

proofs

The
STUDIO
for
Southern
California
HISTORY

June 1, 2012
issue 15

A "Studio Without Walls"

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In December 2011 we decided to close our gallery in Chinatown to become a "Studio Without Walls." While this was a sad day for me personally, as I value this amazing community, it was the right move for the Studio. The loss of a physical space has opened up our ability to do site specific projects across the region and expand our online efforts through the [LA History Archive](http://www.lahistoryarchive.org) at www.lahistoryarchive.org.

Over the last six months we achieved different goals that continue the Studio's work in truly meaningful ways including the creation of a "Pop Up!" location through the generosity of the Hill Street Best Western; "The Real Ladies of LA"-- an epic poem about Los Angeles women that was **perfectly** performed by Hill Street Historian Gabby Garcia; and a vital partnership with **ShoeboxLA** for two exhibits by **Timothy Nolan** and **Joshua Levine**, "Drift" and "Monumental," respectively. I presented a workshop on Swan Point Cemetery for the "Thinking in Public" Colloquium Series at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, which provided a laboratory for the Studio's methods in a new environment and context. Amazing interns continue to work with the Studio; and this issue of **proofs** is chock full of their contributions.

We look forward to seeing you soon at a future "Pop Up!," Walking Tour or perhaps as an interviewee in our oral history program.

The Studio's mission is to critically chronicle and share the region's social history in order to foster sense of place.

Sharon Sekhon PhD
Founder & Executive Director



News Notes

CONGRATULATIONS go to past and present Hill Street Historians (aka Studio interns) who are graduating including **Nancy I. Bautista** who earned her Masters of Social Work with an emphasis in military care from the University of Southern California (Go Trojans!). **Claudia Carcamo** is graduating from UC Riverside with a BA (Go Scotty the Bear!). **Gabrielle Garcia** is graduating from Abraham Lincoln High School and will be attending UC Santa Cruz in the Fall (Go Tigers & Slugs!) All have promised to share Southern California stories with the people they meet in their new surroundings and to keep in touch!

KCET DEPARTURES featured different Studio staffers in its programming thanks to writer Jeremy Rosenberg, who invited Hill Street Historians to share "Arrival Stories" and asked Studio Founder Sharon Sekhon to pick a law that changed Southern California. Sekhon wrote about Executive Order 9066. Lucas Benitez, Claudia Carcamo, George Castillo, Gabrielle Garcia, Michelle Lopez, Michael Mattice and Sekhon contributed Arrival Stories.

New Hill Street Historians came this year from UC Los Angeles in the form of Tiffany Do and Victoria Gonzalez, the latter introduced by Civic Engagement Instructor Beth Goodhue. **Tiffany Do** created a timeline of the **San Fernando Valley** and **Victoria Gonzalez** has continued our interview of artist **Ofelia Esparza** (see their article on page 4).

Studio supporter and Brown University doctoral candidate in American Studies **Amy Jin Johnson** interviewed Faith Wilding in Providence, Rhode Island for the Studio. **Faith Wilding** is a Paraguayan-American multidisciplinary artist, writer and educator who was witness to LA's 1972 **Womanhouse** --the first public feminist art exhibit --and created the powerful documentary of the same name in 1973.

SAVE THE DATE -- SEPTEMBER 1 - STUDIO FUNDRAISER! Do you like karaoke? Do you like prizes? Do you like LA? Of course you do! Mark your calendars for September 1st, when the Studio will say goodbye to summer with an LA karaoke party featuring songs about our favorite town, the City of Angels. In addition to delicious food and the fun of belting out "Walking in LA." – take that Missing Persons! – there will be a fundraising raffle with amazing prizes including **a custom LA pinball machine**!! **YOU KNOW YOU WANT IT**, so prep those pipes and join us on September 1st. Location and time TBA.

Remembering Connie by Sharon Sekhon

On February 23, 2012 I lost my dear friend Connie Capacchione. I met her in 2006 through her granddaughter Celia Pearce and hers was the first oral history conducted as part of the then new Studio. Connie was born in what is now Chinatown--the Little Italy--in 1913 in the family home on New Depot Street. Throughout her amazing life, she witnessed the history of Los Angeles through a set of fun loving and spiritual eyes ... CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
Below Connie with Studio Board Member Bob Drwila.



A message from the Board of Directors by Hillary Jenks

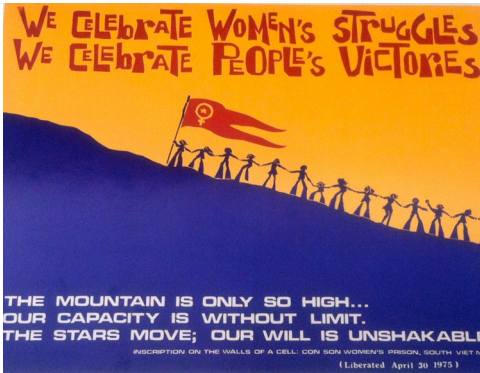
Our transition to a "Studio Without Walls" that can more flexibly and cost-effectively chronicle and share the social history of Southern California continues! While we offer public programs, including a great Cinco de Mayo walking tour of El Pueblo led by Monica Pelayo and the successful pop-up events at our temporary location in the Chinatown Best Western, our emphasis has shifted to student internships, with training and mentoring in local history, as well as expanding our online resources. Thus, in addition to our [LA History Archive](#), you can look for Studio oral histories on YouTube and check out our Facebook page. Our Executive Director Sharon Sekhon is currently collecting more oral histories on projects with students in Artesia and throughout the region, and will be taking Studio interns Gabby Garcia and Michelle Lopez with her to Puerto Rico in the fall to present some of this work at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

"A Decade of Dissent"

Text by Tiffany Do and
Images by Victoria Gonzalez

Organized by the Center for the Study of Political Graphics and its director, Carol Wells, "A Decade of Dissent" explores how California posters from the years 1965-75 and their artists helped to develop and nurture the discourse of democracy that surrounded that decade of revolution. Although it is a small exhibit that takes place within the walls of the West Hollywood public library with just posters and placards, it has grand ambitions to not only chronicle art's influence within politics, but to also create a context for which to understand contemporary society's issues. Posters from half a century ago lend themselves to the discussions of today's issues. Designed to catch the eye and send moving messages to its audience, these political posters are an arresting collection just in visuals. Because these posters are accompanied by very informative placards providing background and context to the creation of each poster, the exhibit is an excellent place to start understanding the turmoil of the decade.





“The continual eruption of the same issues shows that we have not learned from our past. As a collective, the nation has yet to grow up.”

Although many of the organizations behind the posters such as Another Mother for Peace and the Black Panthers are from a different time period, the issues and values that they champion continue to resonate in the new century. The ideals of peace, equality, and freedom are more important than ever to cling on to in an era that has witnessed economic depression and the longest war in US history. The inflammations of emotions regarding individual liberty that is attached to the outcome over the controversy of CISPA, Trayvon Martin, and Occupy are all catalysts for chaos, reminiscent of the 1992 riots, reminiscent of the Watts Riots in 1965. Because of this, the exhibit forces into question whether despite all this change, and there has been a lot of change, if some things have just stayed the same. Perhaps, our generation has inherited the same fight as our elders albeit under different guises.

Because it is an election year, it is more important than ever to learn about the issues that plague and have plagued our City of Angels and the larger us that is the United States. The continual eruption of the same issues shows that we have not learned from our past. As a collective, the nation has yet to grow up. It is time for the multitasking generation to start embracing the responsibilities of citizenship by knowing and understanding the issues that affect the communities we live in. Contemporary society's issues are grounded in the issues of yesteryears. While the entirety of the past is hard to grasp, the exhibit "A Decade of Dissent" provides a jumping point from which to start learning about today's issues. The posters demonstrate a unique method for gaining insight into what discourse was like and how it perpetuates to this day. **The Center for the Study of Political Graphics is located at 8124 W 3rd St # 211 Los Angeles, CA 90048. Visit their website at <http://www.politicalgraphics.org/>. Tiffany Do and Victoria Gonzalez are Hill Street Historians from UCLA.**

SHOEBOXLA: A Perfect Partner

by Michelle Lopez

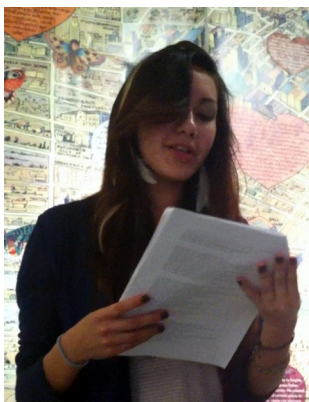


Levine explains "Monumental" to Lopez.

The Studio has partnered with many organizations in its history. Undoubtedly, its partnership with ShoeboxLA ranks among the finest. Led by Paul W. Evans and Sophia Boo Allison, this curatorial team uses space as both a limitation and inspiration in its installations. Artists are invited to present work along smaller, set dimensions. ShoeboxLA held two exhibits with the Studio at our "Pop Up!" in April & May with artists Timothy Nolan and Joshua Levine. I had the opportunity to see Levine's work and speak with him. Levine's work displays his ideas about mutations, genetics, cloning, and synthetic biology. CONTINUED on next page.

LA Ladies by Gabby Garcia

When I read the beautifully written "The Real Ladies of LA" by Sharon Sekhon at the Studio for Southern California's poetry reading event on January 23, 2012, I felt very proud of my history. The ladies that I described in the poem are all amazing women, some of the women were famous, while others were heroines to their own daughters and nieces. The poem reminded me of observing Los Angeles as a child, and experiencing it with a wise mind.



The atmosphere was diverse, and some enjoyed the poem by expressing their emotions with tears. I have no doubt it was reminding them of the Real Ladies of LA that they knowingly love and respect. Since the poem was very detailed, I got the chance to express parts of it differently. For example, some areas of the poem were slow, and sweet, while others were read loudly and passionately. The poem reminded me of all the women in my life I know have, and will continue to change the world. Those interested in reading the poem may find it on the LA History Archive. Photo: Gabby Garcia reading the poem.

The small monumental lays out twelve genetic mutated statues, each with its own individual light shining at the statue as if they were to be shown in a gallery. Levine explains: humanity is used to seeing perfection; when doing his art, he wants to give the eye something different. The artist wants people to wonder why a bear had two faces or why there was a rooster tail on a wolf head. He believes all these genetic mistakes are different and he wants people to question if this could ever happen and if one day this weird thought will become reality. Every mutated animal is standing on top of a very famous well known statue like the Statue of Liberty National Monument. Having the animals on this well known statue demonstrates the idea that one day we will be accustomed to and able to recognize these biological "mistakes" as normal and will respect the differences. Michelle Lopez is a Hill Street Historian and attends CSULB.

JENKS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Given the smaller financial footprint of the Studio, it was decided at the most recent Board of Directors meeting on April 14th to revise the bylaws. A smaller Board will now meet three times a year. The composition of the new Board is also set: Alexis Moreno and Hillary Jenks will serve as co-chairs and Dona Lawrie as treasurer. We look forward to assisting Sharon as she charts this exciting new course for the Studio! Hillary Jenks is the Co-Chair of the Studio for Southern California History's Board of Directors. She is currently a Getty Fellow at the Getty Institute and is an Assistant Professor in the Honors Program at Portland State University.

REMEMBERING CONNIE ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Connie's way of explaining her history not only taught me content, it taught me a loving approach to public history. She and her mother were dressmakers during the Depression and many of the bridal gowns from Los Angeles' Italian American community were stitched with their loving hands. She also worked with leading costume designer Adrian on such classic MGM films as Little Women. She showed me that although life is composed of many losses that may seem insurmountable, we must seize each day with hope and expectations. She demonstrated how to lead a full life; Connie had one daughter, Lucia Capacchione, whose vocation as an art therapist mirrors Connie's influence in profound ways. Connie served as a second mother to her two beautiful granddaughters Celia Pearce and Aleta Pearce Francis. She showed me the best restaurants in Toluca Lake (her home since 1968) like Chez Nous. Connie always ate dessert and loved men, especially my husband Bob Drwila (in photo on page 3 with Connie). I loved being with her because she loved being with me. I miss you Connie and am forever grateful for your friendship.

Are you up to the Challenge???

My Neighborhood Photo-Essay Contest

The Studio seeks to cover neighborhoods across the region that reflect the truly unique and diverse communities set well apart from traditional stereotypes. Examples of past winners are featured on the LA History Archive at www.lahistoryarchive.org.

The next deadline is JULY 1.

Each submission must include the following information:

Photographer's Name

Home Address (Number Street, Apt #)

City, State, Zip code

Home Phone Number

E-mail address (if applicable)

500-1,000 Word Essay

5 - 10 Photographs with title, location and date

More information on the Challenge is available at www.socalstudio.org.



SPECIAL TALK JUNE 20: AMY JIN JOHNSON

June 20 - Amy Jin Johnson discusses Choo Fong. This talk is co-sponsored by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) and the Studio for Southern California History. The talk is on her research around an 1892 case of a Chinese woman named Choo Fong. Her story begins on November 20, 1892, when she was abducted outside of her home in Los Angeles's Chinatown. Reporting that the kidnapping was the first time a white man had been involved in the abduction of a Chinese prostitute, the Los Angeles Times labeled the incident **"the coldest-blooded outrage of its character that has ever been perpetrated in Los Angeles."** Johnson's dissertation examines how Fong's story became the cause célèbre for various organizations and institutions grappling for position, power, and influence in Southern California at the turn of the twentieth century. Her talk will outline the preliminary story, focusing specifically on Charley Ah Him, one of the leaders of Hop Sing and the focus of her dissertation.

Amy Jin Johnson is a doctoral candidate in American Studies at Brown University. The talk will begin at 6:00 pm on June 20. We will update readers on the location of the event when it draws nearer. The Studio is pleased to partner with the CHSSC for this special event.

The Studio for Southern California History

977 N. Hill Street PMB 740, Los Angeles 90012 ● 213-375-8890