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El Museo Del Barrio

Raphael Montaez Ortiz, a Puerto Rican artist and educator, and a group of parents, teachers, artists, and advocates established El Museo Del Barrio in 1969 after noticing that major museums mainly disregarded Latino artists. El Museo has been dedicated to honoring and supporting Latino culture since it opened, making it a cornerstone of El Barrio and an important resource for New York City. The diverse permanent collection at El Museo, which numbers over 8,500 items, spans more than 800 years of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino art. It includes pre-Columbian Tano to modern and contemporary drawings, paintings, sculptures, and installations, as well as textiles, prints, photographs, documentary films, and video. El Museo was placed in this community to offer a platform for education that fosters a love and knowledge of Caribbean and Latin American art, culture, and their significant contributions to North American society (Steinhauer, 2019).

What most stood out to me was that a document called the Mirror Manifesto was released by activists, and more than 500 individuals have supported it. It urges the museum to welcome the diverse Latino communities in the US by rebranding as El Museo de Los Barrios (literally, "museum of the neighborhoods") to avoid becoming "an elitist institution for Latin American art." Another thing that stood out to me was the history and the interpretation behind the art and the artifacts. Each collection provides a context that is specific to its culture and history, a history

of rituals and visual traditions, and frequently a facet of psychological pain. The significance of these collections brings a huge impact in the Latin community.

The way the employees spoke and dressed, in my opinion, respectfully reflected the subject or group of people at El Museo Del Barrio. They were very knowledgeable about the context and history of everything that was explained to us. They provided an excellent representation of the history and the use of the artifacts while providing it with detailed explanation. I think someone in this position needs a lot of expertise about the history, but the staffs were knowledgeable and packed with information. They elaborated on each topic by providing details and examples from actual occurrences.

During my visit, I learned that El Museo teaches its diverse audience about the depth of Caribbean and Latin American arts and cultural heritage through its vast archives, diversified shows and publications, bilingual public programs, instructional activities, festivals, and special events. El Museo is cultivating the next generation of museum visitors while gratifying the increasing interest in Caribbean and Latin American art among a large national and foreign audience by introducing young people to this cultural heritage. El Museo continuously strives to establish these links between the greater history of American art and Latinx artists living and working in this country, which is also their country, to foster an understanding of the significance of Latinx art and its history as a part of the larger history of American art. Museums broaden the meanings of art and its past through its works of art.

Sources

J. Steinhauer, (April 30, 2019). *Whose museum is it anyway? The Story of El Museo del Barrio has always been about representation.* The Art News Paper 2019.

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2019/04/30/whose-museum-is-it-anyway-the-story-of-el-museo-del-barrio-has-always-been-about-representation>