Program in Latino History and Culture (PLHC)  
Latino Initiatives Pool FY 2012 final report

PLHC was established in 2004 to increase Latino visitation; create public programs; maintain a Latino presence on the NMAH Web site; and support and enhance scholarship and collections acquisition on Latino aspects of American history and culture. The Smithsonian Latino Center provided the seed money in support of the Program.

In 2012 the Program in Latino History and Culture received a Latino Initiatives Pool award of $36,555. Thanks to this award the program has been able to attract new visitors to the Museum, present engaging programming, and provide opportunities for our visitors to learn about Latino history and culture.

In 2012 NMAH has welcomed over 4 million people. The Latino Initiatives Pool award gave NMAH the opportunity to expand programs, incorporate Latino themes and provide learning experiences to all our visitors.

Claudia Acuña - Jazz Appreciation Month

The Program in Latino History and Culture, the NMAH Jazz Appreciation Month Program (JAM) and the Smithsonian Latino Center (SLC) joined forces once again to present a stellar performance by Chilean born Claudia Acuña. On April 19 Claudia offered a workshop for music teachers and enthusiast in the Warner Bros Theater, she was also interviewed on stage by Museum curator Marvette Perez. During the evening she presented a free concert at the Rasmunsen Theater of the National Museum of the American Indian. We had about 100 people in the audience but record breaking webcast viewers adding up to over 45,000.
Central American Traditions Festival

On September 15 the Museum, along with SLC and SCEMS presented the kickoff Family Festival celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. The festival focused on Central American cultural traditions. It featured traditional alfombra making, arts and crafts, coloring books, food and cooking demonstrations, and conversations about immigration. Music was an important element and it featured from the traditional chanchona of El Salvador, to Garifuna rhythms to Rock & Punk and they were all enjoyed by families and Museum visitors throughout the day.

The Hirshhorn Museum’s ArtLab Youth Media Group interview audience members about their cultural traditions and created a clip available at this link https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vYEVQbg8Avg

The festival was attended by 17,000 people.

Star Spangled Banner en Español

Not Lost in Translation: The Life of Clotilde Arias is a new exhibition in the Museum, it opened in September 2012 and it features the life of this amazing Peruvian immigrant who in 1945 was commissioned by the State Department a singable translation of the Star Spangled Banner. There are no records that the National Anthem was ever sang in Spanish, so, to that end, the Museum commissioned the local award winning chorus, Coral Cantigas to studio record it for the exhibition and to do a
public performance in the Museum. The program took place on September 29 in Flag Hall and was attended by about 300 people.

Celia Cruz by Robert Weingarten

On October 3rd the Museum unveiled a portrait of Celia Cruz commissioned to renown digital photographer Robert Weingarten. Celia Cruz was selected for the portrait thru a public competition using social media. Cruz, among other historical figures, was overwhelming selected. Her portrait is on view on the 2nd floor, West Artifact Walls. The portrait is accompanied by a few of Celia’s personal objects collected by the Museum and used for the portrait.

Taco Nation/ Planet Taco

On Saturday February 3 the Museum in partnership with the Smithsonian Latino Center presented an engaging conversation about the origins, transformation and consumption of Mexican food in the United States. Taco Nation/Planet Taco featured a conversation between authors Gustavo Arellano and Jeffry Pilcher moderated by the Museum curator of the FOOD exhibition, Rayna Green. The event took place in Warner Bros Theater and was webcasted. A highlight of the program was a Taco Rodeo, featuring three DC-based Taco truck on the Constitution curb of the museum. At the conclusion of the conversation authors signed books inside the FOOD exhibition. The over 300 visitors thoroughly enjoyed the food and the conversation.
Feeding America: Labor, Politics and Food

On February 23rd the Museum presented a public program addressing issues of labor and food production in American History. The program begun with the film Harvest of Loneliness by award winning director Gilbert Gonzales and was followed by a conversation with scholars Matt Garcia, Donald Mitchell, Melanie DuPuis and Museum curator Steve Velasquez. The program concluded with a book signing inside FOOD exhibition.

Translations

Latino Pool funds have been instrumental in helping us reach out and engage the Spanish speaking audience, especially new immigrants from Latin America visiting the museum to learn about American History. Funding was used to translate and post online on the NMAH Web site our core exhibitions. In 2012 we continued to add translations online. Not Lost in Translation: The Life of Clotilde Arias exhibition was the latest edition.

Immigration Cart

PLHC continues to increase the teaching collection on Latino history and culture and present these objects in a didactic cart on the museum floor. The objects on the cart serve as a jumping board to talk about the contributions of Latinos to American history and also for the members of the community to see some familiar objects in a new light. In 2009 the theme of immigration was implemented. Since its launch in July approximately 2,000 visitors have interacted with the immigration cart on a weekly basis. Other carts feature Day of the Dead material, carnival, and Dia de Reyes.