



Menudo-Breakfast of Champions by Maria Navidad

SURFACE TREATMENT

With COVID-19 still slowing gallery re-openings, we will keep your art experiences alive by looking back at shows whose works are still relevant. Today we revisit Sam Coronado's important "Serie Project", exhibited at IMAS in 2014.

Memories: Honoring Sam Z. Coronado's Serie Project

This exhibit is a retrospective of the printmaking legacy of one of the most important Chicano artists, educators and activists.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

"Memories" is an outstanding and socially relevant collection of serigraphs honoring the legacy of Austin artist and cultural icon, Sam Z. Coronado. This exhibit at IMAS is a retrospective selection of serigraphs by the artists who collaborated in his Serie Project from 1993–2014; two prints from each year have been included.

Coronado established the Serie Project in 1993 as a nonprofit serigraphy/screen-printing program. The Project's realization of social change was largely achieved through its collaboration with the Mexic-Art Museum in Austin, which is the official archive of Serie Project prints. With this Project Coronado became a founding member of Consejo Grafico, the first nationally recognized consortium of Latino Printmakers in the United States, and scores of artists have had an

opportunity to make prints at Coronado Studio utilizing the studio space, materials, and receiving guidance. Coronado served as Executive Director of the Project until his death in November of 2013.

For me, an outstanding facet of this collection, beyond the immediate pleasure of looking, is the firm relationship between process and idea. The serigraphy color process involves several layers of color, each screen-printed separately to form a complete image. Many of the works also include layers of imagery, such as Angel Diaz' bold "Santos y Pecador" that combines a sinner's portrait against a lacey "Last Supper" background. In this print, Diaz effectively captures the sinner's seductive charm. Others also add layers of meaning to the visual configuration. In "Gravity" by Jimmy Peña, a man is weighed down, as he tries to resist the physics of gravity, but even more by the gravity (an additional layer of wordplay here) of the news and issues of the day. The interweaving of technique, imagery, and meaning offers the viewer a deep experience. These prints speak intelligently about the human experience like frosting on a very special cake.

Coronado's mission was to grant better access to the historically significant medium of serigraphy. Through this art form, the Serie Project advocates awareness of cultural diversity, a realization of social change, and collaboration with the Latino cultural community. The Project enabled Coronado to host an Artist in Residence program through which artists could utilize his screen-printing business, Coronado Studio, at no cost to them. The program provided a platform for established and emerging Latino artists to reach a larger audience, which is often elusive. The Project has hosted more than 250 artist residencies and produced a special collection of serigraphs. Valley artist, Rigoberto Gonzalez, was part of the Project and is represented by his complex print, "Cielo Azul."

Serigraphy, or screen-printing, is from the Greek word, "seri," meaning silk, and is based on the use of stencils. It was used as an artists' medium for the first time in the US and became popular in the 1930s. Nylon and polymer fabrics have since replaced the silk as the print-screen.

The Serie Project is well represented at IMAS with artistic content addressing the significance of cultural experience. Scanning two decades, the artists' topics display a mix of concerns with personal identity, cultural roots, and social activism. The content varies from the very personal to the stuff of legends.

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