LOUIS MARTINEZ

PRESENTED BY BOARD EMERITUS

J.MICHAEL WALKER

I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY, AS AVENUE 50 BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS, TO SHINE A LIGHT ON A HERETOFORE-UNKNOWN CHICANO ARTIST AND PRINTMAKER, LOUIS MARTINEZ, WHO, BETWEEN 1970 AND 1980, CREATED HERE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, A NUMBER OF EXPRESSIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PRINTS EMBLEMATIC OF HIS TIME AND HIS CULTURE, IN A WIDE RANGE OF PRINTING MEDIA.

MY INTRODUCTION TO LOUIS' ARTWORK ORIGINATED IN A SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT: LOUIS' FAMILY HAVE BEEN CLOSE FAMILY FRIENDS OF OURS FOR OVER TWO DECADES. OCCASIONALLY, ONE OR ANOTHER SMALL, FRAMED ARTWORK ON A WALL IN THE MARTINEZ FAMILY HOME WOULD CAPTURE MY ATTENTION, AND AS I PORED OVER ITS DETAILS, I WOULD NOTICE THE SIGNATURE "L MARTINEZ." LOUIS NEVER DREW ATTENTION TO THIS CHAPTER OF HIS LIFE, FOCUSING INSTEAD ON RAISING AND CARING FOR HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY; BUT I ALWAYS LONGED FOR THE CHANCE TO SEE WHAT OTHER WORKS MIGHT LAY HIDDEN IN STORAGE.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, LOUIS' DAUGHTER MISA CREATED AN INSTALLATION THAT INCLUDED LOUIS' LARGE PRINT "THE WESTERN MAN REVISITED," AND IT BLEW ME AWAY. ITS CENTRAL FIGURE IS EPIC
AND MONUMENTAL IN BOTH EXECUTION AND IMPLICATION; AND THE VARIETY OF PRINTMAKING TECHNIQUES INVOLVED – ETCHING, BLOCK PRINTING, AND COLLAGRAPH – ARE IMPRESSIVE. IT'S A BREATHTAKING WORK OF ART. THE THREE PRINTS ON DISPLAY ARE VIRTUALLY UNIQUE ORIGINALS, AS LOUIS OFTEN ONLY PRINTED ARTIST PROOFS. I HOPE SERIOUS COLLECTORS OF CHICANO ART AND PRINTS WILL AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RESCUE A FASCINATING ARTIST FROM OBSCURITY.

J MICHAEL WALKER

ARMANDO BRITO

PRESENTED BY BOARD EMERITUS
RICARDO MUÑOZ

ARMANDO BRITO IS NOT ONLY AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK I COLLECT, BUT ALSO A DEAR FRIEND OF MORE THAN 20 YEARS. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TOGETHER, AND I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW HIM BOTH AS AN ARTIST AND AS A PERSON.

WHAT ATTRACTS ME MOST TO ARMANDO'S WORK IS HIS IMAGINATION. HE HAS A REMARKABLE GIFT FOR ENVISIONING IDEAS AND BRINGING THEM TO LIFE, AND THAT IMAGINATION IS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT MANY OF HIS PAINTINGS.

ARMANDO SKETCHES EVERY DAY—IT'S PART OF WHO HE IS. WHEN HE ISN'T PAINTING, HE'S USUALLY SKETCHING. HE IS ALSO A SCULPTOR AND ENJOYS WORKING IN THAT MEDIUM AS WELL.

ARMANDO HAS A LONG HISTORY WITH THE US. HE LIVED HERE, MARRIED HERE, AND HAS TWO DAUGHTERS FROM THAT MARRIAGE. HE ALSO HAS A SISTER WHO LIVES IN LOS ANGELES, WHICH BRINGS HIM TO LA FREQUENTLY.

ONE OF HIS MORE RECENT PROJECTS WAS A MURAL HE CREATED FOR ALTAMED AT THE PACE CLINIC IN SUNLAND. ALTAMED ALSO ACQUIRED A NUMBER OF ARMANDO'S WORKS FOR ITS COLLECTION.

ARMANDO HAS DEVELOPED FRIENDSHIPS WITH MANY PROMINENT MEXICAN ARTISTS OVER THE YEARS, INCLUDING ROGER VON GUNTEN AND MANUEL FELGUÉREZ. HIS WORK HAS BEEN EXHIBITED IN NUMEROUS GALLERIES AND EXHIBITIONS THROUGHOUT BOTH THE US AND MEXICO.

HE HAS ALSO EXHIBITED TWICE HERE AT AVENUE 50 STUDIO. MORE RECENTLY, HIS WORK HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH NOEL CAYETANO AND OSCAR ROMÁN GALLERY IN MEXICO CITY.

THERE IS ALSO A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE ABOUT ARMANDO BRITO AND HIS WORK THROUGH ARTICLES AND OTHER PUBLISHED SOURCES. HIS LONG CAREER, INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS, AND CONTINUING ARTISTIC PRACTICE SPEAK TO THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF HIS CONTRIBUTION AS AN ARTIST.

RICARDO MUÑOZ

FRANK ROMERO & TIMMY GARCIA

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER MARICELA GUZMAN

I SELECTED FRANK ROMERO AND TIMMY GARCIA BECAUSE, TO ME, THEY REPRESENT THE BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAESTRO AND ESTUDIANTE AND THE PASSING OF KNOWLEDGE FROM ONE GENERATION OF CHICANO ARTISTS TO THE NEXT.

AS A STUDENT OF FRANK'S AT PLAZA DE LA RAZA, I HAVE SEEN FIRSTHAND HIS GENEROSITY, NOT ONLY IN TEACHING AND SHARING HIS ART, BUT IN HIS BELIEF THAT HIS WORK SHOULD REMAIN ACCESSIBLE TO THE CHICANO COMMUNITY.

AND I HAVE WATCHED TIMMY GROW FROM FRANK'S LONGTIME STUDIO ASSISTANT AND COLLABORATOR INTO AN INVALUABLE TEACHER AND AN AMAZING ARTIST IN HIS OWN RIGHT.

FOR ME, BRINGING FRANK AND TIMMY TOGETHER AT AVENUE 50 STUDIO IS ABOUT HONORING AN ICONIC CHICANO ARTIST WHILE ALSO CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION AND THE COMMUNITY, MENTORSHIP, AND COLLABORATION THAT KEEP CHICANO ART ALIVE.

MARICELA GUZMAN

ISABEL AVILA
&
LEOPOLDO PEÑA

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER
JOHN URQUIZA

PHOTOGRAPHY IS UNDER APPRECIATED IN THE ART WORLD AND MISUNDERSTOOD ACROSS THE WORLD. YES, IT IS A TOOL FOR DOCUMENTATION, NEWS AND FAMILY PHOTOS, BUT ITS EXPRESSIVE QUALITIES ARE OVERLOOKED. WE FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY BECAUSE ITS CONSUMPTION IN REAL LIFE AND ON THE INTERNET IS AS UBIQUITOUS AS ORDERING A LATTE. TH OVERLOOKED MEXICAN AND LATINE PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE BURIED UNDER ALL THIS. THEY ORIGINS OF THESE PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE AS INFLUENTIAL AS THE FRENCH AND GERMANS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY. MEXICAN PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE SERVING UP SURREALISM AS AREGULAR DIET OF THOUGHTS AND EXPRESSIVE WAYS TO EXAMINE OUR BUILT WORLD. MEXICAN PHOTOGRAPHERS AND FILMMAKERS DEVELOPED A STYLE OF PICTORIAL NARRATIVES THAT DWARFED THE BURGEONING AMERICAN SCENE.

ISABEL AND LEOPOLDO ARE PART OF THAT HERITAGE WITH A VERY DISTINCT LOS ANGELES LENS. THEIR CHOICE OF SUBJECT MATTER IN BOTH THEIR COLLECTIVE WORKS REVEALS AN ALTERNATIVE LOS ANGELES, SIMULTANEOUSLY NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT NARRATIVES OF THE UNSEEN CITY.

JOHN URQUIZA

NAYELI GUZMAN
&
HERIBERTO LUNA

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER
KATHY GALLEGOS

HERIBERTO LUNA:

I CHOOSE HERIBERTO LUNA BECAUSE OF THE CONTENT OF HIS WORK, THE COLOR PALETTE HE USES, AND THE INTERESTING DICHOTOMY OF STRENGTH YET GENTLENESS. THE COLOR PALETTE IS STRONGLY AGGRESSIVE, AND THE SUBJECT MATTER -- PIT BULLS, REINFORCES THAT AGGRESSIVENESS. YET, THERE IS A GENTLENESS IN THE ADDITION OF THE BUTTERFLIES, AND THE ADDITION OF FLOWERS. I ALSO THINK THAT THE CONTINUOUS RHYTHM OF ONE GLYPH REPEATED CONTINUOUSLY THROUGHOUT THE DOG'S BODY SUGGESTS TO ME, A SORT OF MEDITATIVE CHANT. THIS CHANT BECOMES A SPIRITUAL PRAYER
REPEATED OVER AND OVER. IS LUNA TRYING TO BRING HIS DOG FIFTY BACK FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD? WHAT I SEE FROM HIS WORK IS A VERY MACHO ENERGY BROUGHT INTO CONTROL THROUGH SPIRITUALISM.

NAYELI GUZMAN:

I WAS IMMEDIATELY DRAWN TO NAYELI'S PAINTING BY ITS CRAFTSMANSHIP. AFTER BEING AWED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE PAINTING, I WAS LURED CLOSER TO EXAMINE THE CONTENT. HER CONTENT IS STRANGELY ODD. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A PAINTING WHICH DEPICTS A DICHOTOMY BETWEEN BEAUTY AND THE BIZARRE. THIS PAINTING GENERATES MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS, WHICH MEANS I ENJOY STARING AT IT ALMOST AS IF I WERE WATCHING A MOVIE, OR READING A CHAPTER FROM A BOOK BECAUSE I BECOME LOST IN ANOTHER WORLD. I LOVE WHEN A WORK OF ART AFFECTS ME IN THAT WAY.

KATHY GALLEGOS

BONNIE LAMBERT & CIDNE HART

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER SUSANNA URQUIZA

BONNIE LAMBERT:

I LOVE BONNIE'S COLOR PALETTE—IT'S BRIGHT, BOLD, AND FEARLESS. THERE IS A CONFIDENCE IN BOTH HER WORK AND HER BRUSHSTROKES. HER LANDSCAPES SEEM TO EXPLODE WITH COLOR, CREATING SOMETHING THAT IS AT ONCE INTENSE, BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING, AND OFTEN CALMING.
I LOVE COLOR MYSELF, AND I THINK THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS I AM SO DRAWN TO HER WORK. FOR MANY YEARS, I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF SITTING BESIDE BONNIE IN OUR WORKSHOPS, WATCHING HER PAINT AND ADMIRING HER DEDICATION TO CONTINUALLY GROWING AND IMPROVING. SHE TRULY LOVED HER CRAFT, AND THAT PASSION CAME THROUGH IN EVERYTHING SHE CREATED.

CIDNE HART:

WHEN I FIRST MET CIDNE, SHE WAS WEARING HER ART—HER PRINTS ON LINEN AND SILK. I WAS IMMEDIATELY DRAWN TO THE ORGANIC NATURE OF HER ARTISTIC PROCESS. LATER, I LEARNED THAT SHE COLLECTS LEAVES AND OTHER OBJECTS SHE DISCOVERS DURING HER COMMUNITY WALKS, BRINGING THOSE PIECES OF THE NATURAL WORLD INTO HER WORK.

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE FLOW AND MOVEMENT OF HER FINISHED PIECES THAT FEEDS MY SOUL AN BRINGS ME CLOSER TO THE LAND. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, IT WAS HER PRINTS THAT TOUCHED ME IN SUCH AN ORGANIC AND MEANINGFUL WAY.

I AM ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO THE CYCLE OF LIFE THAT RUNS THROUGH HER WORK. EACH PIECE TELLS A DIFFERENT STORY, AND EACH PANEL BECOMES ANOTHER PART OF LIFE AS SHE EXPERIENCES AND SEES IT. HER WORK REMINDS ME OF OUR CONNECTION TO NATURE, THE LAND, AND THE EVER-CHANGING BEAUTY OF THE WORLD AROUND US.

SUSANNA URQUIZA

LILLY YANAGITA & KATSU YOKOYAMA

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER RAOUL DE LA SOTA

LILLY YANAGITA:

THIS WORK IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HER STYLE OF TOUCHING THE CANVAS HUNDREDS OF TIMES WITH VARIOUS COLORS TO ACHIEVE THAT SENSE OF MOVEMENT. CONSIDER HER OCEAN WITH THE MYRIAD OF COLOR TOUCHES PRODUCING A SENSE OF LIFE. IT BECOMES A LIVING THING WITH ITS UNDULATING TEXTURE. THE SOLIDITY OF THE ROCKS CREATES THE TEXTURAL CONTRAST TO THE OCEAN.

KATSU YOKOYAMA:

KATSU DEALS WITH A SENSE OF CLARITY AND REALITY REGARDLESS OF HIS SUBJECT. WHILE HE DEALS WITH SUBJECTS, SUCH AS THE PASADENA FREEWAY, HE DOES NOT PORTRAY IT AS IT MIGHT BE WITH VIEWS OF MOUNTAINS, LANDSCAPE AND A FEELING OF DISTANCE. INSTEAD, HE SHOWS US AN UNEXPECTED PART OF THE WHOLE. THIS PARTICULAR WORK IS NOT WHAT IS EXPECTED WITH THE TITLE, BUT RATHER THE ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTY OF A PART OF THE WHOLE.

DELASOTA

RAMON RAMIREZ & ROBERTO GUTIERREZ

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ

RAMÓN RAMÍREZ:

PAINT, COLOR & AN ELEGANT TOUCH.

IN A BORGES LIKE SEQUENCE WHERE LIFE'S STORY IS COMPRESSED WITHIN A FALLING DROP OF WATER, HERE RAMÓN WEAVES A 30 YEAR ARC OF TIME BETWEEN THE CREATION OF THESE TWO WORKS OF ART THAT CONVEY HIS STORY.

ROBERTO GUTIÉRREZ:

ROBERTO ELEGANTLY CAPTURES THE TENSION & ENERGY OF CITY LIFE.

THIS PIECE IS A PUT-ME-THERE PIECE. WE'VE ALL BEEN IN THAT BUS. THE HAND RAISED TO LATCH ONTO THAT BAR WHILE THE BUS SWAYS TO-&-FORTH CONVEYS BOTH AN ACT OF DEFIANCE & THE NEED FOR SECURITY. IS THIS NOT LIFE IN THE BIG CITY ?

FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ

ALEX DONIS
GLORIA WESCOTT
&
GLORIA ENDINA ALVAREZ

PRESENTED BY BOARD MEMBER
GRACE AMEMIYA

ALEX DONIS

‘COMICAL? OR DOES IT JUST PISS YOU OFF?
DANCE CAN TAKE ON OTHER MEANINGS.
MAKES ME WONDER, “WHAT MAKES WAR?”

GLORIA WESTCOTT

ALIENS, WHO REALLY ARE THE ALIENS?
AND IF THEY HAVE LANDED ARE THEY SUBJECT TO INALIENABLE RIGHTS?

GLORIA WESTCOTT IN COLLABORATION WITH GLORIA ENDINA ALVAREZ

BE WITH ART AND GIVE YOURSELF THE TIME TO CONTEMPLATE.

GRACE AMEMIYA