

I have written two chapters of my dissertation, a biography of Manuel Acosta, and have completed the bulk of my research and have only a small amount remaining. The funds provided by CASETA have lent important resources in completing the work that I have thus far. While the first chapter of my dissertation emphasizes the social and political conditions in El Paso in the twentieth century that gave rise to Acosta's life and career, the second chapter explores his relationship with the Western art movement and how he painted the border into it. With the help of a grant I received from my university's Graduate School, CASETA'S generous support assisted me in the completion of three research trips this summer to acquire additional sources. The papers that I gathered from the American Art Archives in Washington DC, the New Mexico Art Archives in Santa Fe, NM, and the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA have been especially useful in drafting my second chapter, which is already written, as well as my third, which I am currently outlining and beginning to draft.

With the data that I gained at the AAA and the NMAA, my second chapter developed into an analysis of the Southwest Art movement and the role that Acosta played in representing Mexican Americans on the border to augment this genre. In Santa Fe, I came across sources—letters, exhibit papers, photographs, and periodical clippings—that yielded relevant information on the “San Patricio Five,” the art colony formed by renowned Western landscape painter, Peter Hurd, in addition to Acosta, Hurd's wife Henriette Wyeth, John Meigs, and Peter Rogers. The American Art Archives also house letters between Acosta and Hurd as well as Chicano art periodicals that reveal Acosta's impact on the Western art movement as a Mexican American. This research demonstrated the artistic lineage from which Acosta descended and provide insight into how he forged a singular vision of the borderlands that was uniquely Chicano. The draft of my second chapter would not be currently finished without the grant provided by CASETA.

My third chapter, on which I am currently working, examines Acosta's influence on the Chicano art movement. At the CSRC in LA, I was able to look at papers that recorded the rise of what is becoming increasingly known as the Chicano Renaissance. Acosta's career immediately preceded this flowering of Mexican American cultural production and I will demonstrate the influence that he had on it in this chapter. By comparing Acosta's use of the Mexican Revolution, Chicano identity, the mural work he did in El Paso, and his use of *rasquachismo* with the artistic trends that followed as part of the rise of the Chicano Movement—this chapter will argue that he was a central forerunner to the Chicano Renaissance in visual art. At the

CSRC, I retrieved documents that highlight the significance of these themes to the Chicano art movement and I will use them to show Acosta's influence on it in the third chapter of my dissertation.

CASETA's generosity has greatly expedited the progress on my dissertation. Because of the grant provided in addition to funds given by UTEP's Graduate School, I will be able to finish research, writing, and revising within the academic year and earn my Doctorate by May 2016. I have had a minor setback sorting out who has image use rights of many of Acosta's local paintings because of a labyrinthine legal battle over his estate and this originally hindered my ability to use the funds as originally intended because I hope to include them in my dissertation when I pursue its publication. However, I was able to utilize grant for conducting further exhaustive investigations into archives that contain important sources on Acosta. The information gained through the research that CASETA made possible on Manuel Acosta is proving essential to the second and third chapters of my dissertation and will greatly have facilitated its completion by the Spring 2016 semester.

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August , 2015