

NHCC Art Museum and Visual Arts Program Awarded Ford Foundation Grant for Creation of Paño Study Center

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ALBUQUERQUE – The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) Art Museum and Visual Art Program has received a two-year grant in the amount of \$160,000 from the Ford Foundation. This generous award will be used to support the creation of a paño study center, a space that will be dedicated to the visual symbolism, cultural significance, and historical relevance of Chicano, Latino, and American art.

Paños (drawings on handkerchiefs, or pañuelos) are sometimes labeled outsider art in the art world, and the names of the artists can be often forgotten. Last year, the NHCC acquired Rudy Padilla's private collection of paños and other artworks made by incarcerated individuals, the majority of whom are Chicano and Latino. Padilla, a formerly incarcerated person, was the founder of the Hour Glass Museum in Albuquerque.

Padilla's collection is significant because, in addition to the artworks themselves, they are accompanied by an archive of more than 400 pieces of correspondence and documentation. His collection is also considered to be one of the largest and best documented.

"We are so pleased to be able to preserve this historically and visually significant collection and continue Rudy Padilla's vision for serious interpretation and scholarship of the artistic legacy of paños and the artists who make them," said Tey Marianna Nunn, Director of the Art Museum and Visual Arts Program at the NHCC. "In a national context of racialized criminalization, mass incarceration, and the impact this has on communities of color, paños are a mode of story-telling, forging connection between their creators and their families, partners, and communities."

This grant will directly support the NHCC Art Museum and Visual Arts Program's mission to collect, interpret, research, and exhibit the works of the entire Hispanic and Latino diaspora. The Art Museum and Visual Arts Program is committed to showcasing the artworks of diverse Latinx artists and supports narrative change in the interest of a more equitable and socially just world. It holds space for

untold stories, centering meaningful community representation, and challenges exclusionary discourse about the role of artists of color in American art.

Although no specific timeline has been announced, future plans for this grant include creating an advisory group of paño artists, community members, and scholars to guide the development of a paño study center; hiring a professional art photographer to digitally photograph Padilla's collection and all accompanying archival materials, about 1,000 objects in total; conducting interviews, archival research, and curatorial travel to other institutions and collections to strengthen the research channels as well as connect interested institutions together for greatest impact in highlighting significance of paño artists and their art; and the publication of a color catalog with essays from artists and scholars.

"The Ford Foundation recognizes the important role the NHCC plays in today's social discourse," said NHCC Executive Director Josefa González Mariscal. "Establishing a paño study center creates a space for dialogue on the imbalance of incarcerated people of color. Preserving and exhibiting the artworks of incarcerated individuals helps restore their artistic voice."

About the National Hispanic Cultural Center

The National Hispanic Cultural Center is dedicated to the preservation, promotion and advancement of Hispanic culture, arts and humanities. The Center presents mission related events throughout the year, some produced by its history, literary, performing and visual arts programs, and others by partnering with external organizations. Events take place at its 20-plus-acre campus, which includes a plaza, an art museum, a historic designated building, a library, and genealogy center. The Center is a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs and is further supported by the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation.

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