

FULBRIGHT GRANT INFORMATION SESSION WITH OSCAR RENE CORNEJO ART '05



TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20 | 12 PM

41 COOPER SQUARE ROOM 101 | PLEASE JOIN US | ARTISTS, ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

Oscar Rene Cornejo will talk about his Fulbright Grant and his work to establish a print shop in rural El Salvador.

Living in the small agrarian village of El Polvo, and with the help of that community's youth, Cornejo created a collection of woodcut prints that culminated in the creation of a hand-bound book. The book consisted of testimonies, poems, news, folklore and legends that of El Polvo. Cornejo utilized Ukiyo-e, a traditional Japanese woodcut technique, along with silkscreen to reproduce and distribute limited editions to the immediate surrounding community. The limited editions are collaborative and include the prints and creative writing of Salvadoran youth. As a first generation Salvadoran-American, Cornejo's ultimate goal was to use collaborative art-making to uncover and document the collective memory of the Salvadoran community, and to engage its youth in modes of creative social expression as they came to terms with issues of economic inequality, immigration, and gang violence.

The scope of the Fulbright experience also facilitated a year's worth of LA CAPacidad programming—an organization that facilitated community art projects. Tailored to the community's specific needs and interests, the programs helped beautify their community center and produced cultural festivals that showcased the artwork from the participants, theater productions, and musical sets. These festivals were a great way to help the fundraising efforts of El Polvo's "Directivas," community advisory boards. With the help of NGO's

and not-for-profit organizations, Directivas organized community development projects that included the implementation of potable water and the paving of El Polvo's dirt roads. As an artist and Creative Director of LA CAPacidad, Cornejo hired local labor to transform an abandoned building in a rural village to be the creative hub where painting, drawing, theater, mural, printmaking and bookmaking workshops can be facilitated. These workshops encouraged participants and visiting artists to exchange ideas. This multifaceted approach was Cornejo's mode of research. Teaching printmaking techniques fostered a creative experience with participants where shared stories were made into zines and distributed to their peers, visiting artists and the surrounding community. It also provided a platform to address issues of violence, poverty, immigration, and the importance of community participation.

In a country that is reconciling with the effects of their civil war, the Fulbright Grant allowed Cornejo to collaborate with museum directors, Peace Corps, community leaders, and visiting artists to provide a model to develop community-specific art projects that created safe constructive spaces to creatively unpack and explore a El Salvador's social, historical and political concerns.

Peter Buckley, Associate Professor of the Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences and The Cooper Union's Fulbright Program Advisor, will join Mr. Cornejo to provide information and field questions about applying for a Fulbright Grant.

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