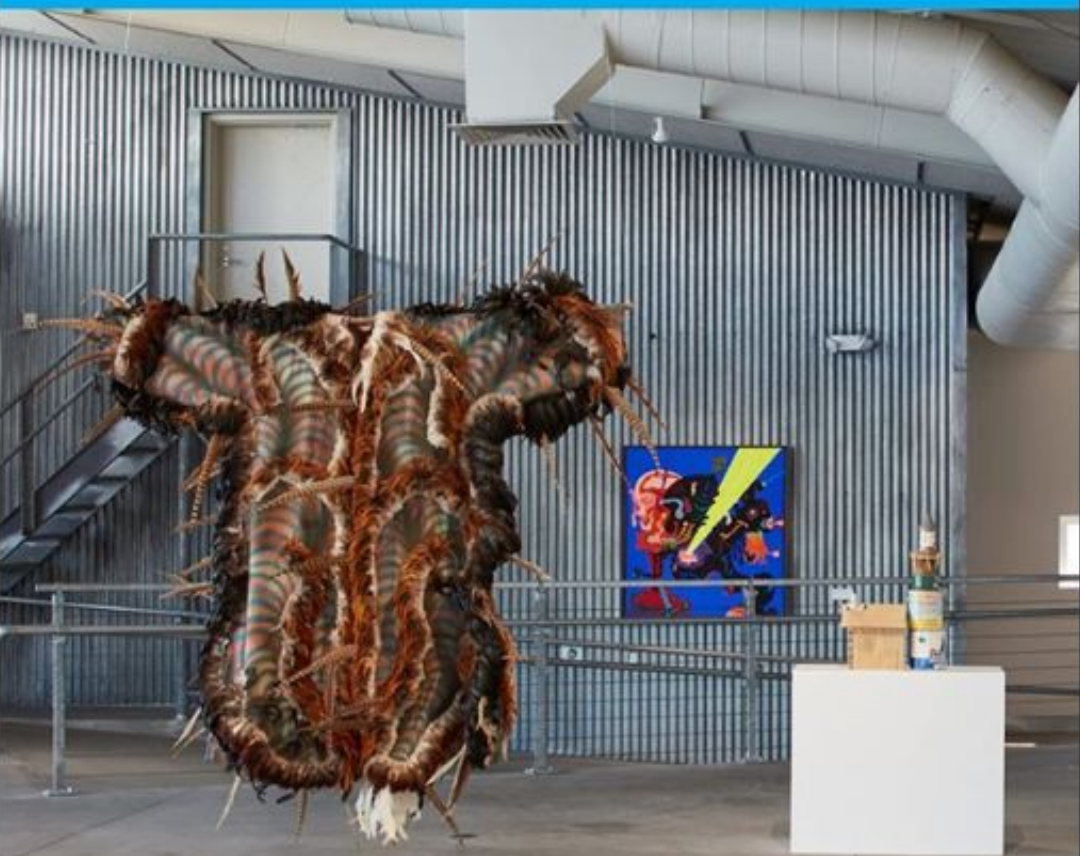




Was this work by Carlos Villa worn in his 1980 performance: *Ritual*?



**THIS PIECE WAS WORN IN A  
PERFORMANCE BY CARLOS VILLA**

**(A)** True

**(B)** False



Answer:

False, this piece was meant to be displayed but not worn

Carlos Villa,  
*Third Coat* (1983)  
Photo by Johnna Arnold

Carlos Villa (b. 1936) was a Filipino-American visual artist, curator and highly influential faculty member in the Painting Department at the San Francisco Art Institute. Villa was born in San Francisco, California to immigrant parents in the Tenderloin District. He was introduced to art while taking lessons with his cousin, Leo Valledor. His work often explored both personal and spiritual forms of ritual as a means of grappling with his own Filipino-American identity and the larger Filipino community in the Bay Area.

After studying and working in New York, Villa returned to San Francisco in 1969.

Working through the San Francisco Art Institute he began an artist residency program at the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center in San Francisco. The residency program worked closely with Black and Asian youth which inspired Carlos Villa to explore his own identity as a Filipino-American.



Children and members of the Black Panthers outside  
of a *Liberation School* in San Francisco, 1969.  
*Bettmann Archive/Getty Images*



Members of the Asian American Political Alliance march against the Vietnam War, San Francisco, 1968.  
*Photo by V. Wong, AAPA Archive.*

“What I was seeing was *rasquache*, as expressed through two different communities, and I was utterly fascinated by it. And I said to myself, “Well, why couldn’t this be a subject matter of my art?” Now, all of a sudden, it just opened a new door for me. Besides doing the kinds of spray paintings or the kinds of sculpture that I was doing, which was very, very minimal, I wanted to bring in older, traditional, non-European traditions into what I was doing, so as to amalgamate these traditions along with a modernist tradition to do an art about what that experience was—except in a very abstract way.”

-Carlos Villa,  
*Smithsonian Archives of American Art*, 1995.



The cloaks are fine examples of this ethic and aesthetic – “Second Coat” from 1978 features feathers and acrylic on canvas with painted taffeta lining, sperm, blood, hair, and spit. Four years later, “Third Coat” is a variation on the theme, with bone dolls sewn into the fabric. Villa said he could never wear such a thing. “Part of it being on the wall was... there developed a kind of tension between you wanting to go up and take the damn thing down and actually wearing it.” An exception to this is in 1980 with a ritual performance in San Francisco with a shaman providing permission, as Villa put it, to execute a repertoire of movement and intentions.

-From *Carlos Villa and the Integrity of Spaces*  
by Theodore Gonzalves.



Screen captures from a recording of *Ritual*, performed by Carlos Villa in 1980. Video by Tymar Productions, uploaded by Theodore Gonzalves