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Short Cuts

The Floricanto Festival brings short films into the mix

By [Richard von Busack](#)

THE BAY AREA'S 4,590th film festival has some piquancy to it--if there were a little thermometer on the side of it, as there is on the jar of La Victoria salsa, it would certainly be up toward the top. "Xicanoquest" is a one-night screening of shorts on the subject of the new Chicano/Chicana filmmaking--and has anyone noted, by the way, that Richard Rodriguez is the first Chicano director to hit No. 1 at the box office three weeks in a row? "Xicanoquest" is brought to you by MACLA, the same gallery that hosted the first annual Cholo Film Festival last fall.

One on the list of shorts recalls the Cholo Fest's lurid wrap-up movie, *American Me*. Remembering the grisly reenactment of the L.A. Zoot Suit race riots in Edward James Olmos' film, it's understood why New York filmmaker Marco Loera had the Cherry Poppin' Daddies song "Zoot Suit Riot" stuck in his craw. His short *Zoot Suit Riots*, juxtaposes the CPD's anemic hit with historical footage of the white-on-brown violence. In another reach-back to the 1940s, filmmaker Alex Rivera's *Why Cyberbraceros?* is a parody of a postwar California Grower's Council promotional movie titled *Why Braceros?*. The latter film answered that question by proving the necessity of recruiting ultrazlow wage short-handled-hoe operators from Mexico--"and after all, the pharoahs/had to import/Hebrew braceros," as Tom Lehrer put it. With today's modern cyberbraceros, opines Rivera, "only the labor is imported and not the laborer."

Dirty Laundry by Texas' Cristina Ibarra is in the form of a *telenovela*, a Mexican soap opera--in which a good Mexican girl is tantalized by all-too-Norte Americano vices *Ballad of*

a Soldier by Kinan Valdez and his group, Chicanos on the Run, is an adaptation of a play by Luis Valdez (Kinan's father) about the departure of a Chicano soldier for Vietnam. Finally, *Folklorico: Dance or Degradation* by Los Del Pubelo portrays the Christian-Scientist-with-appendicitis (Lehrer's phrase again) type dilemma of a girl who loves getting in touch with her cultural roots but really can't reconcile herself to the sexism in traditional dance. So she gets the hallucinations really bad.

Xicanoquest plays Wednesday, April 25, at MACLA, 510 S. First St, in San Jose at 7pm. \$3 donation is requested.

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