



Vereda by Rosendo Sandoval

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "STC Art Collection in Retrospect: Visual Memories as Preservation"
Where: STC Library Art Galleries, Bldg. F, 3201 W Pecan Blvd
When: Through Dec 1, 2017
Hours: 7am-9:30pm Mon-Thurs, 8am-7pm Friday
Info: 956) 872-3488

STC Permanent Art Collection

Special reminders from past shows offer a new experience for many viewers.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

The South Texas College Library Art Galleries displays its complete permanent collection for the first time since 2011; since then it has almost doubled in volume. The STC Library Art Gallery Program began in 2006 under the direction of Jose Cruz, with David Freeman as Curator. Together they made possible exhibits of regional, national and international artworks that explored new theories of creativity and innovative artistic expressions for the South Texas community. The Library Collection currently consists of paintings, prints, photography, ceramics, and sculptures donated by artists whose exhibitions were shown.

Chronologically installed across the walls of the second-floor study area, the exhibit begins with the first piece ever donated, "Temporal Form no. 10" by Ansen Seale, and ends with the most recent donation, "Peaceful Easy Feeling" by Carl Vestweber. "This collection has grown to seventy works in eleven years," said Gina Otvos, Art Gallery Associate. "We try to keep a piece from every show, but it's up to the artist's discretion whether to donate. We make sure that we're accepting quality work, since we'll have to care for the work for the rest of its life." Otvos said that the art form or

medium doesn't matter when considering a work for the collection; its relationship to the STC student body and its relevance to the Valley is a consideration. "When I came on board," Otvos continued, "I noticed that only eighteen or twenty works were by women, so it's been one of my goals to make sure that we're collecting more works by women artists."

It is pleasurable to spend thoughtful time with each work and consider its inherent pictorial meanings. At the time of this review, there was no visible identification of artists or information regarding individual pieces posted other than the year in which it was acquired. Susan Harbage Page's photograph of discarded immigrant clothing from the Border in 2009 is still relevant, as is Roel Guerra's infrared photograph, "La Lomita". Ansen Seale and James Cobb incorporated temporal elements in their experimental images. Seale devised a special camera, while Cobb used a scanner to capture his "light-jet" print. Carl Vestweber's collages bring ancient Egyptian religious beliefs into our own culture. His "Black and White and Red All Over", combines a cat's head atop an elegant male figure indicating a person with the capabilities of the Siamese. Manny Chapa's painting, "Pan Dulce Azul" will always appeal to our memory of taste. "This exhibit allows us to see where we started and how the past eleven years have led us to where we are today," concluded Otvos.

The collection only hints at much of the truly forward-thinking work that has been displayed by the Library Galleries, since many exciting experimental works as well as important pieces were scheduled for venues elsewhere and unable to end their journey here. The collection appears to be heavily weighted toward wall pieces – paintings, prints, and photographs that are easily stored and maintained. That said, an admirable collection has been acquired by STC.

Elsewhere, a traveling cartography exhibit, "Mapping Mexican History: Territories in Dispute, Identities in Question", is displayed on the first floor gallery. Early Mexican maps from 1580 to 1847, some by indigenous artists, are reproduced from UT's Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection. It is also worth a visit.

Nancy Moyer, Professor Emerita of Art, UTRGV, is an art critic for The Monitor. She may be reached at nmoyer@rgv.rr.com