Finding guide to the Simón Silva Papers CEMA 68

Finding aid prepared by UCSB Special Collections Staff

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04/30/2013
Title: Simón Silva papers
Identifier/Call Number: CEMA 68
Contributing Institution: UC Santa Barbara Library, Department of Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 3.4 linear feet (1 document box, 1 oversize box, 9 posters)
Date (inclusive): 1991-1997
Abstract: Simón Silva is a Chicano Artist who paints vibrant and colorful images that are reminiscent of his own culture. His collection to grow over time presently includes notecards, photographic prints, posters, and slides which exemplify his individualistic artwork. Also included is correspondence relating to the published children's story he illustrated, and a copy of the actual book, Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English.
Physical Location: Del Norte
Language of Materials: The collection is in English and Spanish
Conditions Governing Access Note
Service copies of audiovisual items may need to be made before viewing or listening. Please consult Special Collections staff for further information.
Conditions Governing Use Note
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of Item], Simón Silva Papers, CEMA 68. Department of Special Collections, UC Santa Barbara Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.
Acquisition Information
Processing Information
Biographical Sketch
Simón was born in Mexicali, Mexico in 1961. He grew up in Holtville, California a small border town in Southern California. He is one of eleven children that grew up as migrant field workers. At an early age of eight years old, Simón found himself working the fields and eventually traveling to Oregon and Washington to work during the summers. Because of the lack of respect for his type of labor and his family's lack of educational support, Simón grew up with a low self esteem and with very little respect for his culture. Art would be his saving grace, nurturing his self esteem and keeping him focused on pursuing an education. It wasn't until he came to understand and appreciate his culture that he was able to find his true purpose in life.
In 1986, he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. As a Chicano Artist Simón celebrates his bilingual and bicultural life and hopes that others will do the same. His art is a reflection of what he considers to be a great asset that all of us have in this country, that is, the opportunity to use our multicultural make up to our advantage.
Simón lives in San Bernardino, California, with his wife María, and their three sons, Josué, Francisco Xavier, and Emilio. He spends a great deal of time traveling around the country lecturing at schools. He finds it very important to inspire other lives by sharing his art and his personal experiences.
It's the sensory appeal of Simón's work that first captures our attention and invites us to take a closer look. Our eyes are immediately seduced by the vibrant colors which give his artwork a signature style like no other Chicano artist. All of the images are soothing to the eyes and familiar to the heart. Each painting is similar in style, yet uniquely independent of the others, just like the Chicano culture.
Series Description
Series I. Personal and Biographical, 1993-1997 This series housed in box 1 contains two folders of correspondence. One folder is of incoming correspondence and the other is correspondence from the childrens story Gathering the Sun which Silva illustrated.
**Series II. Notecards, 1991-1997** This series contains 15 notecards of Simon Silva’s artwork. They are smaller versions of his posters and book illustrations. They are located in box 1, folders 3-5 and are in order by date, then title.

**Series III. Slides, 1991-1994** This series contains 15 slides of his artwork. They are found in box 1, folder 6 and are in the order in which they were received.

**Series IV. Photographic Prints, undated** This series contains 11 photo copies of the artist’s posters and illustrations. They are untitled and undated. They are located in box 1, folders 7-8.

**Series V. Lithographs, 1992-1997** This series contains 9 offset posters by Simon Silva. A few of the posters are large versions of his book illustrations. They are all signed by the artist. One is signed specifically for an individual who worked with his collection. They are organized alphabetically.

**Series VI. Publications, 1997** Series six contains newspaper clippings about Simon Silva which are housed in oversize box 2. This series also includes a copy of the book, *Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English* which was illustrated by Silva.

**Series VII. Video Recordings, undated** Series seven contains a three minute video recording called *Latino Artists for Patrick Perez* where Silva discusses the inspiration for his pieces.

**Related Material**
The following material is available by searching the UCSB Library Online catalog.

*Green Web*, poems by Juan Delgado, cover art by Simón Silva, University of Georgia Press, 1994

**Separations**
The following materials have been removed and are available by searching the UCSB Library Online catalog.


**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Silva, Simon

Mexican American art -- 20th century

**Series I. Personal and Biographical 1993-1997**

**Correspondence 1993-1997**

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| Box 1, Folder 6 | Las Comadres 1991 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Un Dia De Campo 1992 |
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| Box 1, Folder 6 | Cover for Time Magazine NAFTA 1993 |

Series IV. Photographic Prints undated

| Box 1, Folder 7-8, Flat-file 2, Folder 2 | 11 Prints undated |

Series V. Lithographs 1992-1997


Amor Eterno 1993

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 18 x 22 in.; Poster size: 22 x 26 in.

Description/Comments

This is a poster of a whole family embracing one another. The husband is holding a batch of sunflowers and with the other arm is hugging his wife while they kiss. Their daughter is hugging them, and the mother is carrying another child while she embraces her husband. Behind them is a background of large sunflowers. This poster is signed by the artist.

On Simon Silva's web page he captioned the poster with the following, "Familia is everything!"

Amor de Padre 1994

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 18 x 30 in; Poster size: 23 x 37 in.

Description/Comments

This poster consists of an image of a father embracing his son. He seems to have just opened the door and walked inside, and is in the process of greeting his son by carrying him. Towards the sides of the father and child are carrots on the floor, and a bag. There is a portrait of Lady Guadalupe on the door. In the background of the parent is an image of bright landscape and fields. The bottom of the poster reads, "Amor de Padre" and is signed by Simon Silva.

On Simon Silva's web page, he captioned the poster with the following, "An homage for all our fathers whom by working a job that very few want to do, show us that they love us. A father’s love can come in many ways that go unnoticed and unappreciated."
Amor a Todas Horas 1992

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 21.5 x 25.5 in.; Poster size: 25 x 33.25 in.

Description/Comments
This poster includes an image of a mother and child inside their home. Their backs are turned to the viewer as they stare outside an open window. Outside the window shows the moon shining across rows of roses and mountains in the landscape. The room consists largely of red and orange colors. On the wall next to the mother is a wooden crucifix of Jesus Christ. Below that stands a little table that holds candles and flowers, as well as a note. In Spanish, the note reads, "Mi amor para ti, es amor a todas horas" which translates to "My love for you, my love at all hours."

On his web site Simon Silva captioned the poster with the following, "Watching my beautiful wife take care of our son, I realized how much work it takes to raise a child. This is an homage for all the mother's in the world. In painting this image I regained what was lost through time, beautiful memories of love all times!"

Cesar Chavez 1997

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 19 x 11.5 in; Paper size: 24 x 18 in.

Description/Comments
This poster is an image of Cesar Chavez glancing across fields. His upper body blends with farming fields. The sun is rising so it appears to be dawn. Above Chavez's head is the RCAF symbol. The sky is painted in a beautiful orange and yellow glow with gradients of those two colors. The fields are painted going in different angles in green and orange hues. The poster is autographed by the artist. The bottom of the poster reads, "From Gathering the Sun: An ABC in Spanish and English by Alma Flor Ada."

Dos Mujeres 1992

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 22.5 x 27.25 in.; Poster size: 25 x 34 in.

Description/Comments
This piece includes an image of two woman arched down while washing their hair in a gray tub. Their faces are hidden by their long dark hair. They are dressed in white shirts and colorful skirts, and are both barefoot. Behind them in the background are large groups of sunflowers. In the far background there is a dim sunlight. This piece is signed by the artist.

Estrellas y Flores 1997

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 19 x 11.5 in; Poster size: 24 x 18 in.

Description/Comments
This poster is an image of a little boy laying in a field of flowers while staring at the stars above. The flowers around him are in shades of orange and blue. Then they turn to shades of red, yellow, and light blue. In the background of the boy are fields and the sky fades from an orange gradient to shades of green and blue.
Las Comadres 1992

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 21.75 x 21.75 in.; Poster size: 24.5 x 29 in.

Description/Comments
This offset poster includes an image of two women in a sunflower field. The two women are talking to one another across a red brick wall. One woman's face is not shown, but her long black hair is in a braid and she is shown from behind, carrying a basket of white cloth. The woman she is talking to holds a baby in blue clothing across her back. A majority of the background of the image consists of large yellow sunflowers and a few cacti. This poster is signed by the artist.

On his web page Simon Silva captioned the poster with the following, "Our neighbor was my mother's Comadre. I remember the sharing of tears, sugar, eggs, and hot chisme!"

Mexico 1997

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 19 x 11.5 in.; Poster size: 24 x 18 in.

Description/Comments
This signed, colorful poster is of a staircase leading towards the top of an Aztec temple. The top of the stairs leads to an Aztec calendar, and the colors that are used for the calendar are different hues of yellow, orange, blue, and green for intricate details. The background of the calendar are in gradients of orange and yellow hues.

Un Dia de la Campo 1992

General Physical Description Note: Offset; Image size: 20 x 31.5 in.; Poster size: 24.5 x 38 in.

Description/Comments
This poster is an image of a man, woman, and child seated in rows of farm fields. The people are very small in comparison to the size of the fields. Above them in the sky is a bright orange sun on the horizon. The image colors are darker towards the bottom of the picture and then get brighter towards the sun. This poster is signed by the artist.

The artist described the poster with the following: "I remember picking strawberries in Oregon and Washington State and feeling an overwhelming pride as I put in a full days work. The fields were planted on the hillsides and that created the illusion of endless fields."

Series VI. Publications 1997

Flat-file 2,
Folder 1

Newspaper Clippings 1997

Description/Comments
Articles about Silva and the publication of Gathering the Sun from newspapers including Vida en el Valle, The Arizona Republic, La Opinión, Imperial Valley Press

Box 1

Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English 1997

Series VII. Video Recordings undated

Item V1259/VHS

Latino Artists For Patrick Perez undated

Description/Comments
3:22 min. Simon Silva discusses his approach to his work, and mentions his inspiration for Amor de Padre and Las Comadres.