Hybrid Symbols of Identity
and the Royal Chicano Air Force Poster Collection

Collaboration between the art department and the library allows for insight into past and contemporary conversations in arts and archives, incites exploration of historical art objects leading to the creation of new work, and provides access to university collections that are in sight but not always on view. Our collaboration centered on the Royal Chicano Air Force/Rebel Chicano Art Front (RCAF) poster collection at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) and students in an advanced printmaking class. After a presentation by RCAF member Juanishi Orosco, students viewed a curated selection of the poster collection and discussed how the RCAF used hybrid symbols to create and reinforce Chicano identity. The corresponding assignment directed students to explore symbols that related to their unique hybrid identity and create original images.

**RCAF POSTER COLLECTION FIELD TRIP**

In a visit to Special Collections and University Archives, identify and unpack hybrid symbols used in the RCAF posters. After viewing be prepared to discuss the images with the class.

**Some potentially useful categories to aid your thought process:**

- Amalgamations of two or more existing symbols to create new symbols that are, themselves, hybrids.
- Juxtapositions of two or more existing symbols that create new meaning through their relationship to each other.
- Symbols that originate wholly in one culture/time period, but into which we may read new meaning based on our experiences with one or more other cultures/time periods.
- Symbols or combinations of symbols that are only intelligible to those who have a specific set of experiences/cultural associations.

**Some questions:**

- What symbols do you encounter?
- What do they mean?
- How did you arrive at this meaning?
- Who is the intended audience for these symbols?
- How do they communicate to their intended audience specifically?
- Do they communicate differently or communicate a different message to those outside this intended audience?

**HYBRID SYMBOLS OF IDENTITY ASSIGNMENT**

1. Choose two or more ideas, cultures, nationalities, fields of study, etc. that relate to your personal identity and/or a collective identity that you identify with or would like to establish.

2. Identify a symbol or symbols that relate(s) to this identity.

3. Research! Dig deeper into your chosen symbols.

4. Use what you have learned to incorporate your symbol(s) into an image.

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