

TIERRA, SANGRE Y RESISTENCIA

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For myself, art has been a way to explore my Chicana realism a la Cheri Moraga. There are so many conflicting emotions I have experienced as a mestiza indigenous brown individual living on the borderlands. I have lived with much rage, having survived the colorism within my own family, the racism from both lands of the North and South, and the identity crisis that comes with learning to accept myself as de-tribalized and indigenous in a country which refuses to accept that we are natives and not immigrants.

My contribution to this issue is a painting for the issue's cover titled "Tierra, Sangre y Resistencia" (acrylic, 26x30) which represents violence, survival, and resistance.

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The Rio Grande River/Rio Bravo is depicted as it flows into the Gulf of Mexico, with Tejas and Tamaulipas on both sides of the river painted in violent red brush strokes symbolizing the blood of our ancestors. At the forefront there is a nopal, which represents our indigenous spirit, surrounded by orange brush strokes representative of our fiery spirit.

We have survived colonialism and imperialism even when they have tried to starve us...

like the nopal, we thrive with minimal nourishment...

and like the nopal, we nourish/feed the future of our peoples of the land.

The painting is an acknowledgement of our resistance symbolized by the nopal with its fruits, which traverses across the river.

We exist on both sides of El Rio Bravo,

on land that has seen the colonial and imperialist attempts to eradicate us.

Yet, we still survive without much nourishment.

We still find ways to live and thrive.

The painting is also an acknowledgement that both the land north and the south of the river is indigenous...

con el nopal en la frente we face oppression valiantly even through the dispossession of our lands. Since the conquering of Americas, indigenous resistance was birthed by the processes of colonialism, settler colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. We have never forgotten that we are connected to our lands and indigenous roots. Our cultures have resisted and survived in various forms through food, art, poetry and spirituality. We have lived in conflict, resistance, accommodation, and compromise, but we still have maintained our connections to our lands. We still maintain our indigenous spirit and honor our ancestors.

The yoke of colonialism and imperialism has attempted to decimate our indigenous spirit but we continue to survive... we have never stopped resisting. Our native roots are planted on these lands as the nopal... and even in the desert of colonialism, we bear fruit.

This issue is very much a testament to our oppression, resistance and survival, as we try to make a stand against patriarchal white supremacy and colonialism/imperialism. Decoloniality is difficult as we confront and peel the many layers of colonialism – internal and external hegemonies.

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