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## IDENTIFYING AND PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE LATINO VISUAL ARTS: SURVEY OF ARCHIVAL INITIATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This report includes a nationwide survey of recent Latino arts archival initiatives designed to prevent the loss of important primary sources. It suggests resources for the development of archival practices and how these initiatives could be better coordinated at a national level to preserve a comprehensive historical record of the Latino visual arts. The report is written in response to the 2003 *Latino Policy and Issues Brief*, also produced by the CSRC, recommending further research on Latino cultural legacy preservation efforts.

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center supports interdisciplinary, collaborative, and policy-oriented research on issues critical to the Chicano community. The center's press disseminates books, working papers, and the peer-reviewed *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*.

Sometimes it is not until a piece of history is lost that we begin to recognize its significance.

In the case of the Latino arts, we are lucky—much of this history remains in the file drawers, storage boxes, closets, and attics of those who created it. It is not too late to save this history. But we must act quickly to identify what remains to be saved.

Relatively few institutions have initiated archival projects to find and preserve these materials, but we can learn from those that have. Studying these efforts enables us to plan additional projects with an eye for gaps and to formulate a national strategy based on the best practices for preserving the legacy of the Latino arts.

Thus, this report focuses on two types of recent archival efforts (1995-2005): initiatives to identify Latino arts primary sources that remain in private hands—in essence, appraisal and selection projects—and initiatives to preserve and make accessible Latino arts primary sources already collected by repositories. In addition, this report discusses a model for preventing the loss of uncollected material currently being implemented by the New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Program.

#### WHAT MIGHT BE LOST

Unfortunately—as noted in a 2003 CSRC study by Rita González titled “Archiving the Latino Arts Before It Is Too Late”—many of the arts centers, collectives, and museums that formed during the flourishing of contemporary Latino arts activity over the last thirty years have disappeared or are on the verge of doing so. The pioneers of these activities are largely members of the aging baby-boom generation and

without their institutional memory, organizational records, or personal papers, connections to the materials that document the Latino visual arts and their impact on American society can be lost forever. Currently, too much of the material from the first years remains uncollected, its value often unrecognized by individual or institutional owners.

At the same time, material being produced today is also at risk of being lost. Organizations should not wait until primary sources are “old” before archiving them and individuals should learn what types of files commonly qualify as primary sources (see fig. 1 for the type of records that should be saved). Thousands of contemporary artists and approximately 370 Latino arts organizations across the United States are continually generating materials of archival value.<sup>2</sup> It is essential that we identify and preserve the most important of these documents. Although arts organizations struggle with constant staff and budget constraints, it is vital that they not leave the care of their institutional records off the priority list and literally on the basement floor

Initiatives are underway to capture some of this historical legacy of the Latino arts. But most of these efforts focus principally on those U.S. cities and states with large and established Latino populations. Much more material no doubt exists in communities throughout the South, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic, where the Latino population has seen huge increases in past decades.

#### METHOD OF THIS REPORT

In the interest of increasing cooperation among existing programs and encouraging new initiatives, this study examines two kinds of archival initiatives. One, those initiatives that have been designed, at least in part, to identify primary source materials of the Latino visual arts (see Table 1). That is, initiatives that exhibit “documentation planning” methods, which have the goal of iden-

#### ARTISTS (AND ART CRITICS) PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS

- Correspondence (including email)
- Diaries
- Notebooks/sketchbooks
- Manuscripts and unpublished writing
- Exhibit invitations
- Exhibition catalogs
- Flyers
- Records of sale
- Photographs of artists, families, friends
- Slides, audiovisuals of work
- Oral history interviews

#### ARTS ORGANIZATIONS (AND GALLERIES) PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS

- Slides, photographs, audiovisuals, digital media of artists' work
- Art objects and artifacts
- Exhibition catalogs, invitations, flyers published by the organization
- Newsletters published by the organization
- Recorded performances and interviews presented or sponsored
- Annual reports
- Grant files
- Contracts
- Records of purchases/sales
- Board of directors meeting minutes
- Correspondence
- Publicity files

#### SECONDARY SOURCE MATERIALS

- Artist files—typically include artists' résumés, clippings, slides of work
- Latino art files—can include clippings, exhibition catalogs, invitations related to Latino art or local arts in general
- Books and periodicals—reference sources for curatorial and programming work

Note: Examples compiled from AAA definitions, my interviews, grant proposals, and the MoMA online records surveys.

**Fig. 1. Suitable Primary and Secondary Source Materials for Archiving**

tifying materials in danger of being lost due to neglect, misunderstanding, or scarce resources, not just preserving those that have already been found. This method is based on multi-institutional partnerships, cooperative collecting, regional surveys of private archival holdings, and community meetings to

TABLE 1. INITIATIVES TO IDENTIFY LATINO VISUAL ARTS ARCHIVAL MATERIALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1995-2005.  
(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

Institution	Project	Funder	Principal Investigator	Identification of sources	Survey	Preservation Survey	Training	Processing	Oral History	Acquisition	Digitization	Scholarship
Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Latino Documentation Project in South Florida, 1996	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Curator of Manuscripts	Yes	Yes					Yes		
<p>Nine-month project to identify, survey, and plan for collection of art-related primary source material in South Florida. Information gathered from artists, art critics, curators, collectors, art historians, archivists, and librarians. Project developed key contacts and brought new collections to the AAA</p>												
Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Puerto Rican Art Documentation Project, 1997, 1998	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Curator of Manuscripts	Yes ...	Yes				Yes	Yes		
<p>Project to identify, survey, and plan for collection of undocumented art-related primary source material in Puerto Rico (6 months) and New York City (9 months). Project provided information on potential gifts and loans to the AAA and alerted artists to the value of preserving their papers.</p>												
UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center & UCLA Film and Television Archive	Chicano Cinema Recovery Project, 2003-ongoing	Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, UC-MEXUS	Scholar-Art Historian	Yes	Yes				Yes			Collection in Context guide
<p>Collaborative initiative to identify, survey, and plan for the collection of the independent productions of Chicano and Latino filmmakers. Includes a pilot study to survey 8 mm home movie collections in Chicano-dominant communities and an acquisitions program for film/video collections. In addition to film restoration, project includes filmmaker oral history component and reformatting to DVD for broader access. "Collection in Context" guide will be published.</p>												
UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center	Serving the Community, Preserving Cultural Heritage--Self-Help Graphics and Art, Inc., 2003-2004	UCLA Center for Community Partnerships	Scholar-Art Historian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			Collection in Context guide
<p>Survey of collections, current preservation environment, and collections management systems of Self-Help Graphics, an East L.A. visual arts center. Goals include strengthening the management and preservation of its on-site art and archives collections and providing a model for other efforts. Project provides on-site technical assistance to improve preservation and access infrastructure through an archival internship program coordinated with the UCLA Department of Information Studies as well as funds for collections storage upgrade. A "Collection in Context" guide will be published. A community partnership element established a forum of L.A. arts organizations that convenes regularly to address preservation and access issues related to their archival holdings. Project established foundation for subsequent documentation project, Latino Arts Survey, 2004-2005.</p>												
UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center	Latino Arts Survey, 2004-2005	Getty Grant Program	Scholar-Art Historian	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes		
<p>Project will identify and inventory materials related to Southern California Latino arts groups and collectives, community-based arts organizations, alternative arts publications, and individual artists. Will create a 'roadmap' for the collection development of Latino arts primary sources existing in Southern California. Survey results including inventories of institutional and individual holdings will be produced and available through web site. Transfer of materials to archival settings for preservation and access will be arranged when appropriate.</p>												

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(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

Institution	Project	Funder	Principal Investigator	Identification of sources	Survey	Preservation Survey	Training	Processing	Oral History	Acquisition	Digitization	Scholarship
UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center	A Ver: Revisioning Art History, 2001-ongoing	Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, UC-MEXUS	Scholar-Art Historian	Yes					Yes	NA		Monographs
<p>A research project to produce a series of scholarly texts on the cultural, aesthetic, and historical contributions of Chicano, Cuban American, Puerto Rican, and other U.S.-based Latino artists. Includes archival and oral history components to support research for the texts. Primary source materials of artists will be identified and oral histories generated. First phase will produce monographs and oral histories on ten individual Latina/o artists.</p>												
Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame	Archives of Latino Arts in Chicago: A Survey	N/A (pilot)	Scholar-Sociologist	Yes	Yes	Yes						
<p>A pilot project to identify and survey archival materials of Latino artists and organizations in the Chicago region. Plans include a comprehensive survey of collected primary source materials (existing in repositories) documenting Latino visual arts in Chicago and the creation of a 'location register' to these publicly accessible materials. In consultation with members of the arts community, uncollected materials held by artists and arts organizations will be identified, surveyed, and if appropriate, collected by ILS and referred to another repository. Or preservation information will be provided. Transfer of materials to archival settings for preservation and access will be arranged when appropriate.</p>												
Museum of Modern Art Library	METRO-MoMA Survey of Archives of Latino Art, 2003-2005	Metropolitan New York Library Council through monies received through the New York State Archives' Documentary Heritage Program	Librarian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
<p>Identification and survey of the archival collections of galleries, museums, grassroots organizations, and archives that document Latino visual arts. Goals include establishing a network of Latino art archives, increasing awareness about archival practices and the importance of preservation to safeguarding arts heritage, and increasing accessibility to collections by publishing survey findings on website. Project does not include element for collection of archival materials. Instead, second year will incorporate care of historical records training elements for institutions surveyed.</p>												
Museum of Fine Arts Houston	Documents of Twentieth Century Latin American and Latino Art. A Digital Archive and Publications Project, 2003-2013	Getty Grant Program, initial three year phase	Curator/Art Historian	Yes							Yes, with web access database	Monographs
<p>Project will identify, translate into English, and publish both digital and print formats of selected primary source materials on key artists and movements in modern and contemporary Latin American/Latino art. Project does not include element for collection of original primary sources. Information gathered will be published in a multi-volume series oriented toward specialists, general audiences, and college-level students. A custom-designed digital archive and bibliographic database will be created to provide direct access to images of primary source documents, printed materials, and art work images through the web.</p>												

seek input from the artistic creators, the scholarly users, and the potential caretakers of the material. The study is limited to those begun between 1995 and 2005. Two, it addresses those initiatives that are follow-ups to the first type of initiatives, being designed primarily to preserve and make accessible materials already collected by archives, libraries, and museums. That is, initiatives more narrowly focused than documentation planning projects but just as critical to saving archival materials (see Table 2).

Since some of the projects are not strictly archival in focus, this report is limited to consideration of their archival components. It does not cover projects to document or preserve the artwork itself, nor does this report seek to compile a comprehensive listing of where Latino arts archival materials can be found in public collections.<sup>3</sup> This report acknowledges significant efforts begun much earlier, such as those at Hunter College and the University of California, Santa Barbara, but remains focused on recent concerted appraisal and selection efforts exhibiting the documentation planning model characteristics. It is, rather, a look only at those institutions that have *recently* initiated documentation projects to identify and preserve the personal papers and organizational records of Latino arts activities.

Projects were identified using Internet search engines, such as Google, and through interviews with archivists, librarians, and art historians. Interviews with project directors, combined with a review of collected project proposals and resulting brochures, web sites, or surveys, were used to prepare descriptions of the projects. Because the projects address archival issues, standard archival terminology is used. Project categories assigned to each initiative are based on this specialized terminology (see Glossary).<sup>4</sup>

Finally, this study reproduces a standard methodology for archival

documentation work, one that may be adapted for the Latino arts. This methodology, developed by archivists to build archival holdings for underdocumented subjects, is reviewed. A list of reference sources to be consulted for these types of initiatives is also presented (see Resources).

A challenge in writing this report on identifying Latino art primary sources was the variation in archival terms across scholarly disciplines and the general public. Although most might think Spanish would present the greatest difficulty in identifying and collecting such materials; in actual practice the greater barrier to the creation of effective and coordinated preservation programs may well be the professional language of various disciplines. Since the projects identified in this report were being led and staffed by professionals representing at least seven different areas—art historians, manuscript curators, archivists, sociologists, artists, museum curators, and librarians—the need for a common vocabulary made itself quickly felt. For instance, whereas “documenting art” might mean “photographing an artist at work” to a sociologist or “making a slide of an artwork” to an artist, it meant something quite different to an archivist. Further, the definition of what constitutes “Latino arts primary sources” was a recurring question, especially among artists and arts organizations. Thus, definitions were compiled in a glossary for the purposes of this research (see Glossary).

#### RECENT EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY LATINO ARTS PRIMARY SOURCES

During the past three decades, precious few archival repositories have made it a priority to collect the primary sources of the Latino visual arts. Prior to 1995, the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, City University of New York (Centro) and the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives at the

University of California, Santa Barbara (CEMA) stood out as comprehensive archival programs that sought and collected such materials. They provided early leadership through their Latino art collections identification, acquisitions, processing, and digitization. In successfully and creatively integrating both documentation and archival processing, the Centro and CEMA remain model archival repositories. With core collections in place, these two programs have recently placed an increased emphasis on the conservation and access needs of their major collections—the natural cyclical shift of mature archival programs from collecting activity to processing activity.

In 1995, the Smithsonian Institution established the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives, which dedicated funding for the first time to collecting materials, developing programs, and processing projects to increase the Latino arts and culture representation in its collections. Due to this funding pool, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art (AAA) was able to expand dramatically its collecting activity in this area and to publicize successfully the availability of its Latino holdings. AAA's highly visible new Latino resources coincided with a renewed public and academic interest in Latin American and Latino/a arts and a subsequent increase in the demand for access to Latino arts primary sources. In part, as a response to this demand, a few other archives, research centers, and museums have joined in the effort to identify “lost” primary sources through various survey, documentation, and scholarship-based projects with archival components. In addition, archival repositories with Latino arts materials already in their collections have taken steps to process and improve access to these materials. This report identifies thirty-four Latino arts projects carried out by ten institutions during 1995-2005. Of the thirty-four, nine are specifically identification (or *documentation*) projects

TABLE 2. INITIATIVES TO PROCESS AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO IDENTIFIED LATINO VISUAL ARTS ARCHIVAL MATERIALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1995-2005.  
(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

Project Type	Institution	Project	Funder	Description
Arrangement and Description	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Cataloging the Papelitos: An Improved Find"	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	An item-level, online finding aid of the Ybarro-Frausto material will be produced. Selected documents from the collection digitized and made available on the web.
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Proyecto Aeronaves: Launching the Royal Chicano Air Force Archives (RCAF), 1996-1997	University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC-MEXUS)	One-year project to process the organizational records of the RCAF.
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Border Arts Cultural Heritage, 2002-2003	University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC-MEXUS)	One-year project to process three CEMA collections: the personal collections of two visual artists, Salvador Roberto Torres and Victor Ochoa, and the collection of the Chicano/Latino cultural arts center, or the Centro Cultural de la Raza.
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Francisco Camplis Papers project	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Chicano Art Movement Collection project, 2001	Internally funded	Processing of ephemera and printed materials
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Yolanda Lopez Papers project, 1999	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Rosa M. Papers project, 2001	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Jose Montoya Papers project, 2004	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Ernesto Palomino Papers project, 1996	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Linda Vallejo Papers project, 2004	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Esteban Villa Papers project, 2002	Internally funded	Processing of personal papers
Arrangement and Description Program infrastructure	UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center	Chicano Studies Archival Program-- Processing Project, 2003-2004	Haynes Foundation	Grant for processing numerous collections held by the CSRC and for development of its archival program. Provided for the hiring of an archivist, collation of finding aids, and grant preparation for the acquisition and processing of new collections.
Arrangement and Description Acquisition component	UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center	Visiones Archival Project, 2003-2004	National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC)	Project for the acquisition and processing of NALAC's document collection, the Visiones documentary series (Hector Galan Productions) archive, and the solicitation of NALAC member organizations to participate in Visiones archival project.
Access	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Latino and Latin American Artists Papers project, 1995	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	The AAA holdings were reviewed to identify materials of Latino artists. 105 collections were identified and a guide to these materials was produced.
Access	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Latino and Latin American Artists Papers project, 2000 revision	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Update to 1996 edition of guide to include more than thirty new Latino collections. Guide made available online.

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(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

Project Type	Institution	Project	Funder	Description
Access	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Archivos Virtuales, 2002	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Development of a multi-layered, Latino resources web page to enhance access to the AAA collection. Site includes digitized finding aids, oral history interviews, photographs, and links to other repositories .
Access	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Reconstituting Selected Chicano Archives for Transitioning into Electronic Format (RESCATE), 1997-1998.	Federal Library Services and Technology Act	Project to digitize and make web-accessible the Chicano art slides from various archives.
Access	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Chicano Art Resources Development and Dissemination (CARIDAD II), 2003-2005	California Digital Library	Metadata-based description and digitization initiative to make web-accessible close to 10,000 digitized visual art images.
Access	UCSB California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives	Art Object Documentation Project, 2004-2005	University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC-MEXUS)	Identification and documentation of unidentified artwork and slides of Chicano artists.
Access	UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA Music Library, UCLA Digital Library Program	Frontera Digitization Project, 2001-2005	Los Tigres del Norte Foundation	This collaborative project seeks to improve access to the Arhoolie Foundations' Strachwitz Frontera Collection--a collection of Mexican and Mexican-American recordings that have been inaccessible for study due to the fragility of their medium. Recordings and labels are being digitized and uploaded to a searchable bilingual database. Public access to the digitized collection will be possible through a website. "Collection in Context" guide will be published.
Oral History	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Oral History Interviews of Chicano Artists, 1996	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Interviews conducted with Chicano artists and art historians in California and San Antonio, Texas.
Oral History	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Video Interviews of Puerto Rican Artists, 1997	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Video interviews conducted with ten Puerto Rican artists.
Oral History	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Miami Oral History Project to interview Cuban-American Artists, 1997	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Interviews conducted with eleven Cuban American artists.
Oral History	Smithsonian Archives of American Art	Recuerdos orales: Interview of the Latino Art Community in Texas, 2003-2004	Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Fund	Interviews conducted with key figures in the Latino art community in Texas. Audio interviews and transcripts digitized for dissemination on the web. Includes collaboration with the Alamedas Museo Americano in San Antonio, Texas, to incorporate oral histories into exhibitions and educational programs.
Outreach	UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Science & UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center	Memoria, voz, y patrimonio: The First Conference on Latino/Hispanic Film, Print and Sound Archives	Internal	Held in August of 2003 this conference brought together educators, scholars, archivists, students, librarians, artists, and community members to highlight the importance of archives and record keeping in capturing a community's collective memory and in ensuring access to its cultural past and achievements.
Preservation and Access	Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, City University of New York	Various	External & internal funding	Currently has two preservation grants focusing on the processing and conserving needs of collections.

(see Table 1) and twenty-five are processing projects (see Table 2).

The primary focus of this study is on the nine identification projects, that is, projects designed to identify, survey, and plan for the collection of historical records. These kinds of projects are crucial to saving archival materials because they educate artists and arts organizations about the value of their primary sources and they create an inventory from which selection and preservation can begin. The goal of each project listed below varies from identifying and collecting, to identifying and surveying, to identifying and digitizing. All, however, exhibit the characteristics of formal archival documentation projects, ones that could aid us in developing model practices.

#### SMITHSONIAN ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART

The Smithsonian Archives of American Art (AAA), with the support of the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives, since 1995 has had a consistent record of implementing projects to identify and collect Latino arts materials, then arrange and describe these collections, and finally expand access through bibliographic databases, electronic finding aids, collection guides, and web sites. In total, the AAA has conducted two documentation projects, three access projects, four separate oral history projects,<sup>5</sup> and this year will begin a major arrangement and description project. The AAA has led by example, with model finding aids, its web site, and with its willingness to share information with other documentation projects. The AAA is, however, limited by the scope of its collecting policy to artists of national prominence and also by its policy of only accepting gifts of materials (it may not purchase collections).

#### UCLA CHICANO STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER

The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC), also has a recent record

of documentation efforts. Its projects are strong in both scholarship and preserving primary sources that support that scholarship. Through a concerted effort to connect with the Latino arts community, the CSRC has developed artist fora, community partnerships, and projects centered on addressing the records management and archival infrastructure needs of arts organizations—all with a publication component.<sup>6</sup> CSRC has an established library and archives to support its documentation efforts and fully utilizes the many resources afforded by a large state university—UCLA's bibliographic infrastructure, shared archival storage facilities, and grant, faculty and student resources. CSRC is a partner in the MFAH's recovery project and in 2004 launched the grant-funded project *Latino Arts Survey* to survey the archival holdings of arts organizations and artists in the Los Angeles region.

#### INSTITUTE FOR LATINO STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The Institute for Latino Studies (ILS) at the University of Notre Dame—established in 1999 with a library, archives, and art gallery—is committed to preserving Latino arts archival materials. During the past five years, the ILS has built programs and capacity to support arts and culture outreach, including a network of artists through its Galería América and a newly formed national printmakers council, the *Consejo Nacional de Talleres*. ILS also actively promotes arts programming through its gallery and through relationships with the University's Snite Museum of Art. ILS is a partner in the MFAH recovery project and is collaborating with the CSRC to address the recommendations of their most recent studies on the preservation of Latino arts. As part of these activities, the ILS is preparing to implement a pilot documentation project for Latino arts materials in Chicago with plans to expand the effort to the Midwest region.

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK**  
The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) initiative is an example of a museum, library council, and archives working directly together to lead an effort to address the issue of the underdocumentation of Latino arts. Led and staffed by MoMA, this project is also made possible by support from the Metropolitan New York Library Council with funds from the New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Program. Currently in its second and final year, the project is conducting and publishing on the web a comprehensive survey of resources in the New York metropolitan area. A key finding of the first year of this project was one echoed in the findings of González's (2003) CSRC work—that is, the critical need arts organizations have for basic records management and preservation training and assistance. Thus, phase two of the project will also support the development of workshops and educational materials on these topics. Additionally the MoMA Library has increased its efforts to build artists' files for Latino artists and has initiated an outreach effort. MoMA staff have also generously shared information and project tools with other collecting institutions. MoMA does have an organizational archives, but its current collecting policy restricts its collecting to its own organizational records and to the papers of those artists most closely affiliated with the museum.

#### MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS HOUSTON

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) has perhaps one of the highest-profile projects in this listing. Driven by scholarship, it is a multi-year project to identify primary source materials that document Latin American/Latino art criticism and theory. International in scope, with research teams established in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States, the project will identify, translate, digitize, and upload documents to a custom-designed



searchable bibliographic database to be available on the web. These documents will be the basis for the production of an anthology series of art historical texts. In addition, the MFAH initiative integrates components of exhibitions and the museum's educational programming. The first phase of the project focuses on Latin America. A subsequent Latino art phase will be conducted in cooperation with U.S.-based project partners (among them the CSRC and the ILS.)

#### THE NEED FOR COORDINATION AND STANDARDIZATION

Each of the nine identification projects discussed in this report contribute in some way to securing portions of a legacy for Latino art. Each project has developed practices based upon experience, professional standards, and institutional limitations. Or course, as several project directors point out, identification is only the beginning. Collecting and preserving requires establishing relationships and trust—and this takes time and genuine institutional commitment. Sometimes acquiring is not appropriate, and in these cases training and on-site assistance is called for in order to preserve the materials.

Additionally, mature archival programs such as CEMA, Centro, and AAA have developed a range of archival practices that can be shared with other institutions. They have cycled between collecting and the necessary steps of processing, conserving, and making materials accessible—steps that can sometimes take years and substantial amounts of money. More recently, the CSRC has successfully engaged artists and arts organizations in a preservation dialog and has subsequently linked this “community” input to grant proposals for traditional archival documentation projects. Centro has developed creative ways to engage artists in their archival work by transforming two walls into gallery exhibit space and by giving artists an archival

box to take home to preserve materials that document their work. And ILS has studied existing documentation projects so that its own project design will avoid reinventing the wheel. It is time for a collective review of such practices, experiences, lessons learned, and creative ideas so that model practices may begin to develop.

While we can learn from such good practices, we can also learn from where we fall short. Unfortunately, Latino arts preservation initiatives remain largely separate, with different aims and without similar, formal standards. In addition, only two of the nine documentation projects are led by an archivist/manuscript curator and few archivists are represented on project advisory committees. Instead, the largest documentation projects are led by art historians and driven by the need for primary sources to support current scholarship (users of primary sources often initiate projects to “recover” the materials they need to carry out their work). While all efforts are to be welcomed, projects that include more archivists as project advisors would be better enabled to serve both the scholars' immediate needs and the archivists' concern for preserving comprehensive historical legacies for future user groups.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ARCHIVAL METHODOLOGY

Finally, this study recommends a methodology for building archival collections for Latino arts called “documentation planning.” This methodology is based on collaborative multi-institutional collecting and enables varying institutions to contribute to preserving cultural materials in their own communities. This methodology can enable archival initiatives to move beyond institutional interests and toward a strategy for saving a comprehensive legacy for the Latino arts. As a national strategy for documenting Latino arts develops, this methodology can provide a tested

framework for fairly and adequately identifying historical records.

The methodology of documentation planning evolved from recent attempts by American archivists to archive traditionally underdocumented subjects. It is a democratic model that avoids biased archiving—in which a legacy is collected with only one interest's viewpoint in mind.. At its heart is the premise that collaboration among all the stakeholders—those who create, care for, and use historically valuable documentation—is most effective in identifying and preserving important historical records. Together they can identify what kinds of primary sources exist, determine what is important to save, and decide how and where to save it.

This methodology does have its critics. Some archivists argue that such projects are not practical given the everyday demands and limited budgets of most archives and special collections operations. To be done well, they argue, such a methodology requires enormous commitment and almost always external funding. Nevertheless, its benefits merit consideration as we develop the best practices for saving Latino arts materials.

One of the institutions that has successfully implemented this methodology is the New York State Archives. Since 1988, their Documentary Heritage Program (DHP) has worked to refine a documentation methodology for New York history and culture.<sup>7</sup> With funding from sources such as the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, it has used this methodology to identify and build archival holdings statewide for the topics of mental health, environmental conservation and coincidentally, New York's Latino communities. In fact, of the 134 documentation grants it has awarded in the last fifteen years, twenty-five of those were specifically for the identification, survey, and collection of Latino primary source materials (see fig. 2).

Organization	Award Year	Project Titles (Some Multi-Year)
Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños/ Hunter College	1988, 1990, 1997, 2000, 2001	Puerto Rican Community in NYC; NYC Hispanic Labor
Historical Society of Rockland County	1995, 1996	Latino Communities in Rockland County
Rennelaer County Council for the Arts:	1995, 1996	Latino Communities in Albany, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Schoharie Counties, Latino Community of Amsterdam
Hispanic Women's League	1998,	Hispanic/Latino Community of Buffalo and Erie County
Westchester Library System	2000	The Mexican Community in New Rochelle
Port Washington Public Library	2002, 2003	Port Washington (Long Island) Latino/Hispanic Communities
Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn	2002, 2003	Hispanic Catholic Documentation Survey NYC Metro Dioceses
CUNY Dominican Studies Institute	2003, 2004	Dominicans in NYC
Hofstra University Archives	2003	Latino Culture on Long Island
Onondaga Historical Association	2003, 2004	Latino Community in and around Syracuse
Rochester Museum and Science Center	2003, 2004	Survey Rochester Latino Community
Dutchess County Historical Society	2004	Latino/a Hispanic Culture in City and Town of Poughkeepsie
Genesee Migrant Center	2004	Survey Migrant Farmworkers and Farmers in Livingston, Steuben, and Wyoming Counties
Hostos Community College	2004	Survey and Document First Decade of Hostos Community College

**Fig. 2. Latino/a Culture Documentation Projects in New York State and Funded by the New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Program**

The DHP projects illustrate the benefits of this approach. They were conducted by fifteen diverse cultural organizations including public libraries, academic libraries/archives, arts centers, civic and service organizations, historical societies, and museums. All involved community engagement through advisory committees, fora, or partnerships. All included direct advisory services and grant assistance for holders of these important historical records.

In summary, the DHP used the documentation planning methodology to create a statewide multi-institutional collecting policy—a road map for saving some of its most threatened and neglected historical resources. If we agree that archiving the Latino arts is critical, we might look to examples such as this for guidance in developing the best practices for archiving the Latino arts before it is too late.<sup>8</sup>

#### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

The institutions identified in this study cannot adequately accomplish the task of preserving the Latino Arts on their own. They can, however, begin to construct the foundation for a nationwide strategy for collecting and preserving Latino arts materials. The following is recommended.

- Convene a meeting of all institutions identified in this report to discuss the formation of a national council to guide and promote the preservation of a Latino arts documentary heritage.
- Educate archival repositories and cultural organizations about the place Latino arts materials hold in the context of American culture and Latino communities through conferences, reports, and brochures.
- Develop guidelines for the best practices for saving Latino arts archival materials.
- Develop a resource guide that includes guidelines for institutions and

organizations that want to start their own Latino arts documentation projects (see Resources).

- Engage more archivists, manuscript curators, and librarians by involving them in project planning stages, steering committees, and advisory councils and by presenting papers at their professional conferences.

- Develop consensus around an appropriate methodology for documenting the Latino arts

- Publicize the importance of archival initiatives and the Latino art legacy as well as best practices guidelines.

The current flurry of Latino visual arts documentation presents an opportunity for archivists and scholars to collaborate in finding practical methods to serve scholars immediate needs and the archivists' concern for preserving comprehensive historical legacies. The surge also enables the documentation projects to move beyond informal cooperation and beyond disparate methodologies. By describing these initiatives, this report aims to facilitate increased coordination and communication among the institutions, to provide a resource for others contemplating such projects, and to lay a foundation for developing a documentation plan for saving Latino arts documentary heritage.

The documentation projects listed in this report, combined with recent publications and research, are creating the momentum necessary to establish a formalized, national, coordinated effort. A national dialog on documentation standards, best practices models, and a formal strategy to guide the identification and preservation of Latino art primary sources across the country is needed. Finding a balance between institutional priorities and responsibility to a greater good—the preservation of a historical legacy for Latino arts—will be imperative.

Much work lies ahead to ensure that a more accessible and comprehensive historical record for the Latino arts is preserved for all. The first step will be the coordination of efforts nationwide.

### DOCUMENTATION PLANNING METHODOLOGY

- directly engages those who generate the primary sources, educating them about the value of their files and thereby halting those most likely to destroy archival materials.
- enables academic, government, historical, and civic organizations to contribute to the preservation of archival materials that document aspects of their own heritage.
- produces a detailed and comprehensive road map (a documentation plan) for collecting materials, arrived at through broad stakeholder input.
- enables multiple institutions to work collaboratively from the road map, locally, regionally, or nationally, as their individual collecting policies allow.
- combines advisory services and grant assistance to enable groups to begin to identify and manage their legacies.

### DOCUMENTATION PLANNING PROCESS<sup>9</sup>

1. Define the documentation effort.
  - Research broad historical outlines of the topic
  - Define topic's scope, limits, and components
  - Determine to what extent the topic is already documented
  - Determine important collection gaps
  - Publicize the effort to increase community awareness and participation
2. Identify documentation participants
  - Identify all stakeholders in the topic
  - Engage people with a vested interest in the project's success
  - Form an advisory committee to provide local context and guidance
  - Introduce project staff to key stakeholders
  - Identify people and organizations likely to hold historical records
3. Survey the records
  - Develop and test survey instrument
  - Conduct survey
  - Assess records to determine which may be historically valuable
  - Offer advice on the care and preservation of records found
  - Write archival descriptions of each organization's or individual's holdings
  - Publicize archival findings
4. Create a documentation plan (the road map)
  - Outline priority subjects and themes
  - Analyze survey results
  - Identify potential institutions for holding the historically valuable records
5. Evaluate records.
  - Decide which records to save
  - Negotiate or broker donation of records
6. Make records available
  - Arrange and describe records
  - Publicize the availability of records for research

### NOTES

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1. This study of the Latino visual art documentation has been limited primarily to the fine arts, graphic arts, performance art, and film/media art produced by artists of Latin American or Caribbean origin residing in the United States (including Mexican-American, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and so on). Although not included here, it is also important to a national strategy for preserving the Latino arts to document other art forms central to Latino culture, such as design, music, dance, theater, literature, folk and traditional arts, popular arts, and entertainment. Ideally, all of these sub-topics should be considered.

2. Number is based upon a January 2005 membership roster of the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture.

3. Repositories with notable collections of Latino arts materials include the Chicano Research Collection, Arizona State University; California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara; and Department of Special Collections, Stanford University. In addition, many public libraries, museums, historical societies, academic libraries, and archives do have Latino arts-related holdings—for example, Art Museum of the Americas, Chicago Public Library. A survey to compile a comprehensive listing or location register would be extremely useful to a future, coordinated documentation effort, as well as to researchers.

4. Adapted from relevant grant application guidelines of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission—the outreach arm of the National Archives, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the New York State Archives' Documentary Heritage Program.

5. While sometimes not considered an "archival record" by archivists, an oral history is a reflection or recollection of an experience that lends invaluable context and voice to history—especially to underdocumented subjects. An oral history is distinct from other primary sources because it is generated after the activity, whereas archival evidence is generated during the process of an activity (such as making or exhibiting art).

6. For an excellent discussion of preservation issues related to the university/archives and social responsibility, see Chon A. Noriega's (2005) essay "Preservation Matters."

7. For a step-by-step guide to documentation planning, see Suter (2003).

8. Another example of a documentation planning project is Northeastern University's *Preserving the History of Boston's Underdocumented Communities*. Its method is described and portions of its documentation plan reproduced in Richard and Krizack (1999).

9. Summary adapted from Suter (2003).

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## GLOSSARY OF STANDARD ARCHIVAL TERMS

**Access.** The permission, opportunity, or ability to use a record.

**Appraisal.** The process of evaluating records based on their value to an organization, an individual, or history.

**Archival records.** Unique materials that have permanent historical, legal, or fiscal value. Could be in a variety of forms including paper, audiovisual, and electronic. Also called "historical records."

**Archival and Manuscript Materials.** The term "archives" refers to those noncurrent, permanently valuable records of an organization that are preserved by that entity. The term "manuscript materials" refers to those records created or collected by an individual, group, or organization and then transferred to a repository for permanent retention. The term "archival materials" is the more general term and includes all historical records.

**Arrangement and Description.** The process of identifying relationships within sets of historical records and then organizing the records accordingly. Includes compiling information about the records' origin, context, form, and content; describing and publishing the records in Finding Aids; making the aids available on the web; and providing national, consortium, or institutional bibliographic databases. Sometimes referred to as "processing."

**Collections Guide.** Summaries of multiple groups of archival materials held by one repository or for one topic area. In contrast to a Finding Aid, which is a guide to one group of archival materials. For example, the AAA publication titled *The Papers of Latino and Latin American Artists*.

**Conservation.** The professional repair and stabilization of damaged documents.

**Documentation.** The process of identifying, collecting, and making publicly available existing records that are of enduring historical value. "Documentation" is sometimes used to refer to the records themselves—such as papers, photographs, computer files, and sound recordings.

**Documentation Project.** The effort to identify, survey, and plan for the collection of historical records.

**Documentation Plan.** Description of the topic, resources, personnel, phases, and step-by-step process of work associated with a documentation project.

**Documentation Planning.** A methodology for selecting archival materials that fairly represent various aspects of society. Involves archivists working collaboratively with community members and with other archivists to plan and collect.

**Finding Aid.** Guide for users to find information within one group of archival materials. Includes a series description, catalog, or index.

**Oral History.** A recorded interview with an individual that documents a personal account of activities or historical events he or she experienced. Typically follows guidelines recommended by the Oral History Association <http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha>

**Personal Papers.** The records maintained by a single private individual or family.

**Preservation Survey.** Assessment of the physical conditions of archival materials and the way in which they are stored and handled.

**Primary Source Materials.** Unique materials that have permanent historical value. These are original records created at the time an historical event occurred, often during the process of the activity or event, or after the event, in form of memoirs or oral histories. Examples include documents, letters, and photographs.

**Processing.** The process of arranging and describing archival records.

**Records Management.** The systematic control of all records throughout their existence in an organization.

**Scholarship.** Original research using secondary and primary sources to interpret events and activities.

**Secondary Source Materials.** Accounts of the past written after an event has happened that interpret or analyze the event. An example would be a textbook.

**Survey.** The identification and gathering of summary information on collections of historical records and their holders, including their volume and content. Typically involves site visits.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## SELECTED RESOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTATION PROJECTS

Although most of these resources are not specific to the topic of Latino arts, they might be adapted, with permission, and tested to develop coordinated strategy, standards, and guidelines for preserving the history of Latino arts.

**DOCUMENTATION PLANNING**

New York State Archives. 2002. *A Guide to Documenting Latino/Hispanic History and Culture in New York State*. Publication Number 67. Albany: State Education Department. [http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/researchroom/rr\\_pgc\\_latino\\_recguide.shtml](http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/researchroom/rr_pgc_latino_recguide.shtml)

A guide specifically developed for organizations interested in documenting Latino history and culture in New York State but provides a step-by-step methodology for developing and executing documentation projects for Latino communities anywhere. Suggests documentation priorities—including priorities for the arts—based upon a series of statewide regional community meetings with records creators (Latino communities and organizations), records custodians (historical records organizations), and users of records (scholars, teachers, students, policy-makers, and community members).

Suter, John W. 2003. *Documentation Basics: A Guide to Planning and Managing Documentation Projects*. Publication Number 79. Albany: New York State Archives, State Education Department.

A comprehensive guide for the development of archival documentation projects. While specific to New York State, the guide demonstrates an approach to documenting populations and topics that can serve as a model for local and subject-specific documentation plans. Includes several useful appendices, including sample survey forms.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Northeastern University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department. 1999. *The History of Boston Is Our History/La historia de Boston es nuestra historia*. Boston, Massachusetts: Northeastern University.

A bilingual brochure used as an outreach tool to alert community members about the value of preserving their history, the role of an archive, the definition of an archival record, the typical user of the records, and the role of the community in assuring these materials are saved. Product of a 1999 National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) funded project, *Preserving the History of Boston's UnderDocumented Communities*.

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDES AND TRAINING**

Minnesota Historical Society. 1997. *An Introduction to Records Scheduling and Management for Non-Profit Organizations*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society. Available in Spanish as well.

A straightforward, basic records management guide intended to assist small non-profits that wish to improve control over their organizational records. Addresses such fundamental issues as what types of records most commonly are considered historical and what kinds of records most commonly need only be retained for limited periods. Introduces basic records management vocabulary, storage standards, and basic preservation guidelines. Includes a list of resources and suppliers. Produced in cooperation with the Minnesota State Historical Records Advisory Board with funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

New York State Archives workshops for proper records management and care of historical records..

A series of one-day, fundamentals workshops developed for historical societies, nonprofit organizations, local governments; and other historical records repositories to strengthen their capacity to care for their own or collected historical records. Workshops include: Introduction to Historical Records; An Introduction to Appraisal and Selection of Historical Records; Basic Elements of an Historical Records Program; The Elements of Documentation; Identifying Historical Records: What Is It? Where Does It Belong? Is It A Keeper?; and Seven Attributes of Effective Records Management. Contact the archives for curriculum information at (518) 474-6926. Publications for basic management and care of historical records can be accessed through [http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/nysaservices/ns\\_mhr.shtml](http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/nysaservices/ns_mhr.shtml)

**RECORDS SURVEYS**

Museum of Modern Art. 2003-. *Survey of Archives of Latino Art*. New York: MoMA

A survey of the archival records of five Latino arts organizations are currently available on the web site. The website contains contact information, a brief history of the institution, scope and content of record holdings, description of holdings, finding aids, accessibility, restrictions, and brief preservation assessment. MoMA has identified and will survey thirty more institutions during the second year. Funded by the Metropolitan New York Library Council from monies it receives through the New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Program. <http://www.moma.org/research/library/latinosurvey>

**COLLECTION GUIDES, WEB SITES, AND RESEARCH AIDS**

Smithsonian Archives of American Art. 2000 *The Papers of Latino and Latin American Artists*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Washington, D.C.: AAA.

A guide to the papers of Latino artists, arts organizations, critics, and galleries found in the AAA collection.

Minnesota Historical Society. n.d. *Hispanic History in Minnesota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society. Available in Spanish as well.

A brochure describing Hispanic related holdings in government records, manuscript collections, library, noting museum artifacts, photographs, and oral histories.

California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives. 2004. *Guide to the CEMA Chicano/Latino Collections*. Santa Barbara: CEMA.

A list of thirty-two finding aids for Latino cultural arts and twenty-two guides to collections of Latino artists and organizations. <http://cemaweb.library.ucsb.edu/listguides.html>

Association of Art Historians. 2005. *The Artists' Papers Register*. United Kingdom: AAH.

A location register of the artist, designer, and craftsman papers held in publicly accessible collections in the United Kingdom and Ireland. From a cooperative, multi year project involving surveys of approximately 1,600 national, regional, and local repositories for details of their art related holdings. Includes survey with questionnaire and some site-visits of archives records offices, libraries, museums, galleries, universities, historic houses, and independent societies. Database available online. For survey questionnaire see <http://www.aah.org.uk/resource/APRSurveyForm.rtf> For database search see <http://www.aah.org.uk/artists/home.htm>

New York State Archives. 2000. *Preliminary Guide to Latino Documentary Sources in New York State*. Albany: New York State Archives, State Education Department. Available online at <http://www.archives.nysed.gov>

A guide to Latino primary source materials existing in libraries, archives, and other repositories in New York State. Produced by conducting online search and as an assessment tool in statewide Latino documentation planning process—to assess what historical records already exist and who holds them, to identify gaps in the record and repositories that could be appropriate for future acquisitions.