

## Ovarian Psycos

**Caution:** This film features strong language.

Riding at night through the streets of East Los Angeles, the Ovarian Psycos are an unapologetic crew of women of color. Founded by Xela de la X, a single mother and poet, the Ovas cycle for the purpose of healing, reclaiming their neighborhoods, and creating safer streets for women. At first only attracting a few local women, the Ovarian Psycos have since inspired a crowd of locals to challenge the stereotypical expectations of femininity and be a visible force along the barrios and boulevards of Los Angeles. The film intimately explores the impact of the group's brand of feminism on neighborhood women and communities as they confront the injustice, racism, and violence in their lives.

**Themes:** gender; feminism; race; social change; activism

**Director(s):** Joanna Sokolowski & Kate Trumbull-LaValle (2016)

**Official film website:** <http://www.sylviafrancesfilms.com/ovarianpsycos-documentary/>



### SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to a U.S. Department of Transportation study, only 24% of bicycle commuters are women. Review a summary for the film you are about to watch. Discuss or put it into further context. Riding at night through the streets of Eastside Los Angeles, the Ovarian Psycos are an unapologetic crew of women of color. Founded by Xela de la X, single mother and poet, the Ovas cycle for the purpose of healing, reclaiming their neighborhoods, and creating safer streets for women.

### WORDS TO KNOW

- **Documentary:** A type of film that attempts to explain reality.
- **Brigade:** A group of people organized for a particular purpose.
- **Feminism:** The doctrine advocating social, political and all other rights of women equal to those of men.
- **Stereotype:** A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

### TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- What do you think are the reasons why fewer women ride bikes than men?
- What issues in their community do the Ovarian Psycos want to address?
- What was your favorite moment in the film? Why do you think that moment stands out to you?
- Which person's story did you think was the most interesting? What made them stand out to you?
- Why do the women exclude men from their meetings?
- What conflicts do Xela and Evie have with their families?
- How might different people interpret this film?

## GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



## MAKE CONNECTIONS | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### BOOKS

#### **iChicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement**

By Maylei Blackwell

Tells the powerful story of the emergence of Chicana feminism within student and community-based organizations throughout southern California and the Southwest.

#### **We Are Still Here**

By Devyn Galindo

A photo art book documenting Chicana/indigenous resistance and the underground movement currently shaping Los Angeles. Created over the span of one year.

### FILMS

#### **Missrepresentation**

Directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom

This film calls out mainstream media for its limited and often degrading portrayals of girls and women. The documentary intertwines interviews with teenage girls with ones featuring famed women such as Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Pelosi, Lisa Ling, Rachel Maddow and Gloria Steinem. The interviews are bolstered by compelling statistics such as this one: 53 percent of 13-year-old girls are unhappy with their bodies, but that number increases to 78 percent by age 17.

#### **No Más Bebés**

Directed by Renee Tajima-Peña

Tells the story of Mexican immigrant mothers who sued doctors, the state, and the U.S. government after they were sterilized while giving birth at Los Angeles County General Hospital during the 1970s. Alongside an intrepid, 26-year-old Chicana lawyer and armed with hospital records secretly gathered by a whistle-blowing young doctor, these mothers stood up to powerful institutions in the name of justice. They came to have their babies and went home sterilized.

### LOCAL CONNECTIONS

<http://supergirlpro.com/>

**Supergirl Pro** is the largest female surf contest in the world. It's a popular draw for top surfers because it's the only qualifying event in the U.S. for women competing in the World Surf League.

## BEYOND THE FILM | RELATED INTERNET LINKS

<http://www.balboapark.org/in-the-park/centro-cultural-de-la-raza>

**Central Cultural de la Raza** is a multidisciplinary cultural arts center dedicated to creating, promoting, preserving and educating about Chicano, Mexican, Indigenous and Latino art and culture. Features rotating exhibits and performances with theater, dance, music, and film/video.

**Media Arts Center San Diego** offers project-based Youth Media classroom residencies where students can learn the art of digital storytelling. Contact Larry Da Silveira at [larry@mediaartscenter.org](mailto:larry@mediaartscenter.org) or (619) 230-1938 to learn more.