



Loca Motion: The Travels of Chicana and Latina Popular Culture

Michelle Habell-Pallan

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2006 Honorable Mention for MLA Prize in US Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies

In the summer of 1995, El Vez, the “Mexican Elvis,” along with his backup singers and band, The Lovely Elvettes and the Memphis Mariachis, served as master of ceremony for a ground-breaking show, “Diva L.A.: A Salute to L.A.’s Latinas in the Tanda Style.” The performances were remarkable not only for the talent displayed, but for their blend of linguistic, musical, and cultural traditions.

In **Loca Motion**, Michelle Habell-Pallán argues that performances like Diva L.A. play a vital role in shaping and understanding contemporary transnational social dynamics. Chicano/a and Latino/a popular culture, including spoken word, performance art, comedy, theater, and punk music aesthetics, is central to developing cultural forms and identities that reach across and beyond the Americas, from Mexico City to Vancouver to Berlin. Drawing on the lives and work of a diverse group of artists, Habell-Pallán explores new perspectives that defy both traditional forms of Latino cultural nationalism and the expectations of U.S. culture. The result is a sophisticated rethinking of identity politics and an invaluable lens from which to view the complex dynamics of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

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