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Art in a Time of War: 22 Years After the LA Uprising

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, April 30th, 2014

It's hard to believe that 22 years have passed since so much of Los Angeles was burning following the ruling in the Rodney King/LAPD case. But here we are.

Many artists seized the moment to create work to question authority and justice, to give voice to the silenced, to try and make sense of a world that seemed so clearly unjust.

One of [the greatest works](#) to come out of this period was Anna Deavere Smith's epic *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*. She originally played over 40 characters based on hours of interviews she conducted with more than 300 people, including (then) Police Chief Daryl Gates.

Here is a clip of her portraying a Korean-American woman:

[embedvideo id="j9ntCRdmcHA" website="youtube"]

Mike "the Poet" Sonksen was a senior at Artesia High School, a month from his graduation, when the uprising occurred. He, like many of us growing up in LA at the time, [was greatly affected by the events](#).

To address the tension that was palatable in this city, not just in 1992, but throughout its history, Mike, along with Phillip Martin (PhiLLHarmonic) and David Wittman (DJ Dave), wrote and recorded a spoken word track called "Love & War."

Both pieces continue to echo the truths captured by the artists, here 22 years later.

Featured photo by Gary Leonard, courtesy of LAPL.

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