

## The Protest Against The Equestrian

On April 21 of 2007, protesters shouted shame on you to the city council of El Paso and their guests who celebrated Juan de Oñate as public art or the monumental sculpture The Equestrian; however this conquistador committed genocide against native people. While the council chose to support the artist's vision (John Houser) of conquest and depredation, activists subverted the municipal ceremony with native spiritual rituals and performance art through which the memories of the victims were remembered.

In my digital images of the protest against The Equestrian I focus on the protestors who are elders, danzantes, activist and the descendants of the Acoma people that were terrorized, enslaved and killed by Oñate. I depict the images of people wearing red ribbons around the knees symbolizing Oñate cutting off the feet of Acoma people and I also document the clash between the supporters of the sculpture and the protestors.

Supposedly The Equestrian is public art through which the spectator is to reflect over the historical past of El Paso; however the protest challenges that public space by recalling the native voices that the sculpture has tried to erase.

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(Photographs by Lucía Martínez)