

FROM THE EDITORS

As this inaugural issue of *Boom* went to press, a new year arrived bearing an unfortunate resemblance to prior years. The new governor (a former governor) confronts giant budget deficits (like the last governor). Our public goods—water systems, schools, universities, and roads—are crumbling or reeling from years of neglect compounded by draconian cuts. Leaders on all sides promise new directions. Still, the Golden State remains more adrift than at any time since the Great Depression.

All that—and the fact that print media seems practically an endangered species—might augur ill for the launch of a new publication.

But silence will not produce solutions. We make our futures in part by imagining them, and a new horizon becomes more attainable when we have new stories about how we got where we are. Indeed, producing new narratives about what California is and how it came to be surely ranks among the most urgent needs of the Golden State. *Boom* strives to provide those accounts, by putting scholars, writers, photographers, artists, and activists in dialogue around the most compelling and intriguing issues of the day.

There are remarkable stories to tell. The state became the country's most populous in the early 1960s and it never stopped growing. Today, the behemoth of the Left Coast is home to one in eight residents of the U.S.; its economy has surpassed Canada's. California's size and diversity (it was the first state in a century to gain a non-white majority) make it a bellwether not only for the nation, but for the world. California is an astonishing, exciting, often confusing place, the portal through which the nation encounters Latin America, the Pacific, Asia, and beyond.

And so, in this issue, alongside explorations of the state's failed constitution and the dire consequences of its bitter racial politics, you will find a discussion of the wide-ranging politics behind California's country-music traditions and reflections on how LA's radio culture forges a community from far-flung listeners. We present interviews with a prominent producer of California wine and with the leader of a tenant's rights

organization battling to keep rent-paying residents from eviction. We are proud to publish a remembrance of two immigrant-rights activists who passed too soon, as well as testimony from women fighting environmental injustice in the Central Valley. Together, these articles constitute the beginnings of a conversation about how to rethink California's past, our tumultuous present, and the possible contours of our future.

Why name our effort *Boom*? Isn't the pursuit of fast riches the root of California's problems? Perhaps. But California means many things, and so does *Boom*.

boom—a loud deep sound with much resonance

. . . as of a distant cannon or

an earthquake

a rapid advance in prices

or a sudden bound of activity in any business

truth and the consequences that follow from it, as when

one "lowers the boom"

the effective launching of anything upon public attention

an impetus given to any movement or enterprise

a long beam from which a microphone is suspended

to capture conversations in a crowd

a spar run out to extend a ship's sail

a pole set up to mark the course

of the deep water

the cry of the bittern

Louis Warren

Carolyn de la Peña