



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Murals of Aztlán Film Production Records, 1981, in the Archives of American Art

Megan McShea

2017 April 6

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Exhibition and Production Notes, 1981.....	4
Series 2: Work Print and Soundtrack, 1981.....	5
Series 3: Sound Recordings, 1981.....	7
Series 4: Voiceover Outtakes, 1981.....	8
Series 5: Trims and Outtakes, 1981.....	9

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Murals of Aztlán Film Production Records
Identifier:	AAA.tartjame
Date:	1981
Creator:	Tartan, James, 1931-
Extent:	5.1 Linear feet
Language:	Collection is in English.
Summary:	The <i>Murals of Aztlán</i> Film Production Records measures 5.1 linear feet and consists of film footage, sound recordings, and notes from the documentary produced by James Tartan during the exhibition <i>Murals of Aztlán: the Street Painters of East Los Angeles</i> at the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles in 1981. Film and sound elements in the collection include original sound recordings, work print, outtakes, and trims. Also found are production notes, museum memorandums concerning the exhibition schedule, and a transcript of a recorded conversation among muralists.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by James Tartan, the filmmaker, in 1988.

Separated Materials

Additional production material from the documentary *Murals of Aztlán*, including a final print, is found in the James Tartan Film Collection, 1960-1985, held at the UCLA Chicano Research Center.

Processing Information

Motion picture film reels were inspected and re-housed in 2016-2017 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund. Original film containers were photographed and discarded as collection material was stabilized in archival film cans. Motion picture film was processed by Jennifer Graves, and the entire collection was arranged and described by Megan McShea in 2017.

Preferred Citation

Murals of Aztlán film production records, 1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Terms of Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

Biographical / Historical

Murals of Aztlán is a documentary film produced by actor and filmmaker James Tartan during the exhibition *Murals of Aztlán: the Street Painters of East Los Angeles* held at the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles, California in 1981. For the exhibition, artists Carlos Almaraz, Gronk, Judithe Hernandez, Willie Herron, Frank Romero, John Valadez and the East Los Streetscrapers (David Botello, Wayne Healy, George Yepes) painted portable murals in the gallery, which was open to the public during the installation of the work. The filmmaker and his crew interviewed the artists involved in the exhibition for the film, filmed the artists creating murals in the gallery, and also filmed the public viewing the artists working and the murals themselves.

James Tartan was born in 1931 and worked as a filmmaker, actor, and voiceover artist. In addition to *Murals of Aztlán*, Tartan created a documentary film about the 1974 Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition *Los Four*, and has been credited with training many Chicano filmmakers in the 1970s.

Scope and Contents

The *Murals of Aztlán* Film Production Records measures 5.1 linear feet and consists of film footage, sound recordings, and notes from the documentary produced by James Tartan during the exhibition *Murals of Aztlán: the Street Painters of East Los Angeles* at the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles in 1981. Film and sound elements in the collection include original sound recordings, work print, outtakes, and trims. Also found are production notes, museum memorandums concerning the exhibition schedule, and a transcript of a recorded conversation among muralists.

Arrangement

Collection arranged as 5 series.

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Exhibition and Production Notes, 1981 (8 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Work Print and Soundtrack, 1981 (2.6 linear feet; Box 3, FC 1-30)
 - Series 3: Sound Recordings, 1981 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1-2)
 - Series 4: Voiceover Outtakes, 1981 (0.9 linear feet; FC 31-39)
 - Series 5: Trims and Outtakes, 1981 (0.9 linear feet; FC 40-48)
-

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Chicano artists
Latino and Latin American artists
Mexican American art
Mexican American artists
Mural painting and decoration -- 20th century -- California -- Los Angeles
Street art

Types of Materials:

Motion pictures (visual works)
Sound recordings
Transcripts

Names:

Craft and Folk Art Museum

Occupations:

Muralists -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews

Container Listing

Series 1: Exhibition and Production Notes, 1981

8 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Exhibition and production notes relate to the exhibition and the production of the film *Murals of Aztlán*, as well as documentation of original film containers created during processing of the collection. Museum memorandums concern the schedules of muralists working throughout the exhibition and a press schedule. Editing notes include preliminary notes on the film project's general content and structure, and detailed editing notes describing specific material cut into each scene. Voiceover notes describe interviews with muralists used in the soundtrack.

A typewritten transcript of what appears to be a group interview of the muralists is also found. It is unknown whether this transcript corresponds to the sound recordings in this collection.

Box 1, Folder 1	Craft and Folk Art Museum Memorandums, 1981
Box 1, Folder 2	Editing notes, 1981
Box 1, Folder 3	Voiceover Notes, 1981
Box 1, Folder 4	Transcript of Interview with Muralists, 1981
Box 1, Folder 5	List of Sound Reels, 1981
Box 1, Folder 6	Original Film Container Documentation, Work Print, 1981
Box 1, Folder 7	Original Film Container Documentation, Voiceover Outtakes, 1981
Box 1, Folder 8	Original Film Container Documentation, Trims and Outtakes, 1981

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Work Print and Soundtrack, 1981

2.6 Linear feet (Box 3, FC 1-30)

Scope and Contents: Work print and soundtrack consists of edited picture and soundtrack footage arranged in groups, with each reel in the group numbered W.R. 101 to 110. Each group contains between 1 and 5 reels consisting of a variety of edited production elements, including sync picture and soundtrack, silent film ("MOS"), and non-sync soundtrack ("Wild"). It is unknown what the initials W.R. stand for, but it appears to refer to edited work print grouped into scenes as part of the filmmaker's editing process.

Arrangement: See editing notes in Series 1 for the filmmaker's original documentation of the content of each group. Original recordings of wild soundtrack are found in series 3, and voiceover outtakes are found in series 4. Additional trims and outtakes of all material are found in series 5.

Box 3; Item FC 2; Item FC 4; Item FC 5	W.R. 101, 1981 5 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack, 1 reel MOS picture, and 2 reels wild soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Names on leader: Judith, Frank, Gronk, John, Los Street-Scapers; sync and MOS picture reels housed in Box 3
Item FC 6; Box 3	W.R. 102, 1981 1 Film reel (wild soundtrack; 16mm)
Box 3; Item FC 8; Box FC 9	W.R. 103, 1981 3 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack, 1 reel MOS picture; 16mm) Notes: Names on leader : Judith, Frank, and John; sync and MOS picture reels housed in Box 3
Box 3; Item FC 11; Item FC 13	W.R. 104, 1981 4 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack, 1 reel MOS picture, and 1 reel wild soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Names on leader : Gronk, Willie, and Los Street-scapers; sync and MOS picture reels housed in Box 3
Box 3; Item FC 15; Item FC 16	W.R. 105, 1981 3 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack, and 1 reel wild soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Names on leader : Los Street-scapers and Willie; sync picture reel housed in Box 3
Box 3; Item FC 18; Item FC 20	W.R. 106, 1981 4 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack, 1 reel MOS picture, and 1 reel wild soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Names on leader : John and Carlos; sync and MOS picture reels housed in Box 3
Box 3; Box FC 21;	W.R. 107, 1981

Item FC 24	4 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack, 1 reel MOS picture, and 1 reel wild soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Names on leader: Los Street-scapers, Public, and Frank; sync and MOS picture reels film housed in Box 3
Box 3; Item FC 26	W.R. 108, 1981 2 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Name on leader: Gronk; sync picture reel housed in Box 3
Box 3	W.R. 109 and W.R. 110, 1981 1 Film reel (1 reel MOS picture; 16mm) Notes: Note on leader: Mural details; housed in Box 3
Box FC 28; Item FC 29	Unnumbered Work Print, Carlos (Murals, etc.), 1981 2 Film reels (1 reel sync picture, 1 reel sync soundtrack; 16mm) Notes: Sync picture reel housed in Box 3
Item FC 30	Unnumbered Work Print, John Valdez Mural , 1981 1 Film reel (1 reel MOS picture; 16mm)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Sound Recordings, 1981

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Sound recordings consist of material recorded during the exhibition at the Craft and Folk Art Museum in May of 1981, most of which were made for use in the film production; others may be unrelated to the film. One sound reel contains an interview with Frank Romero. Content may correspond to voiceover notes in series 1 labeled "pickup narration: Frank Romero." One cassette contains a recording of a panel discussion with five artists that took place during the exhibition. The remaining cassettes contain interviews with the muralists conducted while the murals were being created.

Also found are 14 sound tape reels whose content appears to be mainly sound recorded on site during the exhibition. The first 7 reel boxes contain detailed notes from the sound recordist working with the film production; subsequent boxes contain brief notes on content written by a researcher.

Box 1, Folder 9	Frank Romero Voiceover, 1981 June 25 1 Sound tape reel (labeled "Frank Romero – Aztlan - Wild")
Box 1, Folder 10	Panel Discussion with Five Artists, 1981 June 25 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 11	Interviews with Muralists, 1981 May 6 Sound cassettes (handwritten labels of artists' names including Judithe Hernandez, Wayne Healy, George Yepes, Gronk, Willie Herman, David Botello, Frank Romero, and John Valdez) Notes: Content may duplicate voiceover or sound recorded at museum
Box 2	Sound Recorded at Craft and Folk Art Museum, 1981 May 2-30 14 Sound tape reels (Individual boxes contain notes regarding content; Labeled #1-14 of 15)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Voiceover Outtakes, 1981

0.9 Linear feet (FC 31-39)

Scope and Contents: Voiceover outtakes are the parts the artists' narration of the film that were recorded but not used in the film. 9 reels of magnetic film soundtrack are found.

Arrangement: Notes on the content of the recordings, as well as documentation of the original film containers, are found in Series 1. Portions of the narration used in the film are presumably among the work print soundtrack in series 2. Additional outtakes and trims of picture and other soundtrack elements are found in series 5, Trims and Outtakes.

Item FC 31;	Voiceover Outtakes, 1981
Item FC 32;	9 Film reels (Fullcoat magnetic soundtrack; 16mm)
Item FC 33;	Notes: Names on labels include Wayne Healy, Judithe Hernandez,
Item FC 34;	Frank Romero, Grontk, Willie Heron, David Botello, George
Item FC 35;	Yepes, Carlos Almaraz
Item FC 36;	
Item FC 37;	
Item FC 38;	
Item FC 39	

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Trims and Outtakes, 1981

0.9 Linear feet (FC 40-48)

Scope and Contents: Trims and outtakes consist of motion picture and soundtrack footage edited out of the film production.

Arrangement: Longer outtakes are wound onto film cores, but many of the trims and outtakes in this series are short, unassembled trims bundled together with no splices. One long reel of outtakes contains footage of Carlos Alvarez's murals housed separately, and trims from the rest of the film's subject matter are housed with multiple small rolls in each can.

Documentation of original containers housing trims and outtakes, and an inventory of existing labels, is found in series 1. Additional soundtrack outtakes from voiceover recordings are found in series 4.

Item FC 40	Carlos Murals, Motion Picture Trims and Outtakes (MOS) , 1981 1 Film reel (16mm)
Item FC 41	Frank Narration, Picture and Sountrack Trims and Outtakes , 1981 1 Film reel (16mm)
Item FC 42	Motion Picture Trims and outtakes (MOS) 28 Film reels (Multiple rolls of film in 2 film cans; 16mm)
Item FC 43	Motion Picture Trims and outtakes (MOS)
Item FC 44; Item FC 45; Item FC 46	Motion Picture and Soundtrack Trims and Outtakes (Sync), 1981 21 Film reels (21 film rolls in 3 film cans; positive picture and fullcoat magnetic soundtrack; 16mm)
Item FC 47; Item FC 48	Soundtrack Trims and Outtakes ("Wild"), 1981 21 Film reels (21 film rolls in 2 film cans; fullcoat magnetic soundtrack; 16mm)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)