



PHOTOGRAPH BY LA RAZA PHOTOGRAPHIC STAFF, EAST L.A. HIGH SCHOOL WALKOUTS, 1968. LA RAZA NEWSPAPER & MAGAZINE RECORDS, COLL. 1000. COURTESY OF THE UCLA CHICANO STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER.

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## The Past is Present

October 2, 2017 | Los Angeles Magazine | 0 Comments

The Autry's new photography exhibition **LA RAZA** shines a renewed and remarkable light on the Chicano Civil Rights Movement

Protest. Activism. Community building. No, this isn't a show about our current political climate—but now, more than ever, *lo que paso en el pasado esta en el presente* (the past is present).

Currently on view at the Autry, **LA RAZA** presents striking photographs from bilingual newspaper turned magazine *La Raza*, which was published from 1967 to 1977 in Los Angeles during *El Movimiento* (the Chicano Civil Rights Movement). Bold depictions of demonstrations, protest signs, community participants, and police brutality abound. Comprised of more than 200 black-and-white

“What’s interesting to me, especially in this age of smartphones and selfies, is how the photographers of *La Raza* co-opted the camera in order to own the power of self-representation, and to return the repressive gaze of the state in the civil rights era,” said Amy Scott, co-curator of the exhibition and chief curator at the Autry. “In other words, here were activists using the camera to not only document events but to hold the government and police accountable.”

The exhibition is made up of several thematically-linked sections, including “Portraits of a Community,” “Signs of the Times,” and “The Other and the State.” An interactive touchscreen table allows visitors to chart their own experience through thousands of other images in the *La Raza* archive.

Co-curator Luis C. Garza, also a *La Raza* photographer, is hopeful that Angelenos will learn something about an often overlooked part of the larger Civil Rights Movement that happened right in their backyard—and before it’s too late. “These photographs are part of our collective history, and we’re doomed to repeat the past if we don’t pay attention to it,” he said. “The *Movimiento* taught everyone who lived through it that the struggle toward progress is hard-fought but possible. I think that’s a lesson worth remembering.”

*LA RAZA* is currently on view at the Autry Museum of the American West in Griffith Park. For more information about this exhibition, and the more than 70 other exhibitions and programs of *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*, visit [pacificstandardtime.org](http://pacificstandardtime.org).

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