

## *The Last Judgment*

August 27 – November 23, 2019

Gallery 400, University of Illinois at Chicago

### Expanded Exhibition Checklist

#### SOUNDSCAPE

Quadraphonic sound, 19 mins.

Sound Design: Rogelio Sosa

Voice (Náhuatl): Vanessa Medina Martínez (Siuatl Kualtetsin)

The exhibition's soundtrack focuses on a walk that *The Last Judgment's* main character Lucía takes on a Sunday afternoon stroll through Little Village. The neighborhood sites and sounds draw her across time and space as they evoke historical events and her past in Michoacán, México.

#### SCULPTURES

Design: Adela Goldbard

Fabrication: ARTSUMEX Collective (Jesús Sanabria, Amauri Sanabria, Eduardo Pérez, Víctor Rojas)

Building Assistants: Amanda Charles, Elizabeth Cardona, Prakhar Deora, Anes Lee, Amaya Torres, Latrell Walton

All of the temporary sculptures were fabricated by employing, modifying, and scaling up traditional Mexican reed weaving, cardboard bending, and papier-mâché techniques, which are vital and popular in Central and Southern México, in towns like Tultepec. In the October 12 performance, pyrotechnic effects and fireworks will be used both as special effects and to partially destroy the sculptures, transforming the spectacle into an allegorical, cathartic collective purging of the social ills addressed in the story. As such, the performance will trace a link between the spectacular use of fireworks in Spanish evangelical theater and present day Mexican practices of burning effigies, whether Judas Iscariot, pop cultural icons, monsters and mythical creatures, or political figures. *The Last Judgment* adopts the

allegorical destruction of evil embedded in these pagan, religious, and political pyrotechnic immolations of effigies and becomes both a protest and a celebration.

#### WORKSHOP - HAMMOND ART CLASS

As part of a collaboration between Hammond School, Adela Goldbard, and Sue Voss, 5th grade students were encouraged to revise events that had a negative impact on their lives and their community. Through writing, drawing and the creation of cardboard models the students were invited to consider how to correct, transform, and purge these negative narratives. They were **asked, "Think of an event that took place in your neighborhood that stood out to you and your family as emblematic of your community and lives and that you would like to burn. Did something happen that had a negative effect on your family or neighborhood? Think, for example, of a moment of injustice, fear, growing pains, etc. Think about the events that occurred and what effect they had on your life. Make a papel maché model of the site where it happened."** **Workshop facilitation by Sue Voss Sculptures and texts by Hammond Art Class Students**

#### THE CHIMNEY OF THE CRAWFORD COAL POWER PLANT

The Crawford Coal Power Plant in Little Village was hugely pollutive to residents, causing high rates of asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory illnesses. In 2005, the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) began aggressively organizing to shutdown the plant, with hopes of turning the location into a recreational space that could serve the community. The fight to shut down the plant was won in 2012. However, in 2017, Hilco Partners purchased the site, with approval from City Council, in order to build a one-million-square-foot distribution center. With the demolition of the plant now underway (completion is expected sometime in 2020), residents are once again experiencing dangerous air quality conditions, inciting organizations like LVEJO to campaign for a just and safe transition of the site. Organizers are particularly concerned with ensuring there is a community benefits agreement in place that meets the needs of Little Village residents.

## THE LITTLE VILLAGE ARCH

The Little Village Arch is a cultural landmark that stretches over 26th Street. It was built in 1990 and modeled after cement arches and structures that stand at the entrances to many towns in **Mexico**. **The arch, a joint effort by the city, then alderman Jesus “Chuy” Garcia and immigrant business owners, serves as a symbol of welcome to members of the Mexican community in Little Village who had faced discrimination in the 60s, 70s, and 80s from other ethnic groups in the neighborhood.** In 1991, the Mexican government donated a bronze clock made by the oldest clockmaker in Mexico, Relojes Centenario, that was added to the arch. Community events celebrated on 26th Street, like the Mexican Independence Day Parade, pass under the arch and reinforce its status as a symbol of Mexican presence and culture in Chicago.

## PALETAS CART

Street vendors are a fixture in Little Village, principally found up and down Cermak Avenue and 26th Street and offering Mexican fare like elotes, tamales, chicharrones, and paletas. In the 1990s, Mexican street vendors in Little Village and Pilsen were the targets of citywide bans and crackdowns by the Health Department. The vendors were subjected to stricter vending laws and high permit fees. In 2015, the Illinois Policy Institute worked with local vendors and city officials to legalize food carts and in 2018, won the fight to lower licensing fees, further ensuring the social and economic stability of street vendors in the neighborhood. In 2016, the Paletas Poncho vendor cart—or rather, the man pushing it—became the focus of the largest ever GoFundMe campaign in Illinois, and one of the top 25 largest campaigns in the U.S. The campaign for Fidencio Sanchez, the 89-year-old paleta (popsicle) vendor who had pushed the cart around Little Village for over twenty years, had the intention of raising \$3,000 but as his story turned viral, thousands of donors in over 60 countries banded together to raise nearly **\$385,000**. **Sanchez’s story mirrors the unpleasant reality that only 26% of Latinx families have retirement accounts and many have no benefits.**

## THE LITTLE VILLAGE DISCOUNT MALL

**The Little Village Discount Mall anchors the neighborhood’s commercial heart, the two mile stretch of 26th Street between Kedzie and Kostner.** Formerly a Sears, the Discount Mall is a

massive indoor bazaar, much like a Mexican tianguis, featuring independently run shops and stands selling a range of goods from hardware to ice cream to party dresses. Home to over 500 local businesses, 26th Street is Chicago's second highest-grossing shopping district (after Michigan Avenue) and is sometimes known as the second "Magnificent Mile." In 2007, more than 50 heavily armed FBI agents in combination with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) descended on the Discount Mall and arrested 12 people in an operation designed to crackdown on a supposed band producing fake permanent residency cards. The use of force instilled great fear in the mall's business owners and patrons. As the threat of ICE sweeps continues to grow under the Trump administration, Mexican-owned shops and restaurants in Little Village have reported a 20-50 percent drop in sales.

## A BRICK HOUSE

This house typifies the architecture of Little Village, a Chicago neighborhood settled in the immediate years following the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Developed as an affluent neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, it advertised homes primarily made of brick. The demographics of residents changed with the growth of industrialization in the early 20th century from wealthy Anglo-Saxons to mainly Eastern European immigrants. As working class residents settled into the community, new buildings deviated from the large brick buildings and featured two-flats and bungalows. By 1980, Latinx people represented 47% of the population with Mexicans as the dominant ethnic group, a huge increase from only 4% in 1970. With them came Mexican owned businesses ranging from shoe and clothing stores to travel agencies, construction firms, and restaurants attesting to the vibrancy and economic power of the community. Murals and other architectural features asserting diasporic identity, create a pastiche of styles that reflects the immigrant identity of Little Village.

## MIND MAP OF THE LAST JUDGMENT, 2019

Adela Goldbard

A constructed script for a hypothetical play depicting a fictional conversation between Fr. Jerónimo de Mendieta (Spanish, 1525–1604), Chimalpahin (Nahua, 1579-1660), Mikhail Bakhtin (Russian, 1895-1975), Frantz Fanon (French Antilles, 1925-1961), Augusto Boal (Brazilian, 1931- 2009), Paulo Freire (Brazilian, 1921-1997), Gloria Anzaldúa (Chicana, 1942-

2004), Walter Mignolo (Argentine, 1941), and some of their current researchers and students.

This mind map and quotes, here crafted into an approximation of a script, outline the literature, concepts, and purposes that Goldbard identifies as the framework of her project.

## U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT SUV

In June 2019, the Trump administration announced that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) would begin conducting raids in a number of cities with high numbers of undocumented immigrants, part of an operation the magnitude of which had not been seen since **George W. Bush's administration ordered a string of ICE raids in 2007**. Although it had been declared a sanctuary city, Chicago was among the list of cities named. While mass immigration deportation raids failed to materialize in Chicago, the threats made a lasting impact on immigrant communities like Little Village where an environment of increased threat and fear has provoked, amongst other things, unprecedented sales drops on 26th Street. Although **Chicago is a "sanctuary city"**—one that forbids its employees, including police, from **communicating a person's immigration status with federal agents under most circumstances**—ICE can still conduct raids in the city at will. As a response, Little Village and **other neighborhoods are setting up 'defense networks'**—such as **"La Villita Se Defiende" (Little Village Defends)** to protect undocumented residents. With the support and training of Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) and Community Activism Law Alliance (CALA), the defense networks use phone trees and approaching and recording ICE agents to hold them accountable.

## TWO JUDASES

The burning of Judas is a tradition that can be traced back to 16th century Spain to the appearance of monument burning celebrations, the fallas de Valencia. Judases were originally named after Judas Iscariot, the archetypal Catholic traitor, and portrayed as devils with horns and a tail. Over time the Judas burning ritual has transformed into political commentary, **characterized by the public and cathartic destruction of "evil" politicians and other public figures**, both in religious festivals and in protests and demonstrations. The effigy-burning traditions in Mexico and Latin America developed their own unique aesthetic,

very different from the current European aesthetic of the fallas. The Judases here represent developers, businessmen, and politicians that are facilitating gentrification in Little Village. For some, large scale projects like El Paseo, a planned four mile transformation of an abandoned railroad into a bike and pedestrian trail running through Little Village and Pilsen, will force longtime residents out of Little Village. Developers and some residents view El Paseo as a major step toward improving the under- resourced area. Other residents and community organizations, like Únete La Villita and the Pilsen Alliance, fear that the trail will instead accelerate gentrification, causing a hike in home renovations and property taxes **and eventually displacing the neighborhood's lower-income** residents. In a non-binding referendum, Little Village and Pilsen residents voted in favor of a community benefits agreement that would require the city to ensure an affordable housing mandate, property tax freeze, and provide funding for jobs and housing.

#### WORKSHOP WITH TELPOCHCALLI ART CLASS

**In art classes, after learning about the work of Adela Goldbard's and the Artsumex artisans,** students from Telpochcalli Elementary School created hundreds of rolled newspaper cylinders to be used to create structures representing important places in Little Village. They first began by sketching buildings, objects, and symbols found in their neighborhood. Once they chose the objects most relevant to the stories they were trying to tell and celebrate, they constructed paper frameworks to cover in papier-mâché. Once covered, the children gave them initial coats of paint. Later at neighborhood workshops, community members painted the final images on the structures. Workshop facilitation and photography by William Estrada Sculptures by Telpochcalli Art Class students

#### HOW DO WE LISTEN?

What do we hear? What sounds make up our community? If Little Village was an iconic sound, what sound would it be? If the sound of your community were a color, what color would it be? How can your individual experience of where you are from inform a larger narrative about your community? As part of a collaboration between Telpochcalli Community Education Project (TCEP), Adela Goldbard, and Silvia Gonzalez, youth were invited to consider how the space that makes up a community is formed through individual experience and collective memory. Through various exercises and games, youth were

invited to tune into the auditory details that shape their memories of the environment's details and their engagement with it.