A Library *for the* Americas

The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection

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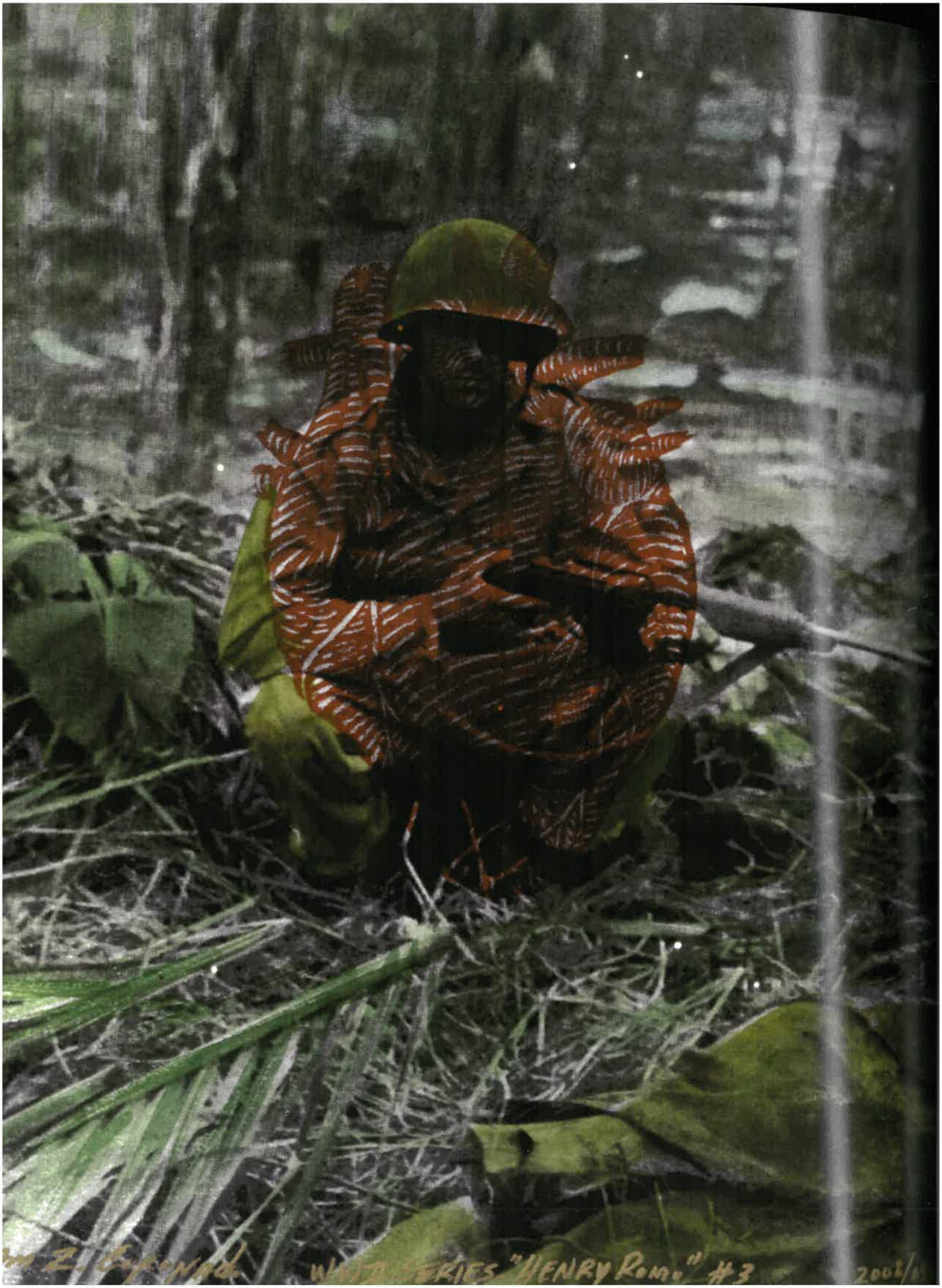
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Printed Proof

THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF RICARDO AND HARRIETT ROMO'S PRINT COLLECTION

Tatiana Reinoza

When every wall of their three-story home and every shelf of storage space had been filled to capacity, Ricardo and Harriett Romo began to contemplate the afterlife of their art collection. They thought carefully about approaching an institution and decided on the Benson Latin American Collection as their first choice. The Benson research library and archival collection is world-renowned for its books, periodicals, and manuscripts pertaining to Latin America and US Latinos from the sixteenth century to the present but perhaps less known for its holdings on the subject of contemporary Chicana/o and Latina/o art.[1] In 1998 the Romos—scholars, art collectors, and university administrators based in San Antonio, Texas—donated the first set of fine art prints to the Benson. Their print collection in this repository now holds more than 600 works on paper.

Recounting my experiences with art and print culture in the archives of the Benson, in this essay I narrate my own "archive story" with the Ricardo and Harriett Romo Collection of Mexican American Art Prints.[2] According to historian Antoinette Burton, "The claims to objectivity associated with the traditional archive must be met in part by telling stories about its provenance, its histories, its effect on its users, and above all, its power to shape all the narratives which are to be 'found' there."[3] In that

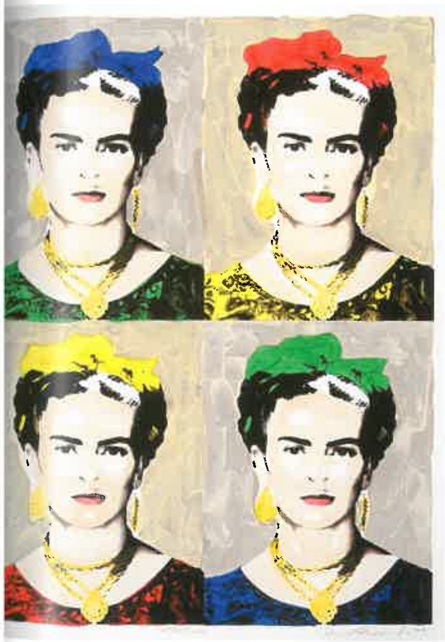
Detail of Sam Coronado,
Henry Romo, 2007.

effort, I provide not only an ethnographic account of how I crafted a narrative around the Romos' collecting practice based on encounters in the collection but also describe how the archive's strategic placement legitimated the corpus of prints as a body of knowledge. After all, theorist Achille Mbembe notes, "the archive has neither status nor power without an architectural dimension," and the site determines how we approach the preserved "fragments of lives and pieces of time."[4] The Benson provides the collection with a particular status. Transformed from visually autonomous objects to public documents, the art prints acquire a status of proof of the often unwritten histories, identities, and activisms of Latino communities in the United States. As Ricardo explained during an interview, "We felt that it would be within our own interest to have something, to have proof, evidence, that we were there, that we witnessed it, we captured it, and we have the ability to share it with other people."[5]

The Romos' decision to donate a large portion of their print collection to the Benson's Rare Books and Manuscripts Division rather than to a museum intrigued me. Most collectors want their art to belong to a museum where it can be displayed as part of a permanent collection and accrue symbolic value. Until recently, however, few US museums have expressed a desire to willingly and systematically acquire Latina/o art.[6] As academics (Ricardo a historian and Harriett a sociologist), the Romos established a close relationship with the Benson library through their own research and teaching. While Ricardo Romo served as vice provost for the University of Texas at Austin, he placed a collection of his academic papers in the Benson's archives. Their choice to gift an archival art collection to this institution was not only a matter of convenience and trust but part of a collecting impulse invested in securing the archivability of these works on paper and making them accessible to students.

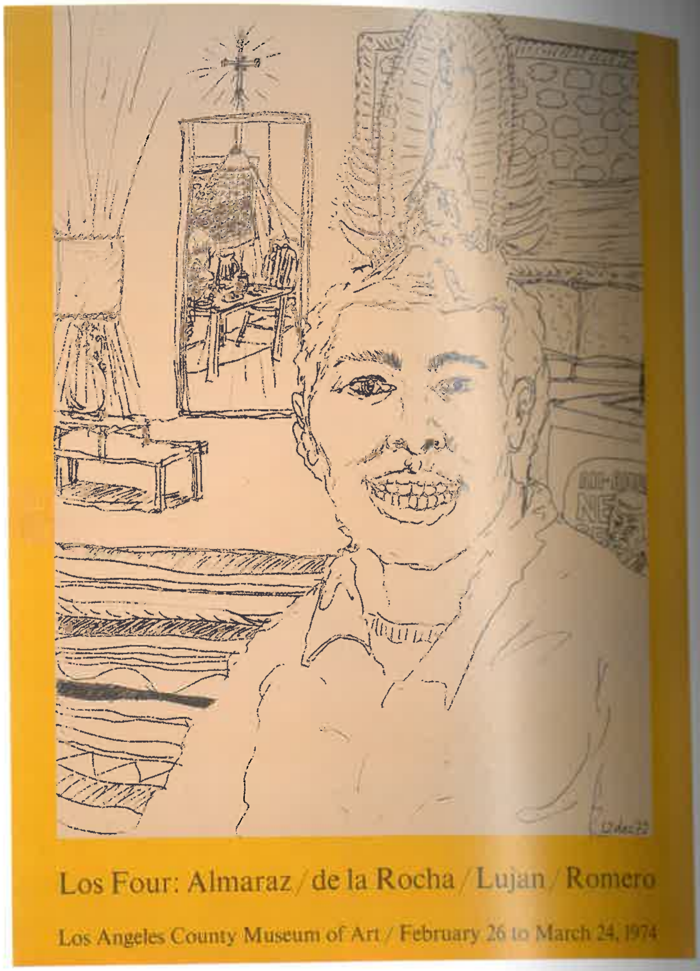
Studying the Romo Print Collection at the Benson was one of the formative experiences that set me on the path I walk today as an art historian who specializes in Latina/o graphic arts. Without the formalities or the restrictions characteristic of many special collections, the Benson provided the space and the freedom to spend entire afternoons looking closely at works by artists such as Amado Peña, Marta Sanchez, Liliana Wilson, and Terry Ybañez. I learned to properly handle prints and to understand the idiosyncratic systems that govern collection making, including how these objects live inside larger structures at the mercy of categorization, keywords, and internal filing systems. Among the many memorable items indicative of the Romos' collecting practice, I found early limited editions made at Self Help Graphics in East Los Angeles, posters for groundbreaking exhibitions such as *Los Four* (1974) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and a vast collection of fine art prints from Texas-based Latina/o artists.

Each of these objects generated new questions about Ricardo and Harriett's commitments to social activism and aesthetic interests as well as the weight of autobiography. Their acquisitions of early editions from Self Help Graphics, the flagship Chicana/o print workshop spearheaded by Sister Karen Boccalero in East LA, invited a venture into the social history of Southern California. Prior to completing graduate school, the Romos worked as public schoolteachers and witnessed the Mexican American student mobilization in the historic walkouts of 1968 and the shocking murder of *Los Angeles Times* journalist Ruben Salazar during the antiwar protest known as the Chicano Moratorium, as well as the splendor of public art forms in East Los Angeles, the community Ricardo researched for his doctoral dissertation.[7] The Romos immediately recognized the value of Self Help Graphics' artistic and community-building programs in opening new horizons for their K–12 inner-city students. Harriett recalled how the organization "was helping those kids in East LA, the kids that we were working with, to give them something to inspire them, to encourage them, to be creative and to reach the talent that we saw in those kids. We just decided that any time they had a show or a print series, we'd just buy as much [art] as we could. That became a way of beginning to build that collection."[8] Among those talented students, the trailblazer Richard Duardo, a former high school student of Ricardo's, served as one of the first printers for the workshop and would eventually earn the moniker of "Warhol of the West."[9] Duardo's *Four Fridas* (2003) graced the entryway to the Benson Rare Books and Manuscripts for most of my years as a graduate student.



Richard Duardo (1952–2014), *Four Fridas*, 2003. This serigraph with hand coloring was printed at Modern Multiples, Los Angeles. Ricardo and Harriett Romo Collection of Mexican American Art Prints. © Estate of Richard Duardo.

As the Romos began their quest to acquire more works on paper in the 1970s, the emerging field of Chicana/o art was also gaining ground at cultural institutions. Encountering the 1974 poster of *Los Four* propelled my interest in how the landmark exhibit had impacted the young collectors. Curated by Jane Livingston and Cecil Fergerson at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), *Los Four* represented the first major breakthrough for Chicana/o art at a mainstream institution and featured the work of the East LA collective integrated by Carlos Almaraz, Gilbert "Magu" Lujan, Roberto "Beto" de la Rocha, and Frank Romero. Through the excesses of an urban baroque or the sensibility that cultural critic Tomás Ybarra-Frausto lauds as "rasquachismo," the artists reconfigured LACMA's white cube into a dazzling display of color and texture.[10] Neo-expressionist paintings, collages, and drawings were hung salon style alongside large-scale assemblages made of found objects, a mural addressing a workers' strike, and the front end of a Chevy low rider, all of which transformed the gallery.[11] The Romos attended the opening, along with record numbers of diverse audience members, including many first-time visitors, who found themselves mingling among art, mariachi music, and sangria. The poet and art historian Roberto Tejada describes how the spectacle and display "must have struck some temperaments as a muddled assault on the institution's devotion to the alleged 'purity' of modernist form."[12] Those temperaments became apparent in the disrupted expectations of critics such as the *Los Angeles Times* writer William Wilson, who voiced his discontent through racist characterizations: "Half of the Los Angeles Museum of Art's contemporary gallery is its usual sleek and sophisticated self. The other half looks like the setting for a fiesta, a 'West Side Story' rumble or, possibly a revolution."[13]

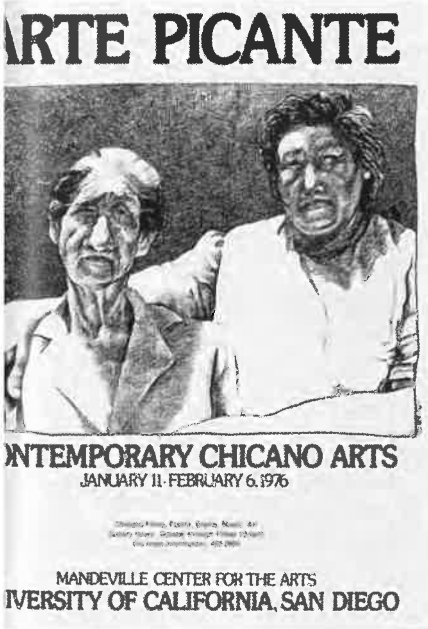

Los Four: Almaraz / de la Rocha / Lujan / Romero
Los Angeles County Museum of Art / February 26 to March 24, 1974

Exhibition poster, *Los Four: Almaraz/de la Rocha/Lujan/Romero*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1974. The offset lithograph poster features a 1972 untitled ink drawing by Beto de la Rocha. Ricardo and Harriett Romo Collection of Mexican American Art Prints. Courtesy of Los Angeles County Museum of Art. © Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Beto de la Rocha's unassuming ink drawing, featured on the exhibition poster, shows a male sitter looking directly at the viewer. With an exaggerated, perhaps nervous smile, the figure is aware of the viewer's gaze, which quickly shifts to the intimate space of a home. De la Rocha's fluid lines move the viewer across a living room filled with everyday objects that evince the markings of class and cultural specificity. A woven rug to his left and a two-tiered end table with a lamp lead the eye to a small entryway where a partially hidden figure pulls away in laughter. The small dining table is set with a pitcher and some plates as if in preparation for dinner. The most peculiar sight occurs above and behind the male figure with a mandorla that emanates from his wavy hair. Inside the mandorla, though hardly discernible, de la Rocha summons a Marian appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas. The Catholic icon finds thematic resonance in the sign of the cross above the doorway, as it partially obscures a large painting over the sofa. Behind the figure, a television set announces the start of an All American series. In these revealing vignettes, the artist exposed museum visitors to alternative locations of embodied and situated knowledge that spoke of the Mexican American experience in East Los Angeles—a world so near and yet so foreign to many Angelenos.

Records in the archive lead us to unpredictable places—both comforting and discomforting—that shape our views of history and our ability to rewrite its narratives. Looking closely at de la Rocha's drawing as I struggled to understand Wilson's hostile reaction led to more questions about the logic of modernism and how it produces disciplinary structures. What was the boundary or the point of rupture where Los Four's experiments in the everyday threatened the authority or taste of a critic trained in the Western tradition? How did the collective's exhibition challenge the museum's modernist culture, which is part of a Eurocentric discourse intent on constructing “borders framed in the language of universals and oppositions,” as Henry Giroux notes in relation to the essentialist binary of high versus popular culture?[14] Why does the notion of aesthetic quality invoke the anxious enforcement of institutional exclusions?[15] These are, of course, larger questions that stem from archival encounters, but the collection itself dictates an intense questioning in our ways of seeing—how we see, what we see or cannot see—and these in turn provide insight into the processes of canon formation.

Emboldened by Los Four’s ingress into one of Los Angeles’s premier institutions and aware of the stakes in opening new avenues for intervention at local institutions, the Romos delved into their first curatorial project. *Arte Picante: Contemporary Chicano Art* opened on January 11, 1976, at UC San Diego’s Mandeville Art Gallery and solidified the couple’s role as cultural custodians of Chicana/o art and advocates of institutional inclusion. They had recently relocated to San Diego. Ricardo joined the faculty in the UCSD Department of History, while Harriett began her doctoral program in sociology. By the fall of 1975, they had assembled a committee of faculty and graduate students known as the Chicano Arts Festival Committee. Among them, the artist Yolanda López, who was working on her master’s in fine arts in the Department of Art, figured prominently as one of the organizers and contributed a portrait of her mother and grandmother for the exhibition poster. Featuring the work of thirty-three California-based artists, *Arte Picante* framed the contemporary survey within the liberatory politics of the Chicano movement. A rare copy of the exhibition brochure that I found in Ricardo’s personal papers describes their concept: “*Arte Picante* is an exhibition of the vitality of Chicano contemporary art, an art which is firmly rooted in the socio-political activity known as the Chicano movement. . . . And it is the expression of this life and heritage which we are extremely proud to exhibit on this University campus.”[16] As witnesses of an art that aligned itself with a larger social movement, the Romos used their cultural capital to open doors to previously unavailable venues knowing full well this was “the first time that Mexican American art had been shown at UC San Diego.”[17]


RTE PICANTE
NTEMPORARY CHICANO ARTS
JANUARY 11-FEBRUARY 6, 1976
MANDEVILLE CENTER FOR THE ARTS
IVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Yolanda López, *Arte picante*, exhibition poster from offset lithograph, 1975. Rupert Garcia and Sammi Madison Garcia Collection, Department of Special Research Collections, University Library, University of California, Santa Barbara. Courtesy of University of California Santa Barbara Library. © Yolanda López.

Arte Picante produced an organic template of how to bring the art and politics of ethnic communities into the privileged spaces of knowledge production, an intention that continues to drive their collecting practice. We can surmise that, as curators who chose a bilingual and playful title (*picante* denotes hot or spicy), the Romos believed the art was striking and unapologetic. It seems the local critics also noticed, even if they made overarching ethnic generalizations like that which appeared in the weekly *San Diego Reader*: “The Latin American spirit with its passionate intensity, its heterogeneous roots and its commitment to radical consciousness is full of brio and emotionality that sets it apart from the restrained aestheticism of mainstream American art.”[18] Their exhibit also came on the heels of *ChicanArte* (1975), a statewide survey of Chicano art held at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park. The Romos, in contrast, placed their sights on an institutional structure of higher education—a university art gallery—that would be widely available to students. Their choice highlights their commitment to developing a particular audience, the next generation of scholars and professionals who can potentially shift the values of a society that insists on keeping Latinos external to the national imaginary.

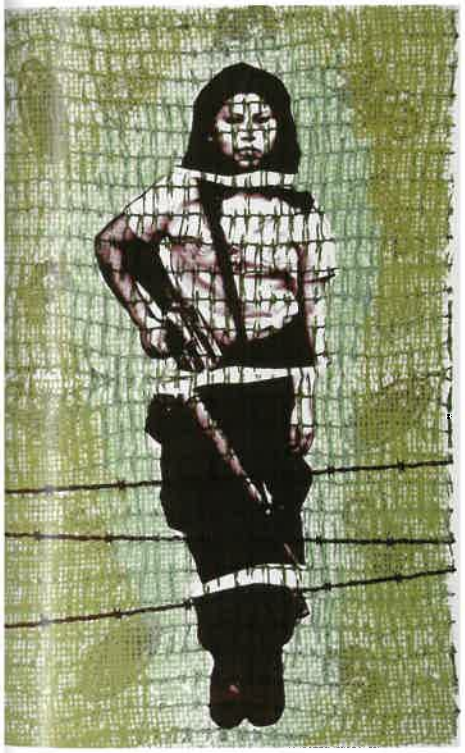
When the Romos returned to Texas in 1980 to continue their academic careers at the University of Texas at Austin and later the University of Texas at San Antonio, they maintained their interest in cultural brokering at institutions of higher learning. While those first ten years in Southern California shaped their social consciousness as collectors, the next thirty years of their practice enthusiastically focused on supporting Latina/o art in the state of Texas. Their geographic relocation not only placed them closer to their families, including Ricardo's in San Antonio's West Side, but also positioned them at the forefront of a new developing market in Latina/o art. During the 1980s the Romos frequently attended openings at the Austin Museum of Art, where Ricardo served on the Board of Directors, and the new Austin art gallery Galeria Sin Fronteras, run by their friend and colleague Gilberto Cárdenas.[19] Through these various social networks, they met artists such as César Martínez, Luis Jiménez, and Sam Coronado, and their collection began to embrace a Tejano sensibility.

Their friendship with Coronado, in particular, created an opportunity to support the launch of Serie Project in 1993, a printmaking residency program that brought emerging and established multicultural artists to work alongside master printers for the production of limited editions.[20] After completing two artist residencies at Self Help Graphics, Coronado returned to Austin with the purpose of establishing a similar program. Although several collaborative presses existed in the area, Coronado understood how race and class continued to segregate the field and limit Latina/o artists' exposure to the medium.

> I knew whenever I started this thing that there was a need for it, because I tried to get into places to go do prints and I could never get in, and I knew a lot of people that wanted to do that, but it was either you knew somebody or your work was recognized. It was a good starting point, and I never thought it was going to last twenty years. I knew there was a need for it. And I knew that whatever need it was, it was going to have to be separated from what was going on around us, because we couldn't rely on their support. We at that point were not accepted as printmakers, so I said, Well, what do we have to lose? What do I have to lose, except time and maybe some money? But I didn't realize how much time and how much money [*laughs*].[21]

Given their extensive support of Self Help Graphics, it was only natural that the Romos became dedicated patrons of Serie Project. From its inception, they made annual acquisitions that now boast a complete series of the first twenty years of its print production. Without the support of private patrons, artistic ventures such as these remain largely untenable.

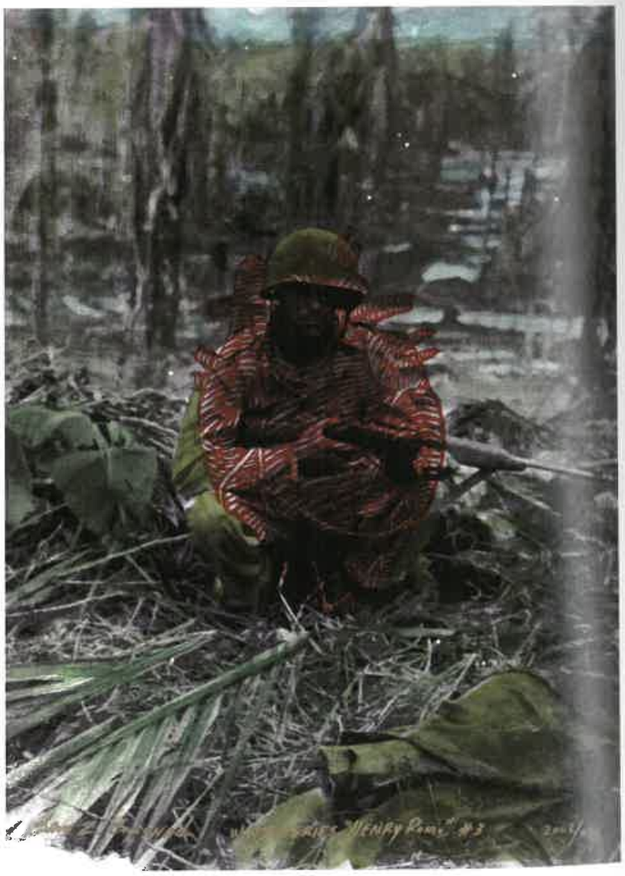
Tracing an archival formation allows us to see how the Romos became part of a precarious infrastructure supporting Latina/o artists during Texas's neoliberal turn. By the 1990s, state sponsorship for the arts began to dwindle, and art organizations as well as individual artists turned to forms of commodity production such as limited-edition prints that could diversify their income sources.[22] Serie Project and the Romos as patrons and cultural advocates were at the forefront of changing the landscape of cultural production for Latina/o artists from what Constance Cortez calls the "Third Coast."[23] These efforts helped promote the professional advancement of many Texas-based artists, including Celia Alvarez Muñoz, Rolando Briseño, Carlos Donjuan, Celina Hinojosa, and Michael Menchaca, who became part of a tradition of socially conscious printmaking. The Romos were at the center of this market shift, mostly as invisible and anonymous social actors in a field that was still malleable and could serve their interests in both art and education.



Sam Coronado (1946–2013), *Guerrillera*, serigraph, 2001. The serigraph edition of fifty was printed at Coronado Studio as part of Serie Project's eighth residency year, 2000–2001. Courtesy of Coronado Studio. © Coronado Studio.

It was in the Romos' role as collectors and private patrons that I became familiar with their practice and advocacy. A few months prior to the start of graduate school in 2007, I met Sam Coronado at an arts activism panel.[24] He spoke on the history of Serie Project, and during the slide show he lingered on one of his own prints, that of a young girl carrying a rifle, a poignant portrait of the guerrilla movement of my native country, El Salvador. Being a researcher who tries to make meaning of such chance encounters, I soon found myself leading a grassroots initiative to inventory prints and documents at Serie Project. My work with the organization led me to understand the crucial role of collectors in sustaining the vibrant print cultures in Texas, and this newfound insight served as the basis for my master's thesis, entitled "Collecting in the Borderlands: Ricardo and Harriet Romo's Collection of Chicano Art."[25] The results of my research prompted curatorial projects like the McNay Museum's 2012 exhibition *Estampas de la Raza: Contemporary Prints from the Romo Collection.* Though many scholars continue to pursue research on Latina/o art from the focal points of Los Angeles and New York, archival collections such as the Romo Print Collection provide new ways of mapping Latino cultural production through these various networks of exchange.

In their histories of collecting, scholars often obscure how much of the impulse to consume, preserve, and document arises from close relationships. Sam Coronado's portrait *Henry Romo* (2007) shows a soldier squatting down with an air rifle in what appears to be a tropical swampland. His green fatigues and metal helmet disguise an earnest young man whose inscrutable identity the viewer attempts to glimpse through the engraved lines of a ghostly sienna heart. The heart, a recurring motif for Coronado, recalls his interest in religious icons as well as his personal struggles with heart disease. In *Henry Romo*, Coronado honored Ricardo's father's contribution to the "Greatest Generation," when the young Mexican American entrepreneur voluntarily enlisted in the armed forces and fought bravely in the Philippines campaign of the Asiatic-Pacific theater.[26] Lush vegetation surrounds the figure in the foreground. Palm leaves create diagonals on the bottom left, the large green leaves to the soldier's right mimic the shape of a heart, and vertical tree trunks guide the viewer farther into a hazy, remote horizon. Using black-and-white vintage photographs from the Voces Oral History Project, also housed in the Benson's Rare Books and Manuscripts, Coronado paid homage to the young Latinas/os who served their country during World War II. As a veteran himself, Coronado knew firsthand the struggles that Latina/o veterans face in a country where their allegiance is often suspect. The *Henry Romo* print also allowed him to make a meaningful gesture toward a friend and patron who had supported his greatest labor of love, his print workshop. *Henry Romo* became the centerpiece of an exhibition, *Hard Fought: Sam Coronado's WWII Series*, that Benson Director Julianne Gilland and I co-curated in the spring of 2015. The narrative print offered an occasion to draw out a tapestry of complex connections between various archival collections—the Romo Print Collection, the Voces Oral History Project, the Sam Coronado papers, the Serie Project papers, all of which represent the rich social fabric of these visual print cultures.



Sam Coronado, *Henry Romo*, 2007. The serigraph was printed at Coronado Studio. Ricardo and Harriett Romo Collection of Mexican American Art Prints. © Coronado Studio.

Private archives and art collections are formed for a variety of reasons, including desire, trauma, and political resistance, and they often circulate and function through alternative circuits. In the worst cases, they become systems of closed knowledge in which the accumulation of objects and their related histories are little more than privileged property. Placing the work at an accessible educational institution is a transgressive act that defies that logic. The material culture specialist Susan Pearce asserts that the placement process is integral to the archive's formation: "The transformation from formally private to formally public, which can be quite an extended process, is an important aspect of collection-making."[27] As educators and scholars, the Romos envision their print collection as a teaching portfolio that can be used by faculty, students, and community members.[28] In Harriett's view, the collection needs to serve a larger purpose: "I mean, what good is it going to do to have it under our bed, or in our flat file, if it can be available to students to see the range of themes and the different artists and what they were doing over a period of time?"[29] Taking print culture out of circulation or simply out of its wooden frame invokes the process of mourning, the "death" of the object, or what Mbembe calls its "interment": "Archiving is a kind of interment, laying something in a coffin, if not to rest, then at least to consign elements of that life which could not be destroyed purely and simply."[30] And yet, it also symbolizes a new life; the prints in the Romo collection acquire a new role in the realm of knowledge production.

In my attempt to understand the placement of this collection at the Benson, I realized how much of the Romos' decision underscores their desire to make the academy a more inclusive space. Their interest in the democratization of education as well as the "democratic multiple" aligns with the values of the Chicano movement, which shaped the Romos' careers and intellectual activism. Chicana feminist theorist C. Alejandra Elenes explains how the social movement stressed the importance of creating new sites of intellectual inquiry:

> The efforts and struggles of the Chicano movement to increase the presence of Chicana/o students in higher education, and to create "new" academic spaces to study systematically the experience and contributions of Chicanas/os to US society, has produced significant scholarship that contributes to the reconceptualization of "American" intellectual traditions and canons.[31]

The Romos prioritize how these objects allow students to participate in constructing new narratives on Latino art history and the students' own political subjectivities. For many students, like myself, particularly those reared between cultures and languages, Elenes finds, "the power to name/construct their world is crucial to reconstructing their histories and cultures."[32] The Benson adds the architectural dimension that imbues the archive with a generative power.

This archive story is a testament to the many ways the Benson has shaped my intellectual formation as an image specialist. I hope it will inspire other students in the humanities and social sciences to craft their own stories by finding their way among special collections that speak of the everyday lives, expressive cultures, and political discourses of Latinos in the United States. Moreover, my experiences with these collections inform my commitment in activist scholarship methods.[33] Working in alignment with marginalized or underrepresented communities is not only a valid practice but a vital one from which to build new scholarship, and archive building is essential to this endeavor. Much work remains to be done in identifying Latina/o art manuscripts, objects, and primary documents to ensure their conservation and secure their placement in an accessible public collection.[34] Among the most important lessons I take from the Benson is an understanding that archives are made up of notes, bills, lists, letters, prints, and posters and yet so much more. Archives are relations forged over time, hopes and dreams of lives that resist being forgotten, and new histories waiting to be written.

NOTES

1. Although the terms "Chicanx" and "Latinx" are becoming more common in everyday use, I adopt "Chicana/o" and "Latina/o" as the preferred terms used by contributors in this edited volume.
2. My use of the concept heeds the call of historian Antoinette Burton, who views archives as products of political, cultural, and economic struggles that require us to tell stories of their formation in order to dispel their mythical or "natural" origins; Antoinette Burton, "Archive Fever, Archive Stories," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and Writing of History*, ed. Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 6.
3. Ibid.
4. Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid, and Razia Saleh (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 19.
5. Ricardo Romo, interview by the author, San Antonio, October 26, 2008.
6. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and National Portrait Gallery are among the first to hire curators of Latina/o art and establish this focus as part of their permanent collections, only after considerable pressure from advocacy groups.
7. Ricardo Romo's doctoral dissertation, later turned monograph, on the history of East Los Angeles was a major contribution to urban history; Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).
8. Harriett Romo, interview by the author, San Antonio, October 26, 2008.
9. Richard Duardo, interview by Steve Olson, *Frank* 46 (Fall 2011): 88.
10. "Rasquachismo is a sensibility that is not elevated and serious, but playful and elemental. It finds delight and refinement in what many consider banal and projects an alternative aesthetic—a sort of good taste of bad taste. It is witty and ironic, but not mean-spirited (there is sincerity in its artifice)"; Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility," in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965–1985*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, UCLA, 1991), 155.
11. To date, the best visual documentation of the exhibition and its opening reception is the documentary film titled after the collective; Jim Tartan, dir., *Los Four*, 16 mm film, 28 min., Ruiz Productions, Los Angeles, 1974.
12. Roberto Tejada, "Los Angeles Snapshots," in *Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980*, ed. Kellie Jones (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, 2011), 76.
13. William Wilson, "A Bit of the Barrio at County Museum," *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1974.
14. Henry A. Giroux, "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Feminism: Rethinking the Boundaries of Educational Discourse," in *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics: Redrawing Educational Boundaries*, ed. Giroux (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 22.
15. For a critical reading of the notion of aesthetic quality see Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Chicano Art Inside/Outside the Master's House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 169.
16. *Arte Picante*, exhibition brochure, Ricardo Romo Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection (Benson Collection).
17. Harriett Romo, interview by the author, San Antonio, October 26, 2008.
18. Steve Kowit, "Neither Gringo nor Mexican," *San Diego Reader*, January 15–21, 1976.
19. Harriett and Ricardo Romo, "Four Decades

of Collecting," in *Estampas de la Raza: Contemporary Prints from the Romo Collection* (San Antonio: McNay Art Museum and University of Texas Press, 2012), 18–19.

20. Sam Coronado took an interesting approach in separating his print workshop, Coronado Studios, from the nonprofit artist residency Serie Project. His hope was to create a sustainable enterprise by having a commercial facility that would do contract printing and serve as the exclusive publisher for the Serie Project, while the nonprofit would give the organization access to grant funding. Legally and financially they remain two separate entities.
21. Sam Coronado, interview by the author, Austin, March 6, 2013.
22. One can study this shift by looking at Serie Project's financial records as well as grant applications that detail its budgetary restrictions and aims; Serie Project Inc. Records, Benson Collection.
23. For more on the genealogy of Chicana/o art from the Third Coast see Constance Cortez, "Aztlán in Tejas: Chicana/o Art from the Third Coast," in *Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge*, by Cheech Marin, Max Benavidez, Constance Cortez, and Tere Romo (New York: Bulfinch Press, 2002), 32–42.
24. "Abriendo Brecha" is an activist scholarship conference based at the University of Texas at Austin that draws together scholars, activists, artists, and others whose research and creative intellectual work is developed and carried out in alignment with communities, organizations, movements, or networks working for social justice.
25. Tatiana Reinoza (Perkins), "Collecting in the Borderlands: Ricardo and Harriett Romo's Collection of Chicano Art" (master's thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2009).
26. Ricardo Romo, "Henry Romo," audio recording, Guide by Cell (512–895–9154) no. 1, February 2015, Benson Collection.
27. Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 37.
28. I have personally taken students to work directly with prints in the Romo Collection when I served as a teaching assistant in George Flaherty's course Chicano Art: Histories and Futures in fall 2012.
29. Harriett Romo, interview by the author, San Antonio, October 26, 2008.
30. Mbembe, "Power of the Archive," 22.
31. C. Alejandra Elenes, "Reclaiming the Borderlands: Chicana/o Identity, Difference, and Critical Pedagogy," in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*, ed. Antonia Darder, Marta Baltodano, and Rodolfo D. Torres (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2003), 194.
32. Elenes, "Reclaiming the Borderlands," 206.
33. Anthropologist Charles Hale defines these methods as involving horizontal dialogues, broad-based participation, critical scrutiny of analytic and theoretical frameworks, and thorough critical self-reflection; Charles R. Hale, *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 8.
34. New efforts are under way with the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, spearheaded by Latino collections specialist Josh Franco, to secure archival materials by Latina/o artists around the country. Through a distinct regional approach, the Benson also acquires artists' personal papers of local significance, including those of Sam Coronado, Carmen Lomas Garza, Marta Sanchez, Regina Vater, and Liliana Wilson, among others.