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"Pocket Diaries"

During a trip to the Antarctic, funded by CART in March 1996, Associate Professor of Art Mercedes Núñez began thinking about the possibilities of what she calls the artist's book, or "pocket diary." During her 16 days on the Antarctic peninsula, Professor Núñez kept what she describes as an extensive expedition journal, with sketches, photographs, drawings, and other visual forms. While traveling in the Pacific Northwest, her artist's books went with her and became miniature art pieces. Similarly, she has taken her diaries on trips to the Berkshires this summer; many of the books that will be photographed and exhibited for next year's exhibition were created in the Berkshires.

According to Professor Núñez, the pocket diaries are functional as well as creative, because "they have a way of communicating themselves." Furthermore, they become visual memoir. Their forms vary. Some contain, for example, mostly collage or ink, others color pencil or water color. Professor Núñez makes the books herself, with pre-cut accordion folds, and takes them with her wherever she goes. This is part of the charm, for the artist, of the pocket diary: unlike more familiar art forms, the artist's books go anywhere. Whenever the artists wants, she can open her book and start creating.

According to Professor Núñez, the "artist's book" is a discipline, genre, or creative process that has gained increasing attention among artists in the past 5 to 7 years. Visual artists have always kept sketchbooks, similar to a writer's notepad or journal—a place to store jottings, sketches, visions, little bits of the artistic process as they occur to the artist throughout his or her day. Ms. Núñez, like most artists, keeps and has always kept sketchbooks where she develops ideas and keeps notes on pieces while she works; she also keeps a studio journal where she documents her studio work. Her current work is an outgrowth of this "natural" artist's process, for the artist's book is like an opportunity for artist to make a memoir—tied, according to Prof. Núñez, to contemporary poetry in its explorations and self-revelations. The intimacy and revelatory aspects of the artist's book bring it to a different level than the sketchbook or studio journal.

The story of Professor Núñez's involvement with one of her pocket diaries, "Postcards to Mary," is typical of the serendipitous process she enjoys in this work. About two years ago, Professor Núñez was walking in Providence near Thayer Street; a collection of postcards in a small bookstore caught her eye. She soon found that they dated from the as early as the late 1920s, and ran through the 1940s. All the cards were addressed to a woman named Mary Mitchell, sent to her by friends on their travels. Prof. Núñez immediately bought the collection, and as she pored over it, began to feel that she knew Mary Mitchell. The result is still in process, an artist's book inspired by the postcards to Mary. Ms. Núñez arranges the postcards, photographs them, enlarges the photos, and fashions collages—a process that varies in order depending on the artist's inspiration. These photographic sheets, arranged in such a way that viewers can walk through them, not just view them from their fixed position, are the outgrowth of this work.

Professor Núñez is now in the midst of photographing pages from her books and grouping them together. She then takes one photo (black and white), tapes various photos together and hangs them. When the viewer enters the gallery, he or she will see enlargements of the "original" work, approximately 5 x 6' or 5 x 7'. Interestingly, once these photographs are enlarged, a new visual element—the grain and texture of the photograph—is added. Prof. Núñez also selects segments of her books, photographing and rearranging them to create wholly new forms like collages. She is now envisioning three-dimensional pieces, hoping, with the aid of a colleague in her department, to be able to construct steel-welded pedestals to hold the books.

Professor Núñez's installation, entitled "Pocket Diaries," will be on display in the Wallace C. Anderson Gallery, on the main floor of the Art Center, from March 19 to April 13, 2001.

**Female Writers and Inquisitorial Repression in Colonial Latin America of the 17th Century**

This past summer, funded by a CART Faculty and Librarian Research Grant, Dr. Duilio Ayalamacedo of the Foreign Languages Department traveled to Peru to pursue his research project, "Female Writers and Inquisitorial Repression in Colonial Latin America of the 17th Century." Dr. Ayalamacedo studies the mechanisms adopted by the Spanish colonial system—specifically, the Inquisition—to create new "types" of colonial subjects. Through the story...
of Angela de Carranza, a seventeenth-century woman, Dr. Ayalamacedo seeks to understand how “unruly women” like Carranza lived and expressed themselves inside the official cultural, political, and economic systems of seventeenth-century Peru, only to fall afoul of the Inquisition.

The Inquisition—in Roman Catholicism, a papal judicial institution that fought heresy and such things as alchemy, witchcraft, and sorcery—wielded considerable power in medieval and early modern times. Though it had operated in other parts of Europe since the mid-thirteenth century, it came into full force in Spain late in the 15th century and was used throughout the colonies (including Peru) until the early 19th century. In 17th-century Peru, as elsewhere, the Inquisitorial system sought to turn those disorderly, potentially heretical voices into obedient, submissive subjects. Angela de Carranza herself is a fascinating subject. Born in Cordoba, Argentina (1641) Carranza appears in Lima 1665. She was a “beata”—pious woman—who dressed using the habit of the Augustinian religious order. According to many accounts, she was a powerful woman, possessed of the ability to perform “miracles.” Carranza became a commanding presence in the society through the good deeds, or in some instances “miracles,” she performed for those who appealed to her for help. For these works, Angela received financial compensation, thereby adding an economic component to a situation already smelling of dissent.

Still, the Inquisition showed little interest in Carranza until her power openly exceeded sanctioned social and religious boundaries. Soon, people began fighting for bits of her clothing, her shoes, nail parings, strands of hair; in short, they began to venerate her possessions, and in effect her body. Perhaps emboldened by this open worship, Carranza's behavior became increasingly defiant of the Colonial system and more bizarre in forcing the Inquisition to intervene. From 1689 to 1694, Carranza was subjected to a long legal process, including torture, in which, based on the interpretations or her manuscript, she was accused of lying, blasphemy, heresy, and making a secret pact with Satan.

Carranza’s case is particularly impressive because within 15 years she was able to write 7,500 folios. She wrote in a compulsive way between 1673 and 1688, when she was between 30 and 45 years old. Her text—or the court’s interpretation of it, since the original was burned by the Inquisition—allows us to glance at the feminine literary activity of the epoch with a clear predominance of mystical lyric. The manuscript shows mystical revelations, a strong criticism of the colonial society, and a constant desire to escape from the masculine-dominated colonial culture. Perhaps not surprisingly, she was a vitriolic critic of the entire colonial society. Carranza even dared to attack the Inquisition, calling this fearsome institution a “cave full of thieves.”

In Colonial Lima, as elsewhere, female writers were singled out when they were not behaving in their traditional roles as wife, mother, prostitute or nun of the church, but as a subject of their own free will. The female writers that did not follow the authority’s mandate paid dearly, and Carranza was no exception. She was judged by the Inquisition; the sentence was to burn all her belongings and to confine her to a convent where she could neither talk nor write. This order was used to silence one of the most interesting female writers of Colonial Lima.

Dr. Ayalamacedo’s research problem is complex, and includes consideration of literary and cultural questions arising from the study of Angela de Carranza and the texts which document her history. The first, literary task involves sorting through the multiple narrative “voices” in the texts of Carranza’s encounter with the Inquisition. Because we do not have Carranza’s own writings, Dr. Ayalamacedo studies the summaries of the legal process through which Carranza passed. The question, then is a difficult one: in essence, who in these documents is talking? Is Carranza speaking, or do we hear the voice of the secretary who transcribes her testimony? Are we encountering the judge? The prosecutor? Unraveling these narrative strands to “hear” Carranza’s voice is a major focus of Dr. Ayalamacedo’s project.

Coexistent with these questions of voice is the problem of contextualization. Dr. Ayalamacedo must accurately situate these documents, in their appropriate political, social, cultural and economic contexts. In addition, he must consider the colonial subject—specifically the female, Creole subject. What does it mean to be a “subject” in Colonial Peruvian society? A last task arises from this question. What does it mean to be a female subject who escapes from the customary way, the accepted way, of being a “good” female subject of the Spanish Empire?

The final research stage of Dr. Ayalamacedo’s project is a trip to Madrid and Seville, Spain, scheduled for this winter. Dr. Ayalamacedo will read some of these legal documents similar to Carranza’s case that will help him to analyze better Angela de Carranza and the production of female “unruly discourse” in a patriarchal and colonial society. For this reason he hopes also to explore three or four other texts detailing parallel situations: other women and men who, like Carranza, incurred the wrath of the Inquisition and felt the power of its gaze.