

1.
 What is your vision for the museum?
 (and do we share parts of it?)

Permanent Art Collection
 our ancestry - ●●●●
 gift shop/cafe ●●●●
 Education Center ●●●●
 community Outreach ●●●●
 concept -
 visitors/audience ●●●●

1.
 What is your vision for the museum?
 (and do we share parts of it?)

1) Tell Indian story in Michigan
 Tell about Detroit ●

2) Multi-purposed - multimedia/cuts
 ● Ethnographic example ethnography/cultural
 history/multimedia

3) re-representing of stereotypes
 val. all things good

4) One space for multiple things
 (archival, library, museum, etc.)

5) Multi-faceted perspective

1.
 What is your vision for the museum?
 (and do we share parts of it?)

- Place that will educate other cultures about
 our local history, as well as the ancient
 history of our people. ●●●●●●●●

● A place that will instill a sense of pride in
 our children. ●

● A site, with a welcoming atmosphere, that is
 "aesthetically compelling" ●●

- A meeting site for our various community
 groups ●●

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● Ethnographic example ethnography/cultural
 history/multimedia ●●●●●●●●

● Multi-purposed ●●●●●●●●

● Education in Michigan ●●●●●●●●

● One space for multiple things ●●●●●●●●

● Multi-faceted perspective ●●●●●●●●

EL MUSEO DEL NORTE

The Michigan Latina/o
 Museum and Cultural Center Project

2009-2011 REPORT

OUR MISSION

We want to document a history of Latina/os by Latina/os for Latina/os in a space where the stories of our grandparents are honored and new stories are generated from the old. We want a site for the production of art, music, literature, and performance that gives voice to our experience and leads to new ways of imagining our world. We want, most of all, a place of community, where the various paths of our lives can come together in mutual support and respect.

Queremos documentar nuestra larga historia en esta región. Deseamos un espacio en dónde podamos reconocer y celebrar las historias de nuestros abuelos y crear nuevas historias. Queremos crear un sitio en dónde nuestras artes plásticas, música, teatro, y poesía, el “flor y canto” de nuestra comunidad, puedan dar voz a nuestros antecedentes y realidad para generar nuevas formas de imaginar nuestro mundo. Sobre todo, queremos una comunidad, en dónde los diversos caminos de nuestras historias intercalan en un ambiente de respeto y honor.



OUR STORIES



MARIA COTERA
Director of Latina/o Studies
University of Michigan

As an educator I've frequently reflected on the profound importance of having a history. Notice I didn't say "knowing history" — I mean to invoke, quite purposefully, that sense of ownership, of possession, that comes with the privilege of knowing that one's story or the story of one's community, has some kind of resonance in our public consciousness. This is no small matter, nor is it simply a question of access and visibility. If the past has taught us anything, it is that a people "without history" can be subjected to the violence of removal, dispossession, erasure, and even genocide. And this is not just true of the past. In our contemporary story-driven culture, not having a "history" — a collective (self-generated) story that grounds oneself and one's community in the larger narrative of the nation — is like not having a home, or a right to one, and we know what implications that has had for our community. Indeed, the fact that Latina/os, and especially Mexican Americans, continue to be figured as permanent "aliens" in popular discourse suggests that despite the real civil rights gains we have made since the 1960s, we have not been able to lay claim to our long history on this continent, a history that, for most of us, reaches right back to the very earth beneath our feet. It is that history that grounds us in this place, and that ultimately responds to the xenophobic discourse that would figure us as perpetual outsiders. This is why having a place crafted from our stories, a place where our multiple histories in the Americas and in the Midwest can take center stage, a place where young people can learn from their elders, and where our arts culture and linguistic traditions are revealed and celebrated as things of beauty, is so very important.



MENTORSHIP

We visited 3 local museums

to meet with directors, explore their exhibits and learn about their institutions, and we invited the Director of Museum Studies at the University of Michigan to deliver a lecture.

COMMUNITY GUIDANCE:

JUANITA MOORE and Tyrone Davenport hosted our visit to the **Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History** in February 2010. Dr. Moore introduced the idea of beginning our work as a “museum without walls.”

RAY SILVERMAN

spoke to our group in January 2010. Professor Silverman works in **Techiman, Ghana**, where he is collaborating with the citizens of the town to create **a community-focused cultural center**, a space for performing and preserving local heritage. He stressed the importance of deep community involvement and community leadership. Professor Silverman is the Director of the Museum Studies Program at the University of Michigan

SHANNON MARTIN hosted our visit to the **Ziibiwing Center for Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways** in Mount Pleasant. William Johnson, Judy Pamp, and Anita Heard described their process of building trust in the community, researching their history, folding in everyone’s story, and learning to design and run a museum along the way.

ANAN AMERI

hosted our group when we visited the **Arab American National Museum** in April 2010. Devon Akmon and Aaron Barndollar treated us to a tour of the museum. Dr. Amiri told us about traveling the entire nation to collect ideas and stories for the AANM.



We began with an idea...

What would a museum of Latina/o culture and history look like?

Whose story would it tell? How would it tell that story?

With funding from the *Arts of Citizenship Program* at the University of Michigan, we brought a group of people together for a year-long conversation about what the museum means for its community.

Central to this process was identifying the needs of the Latina/o community in Michigan and figuring out how a museum and cultural center might meet those needs.

To structure this conversation we visited other museums across Michigan, exploring models that we might draw on in conceptualizing a similar project focused on Latina/os.

We built on long-standing community interest in creating a museum of Latin-American culture in Southwest Detroit.

COMMUNITY FORUM On May 16, 2010, after a year of grant-writing, planning meetings, and museum visits, we gathered forty-five community members to report on the year's activities, gather feedback about the state of the project, and refine our goals for the future.

The work we've done over the past two years began with conversations among local community organizers Elena Herrada and Rocio Valerio, and Professor Maria Cotera, Director of the Latina/o Studies Program at the University of Michigan.

From there it grew into a project that engaged with the larger community in Southwest Detroit.

It quickly became clear that Latina/os all over the state were eager to join our efforts.



COMMUNITY

VISION



“What is your vision for the museum?”

At the community forum, we worked together to propose answers to a series of questions: What is your vision for the museum? “What stories need to be told? Whom will it serve? What form will it take? What resources do we have? From there, key themes emerged:

A place that will **EDUCATE**

tell our **STORIES**

a place for **RESEARCH**

the ARTS

a **GATHERING** place for **COMMUNITY**

a place that documents our history in **MICHIGAN**

and the **MIDWEST**

NEXT STEPS

After almost two years of exploring, researching, and thinking together, we have reached a conclusion. We cannot wait until we have a building, an endowment to support the building, and collections. We need to begin this project now. We will begin as a **museum without walls**.

LA CARPA: A MOBILE MEMORY MUSEUM

El Museo del Norte will dedicate the next year to developing a mobile display documenting Latina/o history in Michigan.

LA CARPA will offer a beautifully designed display of historical artifacts: **letters, photos, documents, maps, and oral histories** that tell our stories of **MIGRATION** and **SETTLEMENT** in the region.

LA CARPA will include **interactive** elements that encourage visitors to add **THEIR OWN STORIES** to the mix.

LA CARPA will travel to areas with large concentrations of Latina/os and long histories of settlement, like: **ADRIAN, FLINT, GRAND RAPIDS, LANSING.**

Stakeholders in the Museo del Norte project believe that we can mobilize the museum without walls concept to:

1. Share what we know about the history of Latina/os in Michigan with the broader community
2. Generate regional interest in the goals of the museum project
3. Educate community members about the importance of preserving their own history; and
4. Collect vital information, resources, and materials that would someday contribute to the formation of a permanent collection/display of Latina/o history and culture in Michigan.





ELENA HERRADA is from one of the founding families of Detroit Mexicans. She comes from Repatriados and produced a documentary “Los Repatriados: Exiles from the Promised Land.” She worked with others in the community to start Fronteras Norteñas, an oral history project, later Centro Obrero, to work with new immigrants. She is connected to the elders through history and activism, and with youth as a school board member.



MARIA COTERA directs the Latina/o Studies Program at the University of Michigan, where she is an Associate Professor of American Studies. Having recently completed *Native Speakers*, her book about the ethnographic fiction of Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, and Jovita González, professor Cotera’s research now centers on recovering the theoretical writing and cultural productions of Chicana Feminists from 1965-1985.



AIMEE VONBOKEL is a PhD student in the Program in American Culture and Museum Studies at the University of Michigan. Her participation in this project is driven by the belief that we can only build nourishing, equitable, and sustainable communities if we take seriously the material and symbolic traces of our shared history.

ABOUT US

This project is a collaboration between **Fronteras Nortenas**, a Detroit-based group focused on Mexican repatriation history and the **University of Michigan** Latina/o Studies Program. The project is sponsored by **Arts of Citizenship**



ADONIA ARTEAGA grew up in Flint, Michigan. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan’s Latina/o Studies, Women’s Studies, and Native Studies programs.



MARI BLISS is an undergraduate at the University of Michigan studying Latina/o Studies and Spanish. She finds it shameful that there is no community museum in the state that honors and educates us about the contributions of Latino/as to Michigan, and is honored to be part of the effort to get this underway!



MIKE GARCIA came to this community from California. His great-great-great grandparents (six generations ago) came through Michigan to get to New Mexico. He believes there is a void in the community when it comes to arts and oral stories, and that our story needs to be told. He has been a union representative for the UAW for over 30 years.



JENNIFER GARCIA PEACOCK As a Chicana from California’s Central Valley, Jennifer is deeply interested in building the community through artistic and cultural engagement. As a PhD student in the Program in American Culture (Latina/o Studies) at the University of Michigan she is developing a project on environmental themes in Chicana cultural production.



ELISA GURUHLE was born and raised in Michigan to a family blessed with a long memory and hell-raising tendencies. This project is of dearest, beloved importance to her. She believes in the magical, transformative power of having, possessing and telling one’s own history -- collective and personal. While it is not always in a museum that one finds empowerment or relevance, this project provides one of the richest moments of that possibility.



LAURA MARTINEZ is a founding member Fronteras Norteñaswho. She has been active in the movement to create a museum of Latina/o history in Michigan for many years.



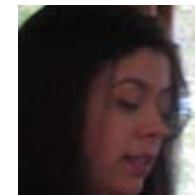
ELISE MCGOWAN is an undergraduate at the University of Michigan. She majors in Native Studies and American Culture.



NORA MENDOZA is a founding member Fronteras Norteñas, an artist engaged in the representation of Latinos/Indigenous peoples, a Sun dancer, world traveler, and renowned artist.



DIANA RIVERA is an 8th generation Tejana and 1st generation resident of northeastern Michigan who is head of the Cesar E. Chavez Collection at the Michigan State University Libraries. The growing manuscript collection of Latino activists and community organizations at MSU Libraries support the mission and vision of Museo del Norte.



ROCIO VALERIO is a graduate of the University of Michigan. She apprenticed under Elena Herrada at the Centro Obrero in Detroit. Rocio initiated the conversation that put this project in motion in the winter of 2009.

In memory of Marty Quiroz



CONTACT US:

El Museo del Norte
c/o Latina/o Studies
University of Michigan
3700 Haven Hall
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045

www.elmuseodelnorte.org

mcotera@umich.edu

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Tabitha Rohn
Judy Grey
Arts of Citizenship
Kamilah Henderson
Matthew Countryman
Latina/o Studies at U-M
U-M Program in American Culture
U-M Latin American
& Caribbean Studies