

CHECKLIST OF ARTWORK

(Unless otherwise noted, artwork has been lent by the artist)

Untitled, 1997

Hand-cut paper, T.P.
13.25 x 9 in.

The Challenging Work of Alphabetical Transportation, 2003

Linocut prints on Lana cover weight paper
edition of 44
5.75 x 4.75 x 84 in.
Printed by Aardvark Letterpress
with La Mano Press

She Stirs the Rabbit, 2004

Oil on canvas
24 x 30 in.
Collection of Sylvie Andrews &
Nick Adams Wright

Eat Your Porridge!, 2005

Silkscreen on paper, 5 colors, edition 33/69
26 x 20 in.
Printed by Self Help Graphics and Art

Tree Full of Life, 2005

Block printing on washi paper and acrylic
on canvas
36 x 36 in.
Collection of Patricia Nieto &
Timothy Martella

He Rides the Frog, 2006

Linocut print on washi paper and
acrylic on wood
7.5 x 12 in.

She Rides the Lion, 2006

Linocut print on washi paper and
acrylic on wood
7.5 x 12 in.

Tree of Forgotten Prayers, 2006

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
32 x 32 in.
Durón Family Collection

Tree of Life in LA, 2006

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
42 x 30 in.
Collection of Gabriel Sandoval

Family Quilt, 2007

Co-created with Frank Romero
(b. 1941, Los Angeles, CA)
Silkscreen on paper, 8 colors
edition 68/75
28 x 40 in.
Printed by Self Help Graphics and Art

Sweet Pastures, 2008

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
84 x 60 in.

Dead Pile, 2009

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 in.

Arctic Cod & Strawberry Pile, 2011

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on panel
24 x 16 in.

Bee Pile, 2011

Silkscreen on paper, 9 colors, A.P.
edition of 38
43 x 31 in.
Printed by Modern Multiples

Bison Skull & Rose Pile, 2011

Linocut block printing on washi
paper and acrylic on panel
24 x 16 in.

Bison Skull Pile, 2011 (reprinted 2023)

Commodity Corn Pile, 2011
(reprinted 2023)

Egg Pile, 2011 (reprinted 2023)

Linocuts printed as silkscreens on
Thai unryu mulberry paper and
acrylic on wall
21 x 13 ft.
Printed by Modern Multiples

Dead Bee Pile, c. 2011

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on wood
9.5 x 7.5 in.
Collection of Sylvie Andrews &
Nick Adams Wright

Inner Landscape, 2011

Co-created with Frank Romero
on paper
38 x 72 in.
Collection of Griselda Benitez

Lassie Pile, 2011

Found object collage and
block printing on paper
14 x 11 in.

Papaya Tree, 2011

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 in.

Tattooed Man, 2011

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 in.

Cinderella Pile, 2012

Found object collage and
block printing on paper
18 x 13 in.

Man's Trunk, 2012

Hand-cut paper with ink
23.5 x 14 in.
Henry & Yolanda Chavez Collection

Outer Layer Fashion Dollars, 2012

Linocut, collagraph and block printing on
washi paper
13 x 10.5 in.
Collection of Holly Jerger &
Matthew Wittmer

She Plays Jarana Jarocho: Fence, 2012

Linocut on paper mounted on
linocut on paper, A.P., edition of 10
17.5 x 13.5 in.

She Plays Jarana Jarocho: Landscape, 2012

Linocut on paper mounted on
linocut on paper, A.P., edition of 10
17.5 x 13.5 in.

She Plays Jarana Jarocho: Willow, 2012

Linocut on paper mounted on
linocut on paper, A.P., edition of 10
17.5 x 13.5 in.

Woman's Torso, 2012

Silkscreen on paper with ink
23.5 x 20 in.
Henry & Yolanda Chavez Collection

Lionheart, 2013 (reprinted 2023)

Linocut and collagraph on paper
edition 10/10
10 x 8 in.

Sacred Heart, 2013

Hand-cut paper and
linocut block print
29 x 41.5 in.
Courtesy of Cheech Marin and
The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art &
Culture of the Riverside Art Museum

Sacred Heart, 2013

Silkscreen on paper, 8 colors
edition 17/36
33 x 46 in.
Printed by Modern Multiples

Tree of Ladders, 2013

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on canvas
60 x 40 in.
Purchased with love by Stephanie Richard
in memory of Jason Campbell
(October 28, 1975 - August 5, 2010)

Sonia Romero, 2023

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on wood; laser-cut Plexiglass and
laser-etched, hand-painted wood
12 x 12 in. ea.



Laband Art Gallery
Loyola Marymount University
1 LMU Dr. MS8346
Los Angeles, CA 90045
lmu.edu/laband

All artwork © Sonia Romero
All rights reserved

The Swimmer, 2016

Silkscreen on paper, 8 colors
edition 21 /50
38 x 31 in.
Printed by Modern Multiples

Teresa, 2019

Silkscreen on paper, 7 colors
edition 3/100
14 x 11 in.
Printed by Modern Multiples

Year of the Straw, 2019

Silkscreen on paper, 11 colors, edition 25/40
22 x 30 in.
Printed by Self Help Graphics and Art

Decommissioned: Junipero Serra

Statue Pile at the LA River, 2023
Silkscreen on paper, 9 colors, edition 3/50
40 x 30 in.
Printed by Modern Multiples

Hamburger Pile, 2023

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on panel
24 x 18 in.

Hecho a Mano, 2023

Linocut block printing on washi paper
and acrylic on wood; laser-cut Plexiglass and
laser-etched, hand-painted wood
12 x 12 in. ea.

PUBLIC ARTWORK

Represented through ephemeral materials

Urban Oasis, completed in 2010

13 porcelain tile panels
4 x 4 ft. ea.
MacArthur Park/Westlake Metro station
mezzanine level
Commissioned by Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

Little Tokyo Medallions

completed in 2012
40 powder-coated aluminum medallions
35 x 38 in. ea.
Commissioned by the Community
Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los
Angeles (CRA/LA)

They Fly Through the Water

completed in 2014
13 laser-cut steel figures
approx. 7 x 4 ft. ea.
4000 hand-painted and silkscreened tiles
dimensions variable
Belvedere Aquatic Center
Commissioned by the Los Angeles County
Department of Arts and Culture

Hecho a Mano, completed in 2020

Hand-painted acrylic mural on honeycomb
aluminum panels
12 x 64 ft.
Mariachi Plaza Metro station, mezzanine level
Commissioned by Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

El Sereno Serape, completed in 2022

Silkscreen on ceramic tile mural
3000 tiles
9 x 9 in. ea.
Commissioned by the Department
of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles
(DCA/LA)

EDUCATION

2002 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Rhode Island School of Design,
Providence, RI
1998 Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, Los Angeles, CA

SELECTED SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Sonia Romero: Taken Root*, Laband Art Gallery, Loyola Marymount
University, Los Angeles, CA
2016 *Sonia Romero, Public Artist*, Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles, CA
2012 *Revolving Landscape*, Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles, CA
2011 *Inner Landscape*, Vincent Price Art Museum,
East Los Angeles College, Monterey Park, CA
2011 *Romero/Romero*, Plaza de la Raza, East Los Angeles, CA
2008 *The Lion's Share*, The Folk Tree, Pasadena, CA
2007 *2nd Edition, a Father/Daughter Print Retrospective*, Self Help
Graphics and Art, Los Angeles, CA
2006 *Debut Solo Show*, Avenue 50 Studio, Los Angeles, CA
2006 *Fledglings*, Metro Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2004 *Upstories, Downstories, a Mother/Daughter show*,
Double Vision Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Ecocide/Ecosave, FOCA Fellows of Contemporary Art*, Los Angeles, CA
Dissolve, UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of
California Art, Irvine, CA
Cheech Collects: Inaugural Exhibition, the Cheech Marin Center for
Chicano Art & Culture of the Riverside Art Museum,
Riverside, CA
2020 *iPrinting the Revolution!: The Rise and Impact of Chicano Graphics,
1965 to Now*, Smithsonian American Art Museum,
Washington, DC, (multi-venue traveling exhibition)
2017 *California Palms*, Plaza de la Raza, Los Angeles, CA
*Día De los Muertos: A Cultural Legacy, Past Presents and Future,
a PST LA/LA exhibit*, Self Help Graphics and Art, Los Angeles, CA
*Descendants and dissonance: Cultural Iconography in contemporary
L.A.: Oscar Magallanes, Sonia Romero, Linda Vallejo*, Salt Fine
Art Gallery, Laguna Beach, CA
2016 *Papel Chicano Dos: Works on Paper from the Collection of Cheech
Marin*, (multi-venue traveling exhibition)
2015 *Alas de Los Muertos: Return of the Souls, Self Help Graphics and
Art 42nd Annual Día de los Muertos*, Los Angeles, CA
2014 *Chicano Dream: La Collection Cheech Marin (1980-2010)*, Musée
d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France
2013 *LA Women, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Forest Lawn Museum,
Los Angeles, CA
LA-SA, Gravelmouth Gallery, San Antonio, TX
Art Exhibit with Sonia Romero, Pola Lopez, Isabel Avila,
Homegirl Cafe, Los Angeles, CA
2012 *Estampas de la Raza, Contemporary Prints from the Romo
Collection*, San Antonio, TX (multi-venue traveling exhibition)
Domestic Disobedience: Redefining the Feminine Space,
San Diego Mesa College Art Gallery, San Diego, CA
2007 *Xican@ Demiurge - An Immediate Survey*, Fresno City Hall,
Fresno, CA



fig. 6 *Hecho a Mano*,
Mariachi Plaza Metro Station
photo: Elon Schoenholz



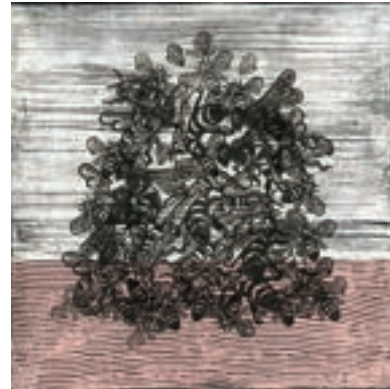
PERMANENT PUBLIC ART

2022 *El Sereno Sarape*, Alhambra Avenue, Department of Cultural Affairs,
Los Angeles, El Sereno, CA
2020 *Hecho A Mano*, Mariachi Plaza Metro Station, Los Angeles
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA),
Boyle Heights, CA
2017 *Byzantine Latino District Medallions*, Los Angeles Neighborhood
Initiative and BLQ BID, Los Angeles, CA
Lady Artesia, Artesia County Library, Los Angeles County Arts
Commission, Artesia, CA
La Linea de la Vida, Plaza de la Raza, East Los Angeles, CA
They Fly Through the Water, Belvedere Aquatic Center,
Los Angeles County Arts Commission, East Los Angeles, CA
2013 *Little Tokyo Medallion Project*, Community Redevelopment Agency
of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), Little Tokyo, CA
2011 *Urban Oasis*, Westlake/MacArthur Park Metro Station, Los Angeles
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), Westlake, CA
2009 *Tierra del Sol*, Tierra del Sol Community Center, Community
Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA),
Canoga Park, CA
2008 *The Water Cycle; Eternal Flow* Los Angeles County Arts Commission,
East Los Angeles, CA

COLLECTIONS

The Autry Museum of the American West
City of Cerritos Public Library
The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture
Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College
UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
McNay Art Museum
Smithsonian American Art Museum

cover Sonia Romero (detail), 2023



Sonia Romero Taken Root

Sonia Romero

Taken Root

September 23 — December 9, 2023



fig. 1 *Sweet Pastures*, 2008

The exhibition **Taken Root** is a twenty-plus-year survey that recognizes Sonia Romero for her enduring and boundary-pushing art practice as well as her important contributions to the public art landscape of Los Angeles. Organized by the Laband Art Gallery, this show includes more than 50 pieces spanning from the early 2000s to the present that celebrate Romero's signature visual language that has always and already expanded the possibilities of the mediums of printmaking and painting.

Romero, born in 1980 in Los Angeles, CA, exemplifies the identity and lived experience of a "both/and" artist. She has cultivated her own artistic path that synthesizes her Chicana heritage traced through the Romero family (her father is artist Frank Romero) together with her Ashkenazi Jewish matrilineal line influenced by her grandmother, the late artist and folk art collector Edith Wyle—who was founder of Los Angeles's Craft and Folk Art Museum—as well as her mother Nancy Romero, also a visual artist. Describing herself

as an artist since she was a child, Sonia Romero's multi-ethnic upbringing has been formative to the development of her individual expression that transcends categories of belonging as well as artmaking.

One of the hallmarks of Romero's practice is her commitment to making her artwork as accessible as possible—legible to the widest potential audience—thereby carrying the torch of important Mexican and Chicana artistic forebears. Her desire to connect her artwork with broad audiences is apparent in the five public artworks highlighted in this exhibition. Romero finds inspiration in narratives gleaned through research and community engagement and pushes herself to develop new working and material strategies that further her artistic vision.

Taken Root considers how Romero, known for her methodical, and oftentimes playful, creative processes that inform both her fine and public art practice, blurs distinctions between the mediums of painting and printmaking,

to produce varied and relatable artworks that belie a mere surface reading. The artwork represented in this exhibition—painted and collaged canvases, papercuts, monoprints, linocuts and silkscreens as well as silkscreened tiles and laser-cut steel forms—could be best described as materially and technically intertwined.

Calling herself a painter first, who studied all modes of printmaking as an undergraduate at the Rhode Island School of Design, it was her post-grad year-long tutelage under the Mexican graphic artist Artemio Rodriguez at Self Help Graphics and Art that set her on a trajectory of mixing media. Her mastery of relief printing, specifically the linocut, and its limitless possibilities of repetition, pattern and bold graphic qualities has blossomed into an ever-evolving signature style in which prints merge within a painting, the linocut begets a papercut, the papercut becomes the model for a painting, and so on.

By combining the mediums of painting and printmaking within a single canvas, Romero comments on food choice and diet in ***Sweet Pastures* (fig. 1)** a work depicting two children seated at a tea party in an idyllic outdoor setting. In the foreground, cupcakes, donuts, corn dogs and spray-can



fig. 3 *Outer Layer Fashion Dollars*, 2012



fig. 2 *Tree of Forgotten Prayers*, 2006

cheese are spread out on the low-lying table under a fruit tree. All the processed food items are painted in acrylic, while the healthy options—carrots, peaches, and cabbages—are rendered as linocut block prints which are collaged onto the painting's surface. Her inventive approach to mixing media extends to public artwork such as her hand-painted mural, ***Hecho a Mano* (2020)**, at the Mariachi Plaza Metro Station, in which she playfully translated small papercut studies into monumental paintings (fig. 6).

Romero often expresses varying perspectives and recollections by employing a set of recurring motifs—in particular trees, bodies and piles—to represent different states of reality. For ***Tree of Forgotten Prayers* (fig. 2)** her inspiration is surely her families' treasured collection of folk art that she grew up around. The ex votos she depicts here adorning the branches of a tree are the Italian versions she saw in churches while studying abroad in Rome, noticeably larger, she has noted, than their Latin counterparts which she knew first-hand from childhood.

Ongoing personal concerns such as the importance of tapping into a state of inner wellbeing inspire her. The multi-layered print ***Outer Layer Fashion Dollars* (fig. 3)** is one example of a figurative series informed by Romero's practice of yoga and meditation. While the female figure is a self-portrait that is depicted in a mountain pose (Tadasana), the tiny, hand-cut dollar bill linocuts affixed to the body



fig. 4 *Taken Root* installation view, photo: Ruben Diaz

playfully reference the wedding dollar dance, a nuptial tradition practiced across various cultures.

Romero's critiques and interpretations have sharpened as she takes on current issues of social, cultural, and political significance. Her site-specific installation (fig. 4 **back wall**) is made up of silkscreened linocuts, hand-cut and wheat-pasted to the wall and arranged in giant piles. While this mural appears highly graphic and seemingly inviting, it should also be read as the artist's stark commentary on this nation's consumption patterns told as trilogy. The left pile, ***Bison Skull Pile* (2012)**, portrays the plight of the American buffalo based on an infamous 19th-century photograph depicting thousands of bison skulls awaiting to be ground as fertilizer. In the center ***Commodity Corn Pile* (2012)**, a humongous pile of corn kernels stands in for high fructose corn syrup among numerous other insidious American applications. On the right, ***Egg Pile* (2012)** recalls a foodstuff subject to recent skyrocketing price increases as well as widespread contamination.

With her most recent artwork, ***Decommissioned: Junipero Serra Statue Pile at the LA River* (fig. 5)** Romero pays tribute to California's Indigenous communities which organized

state-wide protests in allyship with the Black Lives Matter Movement. She conceived of this artwork in 2020, a monumental year in U.S. history, while being particularly drawn to news footage covering activists who were interacting with national monuments. For this piece, Romero sourced actual imagery of Father Serra statues she found on the internet—beheaded, doused with red paint, and occasionally even removed over safety concerns. These images inspired distinct linocut renderings that were translated into the silkscreen medium. Here her piling arrangement offers a reimagined public art edifice—a toppled pile of Serra statues—situated on the banks of the LA River. While Romero's questioning spirit ponders the significance of public artwork in a new, imagined afterlife, it is a familiar scene that combines the creativity and critique we have long come to expect from this artist.

Karen Rapp
Laband Art Gallery Director & Curator



fig. 5 *Decommissioned: Junipero Serra Statue Pile at the LA River*, 2023