

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Preserving Cultural History

The UC Santa Barbara Library has acquired two individual art collections from the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts (MCCLA) in San Francisco's Mission District. Together they consist of thousands of historical silkscreen posters from the Chicano/Latino visual arts movement dating back to the 1970s.

The Mission Gráfica and La Raza Graphics collections, which also include organization records from La Raza Graphics, will become part of the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives (CEMA), a division of UCSB Library's Special Research Collections. The acquisitions will nearly double CEMA's already extensive holdings of Chicano/Latino graphic prints. Once the items in the new collections have been processed and catalogued, they will be available to scholars and the public for research and viewing.

A reception to celebrate the acquisition will take place at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 11, at the MCCLA, 2868 Mission St., in San Francisco. Free and open to the public, the event will feature a Mission Gráfica art display, musical performances and snacks and refreshments. Individuals interested in attending are asked to RSVP to events@missionculturalcenter.org.

The MCCLA collections "are going to be housed in an institution of higher education that values the archives, and understands the social and political context that gave rise to them," said Linda Lucero, former executive director of La Raza Silkscreen Center/La Raza Graphics, which was once a separate organization and later merged with the MCCLA. "Knowing the archives are preserved and accessible to current and

future scholars, curators, historians, and others is a dream come true.”

Added MCCLA Executive Director Jennie Emire Rodriguez, “Not only are we procuring the long-term preservation of this unique collection, we are also providing access to our local and global community. A rich cultural, artistic and colorful piece of our Mission history will be available for all to reflect on and enjoy.”

The addition of these archives to CEMA supports the library’s commitment to procuring, preserving and making accessible primary research materials for students, faculty and scholars, noted University Librarian Denise Stephens. “These historical posters and records are unique articles of California and Chicano/Latino history, and will enrich the work of scholars who must often look back in order to move forward,” she said.

Among the artists featured in the collections are Rene Castro, Enrique Chagoya, Domitilia Dominguez, Juan Fuentes, Pete Gallegos, Carmen Lomas Garza, Ester Hernandez, Linda Lucero, Ralph Maradiaga, Oscar Melara, Consuelo Mendez, Malaquias Montoya, Irene Perez, Michael Rios, Jos Sances and Hebert Siguenza.

“This artwork in its entirety represents and memorializes an important and crucial period of community action, organizing and passion of what we used to call ‘El Movimiento’ — the Chicano Movement,” said Gallegos, who also is one of the founders of La Raza Silkscreen Center/La Raza Graphics. “Precipitated by the ‘60s civil rights and anti-war movements, the artwork documents the Latino/Chicano experience, aspirations, contributions, and expectations of the ‘70s, ‘80s, and ‘90s right up to the present day. As the artists move on and the arts organizations adapt to the new times, the artwork in this collection/archive will remain for the rest of the world to see who we were and what we did for our community.”

CEMA also has an extensive collection of graphic art from other major centers of Chicana/o art production in California, including Self Help Graphics & Art (Los Angeles), Centro Cultural de la Raza (San Diego), Galería de la Raza (San Francisco) and the Royal Chicano Air Force (Sacramento).

Serving to advance scholarship in ethnic studies through collections of primary research materials, CEMA features unique collections documenting the lives and activities of African Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicanos/Latinos and Native Americans in California. The collections represent the cultural, artistic, ethnic and racial diversity that characterizes the state’s population.

The MCCLA was established in 1977, according to its mission statement, “by artists and community activists with a shared vision to promote, preserve and develop the Latino cultural arts that reflect the living tradition and experiences of the Chicano, Central and South American, and Caribbean people. MCCLA makes the arts accessible as an essential element to the community’s development and well-being.”

More information about the individual collections is available at <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/special-collections/cema> and at <http://www.missionculturalcenter.org>. Questions about the collections can be directed to Rebecca Metzger at rmetzger@library.ucsb.edu or (805) 893-2674.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.