

North Carolina Museum of Art Presents Exhibitions of Contemporary Latino Prints and Children’s Book Illustrations

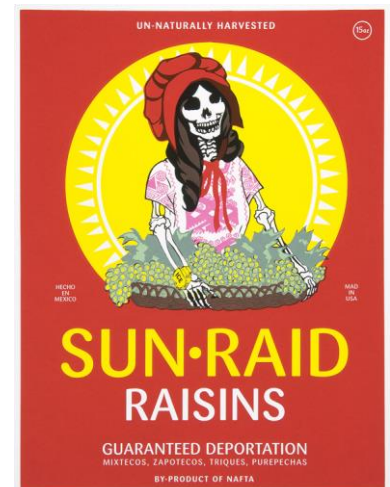
Raleigh, N.C.—Beginning April 13, 2014, the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) presents *Estampas de la raza/Prints for the People: The Romo Collection*, a series of 61 bold, colorful prints that chronicle the unique heritage, history, and experience of contemporary Mexican American and Latino artists. Concurrently, the Museum presents *Tall Tales and Huge Hearts: Raúl Colón*, an exhibition of children’s book illustrations by Raúl Colón, in a nearby gallery.

Estampas de la raza/Prints for the People: The Romo Collection

Estampas (Spanish for *prints*) *de la raza* (*the race or the people*, often referring to Mexican and U.S. heritage) is the first comprehensive examination of contemporary Mexican American and Latino prints and their place in the context of American art and the history of printmaking.

Ranging in date from 1984 to 2011, the works in *Estampas de la raza* explore social, political, and economic issues, as well as issues of identity and race often faced by Mexican American and Latino artists. The exhibition is organized according to the following themes:

- **Identity:** Prints in this category portray the search for Mexican American identity. These artists may declare independence and strength through the use of bold colors and subjects with steely gazes; acknowledge mixed heritage and the blending of Mexican and American identities; or address the evolving identity of Americans, particularly those of Mexican American heritage. Other prints attempt to define or comment on one’s own cultural identity—showing pride in a particular culture, people, or place, or depicting individuals in tension with their heritage and cultural status.
- **Struggle:** Many of these prints examine Mexican Americans’ and Latino Americans’ struggles for equality and labor rights. For example, artist Ester Hernandez’s darkly humorous *Sun Raid* (pictured right) illustrates the continuing struggle for migrant field workers’ rights, while Michael Menchaca’s *Cuando ...*, an image of sombrero-wearing cats crossing—and drowning in—the Rio Grande, uses symbols to bring awareness to the issue of U.S.-Mexico border control and politics. Several prints explore other issues, such as drug use.



- **Tradition, Culture, Memory:** Many of these prints examine themes of tradition. For example, Angel Rodriguez-Diaz's *Stepping into the Light—Quinceañera*, shows a girl participating in the centuries-old cultural tradition of the *quinceañera*, when a young woman celebrates the move from childhood to adulthood on her 15th birthday. Other prints illustrate the melding of Mexican and American cultures, featuring an image of a Mexican symbol—such as a flag or figure—paired with an American item or theme. Finally, several of the prints are inspired by family memories, with images of family members cooking favorite foods or playing music.
- **Icons:** Hispanic cultural icons, such as artist Frida Kahlo (pictured left), political figure Che Guevara, and Catholic saint the Virgin of Guadalupe, appear frequently in these prints. “Artists depict such images to venerate significant icons as well as to promote a particular social or political viewpoint,” explains Jennifer Dasal, associate curator of contemporary art at the NCMA. Other
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cultural icons represented include Golden Age Mexican film stars and *luchadores*, Mexican freestyle wrestlers.

- **Other voices:** These prints may consist of abstract, eclectic images; comment on more widespread economic or social issues; or show a blending of narratives that transcends culture, time, or location.

"The prints in *Estampas de la raza* are certainly remarkable and thought-provoking simply from an aesthetic viewpoint, but because of their cultural and political content, we also expect the prints to stir up conversation among our visitors," says Dasal. "We hope that the prints—with their bold colors and striking imagery—spark interest in the artists' fascinating heritage and culture and the issues that continue to concern them today."

Tall Tales and Huge Hearts: Raúl Colón

In conjunction with *Estampas de la raza*, the Museum presents *Tall Tales and Huge Hearts: Raúl Colón*. Colón, who was raised in Puerto Rico and now lives in New York City, has illustrated over 30 children's books featuring thrilling legends and heartwarming stories from many cultures, among them *Doña Flor*, *Tomás and the Library Lady*, and Jill Biden's book *Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops*.

Colón's watercolor, pencil, and etched works dazzle with their charm, depth, and bright color. Since beginning his artistic career in the 1980s, Colón has received numerous honors, including the Pura Belpré Award, which honors a Latino/Latina writer or illustrator whose work best celebrates the Latino cultural experience in a work of children's literature.



A selection of books illustrated by Colón will be available at reading areas in the exhibition gallery.

Estampas de la raza/Prints for the People: The Romo Collection

April 13–July 27, 2014

East Building, Level B, Meymandi Exhibition Gallery

All tickets \$5

Tall Tales and Huge Hearts: Raúl Colón

April 13–July 27, 2014

East Building, Gallery 2

Free

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday 10 am–5 pm

Friday 10 am–9 pm

Saturday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm

Closed Monday

About the Exhibitions

Estampas de la raza/Prints for the People: The Romo Collection is organized by the McNay Art Museum.

Lead sponsorship for *Estampas de la raza* is provided by the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation of 1992. In Raleigh the exhibition is presented by PNC, and the supporting sponsor is Lord Corporation. This exhibition is also made possible, in part, by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources; the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Inc.; and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment for Educational Exhibitions.

Tall Tales and Huge Hearts: Raúl Colón is organized by the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature, Abilene, Texas. This exhibition is made possible, in part, by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources; the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Inc.; and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment for Educational Exhibitions.

Photo captions, from top:

From *Estampas de la raza*:

Ester Hernandez, *Sun Raid*, 2008, screen print, 19 ¾ x 15 in., Collection of the McNay Art Museum, Gift of Harriett and Ricardo Romo, 2009.58, © 2013 Ester Hernandez

Raul Caracoza, *Young Frida (Pink)*, 2006, screen print, 36 1/8 x 26 1/8 in., Collection of the McNay Art Museum, Gift of Harriett and Ricardo Romo, 2009.42, © 2013 Raul Caracoza

From *Tall Tales and Huge Hearts*:

Raúl Colón, *Coyotes Howling*, 2003, from *Rise the Moon* (Dial, 2003), watercolor and colored pencil on paper, 19 x 22 in., Courtesy of the artist, © 2003 Raúl Colón

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Pat McCrory, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Susan Kluttz, secretary.