

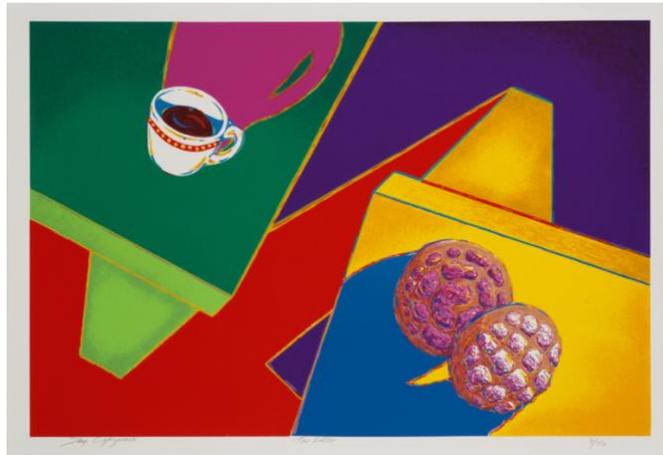
BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Carlotta Stankiewicz, 512.475.6784, carlotta.stankiewicz@blantonmuseum.org
Penny Snyder, 512.471.0241, penny.snyder@blantonmuseum.org

Blanton Presents *Arte Sin Fronteras: Prints from the Self Help Graphics Studio*



AUSTIN, TX—October 2, 2019—The Blanton Museum of Art will present *Arte Sin Fronteras: Prints from the Self Help Graphics Studio* from October 27, 2019 to January 12, 2020. The exhibition highlights the radical, inventive, and technically rigorous work Latinx artists produced at Self Help Graphics & Art, a famous printmaking studio and cultural hub located in East Los Angeles. *Arte Sin Fronteras* includes more than 70 works created between 1978 and 1997, drawn from a gift of around 350 prints given to the Blanton by Dr. Gilberto Cárdenas.

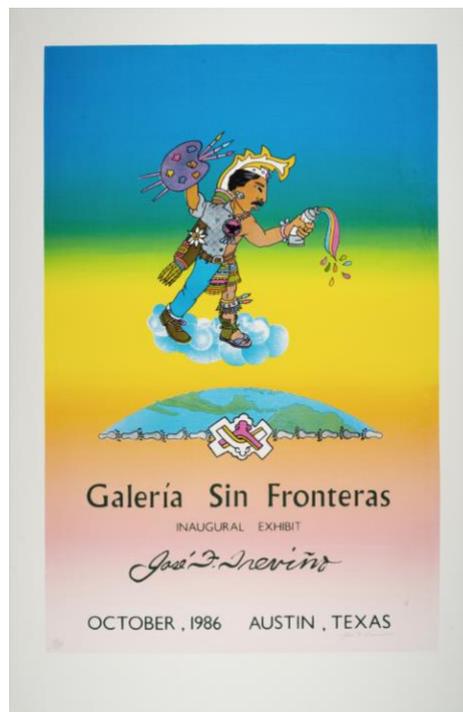
“The Blanton is honored to present the graphic work of these pioneering Latinx artists,” said Blanton director Simone Wicha. “The screenprints in *Arte Sin Fronteras* illustrate intense technical mastery and precision in printmaking, while serving as vibrant expressions of Latinx identity at a critical moment in history. We’re grateful to Dr. Gilberto Cárdenas for gifting this extraordinarily rich set of prints to the museum, which prompted this exhibition. The Blanton’s expanding holdings of Latinx art is bolstered by this gift, and we are excited to celebrate it with our community.”

The exhibition’s title references Galería Sin Fronteras, a commercial gallery Dr. Cárdenas founded in East Austin in 1986 to promote the work of Latinx artists. The space often exhibited prints created at Self Help Graphics. A seminal force in shaping the field of Latinx art, Dr. Cárdenas taught sociology at UT Austin from 1975 to 1999 and has one of the largest private collections of Latinx art in the US.

Founded in 1972 by Sister Karen Bocalero, Self Help Graphics & Art is a community institution devoted to Latinx culture and art, especially printmaking, that still operates today. Located in east LA, Self Help Graphics also advocates for Latinx art and culture on a national stage through many programs, including the Experimental Atelier Program. Begun in 1982, the program invites artists to work with master

printers to produce fine art prints that are sold in a gallery setting; the artists receive half of the output while the other half is used to fund the program. The majority of the works in *Arte Sin Fronteras* were created by artists as a part of this program.

“We are grateful to Dr. Cárdenas for gifting these extraordinary prints to the Blanton, which were produced at a pivotal moment in the national recognition of Latinx art in the US,” said Blanton assistant curator of Latin American art, Florencia Bazzano, co-curator of the exhibition. “Pioneering figures like Dr. Cárdenas, who encourage collecting Latinx art by providing gallery representation for artists, and institutions like Self Help Graphics, which champion artists and the value of Latinx art, paved the way for the inclusion of Latinx art in the American canon.”



Arte Sin Fronteras begins with a selection of works documenting the history of Self Help Graphics & Art as a community organization. This section includes prints depicting the institution’s building and surrounding neighborhood, a rare print by founder Karen Boccalero, and posters announcing exhibitions associated with the Experimental Atelier Program. Also included in this section is an inaugural poster for Austin’s Galería Sin Fronteras by Jose Treviño, which features a figure dressed simultaneously as an artist, labor activist, and Aztec warrior walking on clouds above the earth on a rainbow gradient background.

The next section “Constructing Identity” includes prints that illustrate how artists at Self Help Graphics both constructed and conveyed complex ethnic, political, and cultural identities in their work. Two major themes are the legacy of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s as well as the influence of the rich visual heritage of Mexican and Central American cultures. “Constructing Identity” also includes a small section of screenprints depicting private, domestic spaces, a realm closely tied to self-representation.

“Gendered Bodies” features prints by women and queer artists that explore the intersections of their cultural identities, genders, and sexual orientations. According to Christian Wurst, co-curator of the exhibition and Blanton curatorial assistant, “Marginalized artists within the Latinx community, some of whom were at the forefront of the Chicano Movement, would often find themselves at odds with the traditional gender roles that were often pervasive among Mexican Americans. The artists in this section, like Alex Donis, Teddy Sandoval, and Diane Gamboa, reckon with these tensions, alongside threats to their bodies, while also imagining alternative, liberating futures.”



Artists grappling with the geographic, cultural, and emotional impact of the Mexico-US border comprise the works in “Borderlines.” In this section, Ricardo Duffy’s *New World Order* (1996-97) responds to particular policy changes, such as California’s 1994 ballot initiative which prohibited undocumented immigrants from using public services, while Jean LaMarr’s *Some Kind of Buckaroo* (1990) evokes the rugged geography and increasing militarization of the border. Similarly, “Borderlines” also includes a portfolio of ten etchings by five artists that were sponsored by Self Help Graphics and co-published by Galería Sin Fronteras. The series “The New Immigration” (1988) was commissioned by Gilberto Cárdenas to honor immigrants and the associated triumphs and struggles of transitioning into a new country’s culture.

The last section of the exhibition “Myth and Celebration” focuses on connections to Indigenous iconography and rituals from present-day Mexico. Beginning in the 1960s, as part of a wider resurgence and interest in Mesoamerican cultures, such as the Maya and the Aztec, Mexican American communities found inspiration in their Indigenous past. A particular focus of the section is the depiction of the *Día de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead. Several prints include imagery associated with the holiday as well as commemorative prints from Self Help Graphics’ *Día de los Muertos* event, which included a parade and performances, and was one of the first large-scale celebrations of this tradition in the country.

Arte Sin Fronteras: Prints from the Self Help Graphics Studio is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.

Public Programs:

Friday, October 25 | 6-10 p.m.

B Scene: The Vex at ATX with Piñata Protest

Tuesday, November 7 | 12:30 p.m.

Gallery Talk: Florencia Bazzano on *Arte Sin Fronteras*

Thursday, November 21 | 6:00 p.m.

Art Talk: Dr. Gilberto Cárdenas and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, co-sponsored by the Center for Mexican American and Latino Studies.

Thursday, December 19 | 12:30 p.m.

Gallery Talk: Christian Wurst on *Arte Sin Fronteras*

Image Captions:

Sam Z. Coronado, *Pan dulce*, 1988, screenprint, 26 1/4 x 38 5/8 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas, 2017

José Francisco Treviño, Untitled, 1986, screenprint, 40 1/16 x 26 5/16 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas, 2017

Jean LaMarr, *Some Kind of Buckaroo*, 1990, screenprint, 26 x 38 1/4 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas, 2017