

ARTnews

75 Latinx Artists to Know

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Though Latinx people have long been part of the fabric of this country, Latinx artists in the United States have only recently begun to be acknowledged by the mainstream art world. Because of the lack of support for their works, many Latinx artists established their own venues—from New York to Los Angeles, San Francisco to Chicago, Phoenix to San Antonio—to showcase the varied artistic visions of this diverse community. In recent years institutional support has become more forthcoming, thanks in large part to a generation of Latinx scholars, curators, and writers who have raised the profiles of their artistic elders and contemporaries. And while market support has been much slower in coming, that too is beginning to change.

Below we examine 75 of the most important and exciting Latinx artists, who have had a profound impact on art history and their communities by creating work in which community members can see themselves represented. This list is by no means comprehensive but serves as entry point to learn about a diverse group of artists who deserve further study.

Frank Romero



Frank Romero, Death of Rubén Salazar, 1986.

Photo : ©1986 Frank Romero/Smithsonian American Art Museum

Chicano artist Frank Romero was born in 1941 in East Los Angeles and grew up in the culturally mixed, middle-class community of Boyle Heights. Bold, colorful, and energetic scenes of daily life in Los Angeles characterize Romero's paintings, which feature iconic images like lowriders, palm trees, and freeways. Romero's paintings mix elements of pop art with traditional Mexican and Chicano motifs to produce unique visual experiences. One of his most iconic paintings is *Death of Rubén Salazar* (1986), in which Romero interprets the death and legacy of a civil rights activist and writer for the Los Angeles Times in the 1960s. In the aftermath of a significant Chicano protest in East L.A. in 1970 against the Vietnam War, police fired tear-gas canisters into the Silver Dollar Bar and Café, where Salazar and two

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others were struck and killed. Romero pays homage to this event in a painting that encapsulates his unique style of using bright pastel colors with contrasting hues.

As a member of the influential art collective Los Four, alongside artists Carlos Almaraz, Roberto “Beto” de la Rocha, and Gilbert “Magu” Sanchez Luján, Romero played a key role in bringing Chicano art into the mainstream and advocating for its recognition in major art institutions. The collective was crucial in establishing a distinct Chicano aesthetic and addressing issues of cultural representation and identity. — M.E.R.