

## FAX COVER SHEET

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### FROM INFORMATION:

Name: Judith Hernández FAX#: (312) 942-2219

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Title: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of pages to follow: 2

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

### MESSAGE:

Attached are some comments &  
questions — see you on the  
14th at Frank's.

Chiao for now —

frank

## **The True and Accurate Account of How Judith Hernández Came to Meet and Become a Member of LOS4..... or Isn't Twenty-five years of Hindsight Wonderful**

My relationship with LOS4 began as a direct result of meeting Carlos Almaraz. I doubt if I had tried to negotiate an entry to the group on my own, I would have been successful. In retrospect the *heart* of the group was always Carlos and it's creative life was very much his creation.

I met Carlos Almaraz in graduate school at the then, Otis Art Institute, in 1972. "Charles" as he referred to himself in those days, attracted my attention in a class we shared. When he began to speak, in sophisticated and knowledgeable terms about painting and the art historical context of his work, I was struck by his broad intellect and his sheer charm. At first I didn't realize he was Mexicano. He rather looked middle-eastern, with his crocheted skull cap, and he was far too worldly to have come from East L.A. As we came to know one another we realized we had a great deal in common, including a tremendous desire to immerse ourselves in Chicanismo/ Mexicanismo and meld a relationship between our cultural identity and our art.

Beginning in the late sixties, as a minority woman and an artist, fighting for inclusion in the incipient world of Chicano art was very difficult. The women usually present at meetings I began to attend were almost always the decorative appendages of the men with whom they had come. I and a very few others, were the female "squeaky wheels" who persistently *participated*, hoping to be included and taken seriously. The *kiss of death* for a woman seeking participation seemed to be romantic involvement with these artist/politicos, so I consciously avoided permanent relationships with these men, and as a result, was in time regarded as one of the boys.....I think. Anyway, I fully acknowledge that without Carlos's help, my acceptance would have been much more difficult.

As I recall, after his near death experience in New York, Carlos was very interested in uniting his burgeoning Chicanismo with his interest in socialism (of the Maoist variety). This was a major connection for both of us. At the age of twelve I had been a subscriber of the Daily Worker, and by the time I met Carlos, I was already veteran of early Chicano political organizational efforts. At the time Carlos and I, more than Gilbert Lujan or Frank Romero, enjoyed an appreciation and knowledge western philosophical thought and literature which peppered our discussions on social struggle, aesthetics, and Chicano art and politics. This is why I found Frank's remark on the video so amusing, regarding Carlos not finding me political enough. After years of knowing Carlos, I finally figured out that he loved to orchestrate people and events. Frequently, to stoke the creative possibilities, he would tell people he hoped would interact with one another opposing information to create a dynamic. What Frank doesn't know is that Carlos initially told me that I would be "good" for LOS4, not only because I was a strong painter, but because Frank and Gilbert needed *sexual politicization* to help them recognize that women could be more than ornamental. Carlos was also concerned about (what he perceived as) Frank's marginal level of cultural consciousness. Since in conversation, Frank would (I think to irritate Carlos) refer to himself as "Spanish".

Some questions that come to mind, after seeing the video are:

1. What other reason was Gilbert referring to for wanting me to join LOS4?
2. How important has mainstream acceptance been to us individually? It always seemed important to Carlos, but it would be interesting to know how the rest of feel.
3. How good a job have art historians done in documenting the Chicano art movement? Why has the focus been (and seems to remain) on muralism, as opposed to individual work?
4. How has the institutional racism of mainstream galleries and museums affected Chicano art? Do we care?
5. What is the future of muralism and street art for Chicanos? For LOS4?

If I think of some more I'll call you!

JUDITHE