Finding Aid for the Armando Duron Papers 1928 - 2005

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Armando Duron Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1928 - 2005
Collection number: 76
Creator: Duron, Armando 1955 - extant
Extent: Half linear foot
Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA
Los Angeles, California 90095-1490
Abstract: This is a very small collection of music hall memorabilia of the late 1920s of the attorney and art collector Armando Duron.
Physical location: 180 Haines Hall, UCLA.
Language of Material: Collection materials in English
Access
Collection is open for research. Access is available by appointment for UCLA student and faculty researchers as well as independent researchers. To view the collection or any part of it, please contact the archivist at archivist@chicano.ucla.edu
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Armando Duron Papers, 76, Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA, University of California, Los Angeles.
Acquisition Information
Deed to be addressed as of November 3, 2008
Biography
Real Collectors Armando Duron: Passion and Patrimony - The Art of Collecting Distinguished and elegant, Armando Duron, 52, lawyer and art lover, cuts a classic figure against the backdrop of his impressive and eclectic 350 work collection of Chicano art. A world-acknowledged expert and foremost Chicano art collector on par with Cheech Marin, Duron is an old-school caballero [gentleman] of the first order. Active supporter of Self Help Graphics, the East LA hub of Chicano art, Duron, a proud Angeleno, with roots in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua Mexico, resides in Montebello. Married to Maria Salinas Duron, a high powered business woman; [Executive VP Multicultural Sales Division of Countrywide Home Loans,] they have four children Adelí [23], Isabel, [17] Angelica, [16] Maximiliano, [13], for the Durons, living with art is a family tradition. No dry, pontificating, vainglorious amasser of daubs on canvas, the warm and articulate Armando Duron collects with an uncompromising esthetic and moral compass of his own design. Gleefully shredding the rulebook of what is considered ‘typical’ Chicano art, Duron passionately seeks pieces that counter stereotypes of what is considered Chicano art; supporting visionary artists who dare to paint outside the lines of what is ‘classically’ Chicano. He leaves no stone unturned; going to countless openings in hole in the walls, established galleries, artists studios, garages, storefronts, street corners; wherever art is born. The obvious result is a broader perspective that facilitates growth of the art, artists and the market. Duron sees himself as a gatekeeper of the purist flame; a conduit for information, a touchstone to an alternate Chicano art reality. Humble yet sophisticated, convivial yet understated, the contrasting yet complimentary facets of Senor Duron dazzle. This is a man that deeply appreciates life; his family, friendships, his art. Duron is keenly aware of his good fortune, having ‘come from nothing.’ His legal work and extra curricular helping of others are well known throughout the community, but he’s the soul of discretion. An extraordinary host, a supportive listener, and an open minded free thinker, his unwavering opinions on collecting are elevated, exacting, and challenge the immoral art world’s handling of artists. Since day one of their 26 year buying spree, Duron and his wife Mary have religiously kept a book with every invitation in a plastic sleeve. This documents the origins of the relationship and date. After some 350 purchases, consuming enough wine and cheese to sink the Titanic, times, places and details can blur. Unlike some collectors who prefer to go around the dealers hoping for a hungry artist’s lack of business acumen, Duron respects the artist/gallerist relationship. Acutely aware of the artist’s dependency on a selling outlet, Duron scrupulously plays by the rules, unless he feels that the artist is being abused by their representative, and not being paid. Surprisingly, this has only happened twice in all the time he has been collecting. Mercifully, Duron is financially unmotivated. He has a certain distain for those who purchase with eyes on the
resale value. ‘Those are buyers, not collectors.’ His collecting criteria raises the bar of authenticity for what has evolved from a mere ‘calling’ into an art form all its own: The Art of Collecting 101. The term ‘hobby’ laughably understates the commitment that Duron evinces. The Duron home hosts an elegantly appointed reference library of every book published on the subject of Chicano art. A polished blond wood art deco refectory table dominates a deliciously sunny marigold room. A swirling Gronk blown glass sculpture dissects the table. A hand-crafted, massive silver necklace commissioned by Armando for a special anniversary for wife Mary features painted cameos of the children and Armando. Bookshelves are peppered with small sculptures and Chicano objets d’art. At the very end of the library is a walk in vault of unhung works; treasures waiting for their turn on the walls of the home. The Durons rotate the works at will. The most recent purchase is a tiny photograph of a painting; the revolutionary new concept being that private collector are merely sponsors of art, it must hang in public places where the masses can see it; but the actual owner gets a small photograph of the original. Foremost, Duron views himself as a guardian of Chicano art as a historical point of reference, and a chapter to be constantly rewritten. Real Talk LA’s Associate Publisher and Art Dealer Juan Rodriguez interrogates Real Collector Armando Duron in his Montebello home. RTLA: The house is on fire: your family is safe...which single painting do you carry with you under your arm into safety? Armando Duron: It’s a question that people ask, and it always makes me shiver. Recently, I had this dream, the house was on fire, and I was there...just melting. I was part of the art; I could never decide. I would go with it. RTLA: Distinguish a patron of Chicano art versus a collector of Chicano art. Armando Duron: A lot of people can call themselves collectors of Chicano art but if they are collecting for commercial reasons, for financial purposes, then they are not really collecting Chicano art. They’re collecting something else, they’re collecting a commodity. Pretty pictures. Things to decorate rooms but they are not collecting Chicano art. RTLA: Define Chicano art. Armando Duron: For me, Chicano art is what moves the Chicano soul and references the Chicano experience. Because Chicano art has a very clear reference point, it’s about understanding what your responsibility is within the Chicano community. RTLA: What is your relationship to the art? Armando Duron: Because of a certain amount of discretionary income, because of who we [my wife and myself] are as Chicanos, this is what have acquired here isn’t ours. We are the custodians. Of the the patrimony of our community. The real issue is what is Chicano art? Not what is a collection. You can go see shows that claim to be Chicano art but are not coming from a Chicano perspective. The whole point of Chicano art is to control our history to be the people who are disseminating what our history is about; what out culture is about. And not let others do it for us. That’s the genesis of this collection, somebody has to put this collection together and say for our community, primarily what is our cultural patrimony and our experience. Historically your experience has not been cared for, has not been appreciated. It has only begun recently. This is an empowering process but not for us as individuals it’s not designed that way, it’s for the entire community. RTLA: What significance has Chicano art had for our community? Armando Duron: It was always a part of the community. Through murals, our whole culture was very art driven whether you talk about Pre-Colombian, the Mextihaque, the last 500 years, the Spanish part of it has always been artistically oriented. It hasn’t always been appreciated. I’m working on an article entitled Chicano art before Chicanos. I’m talking about Mexicanos, Californians, painting before the ‘60’s, because there was art produced before that time, it’s always been important. One of the interesting facts about the movement versus the Black Power movement, was how important art was from the beginning, how central it was. How central a role it seemed to play, even in the most political days-the posters, the signs, and the exhibitions were always initially very political and always part of the movement. RTLA: Are there particular iconographies in Chicano art? How do you define Chicano art? Armando Duron: Accepted theories on iconography say that there is a specific Chicano art has bold colors, that Chicano art has callaveras, Chicano art has nopales, has cars, that it has virgins, that sort of thing. That’s not to say that it’s bad but it’s to say that it’s limited to assume that it all is. Most of the works that you see here on the walls here don’t look very Chicano at all. The unofficial title of what you saw today is dis-Chicano art. Everyone from a Linda Vallejo to a Gronk, to a Camille Rose Garcia, to a Monique Prieto are producing works that don’t look Chicano at all—that doesn’t look Latino at all. They don’t appear to refer to that experience, and yet I submit that if you look at it closely you will find those references, you just don’t find them the way that Chicano art is supposed to look. RTLA: Is there a difference between the older generation and newer generation, Armando Duron: As a general rule yes, first generation and second generation were producing very political art, very clearly referenced Chicano iconography, very clearly referenced scenes. And when you speak to them you find that a lot of them would like to move away from it but can’t. When they try, people are shocked, people are disturbed. People say ‘that doesn’t look like your other stuff.’ In order to be understood, to keep selling, established artists will stick to what the have been doing. That’s one of the big tragedies. RTLA: Are Chicano painters mostly moved by politics? Armando Duron: All art is political. Regardless of what their genre is. They’re painting from a perspective of what is going on in their environment at the time. That’s a constant. RTLA: Do you have a special connection to any one piece? Armando Duron: Oh no, they’re all our babies! There’s a story to each piece. The way we acquire a piece is by falling in love with the piece. That’s the way; you have to know yourself well enough to know. Just because somebody says ‘buy that,’ doesn’t mean I will. If everybody else hates it, that doesn’t matter. We’ve proven that enough times in this house. RTLA: How do you know when to buy a piece? Armando Duron: It’s a feeling that comes to me very literally right here in my forehead in the middle of my eyes, when I see something that is perfect. It stays right here, and I can’t get it out.
of my mind. Then I know that I gotta have that one. RTLA: How did you discover your passion for collecting. Armando Duron: It’s not a passion for collecting. RTLA: Is it a hobby? Armando Duron: [shuddering] No, no - it’s not that. RTLA: Are you an art lover? Armando Duron: Definitely an art lover. But in the sense that in a lot of ways it’s a mission, it’s not just that we love art, and that we love artworks, it’s collecting a body of work that’s telling a story. Today’s story of the Chicano community. We can lead to posterity as part of that narrative. And so it this is what that community was going through at that time, we can see this story develop. Some psychoanalyst can tell you that it comes from a need. I can tell you where it comes from; it comes from not having anything when I grew up. I truly love the works, I’m truly grateful to the artists who produce them; I really admire the artists and hope to keep doing it for a while. From Real Talk LA’s Associate Publisher and Art Dealer Juan Rodriguez

Scope and Content
This is a very small collection of music hall memorabilia of the late 1920s of the attorney and art collector Armando Duron.

Related Material
Self Help Graphics Research Papers

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Subjects
Armando Duron
Lupe Velez
Music Hall
Vaudeville

Armando Duron Papers n.d.
Physical Description: Card
Scope and Content Note
3”x5” Silkscreen card
C. Bueno on verso

Armando Duron Papers 23 Nov no year
Physical Description: Clipping
Scope and Content Note
A Night in Mexico... A Gigantic Colorful Vaudeville Show...

CHICANO STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES BOX1
Robert Gutierrez Collection Collection ID: 74 Armando Duron Papers 20 Jun. [1931
Physical Description: Pamphlet
Scope and Content Note
RKO Palace Theater Playbill
Lupe Velez the Mexican-Singing Moving Picture Star