

Embracing Diversity Through Art

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Q. Why do you think it is important to highlight Hispanic Heritage Month?

A. It is important to celebrate in order to keep our culture and traditions. This celebration, however, is not for one day or a designated month only, but rather every day of the year. For Latinos/Hispanics Columbus Day is not our main celebration (the discovery of America) as native people were here in the Americas before Columbus' arrival. We celebrate La Raza (the Race) to honor our ancestors.

Q. The 2016 show is La Raza: Embracing Diversity, a fine art exhibit showcasing the work of graduate students sharing their views, experiences and contribution to the Latino culture.

Why did you choose this title?

A. La Raza is a culture of many ethnic groups within the Latino/Hispanic community. As a group with no specific race, we embrace all kinds of people regardless of our color.

Q. What is the purpose of the art show?

A. The purpose of the art show is to bring together the different cultures within the Latino/Hispanic community. Even though we speak the same language, each experience is different. The show gives voices to students through a different platform such as the visual arts. Images resonate on people often more than verbal messages. There are also messages implied or suggested through the images, whether political, racial, or migration related.

Q. What else do you hope the exhibit teaches?

A. The show brings together people from all walks of life, via the artists and the community and serves as a forum to engage the college community as well as visitors. Since each of the participating artists are from different cultural backgrounds (Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia), viewers can learn about those differences and similarities and get broader perception of the Latino culture.

Q. How did the idea for an annual art exhibit materialize?

A. As mentor at an institution where Latinos are a minority, I introduced this annual event in 2011. However, the idea for this show came from current political and racial and divisionism taking place in our country. Therefore, I thought about a show that could integrate these topics and how each of the artists would interpret them to address their position or views on the matter.



Raul Manzano

[Dr. Manzano earned his Ph.D. with a major in Humanities & Culture from Union Institute & University in 2015.](#) His dissertation is titled, Language, Community,

and Translations: An Analysis of Current Multilingual Exhibition Practices among Art Museums in New York City. He holds a Master of Arts from SUNY

/ Empire State College, New York, NY, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from School of Visual Arts, New

York, NY. Dr. Manzano is busy preparing for the introduction of Caribbean Heritage Month celebration in

June 2017 in collaboration with his colleague Dr. Rosalind October-Edun. For additional information

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