

HERNÁNDEZ, ESTER (1944–)

Ester Hernandez, a San Francisco visual artist known for her pastels, paintings, and prints of Chicana/Latina women, reflects political, social, ecological, and spiritual themes born from community pride, commitment to political action, and abiding sense of humor.

Born and raised in California's San Joaquin Valley, Hernández is one of six children of farm worker parents. She developed great respect for, and interest in, the arts through family and community involvement. Both her mother and her grandmother continued the family tradition of embroidery, her carpenter grandfather made religious sculptures in his spare time, while her father was an amateur photographer and visual artist. The combination of this rich cultural and creative background and the politically charged world of U.C. Berkeley in the early 1970s helped Ester develop her socio-political artistic identity and her consistent commitment to political activism. As a solo artist and member of Las Mujeres Muralistas, a San Francisco Latina women's mural group in the early seventies, her career has marked her as a pioneer in the Chicana/Chicano civil rights art movement.

Ester's work appeared in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad. Her artwork was recently featured in the inaugural opening of the Museo Alameda -- Smithsonian in San Antonio, Texas and is also in permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of American Art, the Library of Congress, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Mexican Museum in San Francisco and Chicago, Cheech Marin, and the Frida Kahlo Studio Museum in Mexico City. Stanford University acquired her artistic and personal archives.