



The Instagram Account Letting Us Relive The Chicano Gang Life Of The 1990s

by [Naomi Clément](#)

Instagram is a vast and varied platform. Created by Kevin Systrom six years ago, the social network now unites over 400 million users who combine to share some 800 million shots every single day.

But beyond the average account devoted to sharing snaps of avocado toast and decorated lattes are some slightly more obscure pages, plunging us into worlds that would otherwise remain relatively unknown. [Hells Angels](#), for example, have a surprisingly strong presence on the site, often posting pictures of their gang logos and treasured motorbikes.

Similarly and now something of a social media phenomenon is account [veteranas and rucas](#), dedicated to Los Angeles's early 1990s gang life and rave scene.



(Photo: © [Instagram](#))

Created by former Aztek Nation member, Guadalupe Rosales, the account offers us an inside look at the South Californian gang and party scene; she shakes things up by focusing primarily on women.

“‘Veterana’ means someone who has put in work or time in the gang culture, and ‘ruca’ is what you call your chick”, explained Rosales to [LA Weekly](#), a few months back.

The account, followed by more than 50,000 people, allows us to relive the glory days of some of Los Angeles’s most active party crews, such as East LA Madness, East LA Q-Teez, Midnight Pleasure, the Swing Kidz and Operation X.

Guadalupe shares mainly photos from her personal collection as a way to remember those closest to her, but also as a way to celebrate the women of this sub-culture. She explains:

“What I’m interested in posting is women that look like strong women. They look tough, and I like showing photographs like that because I want to say that women can be attractive when they’re strong women.”

Donning crop tops, lipliner and a whole lot of gold jewellery, the big-haired *chicanas* are the original representations of *chola* culture. With popstars like [Lana Del Rey](#), [Gwen Stefani](#) and [Nicki Minaj](#) all wearing their own versions of the style over the past few years, some have accused the celebrities of “[chola appropriation](#)”.

Something of which Guadalupe Rosales is well aware:

“Some people will say things like, ‘Let’s dress like this next weekend for this party or Halloween’ or ‘Let’s take pictures like this’ — and then it’s like a white hipster [thing]. I’m exposing this, and there’s nothing I can do about it. It’s inevitable.”

As something of a spokesperson for the era, Guadalupe Rosales is also battling it out beyond the social network in an attempt to shine a light on her forgotten culture. On January 20, she organised a conference in collaboration with UCLA’s Chicano Studies Research Center, entitled “[Southern California Chicano Part Crews and Rave Scene in the 1990s](#)”.

Armed with this success, she is planning an event dedicated to the scene at the non-profit art and performance space PSSST in Boyle Heights – a Los Angeles neighbourhood with a large Mexican-American population.

With the project set to start next year, Guadalupe continues to pay tribute to the party crews on Instagram.