



City of Arts & Innovation

Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: MAY 26, 2021**
FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF TWO DIGITAL PRINTS BY LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER BENOIT MALPHETTES

ISSUE:

To approve a recommendation to accession into the permanent collection two digital prints by local photographer Benoit Malphettes.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of two digital prints by local photographer Benoit Malphettes.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2020, shortly after the start of the pandemic shutdown, the Museum of Riverside (Museum) launched an initiative to collect COVID-19-related content from the community for the history collection. At that time the Museum's Collection Development Plan, which outlines Rapid Response Collecting, had not been finalized. It is common practice for museums to act quickly to collect mission-relevant ephemera and other content that may not be available after the required standard review and approval process. A web portal to collect digital content was added to the Museum's website. It was anticipated that there would be a minimum of physical objects added to this collection, and that the content would primarily be born-digital, which is not accessioned into the permanent collection.

Awareness of the Museum's COVID-19 collecting initiative prompted the offer of a physical object from a local artist who creates digital prints from collaged photographs. Benoit Malphettes offered his COVID-19-inspired print. After discussion with him of his offer, he proposed also donating his composite print of the Tio's Tacos compound, a local cultural attraction.

At its meeting on April 28, 2021, with eleven of its twelve members present, the advisory Collections Committee of the Museum unanimously supported a recommendation to accession.

DISCUSSION:

In its Collections Development Plan, the Museum identifies areas for growth within its history collections. The plan notes that “Through its collections, the Museum will seek to broaden the inquiry into the ways in which material culture defines a shared understanding of history, place, and identity.” The plan further acknowledges the method of collection growth “guided by theories based in social history rather than political history,” further elaborating on collecting in ways that illuminate local experience. While the pandemic was a worldwide phenomenon, it has unquestionably shifted the way Riverside residents think about their locality and their lives, as it has in every other community. Collecting material related to recent history is noted in the plan as an area to be strengthened.

The print of Tio’s Tacos relates to the following target categories: ethnic collections, recent local history, architectural history, photography, and the commercial environment.

The prints are presently unmatted and unframed, and they each measure 17 x 22. While they are art objects, both prints are recommended for accession into the permanent collection in the category of historic cultural documents.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:
Approved by:

Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager



COVID Still Life, 2020, digital print on paper



Tio's Tacos Composition, 2016, digital print on paper