Were First to Be Different,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 1970.

- 13 Rubén Salazar, "Don't Make the 'Bato Loco' Go the Way of the Zoot Suiter," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1970
- 14 Rubén Salazar, "Equal Chance to Education? Not Down in the Barrios," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1970.
- 15 Rubén Salazar, "Chicano Must Be Nationalist to Last in U.S., Leader Says," *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1969.
- 16 Rubén Salazar, "Thousands Cross Border," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1969, 1.
- 17 Rubén Salazar, "Latin Group Presents 7 Demands to UCLA," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1969.
- 18 Rubén Salazar, "Maligned Word: Mexican," *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1970.
- 19 Rubén Salazar, "Who Is a Chicano? And What Is It the Chicanos Want?" *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1970
- 20 Rubén Salazar, "No Middle Class Illusions," *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1969.
- 21 For a specific example, see Dale Rodgers Marshall, *The Politics of Participation in Poverty: A Case Study of the Board of the Economic and Youth Opportunities Agency of Greater Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
- 22 Rubén Salazar, "Chicanos Told to Fight Like Blacks for Respect," *Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 1969.
- 23 Ernesto Chávez, "*¡Mi Raza Primero!*" (*My People First!*): *Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966–1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 66.
- 24 An inquest determined that Salazar's death was an "accident." Fellow writer and friend Hank López wrote: "Initial reports indicated that a bullet that pierced his skull came from a crossfire between the police and some rioters who were holed-up in the restaurant-bar where his body was later found. But it later developed that he was shot through an open doorway by a high-velocity tear-gas missile that should never have been used by the police under such circumstances. In the words of the consultant for the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, such a weapon should never be used for crowd control, since it is designed for use against 'barricaded animals'—hardly a term that could be used to describe a gentle human being like Ruben." Enrique Hank López, "Ruben Salazar Death Silences a Leading Voice of Reason," *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1970. As recently as August 2010, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Robert J. López made efforts to view files relevant to Salazar's death; however, County Sheriff Lee Baca has refused to release eight boxes of records that could reveal how the *Times* columnist and KMEX-TV news director had long been under surveillance. Robert J. López, "Baca Refuses to Release Records Related to Times Journalist Ruben Salazar's Death," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 2010.
- 25 Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility," in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965–1985*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (Los Angeles: UCLA, Wight Art Gallery, 1991), 156.
- 26 James Tartan, *Los Four* (1974, 16mm, color, 22:55 min.), in *Los Four / Murals of Aztlán: The Street Painters of East Los Angeles*, Chicano Cinema and Media Series, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 2004), DVD.
- 27 Dan Knapp, "KCET's Show for Chicano Viewers," *Los Angeles Times*, April 3, 1970.
- 28 Emory Holmes II, "A Pit Bull in the World of Fine Art; Cecil Ferguson Helped Rewrite the Definition of 'Artist' in Southern California as He Nurtured Up-and-Coming African American Talent. But Don't Think It's Been Easy," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, February 14, 1999.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Josh Kun, "Vex Populi," *Los Angeles* magazine, March 2003, 62–70.

- ³¹ Inasmuch as posters had established a communications network for the Chicano Arts Movement on the walls and windows of homes, offices, and storefronts—markers connecting private and public space, even as they promoted art exhibitions, concerts, theatrical productions, mass meetings, and rallies—poster artists expressed solidarity with oppressed peoples both at home and abroad, including those who opposed the war in Southeast Asia and supported liberation movements throughout Central America. Some examples include Rupert García's screen prints *Fuera de Indochina!* (Out of Indochina!) (1970), *Freedom for Political Prisoners* (Angela Davis) (1971), and *Allende, 1909–73* (1973); and Malaquías Montoya's *Viet Nam Aztlán Fuera* (1973) and *One Year of Military Dictatorship* (1977).
- ³² Jeff Spurrier, "Plugz: Back in Business," *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1982. In addition to Tito Larriva and Chalo Quintana of the Plugz, Alice Bag (Alice Armendariz) of the Bags, and San Diego band the Zeros, Latinos were an integral part of the L.A. punk scene from its beginnings. Writer Sean Carrillo notes "the contributions of Ron Reyes and Dez Cadena of Black Flag, Dave Drive of the Gears, Gerardo Velazquez of Nervous Gender, Joe Ramirez of the Eyes, as well as the Brat, the Odd Squad, the Rents, and the Girl Scouts, among others, [who] were an undeniable part of its history and growth." Sean Carrillo, "East of Eden," in *Forming: The Early Days of L.A. Punk* (Los Angeles: Smart Art Press, 1999), 38. A list of those others includes Juan Gómez of the Human Hands, Eddie Muñoz and Louie Ramirez of the Plimsouls, and Charles Ramirez (aka Chuck Roast) of the Suburban Lawns.
- ³³ Richard Cromelin, Kristine McKenna, Don Snowden, and Robert Hilburn, "Rounding Up the L.A. Sound," *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1979.
- ³⁴ Kristine McKenna, "Plugz Keep on Plugging," *Los Angeles Times*, July 13, 1980.
- ³⁵ The Plugz, "A Gain—A Loss," on *Electrify Me*, Fatima Records, 1979.
- ³⁶ George Lipsitz, "Not Just Another Social Movement: Poster Art and the Movimiento Chicano," in *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 171. Lipsitz writes that oppositional movements are successful insofar as they argue and encourage a contrary consciousness. They can account for shared experiences that make collective action imperative and make way for individuals who can find a place for themselves in the shared history of their social group, even as they prompt people "to take risks for systemic change." As well, they invert or satirize ideas and images that support the standard narrative.
- ³⁷ Josh Frank, *In Heaven Everything Is Fine: The Unsolved Life of Peter Ivers and the Last History of New Wave Theatre* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2009).
- ³⁸ Kristine McKenna, "Remembrance of Things Fast," in *Forming: The Early Days of L.A. Punk* (Los Angeles: Smart Art Press, 1999), 30.
- ³⁹ *Punk Rock: How to Look Punk*, an undated vintage fanzine, submits: "That's why 'looking punk' is best achieved using ordinary things around the house. Search drawers, closets and attic, plus your friendly neighborhood thrift shops, for all varieties of PUNK JUNK to attach to your clothes (or mend holes and rips) . . . use safety pins (the symbol of punkdom), paper clips and clothes pins . . . old badges, buttons, charms, soda can flip-flop tabs and war medals . . . bathtub plug chains, dog chains, hardware chains and locks . . . tumbler locks, bottle openers, rabbit's foot key chains and large antique hotel keys . . . bits of coiled rope, old neckties and broken shoestrings . . . studs, nuts 'n bolts, washers . . . toy daggers . . . all tied, pinned, clipped, taped or stapled to clothing, or worn as junk jewelry, in your own most individually creative fashion." Thanks to Rose Salseda-Gómez and Daniel Gómez for their joyous critical appreciation of this musical and artistic moment, and for providing access to this period gem.
- ⁴⁰ Mark Spitz and Brendan Mullen, *We Got the Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of L.A. Punk* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001).
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Don Snowden, "Maverick Visions," *Los Angeles Times*, July 22, 1986.
- ⁴² Self-description by keyboardist John Dentino; see Jeff Spurrier, "Fibonacci Are Rota Rooters," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1982.
- ⁴³ Snowden, "Maverick Visions."
- ⁴⁴ Ibid. In writing about "the creative scene that is seldom seen or written about," Snowden adds: "Only a handful of local outlets, ranging from museums to underground rock clubs, exhibit fine-art videos and Jenkins' political thrust and Third World perspective often encountered stiff opposition there." Public access television on cable provided opportunities for artists like Jenkins to produce and air videos with content about the community. Jenkins considered his completed videos "rituals," and he christened his choppy style of editing (reminiscent of other cable-access productions like *New Wave Theater*) "doggereal."

45 Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 83.

46 Jenkins addressed this theme again in his 1979 MFA performance piece *Just Another Rendering of the Same Old Problem*. See Paul Von Blum, "Ulysses Jenkins: A Griot for the Electronic Age," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 3, no. 2 (September 2009): 140–41.

47 Other members included saxophonist Harold (Stemsy) Hunter (an original member of the rock group Electric Flag led by Buddy Miles) and David Strother on electric violin, Larry Tuttle on the Chapman Stick bass, and Jack Nathan on drums. Life in the Park with Debris was an early configuration of what later became Othervisions Art Band: a lineup comprising Michael Delgado on guitar and backup vocals, Oscar Del Pinal on bass, Brent Woten on drums, and Reyes Rodriguez (later founding director of Trópico de Nopal art gallery) on tracks and percussion; Ulysses Jenkins provided lead and backup vocals, as well as rhythm guitar. A track titled "Sobriety" was co-penned with Mark Stewart, the eventual front man to the Negro Problem who with Heidi Rodewald produced several recordings as Stew, and wrote the 2009 Tony Award-winning musical *Passing Strange*. Prior to founding the Negro Problem, Stewart briefly played in a band with Vinzula Kara called Primal Syntheses, and he had replaced Michael Delgado to collaborate with Jenkins on a CD titled *Serendipity*. I am grateful to Ulysses Jenkins for providing this information.

48 Performing were Crono, Bob Dale, Todd Gray, Liz Rodriguez, Maren Hassinger, Ulysses Jenkins, Senga Nengudi, Franklin Parker, and May Sun.

49 Ulysses Jenkins and Senga Nengudi Fittz, press release, "Chance Unfrozen," 1983. Manuscript provided by Ulysses Jenkins.

50 Artist's website: <http://www.ulyssesjenkins.com/without.html>.

51 Snowden, "Maverick Visions."

52 Ibid.

53 Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989).