

Art

# Cheech Marin's Long-Awaited Museum for Chicano Art Opens in California

The newly opened Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture — also known as “The Cheech” — celebrates, spotlights, and complicates representations of Chicano art.

by Matt Stromberg  
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The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture (photo by Matt Stromberg/Hyperallergic)



Jamex and Einar de la Torre in their exhibition Collidoscope at The Cheech (photo by Matt Stromberg/Hyperallergic)

However, the first temporary show at the museum, *Collidoscope: de la Torre Brothers Retro-Perspective*, complicates this identity, showcasing the work of two artists born in Guadalajara but raised in the US. The show covers thirty years of work ranging from glassblowing to lenticular images that shift as you move in front of them to assemblages that collect material culture from both sides of the border. They incorporate pre-Columbian imagery, Catholic symbols, and the detritus of daily life, reflecting their own binational experience in vibrant, complex, often humorous constructions. The exhibition was produced in conjunction with the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Latino, for which four potential permanent sites were just announced.



Einar and Jamex de la Torre, "Border Park of Earthly Delights" (2014), archival lenticular print in lightbox (photo by Matt Stromberg/Hyperallergic)

“We have a lot in common with Chicanos in terms of use of color, iconography, layering, but we come at it from a different angle,” says Einar de la Torre. “One of the terms we’re comfortable with, since our studio is in Baja, is that we’re very border. The work has a lot to do with the dialogue between the two countries.” This is evident in the use of imagery and references that flow across the border, such as the Aztec Sun Stone, an important symbol for Mexicans and Chicanos, as well as the literal border wall itself, which is represented in several works, such as the lenticular “Border Park of Earthly Delights” (2014) that appropriates elements of the famous Bosch painting. The showstopper is a dazzling 26-foot high lenticular work depicting the Aztec goddess Coatlicue, her double snake-heads transforming into car parts as the viewer shifts their angle. The work is a recent acquisition to the collection and spans from the ground floor to the upstairs balcony.