

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez House and Studios

other names/site number

Hondo Elementary School, Old Hondo Schoolhouse

2. Location

street & number



not for publication

city or town

Hondo

vicinity

state New Mexico

code NM

county Lincoln

code

zip code

88336

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Dr. Jeff Pappas, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studios

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	0	buildings
1	0	sites
4	0	structures
1	0	objects
11	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

COMMERE/TRADE: Professional

LANDSCAPE: Garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone, Concrete

walls: Adobe, Stone, Stucco

roof: Metal

other: Wood

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studios

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

***Note on Restricted Information:** The following information is to be withheld from the public under *National Register Bulletin 29: Guidelines for Restricting Information about Historic and Prehistoric Resources*, condition 1: "the resource is likely to be damaged or destroyed if its location/and or character is published." The Jimenez and House Studio include an extensive collection of artworks and the property owner has reported that on several occasions curiosity seekers have trespassed onto the house and studio property. Therefore, the street address, geographical information, maps, sketch maps, floor plans, and photographs are to be withheld from publication. The remainder of the form, including description, statement of significance, and bibliography, may be released to the public.

Summary Paragraph

The Luis A. and Susan B. Jimenez, Jr., House and Studios, of rural Hondo, Lincoln County in south-central New Mexico, is where the artist Luis Jimenez produced drawings, lithographic prints, and monumental public sculptures from 1985 to 2006. The nomination includes two discontinuous properties: the Jimenez Home and Studio where the Jimenezes resided, raised a family, and where Luis maintained a studio. The second property, located roughly two miles east on U.S Highway 70, is the Apple Shed, where Luis cast and painted his large-scale fiberglass sculptures after 1990. The Jimenez House and Studio, which became the Jimenez's permanent residence in 1985, includes a four-room adobe classroom building built in 1902, and a large gymnasium constructed by the WPA in 1935. The adobe gymnasium rests on a stone lower level and the sky-lit roof is supported with a wood trusses. Susan and Luis rebuilt the lower level to serve as their residence and the large, open gymnasium above served as Luis's studio, which he modified with oversized-steel doors and cranes to accommodate his sculptures. He enclosed the stage with a large wall on which he pinned working drawings. The irregularly-shaped compound is bounded by a stone wall that varies in height from four to fifteen feet. Stone walls also terrace the sloping east side of the property, which served as outdoor living space. Luis, for whom nature was important in life and in art, built an aviary and a livestock pen adjacent to the classroom building. The Apple Shed is a large, concrete-block factory building where apples were once processed and packed. After Jimenez purchased the building in 1990, he enlarged the entrance and built a crane on the main façade. He divided the interior into two unequal-sized spaces. The smaller space served as the print room and offices. He used the larger room to cast and paint his fiberglass sculptures. The Apple Shed property includes a pump house, horse barn, and mobile home where studio assistants lived. Both studio spaces retain finished and unfinished art and the equipment, materials, molds, and other supplies Jimenez used in the production process.

Narrative Description

The Luis A. and Susan B. Jimenez, Jr., House and Studios in Hondo, New Mexico

The Luis and Susan Jimenez House and Studios include two discontinuous properties located in the rural village of Hondo, which lies in the Hondo River Valley in Lincoln County, south-central New Mexico. The two properties are the Jimenez House and Studio and the Apple Shed. The Jimenez House and Studio is located on Old Schoolhouse Road adjacent to U.S. Highway 70 on a rise overlooking the Hondo River Valley to the east, west, and south. The Jimenez House and Studio, which became the Jimenezs' permanent residence in 1985, includes a four-room adobe classroom building, built in 1902, and a large gymnasium, constructed by the WPA in 1935. The Jimenezes converted the gymnasium into their house and studio. The irregularly-shaped property is bounded by a stone wall framed in reinforced concrete that varies in height from four to fifteen feet. Stone walls also terrace the sloping east side of the property, which serves as outdoor living space. The Jimenez House and Studio and the Apple Shed were Luis Jimenez's only studio spaces until his death in 2006.

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studios

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

The large, rectangular-shaped gymnasium was constructed in 1935 on a hillside, which forms a spacious lower level on the downhill side of the building. The lower level is constructed of coursed rubble walls. The upper-level studio walls are built of adobe and covered with stucco. The eight-light steel-frame windows reveal the thickness of the adobe walls. Skylights in the gable roof provide additional light to the studio. The roof is covered with corrugated sheet metal. Luis Jimenez built a massive loading dock on the northwest corner of the gymnasium to accommodate his large-scale sculptures. The loading dock comprises steel inner and outer doors. (The overhead crane was removed and installed at the Apple Shed). The floor-to-ceiling inner doors include a pedestrian entrance. A free-standing crane, which was used to support *Mustang*, is located near the center of the studio. A shed-roofed terrace on the lower level overlooks the yard. The entrance to the house is on the lower level at the west side.

The interior of the studio is open to provide space for Luis's large-scale sculptures. The wood floor is a remnant of the space's earlier days as a gymnasium. The thick adobe walls curve around the window openings. Jimenez removed the ceiling tiles to expose the Howe trusses. He altered the ceiling further by adding skylights to bring in natural light. He then changed the space to accommodate his art, enclosing the stage with a large wall, on which he pinned working drawings. Luis's drawing studio is located on the stage, at the south side of the wall. The studio contains his finished and unfinished sculptures.

The lower level of the gymnasium, which contained classrooms, locker rooms, a kitchen, and cafeteria, was converted to living space by Susan and Luis. The plan featured four rooms and a narrow central hall, which the Jimenezes converted to closets. The interior features a living room, office, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. The Jimenezes installed new ceilings and floors, and Luis made plywood kitchen cabinets.

The classroom building served as the Hondo Elementary School from 1902 to 1955. It is a one-story, rectangular-shaped building with a high-pitched hip roof and two chimneys. The roof is covered in corrugated sheet metal. The adobe walls are covered with stucco and are supported by stone buttresses on the north and main (east) facades, which Luis augmented with reinforced-concrete. He also added buttresses to the south side. The foundation is uncoursed rubble. The main entrance on the east façade features a porch and single door with sidelights and transom. South of the main entrance, Luis built a wood livestock pen and an aviary.

The interior plan included four classrooms, which the Jimenezes converted into living quarters for studio and construction workers. Rooms on the north side served as bedroom and storage and the Jimenezes added a kitchen and bathroom to the west end of the building. The largest room, located along the south side, was Susan's sculpture studio. An enclosed garden is located along the south side of the school. Within the garden is a small pond, designed by Luis to be the shape of a woman's leg.

In plan, the classroom and gymnasium are situated in an L shape. The reentrant angle on the east side meets terraced gardens and a grass lawn. This six-sided compound is bounded by a four-to-fifteen tall uncoursed-rubble stone wall framed with reinforced concrete. The property is entered on the west side through a steel entrance gate ornamented with a stallion, roadrunner, and the name "Jimenez." The front yard (west) includes a neon rooster sign from Luis's father's sign shop in El Paso. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the Jimenezes, with the help of assistants, "designed and built the wall, followed by the terraces and other landscape features, which were completed in the mid-1990s" (S. Jimenez, Personal communication, April 30, 2014). The wall, because of the irregularly-shaped property, creates triangular-shaped gardens on the north and west sides, and a large open lawn on the east side. Conversely, the wall forms narrow passages along the north and east sides of the classroom building and the south side of the gymnasium.

The Apple Shed in Hondo, New Mexico

In 1990, Luis and Susan purchased an apple packing plant, where Luis relocated his printing, casting, and painting operations. The plant, referred to by the Jimenezes as the Apple Shed, is located on U.S. Highway 70 roughly two miles east of the Jimenez House and Studio. Built c.1930, the Apple Shed is a large, rectangular building with an arched roof, supported by steel bow-string trusses. The north and south ends include stepped parapets. A concrete loading dock runs the length of the south side. An open shed along the north side stores casting molds, paint, tools, and other equipment. The walls are built concrete block, the exterior covered with stucco and supported with buttresses. The main (north)

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studios

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

façade includes two, double steel doors and a third, floor-to-ceiling entrance in the center. Built by Luis, this entrance includes a steel crane for moving large-scale sculptures from the studio to a truck for transport. Written across the main façade is "White Mountain Apples."

Jimenez divided the interior of the Apple Shed into two main rooms. The largest room is the casting and finishing room on the north side, which occupies roughly two-thirds of the building. This large open space is unfinished with exposed concrete-block walls, concrete floor, and bow-string trusses, upon which are mounted fluorescent lights. Located along the perimeter walls are the electrical and plumbing areas and the paint and spray-paint areas. Supplies, such as rolls of fiberglass and drums of clay, also sit along the perimeter walls. Large-scale molds and partially finished sculptures currently occupy the center of the room, a space once used for casting and painting.

The smaller space, located on the south side of the building, features a large print room and several smaller rooms. The large print room includes two manual printing presses, printing tools, and wood case housing lithographic stones. The south side also includes a small print room, bathroom, an unused room, and a second-floor office with windows overlooking the large print room. The office contains numerous everyday objects associated with the business side of Jimenez's artistic endeavors.

The Apple Shed property includes the frame barn, clad in corrugated-sheet metal and once home to Black Jack, Jimenez's beloved appaloosa. The property also includes a small, wood pump house and a mobile home, located north of the Apple Shed, which at one point housed Jimenez's studio assistants.

Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

Contributing Buildings:

Jimenez House and Studio (gymnasium)
Hondo Elementary School (classroom building)

Apple Shed
Pump house
Horse barn

Contributing Site

The Jimenez House and Studio on Old Schoolhouse Road is counted as one contributing site, which includes the landscape associated with the house and studio, including the stone wall that surrounds the property, stone terraces, garden wall and pond, and other features in the landscape.

Contributing Structures:

Aviary at Jimenez House and Studio in Hondo is counted as one contributing structure.
Livestock pen at Jimenez House and Studio in Hondo is counted as one contributing structure.
Mobile home for studio workers at the Apple Shed is counted as one contributing structure.

Cranes, printing presses, and other equipment used by Luis Jimenez at both the Jimenez House and Studio and the Apple Shed in the production of his art are counted as one contributing structure.

Contributing Objects:

Completed and unfinished art, molds, lithographic stones, art supplies, small-scale equipment, workshop materials, office materials and supplies, books, *objets d'art*, and objects associated with the everyday life of Susan and Luis Jimenez between 1985 and 2006 are counted as one contributing object.

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studios

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art

Architecture

Period of Significance

1985-2006

Significant Dates

1985—Luis and Susan marry and move to the Hondo property in Lincoln County, NM

1990—Susan and Luis purchase the Apple Shed

2006—Luis is killed in a studio accident

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1985, when artist Luis Jimenez, Jr. and his wife, Susan, made the Hondo Elementary School property in Lincoln, County, New Mexico their permanent residence, and ends in 2006, when Luis Jimenez, Jr. was killed in a studio in a studio accident while working on the monumental *Mustang*, his last major piece of public art. The period of significance does not include the period that the property served as the Hondo Elementary School because the Jimenezes so completely transformed the property when they converted it to a home and studio that the buildings and grounds no longer maintain the historic integrity as a school campus.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez House and Studio in Hondo, New Mexico meets National Register Criterion Consideration G because the property has achieved significance and exceptional importance within the past 50 years. Luis A. Jimenez, Jr.'s use of the property commenced in 1985, upon moving there with his wife, Susan, and ended on June, 13, 2006, when he was killed in a studio accident. Luis Jimenez, Jr., has been recognized by art historians, art critics, artists, governmental agencies, as well as museums and galleries throughout the world, as one of the leading figures of American art in the 20th century.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Luis A. and Susan B. Jimenez House and Studios is significant at the national level under National Register Criterion B in the area of art because of its association with Luis A. Jimenez, Jr., as the house and studio where he created his publicly commissioned large-scale fiberglass sculptures. During his more than twenty years living and working in Hondo, Jimenez created nearly all his public sculptures in these studios, including *Sodbuster-San Isidro*, *Southwest Pieta*, *Border Crossing*, *Steelworker*, and finally, his largest and last piece, *Mustang*. The Luis A. Jimenez and Susan B. Jimenez House and Studios are significant at the national level under Criterion C in the area of architecture because the house and studios where Luis and Susan Jimenez lived and work is an excellent example of a late 20th-century artist house and studio. The Jimenezes modified the Hondo Elementary School and gymnasium existing into living and studio spaces, altering the buildings to accommodate Luis' large-scale public art. The house and studios remain nearly unchanged and reflect the 1985 to 2006 period of significance.

A host of art historians, art critics, scholars and artists have credited Jimenez for a number of substantial contributions to American art of the late 20th century. He is one of the primary artists responsible for opening the door to other Mexican-American artists, and more broadly helping to expand the canon of American art to include those ethnic minority artists previously represented in culturally marginalized terms, such as "folk art" or "Chicano art." In addition, Jimenez was an important force within the Pop art and post-Pop movements, but in ways unseen in more well-known Pop artists such as Andy Warhol or Roy Lichtenstein, as Jimenez's art conveyed racially-informed social and political realities in richly historicized contexts. His greatest contribution on a national scale emanated from his commitment to meaningful public art. Credited with reconstituting and invigorating the concept of public art in this country, Jimenez's public sculptures are significant for their power to evoke emotion, forge community, and above all, challenge, and educate. Displayed in numerous cities from Washington, D.C to Fargo, North Dakota, Jimenez's large-scale fiberglass sculptures merge past and present, portraying the American experience and the forgotten or overlooked heroes of everyday life and the American experience, while using thoroughly modern media to evoke myths and universal themes with the broadest appeal and popular meaning.

Jimenez was also a talented draftsman who produced numerous drawings, paintings, and lithographs. Taken together, his body of work is imbued with a uniquely particular worldview, one that "combines Chicano border consciousness with a keenly critical political sensibility and unquestioning belief in the social utility of art" (Whitney 1997, 21). Luis Jimenez's art, for many years, has been displayed prominently in outdoor public places and the most prestigious art museums throughout the United States, including in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Dallas Museum of Art, as well as the National Museum of American Art, the National Collection of Fine Arts, and the Hirshorn Museum in Washington, DC. In 1999, the White House Millennium Council declared Jimenez's public sculpture, *Southwest Pieta*, a National Treasure. In July, 2006, following Jimenez's death, the United States House of Representatives passed House Resolution 978, recognizing the artist for his distinguished career and profound contributions to American art, noting that Jimenez "is widely acknowledged as being among the

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

most influential and important American artists, literally changing the face of contemporary art..." (*H. Res. 978*, 2006).

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Luis A. and Susan B. Jimenez House and Studios is significant at the national level under Criterion B in the area of art because of its association with Luis A. Jimenez, Jr. as the site where he lived and created art for over twenty years. Jimenez created works of art distinctive in both medium and message, art that conveyed familiar themes in unexpected ways and expanded the cultural reach and social relevance of the prevailing idioms of Pop and post-Pop art movements. Jimenez broadened the American art canon, so that works by a Mexican-American artist were no longer thought of in marginalized terms as "folk art" or "Chicano art," but simply "American art." His iconoclastic rejection of the label "Chicano artist" shifted the predominant understanding of who could be an "American artist."¹

Internationally renowned Mexican-American artist, Luis A. Jimenez, Jr. (1940-2006), was born in El Paso, Texas and long-time resident of Hondo, New Mexico. Jimenez is known primarily for his large-scale, polychromatic fiberglass sculptures—swirling images of color, rich textures, and narrative power celebrating the disenfranchised, sculptures designed to be both "celebratory and critical" (Goldman 1994, 9)—was one of the seminal visual artists of the late 20th century. Displayed in prestigious museums throughout the United States, Jimenez's work engages issues related to culture, identity, gender, myth, and historical memory. Accomplished at numerous art forms, including drawing, painting, lithography, and sculpture, Jimenez was at the center of two dramatic transformations in American art of the late 20th century: a movement away from Abstract Expressionism and toward image and figuration; and the art world's embrace of more inclusive notions of who is an "American" artist, what constitutes "American" art, and in a purely aesthetic context, what constitutes "high art."

Luis Jimenez created art informed by sociopolitical realities and a deep historical consciousness. He sought to celebrate the humanity of his subjects, while simultaneously challenging the preconceptions of his audience. His public art focuses on the daily life of the working person. Jimenez created art that was thought-provoking, universally relevant, historically conscious, and accessible, while at the same time celebrating the lives of common people and challenging audiences to re-examine their national histories and myths. His deft employment of "cross-cultural sagas, heroes, and histories" (Manthorne 2006, 31) speaks to our complex, multi-ethnic national identity, thus reminding us that "our history is made up of many points of view, many tales and tellings" (Yau 1994, 39). While his pieces have come to embody "signposts marking elements of 20th-century culture" with a style of idealized imagery as potent as any classical and Renaissance master (Santiago 1993, 87), they speak universal themes through means intelligible to all. Art critic Lucy Lippard has asserted, "A people's history is found only rarely in American public art, most notably in the work of...Luis Jimenez" (Lippard 1994, 35).

Luis Jimenez' significance as an artist lies in his work primarily as a sculptor, though he was also an accomplished draftsman who produced hundreds of drawings, paintings, and lithographs. Conscious choices in medium, content, and message all converge in Jimenez's pieces. Jimenez' undergraduate coursework focusing on sculpture at the University of Texas-Austin in the early 1960s enabled him to experiment with a number of different media, including wood, steel, and fiberglass. Jimenez chose the last of these as his primary medium largely because of its aesthetic utility and cultural statement. In this case, fiberglass had a clear association with American

¹ "Chicano/a," "Mexican-American," "Latino/a," and "Hispanic" are all terms freighted with particular ideologies and histories, and thus subject to varied interpretations often at odds or in contention for preferred nomenclature. This nomination will attempt to avoid such issues, by employing these terms in their proper historical contexts and by treating "Chicano/a" and "Mexican-American" as largely synonymous (their fine political and geographical distinctions notwithstanding) and "Hispanic" or "Latino/a" to refer to people from Spanish-speaking countries in the rest of the Americas. Thus, Jimenez, as an American born of Mexican descent, could be (and has been) labeled "Chicano," "Mexican-American," or "Hispanic," with the latter term, however, the broadest, in describing Jimenez's background. In addition, Jimenez, when choosing to employ these terms, often referred to himself alternately using any one of these terms, or very often simply as an "American." According to his widow, Susan, "Luis saw himself as an American artist who never forgot his Hispanic heritage."

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

popular culture (Keller et al. 2002). As he described his thought process years later, "I really need a material that is a statement in itself, one that can incorporate color and fluid form, the sensuality that I like. Somehow fiberglass seems to do that" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 87). Discussing the cultural dimensions of his choice of materials, Jimenez has affirmed, "Using fiberglass was a logical decision. The material carries the same baggage as the images. It's not 'high art' material" (Jimenez, quoted in Santiago 1993, 91).² Elsewhere, Jimenez, shedding more light on the symbolic dimensions of this choice, has stated, "I decided that if my images were going to be taken from popular culture, I wanted a material that didn't carry the cultural baggage of marble or bronze" (Jimenez, quoted in Ennis 1998, 113). Jimenez's use of fiberglass thus consciously reflected both functional and aesthetic motivations, as well as embodying his cultural and social messages. "I like to take images from the popular culture and execute them in materials associated more with amusement parks than fine art museums...As I result I am able to express the truths already out there" (Jimenez, quoted in Flores-Turney 1997, 18). His fascination with the tensions between high and low art would find added encouragement once Jimenez arrived in New York City in 1966, intent on making a career as an artist. There, Jimenez found an art scene in flux, arriving at a time when the traditional canons of art were dramatically transforming: elements of popular culture were beginning to appear in high art, and the return of figuration was challenging the prevailing mid-20th century American aesthetic of abstract expressionism.³

Jimenez in New York City

Most of Jimenez's work from 1966 to 1969 was deeply satirical, provocative, and aggressive (often with sexual overtones), characteristics common to both his prints and his fiberglass sculptures. Much of his early sculptures, small fiberglass and epoxy-painted figures,⁴ such as *American Dream* (1967) and *Barfly* (1969), portrayed human figures in flowing forms and satirical, image-rich contexts, with themes of biting social and political commentary. *American Dream*, depicting a blonde woman copulating with a Volkswagen Beetle, and *Barfly*, an image of a drunken Statue of Liberty, represent both Jimenez's aesthetic and his message at this time, showing "images of a society in the thrall of machinery, with its humanity out of control" (Santiago 1993, 91). These works gave Jimenez's art a reputation as being "pop images with an undercurrent of progressive content" (Lippard 1994, 24). These works expressed Jimenez's stylistic development during this period. All of his early sculptures, while containing Jimenez's characteristic sensuous, flowing lines, remained relatively small, self-contained pieces (see *Old Woman with Cat* from 1969) that do not extend into space compositionally with the cantilevered elements and degree of dynamic gestural vitality evident in so much of Jimenez's subsequent work, especially his publically-commissioned sculptures.

Perhaps Jimenez's best-known work to come out of his years in New York was *Man on Fire* (1969), a striking, nearly 8-foot tall fiberglass rendering of a man standing stoic and naked, with his head, legs, and single upraised arm aflame. This sculpture draws on a deeper historical consciousness than Jimenez's prior work, utilizing a wide array of sources of inspiration, including his experiences as a social worker with youth in the Bronx, Mexican

² Jimenez has described his sculptural work as following "a traditional process...the materials are different, modern, but the process is centuries old" (*Interview with Luis Jimenez*, n.d.). As a teenager in El Paso, he had worked with fiberglass while working on cars, and recalled as an art student around 1963 thinking, "I could adapt these materials to make sculpture" (*Ibid.*).

³ During the middle of the 20th century, alternative conceptions of American art were competing for ascendancy on a number of levels, including issues of aesthetic as well as ethnicity. Artists from ethnic minority backgrounds were seeking not only appreciation and acceptance, but acceptance as something more than representative of a particular ethnic or racial background. Hence, definable styles such as Latino or Chicano art began to arise. In addition, along aesthetic grounds, an artistic debate was raging between a formalist abstraction that transcended the local to embrace the universal (known as abstract expressionism) and a range of emerging movements (including Pop art and New Figuration) that represented a return to image, while also consciously engaging "the economic, racial, gendered, and political shifts" of the era (Ramos 2012, 8).

⁴ During these early years of Jimenez's career, personal finances and the expense of materials precluded him from using the best quality paints. These early sculptural pieces generally were of thinner and less sturdy fiberglass molds and painted with epoxy using mixtures of resins, aluminum powder and pigments rather than expensive commercial finishes, like the acrylic urethane Jimenez began to utilize during the next decade (*Oral History* 1985; Santiago 1993).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

muralist traditions, media images from the Vietnam War, the hood ornament from his father's Pontiac, and most significantly, Aztec history and symbolism of the Mexican Revolution (*Oral History*, 1985). All of these sources express a powerfully unified imagery that is (save the hood ornament) based on fire as an archetype, from images of rioting, Molotov cocktail-wielding youth in New York City and of the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk protesting the war in Vietnam, to the great Cuauhtémoc the heroic Aztec emperor who was tortured by fire while resisting Spanish conquest, and later became a symbol of the Mexican Revolution and a positive representation of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas (*Oral History* 1985). While the immediate artistic sources of this piece lay in Jose Clemente Orozco's 1939 fresco, *Man in Flames*, and Jimenez's own impressions from childhood tales of the heroism of Cuauhtémoc, Jimenez has described *Man on Fire* also in broader, syncretic terms, asserting he "felt like this really had something to do with the times, even though it was a Mexican image...it's a synthesis of a lot of different things coming together..." and as reflective of his belief in archetypal images and his particular fascination with Promethean images (*Ibid.*).

As many scholars have noted (Ramos 2012; Goldman 1994; Lippard 1994; Yau 1994), the subject matter, medium, and sources of Jimenez's work from this New York period all neatly dovetail with the classic definitions of the Pop art movement of the 1960s, commonly defined as an aesthetic based on its "coincidence of style and subject, [or works that represent] mass-produced images and objects using a style which is also based upon the visual vocabulary of mass production" (Ramos 2012, 10). Jimenez used industrial materials—plastic, fiberglass, and acrylic paint—and, similar to other Pop artists of the time, critically engaged popular culture, transforming media images into high art. This choice of materials helped situate Jimenez's work within the scope of Pop art. Brightly colored, inexpensive, easily duplicated, fiberglass is a material representative of the vernacular and common, rather than of the elite (Whitney 1997). Jimenez, acutely aware of these dimensions, has asserted, "Fiberglass is very direct and also very democratic. It's not a real 'artist's' material, it's the stuff people use on motorcycles and low riders. It doesn't have the same high culture associations bronze has. My material is part of the statement" (Jimenez, quoted in Whitney 1997, 23).

In creating *Man on Fire*, Jimenez produced a piece that not only would become his most well-known work, but would broaden the reach and meaning of Pop art, as well. *Man on Fire* signaled a critical shift in Jimenez's stylistic development, with its distinct Chicano perspective, indigenous theme, and allusion to Mexican painter Jose Clemente Orozco's mural, *Man of Fire* (1938-39). Stylistically, this piece marked Jimenez's deepening historical consciousness, a feature that would come to characterize his subsequent work, particularly his public art. Contemporary and historical references inflected Jimenez's approach to Pop art (Ramos 2012). After *Man on Fire*, his usage of a traditional Mexican story or Native American motif to portray a contemporary situation became a defining element in much of his work (Whitney 1997). In this context, scholars have noted that Jimenez's imagery was "...unlike those of other Pop artists, colored by a consciousness of racism" (Goldman 1994, 9). In using mythological undercurrents of cultures not considered at the time to be a part of American Pop culture, Jimenez's Pop art draws attention to the previously unacknowledged exclusivity of Pop art: "...[l]ike works by his Pop art peers, those of Jimenez's early career affirm that consumer culture signifies meaning beyond its surface, but they also question *what* it signifies and *for whom*" (Ramos 2012, 12).

Another key distinction setting Jimenez apart from his Pop art peers and precursors was his rejection of the "coolly aristocratic detachment" (Schwabsky 1984, 21) characterizing so much Pop art. In their pursuit of erasing the lines between art and popular society, most Pop artists conveyed a clear sense of detachment, choosing to assume an air of casual disengagement (Goldman 1994). Instead, according to art critic Barry Schwabsky, Jimenez's art revels in "life-giving vulgarity," portraying "this unnatural coupling" with such gusto that it precludes detachment, and invites tension. His art demands more of its audience than that of other Pop artists. As art historian John Yau has asserted, "Whereas Warhol's prints depend upon the ability of the viewer to recognize his images and thus believe them to be true, Jimenez's sculpture compels the viewer to actively engage in reading it in an attempt to adduce all its possible meanings" (Yau 1994, 42). Scholars have noted this divergence, and attribute it to Jimenez's personal values of civic-mindedness and concern for individuals often overlooked or misrepresented (Goldman 1994; Yau 1994). Jimenez, "an unorthodox Pop artist with humanist concerns" (Goldman 1994, 8), drew upon a multiplicity of richly diverse sources. His works of art derive power from hybridity

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

and cross-association. Consequently, his art transcends conventional or convenient categories, even the label “Pop art” itself.

Jimenez’s art is so richly layered that it spans other traditions and genres beyond Pop or post-Pop art. Its syncretic style embraces a wider range of cultural and aesthetic legacies, and “both bridges and imaginatively restates three seemingly divergent currents in 20th Century American art”—the American regionalist movement of the 1930s (particularly the paintings of Thomas Hart Benton), the public murals and paintings of Latin American artists (such as Wilfredo Lam, Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Siqueiros), and finally Pop art, in particular the attention to the ordinary seen in the works of Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg (Yau 1994). However, according to art historian John Yau (1994, 40), Jimenez presented a more complex, nuanced style than had yet been seen in any of these artistic traditions, one that was “darker and grittier than Benton’s, gentler and more lyrical than Siqueiros’, and finally more robust and directly engaging than Warhol’s.”

Jimenez, himself a witness to cultural hybridity, fusion and fluidity, arrived in New York as a young artist at a time of flux in the art world. The dominant norms of abstract expressionism were threatened by alternative aesthetic visions that rejected the formalism of abstraction in favor of image and narrative, “a figurative language that rejected the utopian premises of modernism” (Goldman 1994, 7). Indeed, it is his commitment to a highly defined and deliberate use of image (as evidenced in his early works, most notably *Man on Fire*) that so definitively identifies Jimenez’s style. As art historian Lucy Lippard has noted, “the focus on image, cousin to narrative, is perhaps his strongest bond to tradition” (1994, 31). Art historian Shifra Goldman has also traced the roots of his artistic sensibility to a pair of related movements of the 1960s, Pop art and New Figuration, as well as Mexican social realist murals (and the New Deal artists it inspired) and the particularly Chicano aesthetic known as *rasquachismo*, an artistic movement identified by a rich use of imagery (Goldman 1994).⁵ Within this context, Jimenez’s art appears as a response to “pared down aesthetics of geometric abstraction and to the virtual disappearance of the very art object in conceptual art” (Beardsley 1987, 74). Jimenez, himself, shed light on this critical dimension underlying his art, affirming, “...I really felt that for me the image was important, and there wasn’t a place for it that I could see in Abstract Expressionism...The problem was that I had certain ideals of what I thought my work should be and should do, and they didn’t fit within the framework of Abstract Expressionism” (*Oral History* 1985). The final statement regarding the relationship of Luis Jimenez’s art during this period to the Pop art movement should belong to Jimenez himself. In an interview in 1985, Jimenez offered this perspective: “To a certain extent I did have a legacy to Pop. I didn’t think my work was about what Pop art was about, but I felt that it made it easier for people to see what my work was about, to look at popular images. But I don’t think my work was about Pop—or is about Pop art—or was then. I think post-Pop is okay” (*Oral History* 1985).

Critical reception at the time to Jimenez’s art was mostly positive, although some critics had reservations. Art critic Carter Ratcliff, reviewing Jimenez’s final one-man show in New York City before the artist’s departure to the Southwest in 1971, referred to Jimenez’s colorfully painted fiberglass figures as “monuments to sheer, screaming vulgarity,” while noting the “perfection of industrial finish...hot color and a caricature of voluptuous shape” (Ratcliff 1972, 46). At this show, Jimenez exhibited *End of the Trail* (1971), a seven foot tall figure of an Indian astride his horse framing a backdrop of a setting sun and an array of electric lights, an important piece that represented not only Jimenez’s ode to the frontier myth of the disappearing Indian, but the point at which his subject matter merged with his stylistic roots (Lippard 1994). Ratcliff saw this piece with its familiar kitschy motif and flashing lights as “brilliant in its tastelessness” (Ratcliff 1972, 46). But most critics appreciated the overt energy and subtle

⁵ “Rasquachismo” is an aesthetic sensibility that, while a long-standing element in the artistic traditions of Mexico, has only recently been formally identified as a principal characteristic of Chicano art, and subsequently applied to the art of Luis Jimenez (Ybarra-Frausto 1991; Goldman 1994; Whitney 1997; Keller et al., 2002). It refers to an outsider viewpoint that stems from “a funky, irreverent stance that debunks convention and spoofs protocol. To be ‘rasquache’ is to posit bawdy, spunky consciousness, to seek to subvert and turn ruling paradigms upside down. It is a witty, irreverent, and impertinent posture that recodes and moves outside established boundaries” (Ybarra-Frausto 1991, 155). Moreover, it embodies a sensibility that is “not elevated and serious, but playful and elemental. It finds delight and refinement in what many consider banal and projects an alternative aesthetic—a sort of good taste of bad taste. It is witty and ironic, but not mean-spirited” (Ibid.).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

intent animating Jimenez's work. Famed *New York Times* art critic Hilton Kramer called Jimenez "an artist of remarkable vitality" after his second one-man show at New York City's Graham Gallery in 1970, while also extolling the general spirit of Jimenez's work as "open, robust, and unrestrained" (Kramer 1970, 29). Art historian Jacinto Quirarte, commenting on Jimenez' style at this junction in his career, asserted, "the combination of intensely volumetric, shiny glasslike polychromed surfaces and neon lights produces an imagery that is at once contradictory, because of such a juxtaposition of dissimilar surfaces, and yet powerful in its insistence that is be assessed along formal and thematic lines" (1973, 115). Later, other art critics and historians came to refer to Jimenez's style at this stage of his career as "contrarian aesthetic" (Ennis 1998) and "Rabelaisian populism as a cousin to Pop Art" (Lippard 1994, 24). Labels aside, the ingredients were in place for Jimenez's subsequent development as an artist who, through vernacular methods and materials, would write and rewrite the untold tales and popular myths of the American experience (Lippard 1994).

Jimenez in the Southwest

In 1971, Jimenez left the New York art world behind him. Packing up his artwork, he moved to Roswell, New Mexico. There, he worked as artist-in-residence under the auspices of local art patron Donald Anderson. Such a move could appear, on the surface, to constitute a creative or commercial setback for a young artist intent on gaining exposure and acclaim. However, this move would spur necessary evolutions in the developing style and scale of Jimenez's artwork. New York City signified for Jimenez acceptance, while also embodying the contingencies of private interests and personal proclivities that he felt limited the reach and accessibility of his art. Jimenez's move from New York in 1971 represented an attempt to achieve two objectives: to extend the reach of his art, and to tap the richest source of his artistic imagery, the Southwest. In an interview only a few years after his move to New Mexico, Jimenez asserted, "I had gone into my work as part of the American Experience. And as I started to go into it more and more, the images started to become more personal....As I started doing that, the images that I felt were becoming more and more important were the images I had grown up with. I felt those were the images I should put down. Those images come from the Southwest, and that was the reason for coming to the Southwest—the images are here....the space in the Southwest was important" (*Luis Jimenez*, 1977). Years later, as Jimenez reflected on the evolving context of his work, he added, "I realized I was reaching what I thought was a very limited audience—the gallery and museum world. It's not like having the work out in public. And I wanted to move out in public" (Jimenez, quoted in Ennis 1998, 112). The eventual marriage of these two defining elements—Southwestern imagery and a commitment to public art—would come to characterize much of Jimenez's most powerful work.

The first two works he produced during this period, *Progress I* and *Progress II*, are the intermediate step for Jimenez between art for private consumption and art for all. Although both of these original pieces ended up in Donald Anderson's private collection, they are transitional pieces, representative of an artist moving from exhibition in private galleries to creating fully realized pieces of public art. Not only was the content of both *Progress I* and *Progress II* based on the western expansion imagery in the WPA murals of Jimenez's youth, the technical and aesthetic challenges posed by his artistic conceptions for these pieces presaged his subsequent career dedicated to public sculpture. Jimenez described the significance of the *Progress* pieces: "It was with them I learned how to solve certain problems, both artistically and with the material, that I had never done before. I had never had any elements that were sticking out on any of the pieces that I made before....When I got into the *Progress* pieces, I began to tackle problems where there was not a simple solution" (Jimenez, quoted in *Man in Fire* 1994, 96). These sculptures are Jimenez's solution to a range of challenges involving composition, technique, and imagery. They were not only the first ones in which Jimenez used secondary molds in order to incorporate elements that appear to fly away from the composition—these two pieces also formed the initial research behind Jimenez's subsequent use of images of popular myth to create his fiberglass public works (Flores-Turney 1997; Mitchell 1999).

Progress I (1974) portrays an Indian on horseback, delivering a presumably fatal arrow to a buffalo in a compressed composition of an inward-focused energy; *Progress II* (1977) continues the theme chronologically with its equally kinetic depiction of an Anglo-American cowboy roping a steer. And yet, this latter piece presents a wholly different kind of compositional energy—dynamically outward with a pair of cantilevered elements, the cowboy and the steer, internal, opposing forces exploding outward. This is in contrast with the compressed energy

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

and fused images of *Progress I* (Phillips 1984; Mitchell 1999). *Progress II* marks Jimenez's first substantial experimentation with composition, and poignantly echoes art critic Barry Schwabsky's assertion that "Tension is the key to the visual as well as the conceptual interest of Jimenez's work" (Schwabsky 1984, 21). Not only do these works advance a theme sequentially, they also demonstrate a clear compositional development. Jimenez has described these pieces as a progression, affirming "The form of the first piece is basically a pyramid with things starting to fly off. In the second piece, the work becomes a complete exploded view" (Jimenez, quoted in *Jimenez*, 1977). Regarding the question of the *Progress* pieces as public art, Jimenez has declared them to occupy a place "that's somewhere halfway in between. They were leading up to the public pieces and developing the systems that I was going to use with them" (*Oral History* 1985).

Jimenez and his Public Art

Jimenez saw public art as a medium with social utility and educative value. The nature of Jimenez's public sculpture, according to art historian Kathleen Whitney, "has been determined by his perception and definition of the artist's public role in society" (Whitney 1997, 21). Years later, Jimenez recalled, "...from the very beginning, when I went to New York, I really wanted to eventually develop this whole concept of public art...What I really wanted to do was public works. I didn't like the idea of having a very limited audience that the museum and gallery represent. I wanted to expand that audience....I wanted to be an integral part of society" (Jimenez, quoted in *Man on Fire* 1994, 94). In interviews Jimenez has shed more light on his conception of the artist's role, most notably saying, "I guess what really impressed me about Mexican art was somehow that it seemed relevant. I thought I had to be relevant to the society" (Jimenez, quoted in Quirarte 1973, 120).⁶ Elsewhere, Jimenez, expanding on this idea and his commitment to public art, has stated, "I want my work to become an integral part of the society that surrounds it; to generate a meaningful dialogue among diverse members of the community" (Jimenez, quoted in Flores-Turney, 20).

Beyond the edification of the public, the desire to develop a truly American aesthetic would also influence the development of Jimenez's unique public art. As Jimenez described it, this was a time in which he "was actually looking at what had really worked in terms of public art" (Jimenez, quoted in *Man on Fire* 1994, 94). Finding two common motifs in this history—the equestrian statue and, in an American-specific context, the progress-themed, WPA-era murals from his El Paso childhood—he was able to employ them in pursuit of one of his primary goals as a public artist, which he later expressed as, "developing an American art" free of European-based imagery (*Ibid.*). Elsewhere, he expanded on the role of imagery in this endeavor, affirming, "I believe in the communicative power of the image; I believe people can be changed through exposure to images. I make my work so that it will be accessible to the group normally ignored by 'private-art' makers—the blue-collar audience. My work is made for a community" (Jimenez, quoted in Whitney 1997, 21).

Jimenez's first publicly-commissioned piece, *Vaquero* (1980-81) created for the city of Houston, Texas, illustrates the tensions and contexts that underlay Jimenez's public sculptures. This 16-foot tall figure of a vaquero astride a blue bronco, vigorously bucking, yet unexpectedly poised on its front legs with rear legs in midair, caused much controversy. Initially designed for a site near a city hall, *Vaquero* met with much resistance from the political leaders of the city for whom, Jimenez later reasoned, a figure of a gun-toting Mexican may have been too much to absorb in such a conspicuous public setting (*Oral History* 1985). *Vaquero* was moved to Moody Park, a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood, where it continues to occasionally serve as an object of conversation by local politicians (*Ibid.*).

⁶ Jimenez's sentiments echo the Mexican tradition of mural painting, seen as the voice of the people and often a form of protest. They also poignantly reflect the ideas in the 1922 manifesto of the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors, and famously later quoted by Mexican muralist and avowed inspirational hero of Luis A. Jimenez, David Siqueiros, "The creators of beauty must use their best efforts to produce ideological works of art for the people; art must no longer be the expression of individual satisfaction which it is today, but should aim to become a fighting, educative art for all" (Siqueiros, quoted in Quirarte 1984, 123).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Jimenez intended this piece as a corrective to misleading notions regarding the role of Mexican culture in the United States' national mythological icons. As he described it, *Vaquero* is "a tribute to the Mexican origins of the American cowboy, a statement about Texas, and also the Mexican community within Texas...The cowboy was a Mexican invention...It wasn't John Wayne who was the original cowboy. That's the myth. This contribution that the Mexican community made to Texas and to the United States has been totally overlooked...I'm redefining an image and a myth" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1987, 84). During his research into the iconography of the equestrian statue, Jimenez discovered a historical tradition around the position of the horse's legs: "If all four feet are down, the person died in his sleep. One front foot up means he died in battle. Well, two feet in the air didn't mean anything. So putting the vaquero on a bucking bronco was a way of breaking with tradition" (Santiago 1993, 90). This subtle change signifies a break with tradition on a number of levels. Jimenez subverted the traditional role of the equestrian statue, parodying its purpose by paying homage not to a single individual hero on the basis of military exploits or political honor, but to the collective identity of the Mexican cowboy (Whitney 1997). Jimenez's horse and rider, portrayed as cantilevered in space and colorful, also broke with long-standing European traditions for equestrian statues (*Oral History*, 1985). This subversion of tradition and celebration of common figures of daily life animates much of Jimenez's public sculpture.⁷

An homage to another heroic icon of the American West, *Sodbuster-San Isidro* (1982) is a 24-foot figure of a farmer guiding a team of oxen and plough through a prairie furrow. This piece was commissioned by the city of Fargo, North Dakota, where Jimenez "saw the work ethic still running strong and true in a vernacular landscape," and thus chose the farmer as the icon of the northern plains (Phillips 1984, 95). As Jimenez described the evolution of the sculpture, he almost discarded the farmer motif when his initial studies depicted farmers with tractors. However, as he recalled, "Somehow I came back around to it when I rethought the idea of using oxen, because I could then plug it into the San Isidro tradition" (Jimenez, quoted in *Man on Fire* 1994, 138).⁸ Aesthetically, art critics and historians have noted a composition that saturates this portrayal of human survival and domestication of animals with a sense of controlled, channeled forces (Schwabsky 1984). *Sodbuster-San Isidro* also illustrates clearly how Jimenez's use of imagery diverged from that of preceding public artists in the United States. In particular, art historians have indicated that the "heretical challenge to the accepted canons of Western art is Jimenez's portrayal of nature as an often-suffering protagonist rather than the malign adversary of Anglo-American progress" (Ennis 1998, 114).⁹

Subtle forms of cultural hybridism operate under *Sodbuster's* surface. Jimenez uses of oxen and the titular reference to San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers in Mexico and the southwestern United States, to pay homage to the work ethic of the North Dakota farmer. The details of *Sodbuster-San Isidro*, according to Jimenez, were inspired by the New Mexican folk art tradition of *santos*-carving, as evident in the stylized and somewhat exaggerated depiction of the sodbuster's hair, beard, sweat beads, and taut limbs (*Man on Fire* 1994). Jimenez described his borrowing from this *santero* tradition in *Sodbuster's* "refinement in paring down to essential elements," and went on to affirm, "I simplify and stylize images to exaggerate certain characteristics" (Jimenez, quoted in Flores-Turney 1997, 63). Finally, Jimenez based the figure of the sodbusting farmer on a friend, named Andres, a local laborer who lived for a time in a trailer on the Luis' studio property in Hondo, New Mexico. In using Andres, a man of Ute, Mexican, and Anglo-American descent, to portray a figure of dual identities, Jimenez further underscores the layered cultural hybridity so often celebrated in his art (*Oral History* 1985; *Man on Fire* 1994).

⁷ Further evidence of the power and universal appeal of *Vaquero*, perhaps Jimenez's most famous work, was its 1987 purchase by the Smithsonian Institute and installation beside the entrance to the Museum of Museum of American Art, where it shortly came to be regarded as "the symbol of the museum" (Gaspar de Alba 1998, 185).

⁸ In the Catholic Church San Isidro was the patron saint of farmers known for his piety toward animals and the poor. The San Isidro tradition refers to the folk Spanish and Mexican belief in the veneration of San Isidro, including the blessing of fields and celebrating the lessons learned from his life regarding the dignity of work and service to the poor (Rodriguez 2006).

⁹ This portrayal of nature was also evident in Jimenez's final piece (*Mustang*, finished posthumously in 2009) and other works incorporating nature as a theme, where Jimenez "eulogizes a vanishing natural world while conjuring powerful animistic spirits..." (Ennis 1998, 114).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

In *Southwest Pieta* (1987), Jimenez reimagines the tragic tale of Aztec lovers in a form that also suggests Michelangelo's *Pieta* and Christ's Passion (Peterson 1988; Shields 1994). In this particular retelling, the male, Popocatotpetl, is given Hispanicized features and holds the arched body of his lover Ixtacihuatl across his lap in a poignant moment of shared loss. Jimenez saw the work as a comment on Chicano identity, in particular the Spanish-Indian mixing that gave rise to the Mexican and Mexican-American people (*Oral History* 1985). Jimenez described this piece as expressing "a kind of commonality of symbols and images," using the eagle as a national symbol of both Mexico and the United States, and including regional flora and fauna important to many of the area's different Native American cultures (Jimenez, quoted in *Man on Fire* 1994, 142). According to Jimenez, however, *Southwest Pieta* was also intensely personal and reflective of a time when he was going through a difficult divorce. Jimenez described this piece as being about "grieving...the very core of the piece, that's what it is about" (*Oral History* 1985). Intended for Tiguex Park near Old Town, Albuquerque's tourist-centric commercial and historical core, *Southwest Pieta* met with considerable controversy from some members of the city's Hispanic community. Objectors saw the piece as depicting the rape of a Native American woman by a Spanish man, and hence as offensive to the many local residents who claimed Spanish heritage. The sculpture was subject to political objections from a segment of the city and subsequent support from working-class Hispanics. It was relocated a few miles east to Longfellow Park in Martineztown, where it currently still stands atop its pedestal at the corner of a city park, overlooking one of the city's oldest working-class Hispanic neighborhoods.

Jimenez and the Democratization of Public Art

The medium of sculpture represents an accepted form of high art, but one not easily translated into a populist art form. Painting, for example, has lent itself easily to murals, posters, and other forms of popular expression throughout history. Jimenez was aware of the role sculpture played in antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, both traditional antecedents of current public art (Whitney 1997). In an interview, Jimenez said: "Sculpture has served for centuries as a way of humanizing urban spaces. It's one way of making art part of the world again" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 85). The fiberglass and other modern industrial materials he uses as medium represent another layer of democratization implicit in his public sculptures. Brightly colored, inexpensive, easily duplicated, fiberglass is a material representative of the vernacular and common, rather than of the elite, a fitting vehicle to convey Jimenez's populist message (Whitney 1997). Art historian John Yau (1994, 46) has noted the populist sensibilities within Jimenez's choice of fiberglass, calling it "the one material with the adaptability, as well as emotional pitch, to represent the range of Jimenez's complex concerns." Jimenez himself described the implied meanings within fiberglass, saying, "Fiberglass is very direct and also very democratic. It's not a real 'artist's' material, it's the stuff people use on motorcycles and lowriders. It doesn't have the same high culture associations bronze has. My material is part of the statement" (Whitney 1997).

While Jimenez was not the first American artist to utilize fiberglass as primary sculptural medium in a high art context, he employed it in significantly different ways than his contemporaries Craig Kaufmann and Bruce Nauman. Kaufmann and Nauman, among the first American artists to use of fiberglass, sought to remove fiberglass from any commercial association and transform it into high art. Jimenez's figurative style, on the other hand, was one that celebrated the commercial origins and processes of working with fiberglass, upholding them as elements conducive, rather than contradictory, to the creation of fine art (Mitchell 1999). Jimenez's particular treatment of fiberglass is a principal conduit for the populist nature of his public art.¹⁰

However, it was message more than medium that gives Jimenez's art its most distinctively democratic, populist qualities. Jimenez designed public sculptures with narrative designed to prompt dialogue. Jimenez elaborated on this idea, arguing "the worst thing for a work of art is to be ignored. People can be affected by a work of art they hate if it makes them think. My work tries to make bridges within a community, and it can evoke controversy if it brings up issues people would rather ignore" (Jimenez, quoted in Whitney 1997, 23). It was through both his early public pieces and later works, such as *Border Crossing* (1989), *Steelworker* (1990), and *Fiesta* (1990), in which Jimenez, "Rather than dressing up familiar tales in new clothes... has strived to reconstruct both this country's

¹⁰ For more on Jimenez's sculptural process and how he works with fiberglass in his large-scale public art, see "Jimenez and the Sculptural Process" in "Developmental History" Section 8 of this nomination form.

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

unfamiliar tales and those that are disregarded, forgotten, or misrepresented” (Yau 1994, 39). Jimenez expanded his audience’s awareness of the multiplicity of our national history, “reminding us that our history is made up of many points of view, many tales and tellings” (Yau 1994, 39). Similarly, renowned art critic, Barry Schwabsky, commenting on the depth of the narrative power within Jimenez’s public art, asserted that Jimenez “infuses new power into images which have already been drained of meaning” (Schwabsky 1984, 21). Works like *Sodbuster*, *Steelworker*, and *Border Crossing*, in their celebration of the humanity and dignity of labor, earned Jimenez a “reputation as the artist of the working-class people” (Flores-Turney 1997, 50). The public history of many of Jimenez’s most well-known sculptures, most often following a course of “political objections followed by working-class support” (Mitchell 1999, 104), has only reinforced the legitimacy of this reputation.

The consensus among art historians is that Jimenez did achieve his lofty objective of developing a purely American artistic idiom through his public art, in effect synthesizing “popular and high art so successfully that viewers are barely aware of the merging of such diverse sources as a baroque painting by Peter Paul Rubens and a still from a John Wayne movie” (Manthorne 2006, 30-31). According to art historian Charles Beardsley, “Jimenez has invented a distinctive narrative voice, the visual language of the rural southwestern Chicano experience, the culture of the border crossing, the Texas dance hall, the Chicano cowboy” (Beardsley 1987, 105). Art critics, too, have similarly noted the unique cultural expression of his work, asserting “Jimenez’s art fuses baroque form with popular culture and materials, a fusion that seems particularly and splendidly American” (McCombie 1987, 7).

According to art historian Kathleen Whitney, referring to Jimenez’s work, “As single-minded as it has been in terms of its means and imagery, what gives his body of work its moral weight and imagistic coherence is its conceptual reconstitution of the personal and the political. These twin notional elements give Jimenez’s work enormous scope and forge an alliance between the two concepts generally thought of as mutually exclusive: private and public....The nature of his artistic production has been determined by his perception and definition of the artist’s public role in society” (Whitney 1997, 21). Jimenez unites public sculpture with public message; he tells these messages through media that reflects public taste and public endeavor. In Jimenez’s own words, “The purpose of public art is to create a ‘dialogue’” (Ennis 1998, 113). Art “should in some way make a person more aware, give him insight ‘to where he’s at,’ and in some way reflect what it is like to be living in these times and in this place” (Jimenez, quoted in Cancel, 1988).

As Whitney eloquently expressed about the civic function underlying Jimenez’s public art, “While there is a strong Eurocentric precedent for Jimenez’s type of work (his public work functions in an arena directly descended from the Italian Renaissance), the nature of his imagery makes his monuments function differently. They are not vehicles for classical representations or facile generalizations. Instead, they are about contemporary complexity and its fragmentation, about the clash between social classes, traditions, ideologies, and identities. Jimenez rejects the intangibility of ‘multiculturalism’ and banal notions of the ‘other’ in favor of a kind of involved reportage, observation of reality and reflection of difference. His Pop sensibility allows him to make work that is easily accessible, politically conscious, and deeply philosophical” (Whitney 1997, 25).

Jimenez’s art projected a refreshingly “gutsy and sweaty” familiarity, while also evoking a Baroque elegance of line and color with no trace of the “icy intellectual distance” common to much high art (Phillips 1984, 95). The boldness of this approach has been credited with reconstituting and invigorating the concept of public art in the United States (Phillips 1984). Contemporary public art has been treated “timidly” by artists in the United States with a “muddled, simplified esthetic,” creating “blandly uncommunicative” works (Phillips 1984, 85), or dominated by “steel-and-marble corporate minimalism,” representing “whispers of carefully edited platitudes” (Ennis 1998, 112-113). However, Jimenez has a far bolder vision of public art, one invigorated by social utility, historical consciousness, dialogue, and a dash of idiosyncrasy.

Jimenez consciously sought to cultivate this dimension of his art. In an interview during his early years as a public artist, he distinguished between two different types of public art, dismissively calling one kind “bent-metal pieces that have been put out in public,” distinctive from a piece that is public “in that it’s sitting in a public situation.... and because it’s speaking a publicly accessible language” (*Oral History* 1985). Elsewhere, he expanded on this idea,

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

declaring, "Art must function on many levels, not just one or two" (Jimenez, quoted in *Man on Fire*, 1994). Jimenez shed more light on this notion, asserting, "My working-class roots have a lot to do with it; I want to create a popular art that ordinary people can relate to as well as people who have degrees in art. That doesn't mean it has to be watered down. My philosophy is to create a multi-layered piece, like Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*. The first time I read it, it was an exciting adventure story about fishing. The last time, I was deeply moved" (Jimenez, quoted in Santiago 1993, 91).

Jimenez and his Artistic Process

Luis A. Jimenez, Jr. was celebrated not only as a sculptor, but as a master draftsman as well, producing numerous drawings, prints, and lithographs during the period he was also creating some of his most well-known public sculptures. Throughout his career, Jimenez attracted a great deal of critical praise for his prints and lithographs, many of which derived from earlier drawings he had produced for himself. In many cases not intended for public display, these were personal pursuits. For this reason, Jimenez's work in these media depicted more personal content, and often responded directly to an impulse or event in Jimenez's life.

For Jimenez, drawing and the making of lithographs and prints primarily served three purposes. First, they were a form of pure pleasure for him, rather than the more intensive work that sculpture involved, which may explain the more personalized content. They also were an important source of income for Jimenez. Income from the sales of his prints was Jimenez's primary means of survival as a young artist in New York City (*Oral History* 1985). During his time in Hondo, he often told his wife that the money earned through the sale of his prints and lithographs "pays for the groceries" (S. Jimenez, *Personal Communication*, 2014). Much of Jimenez's work in these media were the seeds of ideas that later became sculptural pieces. It studying his drawings, prints, and lithographs, one gets a sense of the invention and evolution of his pieces (McCombie 1987). The process of developing an idea was paramount to the way Jimenez worked, and when seen in his drawings, constitutes a critical window into the aesthetic and thematic arcs of his sculptural work.

Among Jimenez's notable prints and lithographs are *American Dream* (1970), *Filo's Lowrider* (1976), *Honky Tonk* (1981), *Dance with Death* (1984), and *El Buen Pastor/The Good Shepherd* (1999). While many of his prints and lithographs originated as drawings that also served as ideas for later sculptural pieces (such as the van depicted in *Lowrider*, incorporating the ancient Aztec image Jimenez later used for his sculpture, *Southwest Pieta*), Jimenez created some solely as prints or lithographs. Critics appreciated the bold expressiveness of his line, the raucous celebration of life and knowing awareness of death, seen in works like *Dance with Death* and *Honky Tonk*.

It was Jimenez's drawings and prints that led the famous Pop art patron, Ivan Karp, to label Jimenez "a virtuoso" upon first viewing his work in New York City in 1969 (*Oral History* 1985). Throughout his career, his exhibitions included both sculptural and print pieces, the print pieces "filled with gyrating bodies, big cars, leaping forms, horses, and steamy eroticism," and "demonstrating a vigorous proficiency with line and color" Phillips (1984, 95). During the portion of his career in which his Hondo drafting studio was in full operation in the Apple Shed, Jimenez's drawings and prints drew more attention from critics. According to art critic Kathleen Shields, "the linear energy of his drawings...hold their own amid the more spectacular three-dimensional works" (Shields 1994, 140). Shields went on to assert, "In fact, the power and fluid immediacy of the drawings (his most direct means of expression) are not always captured in the conceptually and technically more complex large-scale sculptures..." (1994, 140). Another declared "the rhythmic and friezelike composition" of Jimenez's *Homeless Set Adrift* (1996) a variation on the work of 17th century French Baroque painter, Poussin (Mitchell 1999, 105).

Art critic Mel McCombie conveyed succinctly both the nature and significance of the processes Jimenez followed in creating his large-scale sculptural pieces, when he stated, "Since Jimenez works in series, carrying a theme through drawings, clay models, prints and sculptures, one is able to get a sense of evolution and invention of his pieces from rapidly-drawn study to final, glossy sculpture" (McCombie 1987, 7). The process of developing an idea—a dynamic that involved, for Jimenez, both the deliberate and intuitive—was paramount to the way Jimenez worked, and because he often employed different media at different parts of his creative process, the aesthetic and thematic arcs of individual works become apparent when examining them in their different artistic forms. In part, this developmental approach can be attributed to Jimenez's early experience in architecture. Reflecting on

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

this early formal training, Jimenez once explained, "...in the architecture school, you know, there was a way of approaching a problem. You had to define the problem, you had to develop a concept for approaching the problem, and you had to be systematic about it. And I still develop my sculptures the same way...as if I was going to do it, you know, for an architecture project...the basic approach is very methodical" (*Oral History*, 1985).

Elsewhere on a number of occasions Jimenez has elaborated further on many of these notions, giving greater insight into the creative evolution of his ideas. Below is a sample of Jimenez's words taken from interviews conducted over time that shed light on his approach to his art and the processes he followed in its creation.

How do your drawings relate to your sculpture? "I've always loved to draw. I always think of drawing as a fun experience in art. You know, sculpture is a lot of work. I enjoy work, but drawing is pure fun. Drawing is a release, number one, and it's a tool in that that's the way I develop the sculpture. So many times, it's not necessary to put a sculptural idea down in drawings because I can visualize it very well. But all my pieces evolve from drawings. I may just sit there and start drawing. After a while, I start liking a certain image...I may redraw it again another time. But what happens is that after a while, I realize that somehow I am starting to condense the idea. Once it reaches a certain point, it's a sculpture. I usually don't make a model. Usually, from a drawing I can just make it into a sculpture" (Jimenez, quoted in *Luis Jimenez*, 1977).

Do the drawings turn you on to possibilities in the sculpture? "...The drawings are the result of a process that's developing....I think developing is a good word for the way that I work, because what happens is that at the very beginning of a piece, I really don't have a very deep commitment to it. And I begin to focus more and more and more attention, and then the more attention that I focus, the more things begin to develop....But at the time that it's going on, the drawings are the manifestations of where the project is at. I'll put it down because all of a sudden this development becomes important" (*Oral History*, 1985). Discussing his process further, Jimenez went on to explain why he chose not to subcontract any of this work even though it would save time, asserting, "It would be nice if I could subcontract some of this work out. I know that's the way it's done, but I am afraid of losing a kind of control because I know that when I work out the models, when I work out the initial ideas, I know that for me to really make that piece work, it somehow has to go through this process..." (*Oral History*, 1985).

Can you summarize [your sculptural process]? "...it's a very traditional approach....I have what I think is a very methodical approach, although the steps in the process are also conscious steps, and there's a tremendous amount of development I every one of my ideas from the beginning concept to what I end up with as a finished product....the process I follow is: I'll put down the initial idea in a drawing. It's only a concept....And then I begin to develop the idea....through drawings, and at one point began to work out the clay. Now, up to now—I wish I could do it differently—but up to now, there is still an awful lot of the development that's going on in the clay. From the central core that I might make, which is basically the germ of the idea, I then develop it on a full scale....So at one point I might make a rough little model, and then—again in the early pieces I didn't cast it; now I do—then I make the piece in clay—again, a very traditional process, over a metal armature. And the clay is basically a skin. Sometimes it's maybe two or three inches thick; sometimes it might be thicker, but mostly, you know, it's built over a core, you know, a kind of metal lath over a re-bar [reinforced bar] framework. I then pull fiberglass molds, and I pull, I use a piece-molds system....After I pull the piece out of the molds—again, you know, the only thing that is different is the material, because I then come along and grind off all the seam lines, and then I come back and I spray it with an, in the early years, with an epoxy; now I use an acrylic urethane....But that's basically the process. And again, I tell people it's a totally traditional process; the only thing that's really different is that I'm using a different material, that's all. But the process is all very traditional" (*Oral History*, 1985).

In a short article entitled, "The Process of Developing a Sculpture," accompanying the catalogue for his 1994 retrospective exhibition, *Man on Fire*, Jimenez offered a written synopsis of this process: "The process in terms of developing solutions is very traditional. Most of the images are a synthesis of the various ideas that I have. The solution evolves through the drawings. From there, I try to resolve the image three-dimensionally through the use of cutouts and models. I then make the full size piece in clay, using oil-based plasticine over a steel armature. The only difference with traditional methods is at this point when I make a fiberglass piece mold of the plasticine object rather than use plaster of Paris which had been used in the past. The mold that I'm making is in fact

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

identical to the molds that are made for canoes, auto bodies, hot tubs, etc. I then lay the fiberglass into the fiberglass mold to make the object. When that process is complete, the molds are removed, the seams are ground off and any irregularities are repaired. I then apply a jet aircraft acrylic urethane finish to the object. When I have completed spraying the colors, I recoat the sculpture with three coats of clear, which intensifies the plastic look and is the finish that the critics love to hate” (Jimenez 1994: 48).¹¹

Typically, for each commissioned piece, Jimenez retained the right to make five additional castings,¹² as well as an artist’s proof (Santiago, 1993)—an agreement that aptly embodied one of the overall ethics underlying his public art, which Jimenez poignantly expressed: “My interest in art has always been from the standpoint of ideas. I would really rather make large works that might end up some place public only because more people can see them. What happens with a small, private work is that somebody buys it and puts it in their house. The audience is really limited.

That’s also why I went against having a unique piece. I make all my sculptures in an edition of five because I want people to see them” (Jimenez, quoted in *Luis Jimenez*, 1977).

The Artistic Legacy of Luis A. Jimenez

Aesthetically, Jimenez has been credited with the creation of a “new-old art” by uniting painting and sculpture “in a delicately balanced, dramatically cantilevered, free-standing objects that retain the transparent luminosity of oil painting,” long the aspiration of 17th century Italian masters, Caravaggio and Bernini (Flores-Turney, 1997, 8). According to art critic and scholar Dave Hickey, Jimenez “has revived the tradition of Mediterranean image-making and restored its faded glory by re-imagining it in contemporary terms and materials...enlivening that idiom with the dash of Pop Art, while simultaneously re-examining its historical roots in the streets and churches of Rome” (Flores-Turney, 1997: 8).

Jimenez’s works are “signposts marking elements of 20th-century culture,” but their stylistic roots extend far back in time. According to curator Ellen Landis, Jimenez is “a major contemporary sculptor whose works reflect the idealized imagery of Michelangelo, the Greeks and the Romans” (Santiago 1993, 87). Others have similarly placed Jimenez’s work in the company of some of Europe’s most revered art traditions, noting “his figural sculptures, drawings, and prints are suffused with a passion for expressive, exaggerated anatomy and grand gesture that would be at home on the ceiling of the Palazzo Farnese” (McCombie 1987, 7). Scholars are in firm consensus that “the elegance of craft and the monumental scale” of Jimenez’s work place it into “the fine art realm” (Ballatore 1990, 39). Dave Hickey, reflecting on the breadth of Jimenez’s influence, has affirmed, “the ultimate testament to Luis Jimenez’s influence as an artist, especially in his home country, is that you can no longer distinguish his direct influence on individual artists from the influence of his drawings and sculpture on the popular idioms from which it sprang” (Flores-Turney, 1997: 7).

Jimenez fused high art and popular art in ways that evoke both “the classical lines and rapturous Baroque energy of a Bernini with a pneumatic surrealism of Mexican calendar art” (Ennis 1998, 112). Jimenez’s intimate relationship with *la frontera* lent his work an aesthetic all its own that defies easy categorization. An assortment of scholars have noted the influences of the border on Jimenez’s art, and have characterized his style as “an aesthetic which reflects *la frontera*” (Anaya 1994, 1); New Expressionism (Beardsley 1987, 118); a “contrarian aesthetic” (Ennis 1998, 112); “Modern American Baroque” (McCombie 1987, 7); a “neo-Baroque” hybridity (Manthorne 2006, 31); “Southwestern Hellenistic” (Schwabsky 1984, 21); and more playfully, “Baroque populism,” a fusion of Baroque forms and a vernacular Pop energy (Mitchell 1999, 100).

¹¹ Many critics, Jimenez’s self-deprecating tone notwithstanding, noted the aesthetic significance of this final clear coating. As Charles Mitchell asserted regarding this phase, “Jimenez then coats the painted sculpture in layers of clear urethane, a process that tones down the color by sealing it under a gelatinous glaze, in effect creating an image in which color and form become one” (Mitchell 1999, 101).

¹² These additional castings were not strictly copies of original castings. Rather, they represented original works, as Jimenez treated the textural surface of each differently and painted each in a different color scheme (S. Jimenez, Personal communication, May 1, 2014).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Writer Rodolfo Anaya calls Jimenez “an artist who creates a synthesis of vision, fusing the North American with the Mexicano...” (Anaya 1994, 2). Within this fusion resides a profound transformative power for humanity. According to Anaya, within Jimenez’s art “there is a vision for the future in his fusion and syncretism,” for, on *la frontera*, one can either lose their humanity, or regain it in a celebration of hybridity and its “implication of hope” (Ibid.). Jimenez’s work deals with relevant issues of contemporary times, the complexity of cultures and community. Drawing on specific experiences of place, Jimenez is able to create art that manages to transcend place and culture. In this way, “Jimenez creates works that come from a border perspective, one that draws upon the hybridity bred by culture clashes. Often socially and politically informed, his works speak not only in regional terms, those germane to the southwestern United States, but to broader, more global issues as well....Jimenez creates works that function as personal narrative yet are also able to make statements about culture in more global terms....Creating art that speaks to the people, Jimenez is able to transform regional and culturally specific myths and symbols into globally recognized and relevant icons” (Keller et al 2002, 42-43).

Selected Sculptural Commissions

Progress I and Progress II (1972), Donald B. Anderson, Roswell Museum & Art Center, Roswell, New Mexico; *Sodbuster-San Isidro* (1977), National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Fargo, North Dakota; *Southwest Pieta* (1981), National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico; *Steelworker* (1982), Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Buffalo, New York; *Flag Raising* (1982), Veterans Administration Hospital, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; *Howl* (1983)—Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas; *Border Crossing* (1984), Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles, California; *Fiesta* (1986), General Services Administration, Otay Mesa, California; *The Horton Plaza Fountain* (1986), Center City Development Corporation, San Diego, California; *Plaza de los Lagartos* (1986), National Endowment for the Arts and the City of El Paso, Texas; *Steelworker* (1990), Three Rivers Arts Festival and the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; *Mustang* (1992), City and County of Denver, Denver, Colorado; *Colonnade of Workers* (1992), City of New York Cultural Affairs, Bronx, New York; (1993) Sculptural Commission, Corpus Christi Police, Corpus Christi, Texas; *Firefighters* (1996), City of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio

Selected Collections

Giovanni Agnelli, Italy; The Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Donald B. Anderson, Roswell, New Mexico; Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, New Mexico; Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; Brunner Art Museum, Ames, Iowa; Charles Benenson, Greenwich, Connecticut; Centro Cultural Arte Contemporaneo, Polanco, Mexico; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Chicago Art Institute, Chicago, Illinois Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado; El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas; Elaine Horwitch Galleries, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Federal Reserve, Dallas, Texas; Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Ivan Karp, New York, New York; Las Vegas International Airport, Nevada; LewAllen Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico Long Beach Museum of Art, California The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; Rockefeller Foundation, New York, New York; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska; Texas Public Sculpture Collection, Abilene, Texas University Art Museum, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona; University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico; University of Texas at El Paso Library

Selected Exhibitions

Graham Gallery, New York, New York; O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York, New York; Long Beach Museum of Art, California; Bienville Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas; Hill's Gallery of Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Meredith Long and Company, Houston, Texas; North Dakota Museum of Art, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks; de Saisset Gallery, University of Santa Clara, California; University Art Gallery, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico; Plains Art Museum, Moorehead, Minnesota; Landfall Press Gallery, Chicago, Illinois; Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska; Franklin Struve Gallery, Chicago, Illinois; Sebastian-Moore Gallery, Denver, Colorado; Peppertine Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Amarillo Art Center, Texas; Heydt-Blair Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Fox Fine Arts Center, Main Gallery, University of Texas-El Paso; Riva Yares

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, Texas; Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York, New York; Alternative Museum, New York, New York; Dag Hammarskjold Sculpture Plaza, New York, New York; Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, California; Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, New Mexico; League of United Chicano Artists/Museo del Barrio, Austin, Texas; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; Art Network, Tucson, Arizona; University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona; University of Texas at El Paso Art Museum; Adair Margo Gallery, El Paso, Texas; Moody Gallery, Houston Texas; Gray Art Gallery, Jenkins Fine Arts Center, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina; Marilyn Butler Fine Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Nave Museum, Victoria, Texas; Malony/Butler Gallery, Santa Monica California; Art Institute for the Permian Basin, Texas; Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; LewAllen Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Arizona; SPARC Gallery, Los Angeles, California; Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas; Museum of Art, Wichita, Kansas; Social and Public Art Resource Center, Venice, California; La Raza Galleria Posada, Sacramento, California; Morgan Gallery, Kansas City, Kansas; Jessie Alonso Gallery, Tucson, Arizona; The Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico; The National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; University of Texas-San Antonio, Division of Art & Architecture Art Gallery, San Antonio, Texas; A.C.A Galleries, New York; White Gallery, Sangre de Cristo Arts Center, Pueblo, Colorado; Marsha Mateyka Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Fort Bend Museum, Richmond, Texas; Galveston Art Center, Galveston, TX; Museo de Las Americas, Denver, Colorado; Harwood Foundation, Taos, New Mexico; Heston College Art Gallery, Heston, Kansas; Boise State University Art Gallery, Boise, Idaho; William Campbell Contemporary Art, Ft. Worth, Texas; Turner & Runyan Gallery, Dallas, Texas, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana; Museum of Texas Tech, Lubbock, Texas; Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, Washington; Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, California; Blaffer Gallery, Houston, Texas; Florida International University, Miami, Florida; Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama; Santa Barbara County Arts Commission, Santa Barbara, California; Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas; Mexican Fine Arts Museum, Chicago, Illinois

Sculptural commissions completed in Hondo

Sodbuster-San Isidro (1977)—National Endowment for the Arts and the City of Fargo, North Dakota; *Southwest Pieta* (1981)—National Endowment for the Arts and the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico; *Steelworker* (1982)—Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Buffalo, New York *Flag Raising* (1982)—Veterans Administration Hospital, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; *Howl* (1983)—Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas; *Border Crossing* (1984)—Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles, California; *Fiesta* (1986)—General Services Administration, Otay Mesa, California; *The Horton Plaza Fountain* (1986)—Center City Development Corporation, San Diego, California; *Plaza de los Lagartos* (1986)—National Endowment for the Arts and the City of El Paso, Texas *Steelworker* (1990)—Three Rivers Arts Festival and the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; *Mustang* (1992)—City and County of Denver, Denver, Colorado; *Colonnade of Workers* (1992)—City of New York Cultural Affairs, Bronx, New York; *Firefighters* (1996)—City of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio

The Luis A. and Susan Jimenez House and Studios is significant at the national level under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture because it is an exceptional and largely intact example of a house and studio of a major late 20th-century artist. The property displays design qualities unique to a studio where large-scale public art works were conceived, developed, and produced. Jimenez and his wife, Susan, modified the original building, once a school gymnasium, in order to accommodate the large-scale public sculptures and to serve his creative approach to art in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. These modifications allowed Jimenez to exercise full artistic autonomy in a studio customized to fit the specific demands of publically commissioned sculpture. Luis Jimenez purchased the Hondo Elementary School property in 1976 and “dreamed of opening a studio in the building” (Susan Jimenez, Personal Communication, April 30, 2014). But the building sat vacant for many years and Jimenez was able to make only slight improvements, cleaning out debris and using the building at first for storage.

In 1985, Luis and Susan made the Hondo property their permanent residence. The Hondo Valley offered respite not only from El Paso’s sweltering heat in the summer, but from the racial barriers and overt racism that Luis had experienced living in Texas. The hills and canyons of the Hondo Valley Jimenez encountered on his daily walks with his appaloosa inspired Jimenez’s art (S. Jimenez, Personal Communication, April 30, 2014).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Jimenez's career as a public sculptor was just beginning. He had completed his first publicly-commissioned work *Vaquero* a few years earlier for the city of Houston. His public art was attracting acclaim. With his work increasingly in demand, Jimenez received commissions from cities around the country: Fargo, Albuquerque, Buffalo, and Los Angeles. As Michael Ennis observed at this time, "Working in a hangarlike studio in a former Works Progress Administration schoolhouse near Hondo, New Mexico... Jimenez has [succeeded in] moving his art into the public arena with an ambition and audacity unmatched by any American artist in the past two decades" (Ennis 1998, 112). In the Hondo studio, Jimenez did the original castings for all of his public pieces, and completed casts for a number of his other well-known works.¹³ According to Susan, Jimenez completed forty-two public sculptures in this studio, including the original castings for *Sodbuster-San Isidro*, *Southwest Pieta*, *Steelworker*, *Flag Raising*, *Howl*, *Border Crossing*, *Fiesta*, *the Horton Plaza Fountain*, *Plaza de los Lagartos*, *Colonnade of Workers*, *Firefighters*, and *Mustang*, as well as additional castings of *Man on Fire*, *Motorcycle*, *End of the Trail*, and both *Progress I* and *Progress II*.¹⁴

The demands of public sculpture dictated a series of modifications to their studio very soon after Luis and Susan began their permanent residence in Hondo. The first change came at the structure's southern end, where Jimenez built a floor-to-ceiling wall, blocking off the stage opening. On this new wall, he could hang the large drawings from which he developed his sculptures. In 1987/88, major alterations to the exterior walls of the studio became necessary. As Susan Jimenez tells it, at this time *Southwest Pieta* was completed and ready for transport, but was too large to get out of the existing studio doors. The Jimenezes expanded one of the two existing doorways on the west-facing wall, and installed an overhead crane and loading dock adjacent to the new, wider opening to allow for the transportation of Jimenez's large-scale fiberglass sculptures. After these critical changes customizing the space to accommodate the unique scale of his art, Jimenez made no other significant modifications to the studio. The studio remains today just as it appeared when he worked there.

Jimenez's very deliberate and specific use of the expansive space in his studio reflected the unique creative process underlying the conceptual and aesthetic development of his ideas. Each area of the studio served a different complementary function. Jimenez set up a drafting table on the southwestern corner of the old stage (behind the floor-to-ceiling screen wall) where he worked on his sketches and drawings. If the drawing was intended to become a sculptural piece, Jimenez would tack it to the screen wall, and use it as a large-working drawing from which he developed the sculpture. He then used the front third of the studio floor in front of the screen wall to construct the sculpture's basic shape, creating a steel armature out of re-bar. He then shrouded this steel skeleton in quarter-inch wire hardware cloth. Jimenez would apply two layers of clay, totaling about 3-4 inches thick, over the wire mesh. He used the initial layer as a kind of base, and applied the second layer in a much more defined manner through which the sculpture began to take shape (Susan Jimenez, Personal Communication, May 1, 2014).

At this point, Jimenez used both the floor-to-ceiling screen at the studio's south wall and the open central space to transfer a two-dimensional image into a three-dimensional figure. Looking for correct proportion and line, he would align the clay sculpture with the drawing posted on the screen, and then, standing in front of the sculpture and screen, begin to make the final piece, shaping the clay forms to reflect the drawn forms in the background. Next, Jimenez moved the clay figure to the northern end of the studio, where he would sink shims into the clay to divide the fiberglass mold into sections. He then would paint a layer of resin onto the clay surface, which was subsequently coated in three layers of chopped fiber and four layers of woven roving. Once the molds dried and set, they were bolted together at the flanges, and the edges were then trimmed and the seams sanded. The piece was then cast and painted in acrylic urethane followed by three layers of clear coat (Susan Jimenez, Personal Communication, May 1, 2014).

¹³ The only public piece not made in Hondo was Jimenez's first public commission, *Vaquero*, for the city of Houston, Texas completed in El Paso in 1980-81.

¹⁴ These additional castings did not constitute mere copies of original castings. Rather, they represented original works, as Jimenez treated the textural surface of each differently and painted each in a different color scheme (S. Jimenez, Personal communication, May 1, 2014).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

The Hondo Elementary School studio housed all media and phases of Jimenez's artistic production until 1990, when he purchased an old apple processing warehouse on the other side of town. According to Susan, one day in 1989, while Luis was painting a sculpture in the studio, the family living quarters below filled with noxious fumes from the acrylic paints. Luis and Susan installed ceiling fans to dissipate the fumes. The following year they relocated the most hazardous phases of his sculptural process, the casting and painting to the former White Mountain Apple processing warehouse. Known as the "Apple Shed," the warehouse became Jimenez's second studio, and was integral to the completion of his public sculptures, print work, and lithography after 1990. This structure already had features critical to the creation of Jimenez's large-scale sculptures, including wide doorways and expansive, segregated space suitable for the different activities occurring within—casting, painting, printing, lithographic work, as well as the upstairs business office, where Susan primarily operated the business-related activities of Jimenez's art.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

Luis A. Jimenez, Jr.

Luis A. Jimenez, Jr., born in El Paso, Texas on July 30, 1940 to a Mexican immigrant and his Mexican-American wife, spent a childhood negotiating borders. As a first generation Mexican American, born to working-class Protestant parents, and living in the predominantly Mexican-Catholic Segundo Barrio neighborhood of El Paso, Jimenez grew up accustomed to 'outsider' status. Separated from Anglo-Americans by ethnicity and from other Mexicans by religion, he was raised outside of the mainstream of the Anglo and the Mexican-American communities, a situation Jimenez later would describe as "a minority within a minority" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 84).¹⁵ How this son of an undocumented immigrant, *un hijo de la frontera*, grew up to create the symbol of the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American Art, is a fascinating story.

La frontera had a significant impact on Jimenez. As Mexican-American writer, Rudolfo Anaya, has expressed, a place consisting of "two worlds, and the multiplicity of worlds which these two create as they meet" (Anaya 1994, 2). The people, plants, and animals of the Texas-Mexico border provided much of the images in Jimenez' art. Jimenez has indicated different dimensions of the border's direct impact on the imagery he employs, recalling, "I spent a lot of time up in the hills, which is the reason for all the little animals and things in the sculptures" (*Oral history interview with Luis Jimenez* 1985). Elsewhere, he referred to the dynamics of cultural fusion and the source of much of his imagery, asserting, "It's coming out of the border perspective...the cultures clash and you get hybrid vigor. You get flashy signs, you get bright color, energy. (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 84). Elaborating further on this influence, Jimenez has said, "Growing up on the border is really different from the general American experience. It's kind of straddling two cultures. There are obvious Mexican-American connections in the work. The attitudes toward color, toward form, and the approach in general is Mexican-American" (*Luis Jimenez*, 1977).

A Childhood on "La Frontera"

As the son of a Protestant Mexican immigrant sign-maker, living in El Paso, the largest border city in the United States,¹⁶ Luis, from an early age, was exposed to the visual arts of different traditions. He had early experience in industrial arts, working in his father's sign shop as a child. His was a childhood where he "learned to negotiate not only alternation...but the transnational context of everything from economics and politics to clothing and food" (Manthorne 2006, 31), critical elements which would come to frame much of his work.¹⁷ Born into a family with a

¹⁵ In an interview in 1984, Jimenez, recalling the particulars of his childhood, contended that his 'outsider' status was a benefit to his artistic development, asserting that such an ability to stand outside of both cultures, is "the role the artist has always been in" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 84).

¹⁶ Not only does El Paso, as its name would suggest, constitute a significant place of passage and movement along the United States' southern border with Mexico, it also lies adjacent to Ciudad Juarez, a city on the Mexican side consisting of more than two million people.

¹⁷ Jimenez's mother, Alicia, was born in the United States, having immigrated with her family (surname Franco) to

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

history of craftsmanship, Jimenez grew up a skilled draftsman even as a child. Jimenez's family nurtured his artistic talents and interests. Jimenez later recalled amusedly, "When I was young, I felt my skill was inherent in being Chicano, inherent in being Mexican, and that every Mexican not only had ability but also appreciated art. It was a kind of fantasy, but certainly within that context a positive thing" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 84).¹⁸

At the age of six, Luis visited Mexico City for the first time with his family. The place of his father's birth, Mexico City would later become important for Jimenez's development as a young artist. During this first visit to the great capital city, Jimenez spent hours immersed in the abundant public art, saw shows by Henry Moore, and visited the *Museo de Bellas Artes*. This trip was his first meaningful contact with public art. It was the first time the works of the triad of great Mexican muralists, Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, and Jimenez's eventual favorite, Jose Clemente Orozco left an impression on young Luis.¹⁹

The following year he began working in his father's sign shop. There, he helped to fabricate, weld, and paint the signs that the shop sold to businesses throughout the United States. As Jimenez recalled, by the age of six, "I had already learned to spray, weld, and (do) all of the craft part of what I do today" (Menard 1995, 40). Luis Jimenez, Sr.'s Electric Neon was no ordinary shop, however, and Mr. Jimenez no ordinary sign-maker. The elder Jimenez was a respected, award-winning craftsman. His work lit up buildings from the Las Vegas Strip to New York City's Times Square. Years earlier, in fact, as part of a national soap sculpture competition, a 16 year-old Luis Sr. won a scholarship to attend the Chicago Art Institute. As it was in the midst of the Depression, the offer did not materialize, and he was left to forge a career as a sign-maker and shop owner whose designs adorned businesses from the 1930s into the 1970s.²⁰ Young Luis worked in his father's sign shop through high school by which time he "could pretty much do everything in the shop," recalling, "I could weld, I could work tin, or I could paint" (*Oral History*, 1985).

Through his relationship with his father, Jimenez was able to learn valuable skills he later applied directly to his artistic career. But this relationship was never one of benign paternal apprenticeship. As Jimenez described the relationship, "...my father never ever sat down and gave me any training. It was a strange thing. My father and I have a very complicated relationship. It's highly competitive" (*Oral History*, 1985). Elsewhere, Jimenez asserted that his own career is an example "of the son living out the dream of the father" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 85). Art historians and critics have attributed "the bold color and fluid, sexy design of neon [that] informs much of his work" (Mitchell 1999, 100) to his work in the sign shop. Jimenez attributed the choice of fiberglass as his sculptural medium to vernacular elements of his upbringing, asserting "When I was growing up,

Texas from Chihuahua, Mexico just before the Mexican Revolution, and includes distant French ancestry with the additional surnames, duFahs and Couturiere (*Oral History*, 1985).

¹⁸ As Jimenez recalled in an interview years later, "there certainly was a tradition of craftsmanship on both sides of the family that I feel was very important in my own development." He went on to note that his mother's father was a highly regarded finish carpenter, and one of his mother's brothers was a skilled metal-worker. In addition, his paternal grandfather was a glassblower who made small glass figurines that Jimenez remembered his own father recalling many years later and his grandmother proudly displaying (*Oral History*, 1985).

¹⁹ Orozco had a particularly strong influence on Jimenez, as would later be seen in his seminal work, *Man on Fire*, which drew inspiration from Orozco's 1939 fresco, *Man in Flames*. The other major experiences with public art that Jimenez would have in his childhood were the 1930s era WPA-sponsored murals in El Paso's courthouse and other federal buildings.

²⁰ In fact, when Luis, Jr. arrived in New York City hoping to make his way in the art world, he recalled meeting people in the commercial art world who knew of his father's work. Jimenez also tells an amusing story about a visit to El Paso by noted architect Frank Lloyd Wright sometime in the early 1960s. Visiting the city to present a talk to the American Institute of Architects, Mr. Wright reportedly was less than enthralled by the quality of architecture evident in the city, save for one notable exception—the neon signs of Mr. Jimenez, Sr.—whose beautiful designs Wright singled out for praise (*Oral History*, 1985).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

whether it was in the sign business or playing around with cars, the tour de force of a flawless surface was desirable....Somehow fiberglass seems to do that" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 87).²¹

His background also provided a young Luis with direct experience in the application of art to a professional pursuit—art for a purpose, rather than an exercise in self-expression. Years later, while recalling the elaborate signs produced in his father's shop, Jimenez would assert, "Then it was considered crass, commercial stuff. Now I'm doing it in a fine art setting" (*Luis Jimenez*, 1977). As Jimenez affirmed, "As far as I'm concerned my father made works of art—though they were considered popular culture, and therefore 'low art.' In the case of my Dad and me, there's a lot of mingling going on" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984, 85). Indeed, this hybridity became an essential element to Jimenez's art—a hybridity first experienced through negotiating the social, cultural, and physical borders of his childhood.

Jimenez's College Years

After taking preliminary courses at Texas Western College from 1958 to 1959, Jimenez went on to the University of Texas, Austin. He pursued a degree in architecture, a choice reflecting his father's strong principles regarding the practical application of art. As Jimenez recalled, "My father was...very dogmatic. And he felt that art was a totally frivolous situation unless it was applied to something else" (*Oral History*, 1985). "He felt...you couldn't support a family with art. It was alright to have art as a hobby" (*Luis Jimenez*, 1977). Internalizing his father's counsel, Jimenez as a young student believed "in my own head....art wasn't something you were going to be that serious about..." (*Oral History*, 1985).

An architecture major for his first four years of this five-year program, Jimenez switched to art before his final year, partly due to the encouragement of his first wife. Luis would subsequently get married, change academic programs, and graduate in 1964 with a B.S. in art. Years later Jimenez described this formal switch from architecture to art in terms of creative freedom, recalling, "I realized that I didn't want to be an architect. I realized it wasn't for me. In architecture, it seemed like there were always going to be compromises". In interviews, Jimenez also discussed the implications for his undergraduate program of a "giant shake-up at the university," whereby "a very liberal, very arts-oriented program...became an engineering school," characterized by "very limited creativity" (*Oral History*, 1985). In turning his back on architecture to pursue a degree in art, Jimenez launched an illustrious career and caused a deep rift with his father. Luis would not speak to Luis, Sr. for another five years.²²

Jimenez's academic experience in architecture was crucial to his development as a studio artist. The discipline's rigorous problem-solving methods became Jimenez's approach to the creative process of sculpture. Contrasting the structured demands of architecture with a relatively less structured art curriculum, Jimenez affirmed, "I will say that there were some real advantages to going to architecture school rather than your standard art curriculum at the time....in the architecture school, you know, there was a way of approaching a problem. You had to define the problem, you had to develop a concept for approaching the problem, and you had to be systematic about it. And I still develop my sculptures the same way...as if I was going to do it, you know, for an architecture project...the basic approach is very methodical" (*Oral History*, 1985).

The following year Jimenez earned a scholarship from *Ciudad Universitaria* in Mexico City (the National University of Mexico) to study art, and moved to the capital city with his young wife to pursue further studies. However, Jimenez's expectations that he would study under the tutelage of a sculpture instructor were disappointed. He

²¹ Interestingly, it has been noted that the popular appeal of the flawless surface referred to here by Jimenez was looked at with abhorrence by the fine arts establishment at the time (Mitchell 1999, 101).

²² Though often mislabeled in the existing literature, Jimenez' undergraduate degree was a B.S in art, not a B.F.A. In an interview, he addressed this distinction, stating, "I went in and I just took enough courses to get a bachelor of science degree in art...Because with a lot of math, etc., it was easier for me to get a bachelor of science degree than it was to get a bachelor of Fine Arts. I was told it was not as good a degree, but in a sense I didn't care...I had been so long trying to get a degree. I was also at the time supporting myself and I was married..." (*Oral History*, 1985).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

recalled the experience as "...a big, just disappointment. I was down there about three months. He sent an assistant to teach the class and so I never really had any classes with him. And the classes were really set up for American students to go down and have fun" (*Oral History*, 1985). Jimenez was able to find apprenticeship work with the sculptor, Francisco Zuniga, but soon learned that his prospects for a career as an artist in Mexico were restricted to a limited number of government commissions or to the tourism trade. He recalled Zuniga telling him that for what he was doing creatively, he (Luis) needed go "to where the ideas were feeding in," or New York, rather than stay in Mexico (*Oral History*, 1985).

Though it was a disappointing experience for the ambitious artist, Jimenez himself credited his year in Mexico as critical to his development. The target of much racism as a young Mexican-American growing up in Texas, and member of a family that had maintained a physical tie to Mexico, Jimenez had come to view going to Mexico "as an important kind of pilgrimage" (*Oral History*, 1985).²³ Jimenez was also acutely aware of an aesthetic dimension to his Mexican experience: the power of the image. As Jimenez recalled, "It was important for me also, though, because...Abstract Expressionism was in fashion at the time. And I felt like the image—even though I came out of architecture school, even though I knew how to make nonobjective things because that's where I started out, I really felt that for me the image was important, and there wasn't a place for it that I could see in Abstract Expressionism. I could paint. That wasn't the problem. The problem was that I had certain ideals of what I thought my work should be and should do, and they didn't fit within the framework of Abstract Expressionism. And so what I did was I began looking for new models, and where I found new models was in the Mexican hills" (*Oral History*, 1985). While Jimenez clearly appreciated the aesthetic and ethnic dimensions of his cultural heritage, he also came to another equally powerful and significant understanding: that he was *not* Mexican. As he recalled years later, "When I got down to Mexico, I realized that I was an American. My whole way of thinking, my framework, etc., is American. I am an American of Mexican descent" (*Oral History*, 1985). With little financial resources and a pregnant wife uninterested in living in New York City, Jimenez was not able to pursue a career in art there. Instead, he and his wife returned to El Paso, where he took a job in the local public school system teaching junior high art classes. Over the course of the next year a series of events further delayed his move to New York.²⁴

Jimenez in New York

In 1966, Jimenez, finding little opportunity for a Mexican-American artist in El Paso, packed his van and moved to New York City. Jimenez was in pursuit of two elements absent for in Texas, a need for "exposure...a desperation to just work (on art)" (*Luis Jimenez*, 1977) and a need "to continue to develop" (*Oral History*, 1985). His dreams of gaining exposure, however, were still a number of years away. On just his third day in New York, Jimenez got a job as a recruiter for the Headstart program in the Bronx, allowing him to send money back to Texas to his wife and newborn child. Over the next three years, Jimenez saw intervals of wage employment (most notably as a social worker/community organizer for the city's Youth Board), interspersed with periods where he worked odd jobs that gave him time to work on his art. Around this time, Jimenez became an apprentice to the famous contemporary sculptor, Seymour Lipton.

One afternoon in 1969, after nearly three years of producing sculptures, drawings, and prints with exactly one sale to show for it, Jimenez drove a van full of his artwork to the Leo Castelli Gallery. Finding an empty ground floor space, he proceeded to set up three of his sculptures (*Oral History* 1985).²⁵ Luckily for Jimenez, the gallery was run at the time by Ivan Karp, patron of a man with a reputation for being sympathetic to young artists and a supporter of contemporary art. Impressed by Jimenez's work and his boldness, Karp displayed his sculptures and

²³ Jimenez recalls his father talking about his plans to retire at age 50 and move back to Mexico. In addition, his father's own mother regularly went back to Mexico to visit and live intermittently (*Oral History*, 1985).

²⁴ Luis' wife contracted hepatitis, and soon after Luis, himself, was gravely injured in a car accident in Idaho while accompanying a friend en route to Canada to avoid the Vietnam War draft. As a result of this accident, Luis was bed-ridden for months with a broken back and significant nerve damage (*Oral History*, 1985).

²⁵ Karp was well known then as not only a supporter of pop artists, but also the man who helped launched the careers of noted pop artists, Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg among others (Ramos 2012).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

prints at the respected Graham Gallery. The work attracted attention as well as sales, and then, as Jimenez recalled, "things happened pretty quickly after that" (Jimenez, quoted in Santiago 1993, 89).²⁶

Most of Jimenez's work from 1966 to 1969 was deeply satirical, provocative, and aggressive (often with sexual overtones), characteristics he employed to get noticed. According to Jimenez, "it was out of desperation that the ideas started getting more and more aggressive" (*Luis Jimenez* 1977). Some of his most famous sculptures from this period were relatively small fiberglass and epoxy-painted figures such as *American Dream* (1967), portraying the amorous embrace of a Volkswagen Beetle and a blond-haired woman, and *Barfly* (1969), depicting a drunken, degenerate Statue of Liberty hoisting a drink above her head. Perhaps Jimenez's best-known work during his years in New York was *Man on Fire*, produced in 1969, the year Jimenez called his most productive single year. He attributed this years later to being 29 years of age, recently divorced, and generally feeling as though he "was coming up from behind, and I needed to make up a lot of time" (*Oral History* 1985).

During his early years in New York, Jimenez sold mostly prints. He eventually achieved his goal of commercial success and recognition, holding a pair of one-man shows to great acclaim at both Graham Gallery and OK Harris, two of the city's leading contemporary galleries, and garnering high praise from notoriously tough critic, the *New York Times*' Hilton Kramer, who called Jimenez "an artist of remarkable vitality" (Kramer 1970). By the early 1970s, Jimenez, already a name within the Pop Art and post-Pop movements, was recognized nationally as "one of the most outstanding" young Mexican-American artists (Quirarte 1973, 115). With sculptures selected for exhibition in the 1973 Whitney Biennial in Venice, Italy, along with established Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, Jimenez had achieved the recognition he coveted as an artist. After the racially-imposed limitations Jimenez felt in Texas, New York was, in his words, "a totally level playing field. Being Chicano didn't mean much. I became a Latino" (Jimenez, quoted in Santiago 1993, 88). Here, he was a part of a national culture (Santiago 1993).

The Southwestern Roots of Jimenez's Public Art

In 1971, Jimenez left the center of contemporary art in the United States for the Southwest, where he would reside for the next thirty-five years. Once again Jimenez packed his art work into his van. This time he drove to the unlikely destination of Roswell, New Mexico. Jimenez convinced local businessman and known art patron Donald Anderson to subsidize the planned completion of his work, *End of the Trail*. Jimenez lacked the \$5,000 necessary to finish the sculpture. After securing Anderson's financial support, Jimenez spent the rest of the year in El Paso, completing *End of the Trail* at his father's sign shop. The following year, Jimenez moved to Roswell, where he would remain the Roswell Art Center's artist-in-residence for the next six years.²⁷

Such a move from New York City to Roswell, New Mexico could appear, on the surface, to constitute a creative or commercial setback for an artist intent on exposure and acclaim. However, Jimenez's return to the Southwest preceded the creation of larger, more ambitious, more accessible public pieces. As Jimenez affirmed, his move back west "was a conscious decision to work on pieces that were public in scale and so had special access" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984: 87). He expounded on this idea, recalling, "It was a question of developing a language, also a particular kind of technology, and it seemed to make sense to go West to do it. It also was going back to those visual images I know best and to a relation to that landscape, and my own background" (Jimenez, quoted in Baker Sandback 1984: 87). Jimenez's artistic output over the rest of his career,

²⁶ Jimenez's first one man show at the Graham Gallery in 1969, a significant achievement in the career of any young artist also marked a healing in the rift with his father. Estranged since 1963 when Luis left his undergraduate architectural program for a degree and career in art, his parents attended the gallery opening at which a proud father presented Luis with a gold watch engraved, "To My Son, the Artist" (*Man on Fire* 1994, 92).

²⁷ As part of their patron-artist arrangement, Jimenez got a place to live, a workspace, a living allowance, and assistants, and in return, Anderson would receive the original piece of any works created. Jimenez, as part of his process, retained the molds from which he would then routinely make four copies of each piece, making sure to keep for himself an artist's proof of each (*Oral History*, 1985).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

works often deeply embedded in their unique regional identity, would affirm Mexican-American writer Rudolfo Anaya's adage that "Art springs from place, not from abstract definitions" (Anaya 1994, 2).

Anderson commissioned Jimenez's first great sculptural series focused on Southwestern themes—a pair of related pieces now known as "*Progress I*" and "*Progress II*." Both drew upon the WPA murals, Jimenez saw during his El Paso childhood, depicting the changing human and natural elements on the western landscape. During this time, Jimenez also began to receive offers for one-man shows, holding nearly two dozen over the rest of the decade in a range of museums and galleries across the country, perhaps most significantly at Houston's Contemporary Arts Museum in 1974, a notable achievement for a Mexican-American artist at the time. On the occasion of this first major museum exhibition, critics touted Jimenez's considerable skills: "his technical virtuosity alone is commanding; in the service of his subject matter it lends his art real power" (Rabyer 1975, 88). "In an unconventional and refreshingly attractive way, Jimenez has managed to overcome the cheap gaudiness of his image prototypes to make serious, concerned statements about life—and art—in America" (Ibid.).

In 1979, Jimenez returned to El Paso to run the family sign shop, while his father recovered from a sickness that left him unable to work. It was also in 1979 that Jimenez received his first public commission from the city of Houston, Texas for a downtown park. Jimenez completed the controversial 16-foot *Vaquero* a few years later (1980-81).

Susan B. Jimenez

Susan B. Jimenez was born in Jerseyville, a small town in central Illinois. She was the youngest of four children born to Sarah Griswold Brockman and William F. Brockman. Art has long been a part of Susan's life, an involvement that extends back to when her parents first encouraged her childhood interest in drawing. Susan recalls a number of early influences that pushed her toward a life in art: visits to museums in St. Louis, reading books on famous artists' lives, and an uncle who was a studio painter. Susan went on to earn her bachelor of arts degree in 1980 from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, and a bachelor of sciences degree in art education the following year from SIU in Edwardsville, Illinois.

In 1980, Susan began working in the professional realms of studio art, from education to the management of business operations, a period that now spans 35 years of experience. Susan worked one year as a studio assistant in Delaware Water Gap, New Jersey, before moving back to Illinois. There she spent a year teaching art at Rushville High School. After receiving a special assistance award, Susan returned east to study sculptural casting at the Johnson Atelier in Trenton, New Jersey. It was there at the Johnson Atelier in 1984 that Susan met Luis, and, soon after that, the two fell in love. In 1985, Susan and Luis married, and moved to Hondo, New Mexico, about three hours north of El Paso. Nine years earlier, Luis purchased the former Hondo Elementary School, which included a classroom building and a gymnasium. Luis and Susan began renovations to the property. Luis spent a year teaching studio art at the University of Arizona. The couple then returned to Hondo, where they continued converting the old school property into a full-time residence and artist studio. The two of them, along with the help of 6-15 assistants, worked to make a more livable space out of the bottom floor of the old school's gymnasium. Meanwhile, Luis' sculptural and drafting work continued in the make-shift studio space in the upper floor of the gym. As Luis increased his production of sculptures and prints, Susan became unofficial manager of business operations, providing Luis with supplies and personnel, organizing exhibitions of Luis' work, and making sure the bills were paid. Susan also handled the sales of Luis' art.

The Jimenezes in Hondo

Jimenez's artistic production increased considerably after *Vaquero* as he rose to national prominence. His output grew steadily throughout the 1980s as he settled into his Hondo studio and home. More public commissions followed, expanding Jimenez's reach as a public artist. Among the works of this time period were *Sodbuster-San Isidro* (1982) a figure of farmer following his team of oxen made for Fargo, North Dakota, and Albuquerque, New Mexico's *Southwest Pieta* (1987), an homage to a familiar Chicano theme depicting the Aztec legend of a warrior mourning the loss of the lover draped over his lap.

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Throughout the rest of the 1980s and 1990s, Jimenez had a dozen more public sculptural commissions, over two dozen one-man shows, inclusion in a pair of major national touring exhibitions, and a major retrospective of his work in 1994 at the National Museum of Modern Art in Washington, DC.²⁸ In 1987, the Smithsonian Institute purchased his *Vaquero* figure and installed it at the front entrance to the National Museum of Modern Art, where it would come to symbolize this important national museum (Gaspar de Alba 1998).

Jimenez's commitment to community and local matters did not waver during this time. In fact, Jimenez was active in community issues in and around the Hondo, New Mexico area, serving on the local school board and supporting local activist efforts. He also continued to instruct students in studio art during spring semesters at the University of Houston throughout much of the 1990s (Menard 1995). Jimenez mentored many young artists including Sam Coronado, Benito Huerta, and Jesus Batista Moroles (Whitney 1997). According to Chicano artist Coronado, "Luis Jimenez is one of—if not the first and foremost—Chicano artists who has opened the door for the rest of us by producing art and imagery related to the culture in a mainstream way" by sending "the message to the mainstream art community that our art is legitimate" (Menard 1995, 44). Hispanic artist and professor Benito Huerta declared, "For him to be a Chicano or Latino or a Hispanic in his 30s having a one-person show at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, that made him a role model for a lot of other Latino artists. I remember saying to myself, 'If this Chicano can make it, I can too'" (Dingmann 2002, 58). But Jimenez's influence on other artists was not confined by ethnic or racial categories. He also mentored prominent non-Hispanic artists like Ted Kuykendall.

In the midst of all this activity, Jimenez was also a proud father, raising three young children with Susan.²⁹ In 1986, Luis and Susan had their first of three children, Luis Adan. The next year, their second son, Juan Orion, was born, and their daughter, Sara Alicia Xochil, followed in 1990.

Luis, Susan, and their children continued to live and work at their Hondo house and studio, where he created many of his best-known prints and sculptures until his untimely death in 2006. Over this span of time, Susan assisted Luis in the completion and placement of all of his large-scale, publicly-commissioned sculptures. She also organized over 126 solo exhibitions and a pair of major traveling retrospectives of Luis' work, maintained a group exhibition and lecture schedule on his work, and was the major force behind the posthumous completion of a number of prints and public sculptural commissions, including *Cesar Chavez* (2007) for the Houston Independent School District and *Mustang* (2008) for the Denver International Airport.

Jimenez's output of public sculpture continued throughout the rest of the 1990s and into the 2000s. These two decades saw the completion and site location of public sculptural commissions including *Steelworker* (1990), *Fiesta* (1990), *the Plaza de los Lagartos* (1995), and work begun on a number of pieces finished posthumously, including *Firefighters*, *Cesar Chavez*, and his final and largest public sculpture, *Mustang*, a 32-foot tall bucking bronco commissioned by the Denver International Airport.

The Jimenez House and Studios

In 1976 Luis Jimenez purchased the Hondo Elementary School. The building was originally a two-room school. Two additional rooms were added later. The gymnasium was completed by the WPA in 1935. The elementary school closed in 1955. The gradual process of converting the property into his home and work space, however, did not start until the early 1980s when Jimenez moved to Hondo after returning to El Paso in 1979 to run his father's sign shop and work on *Vaquero*. Soon after completing the original casting of *Vaquero*, Jimenez moved to his Hondo property, living on the east side of the lower level of the school where the home economics classroom and cafeteria once were. The upper-floor gymnasium became his studio. Conditions were spartan and amenities bare; Luis lived with no heat and only simple facilities for cooking and bathing.

²⁸ All of Jimenez's publicly-commissioned sculptures were created in Hondo, and are some of Jimenez's most well-known and best-loved works including *Sodbuster-San Isidro* (1982), *Howl* (1986-87), *Southwest Pieta* (1987), and *Border Crossing* (1989). The two national exhibitions were 1986's *Hispanic Art in the United States* and *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* in 1990.

²⁹ Luis' only other child, from his first marriage, was a daughter named Elisa, who became a successful fashion designer in New York and Los Angeles (Dingmann 1999).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

In 1985, Luis and Susan married and moved to Hondo. Susan helped Luis with the production of his art and converting the property into a full-time residence and artist studio.³⁰ The two of them, along with the help of a 6-15 workers, created a more livable space out of the bottom floor of the old schoolhouse. At first, Luis and Susan lived on the east side of the old building's ground floor, while the west side was renovated into living quarters (completed circa 1986). The basic footprint of the structure has remained the same. The ground level's interior floor plan was altered when they cut off the original center hallway and installed closets. They also added cabinets along the kitchen's west wall, as well as bookcases, to partition the adjacent bedroom at the room's south end. The Jimenezes also added a single-leaf door along the kitchen's east wall leading to the landscaped backyard.

A team of workers completed construction on the stone wall that currently surrounds the property in 1990. They built terraced walkways and gardens in the backyard leading from the rear east-facing kitchen doors up to the adjacent school building, completed in the mid-1990s. The backyard space underwent the addition of an aviary (in the late 1980s-early 1990s) behind the east-facing wall of the old schoolhouse building, an adjacent peacock pen added soon after, a treehouse near the center of the yard (circa late 1980s), and a trellis with grape vines (added between 1993 and 1995) next to a shed roof (circa early 1990s) running along the rear, east-facing wall. The treehouse once served as the armature for Luis' publicly-commissioned fountain structure installed at Horton Plaza in San Diego, California. After a car slammed into the north wall of the school in the late 1980s, the wall was rebuilt and buttresses added.

In 1988, the Jimenezes began to change the property accommodate Luis' creation of large-scale public sculptures. With *Southwest Pieta* completed in the Hondo studio, Jimenez discovered that the piece was too large to transport out of the upper-level studio. Consequently, Luis and Susan opened up the west-facing wall of the studio, expanding the doorways and installing large sliding steel doors. They added an overhead crane and loading dock on the west side of the building to load and transport the sculpture. Also, in the late 1980s, a large wall that rose from the stage floor to the studio's ceiling filled in the proscenium at the south end of the studio (where the old gymnasium's stage was located). The enclosed space behind the former stage became Luis' print studio. The now floor-to-ceiling wall was a convenient place for him to pin up his drawings as he transferred them to sculpture. Jimenez required additional modifications to the first-floor living space to allow the increased use of his upper-story studio space. When it became apparent that Jimenez's use of acrylic paints on his fiberglass-cast sculptures was causing chemical fumes to enter the living quarters below, Luis and Susan installed ceiling fans in the bedrooms to disperse the fumes. The only other additions were the shelves along the south side wall and the installation of oak flooring, originally from Red Rooster Bowling Alley in El Paso, in the print studio.

The classroom building was constructed in 1902. Jimenez, at first, used the classroom building as storage space to hold some of his sculptural molds and the many items salvaged from his father's shuttered sign shop in El Paso. At times the rooms on the building's north side have also served as living space for workers and studio assistants. Jimenez's primary assistant for many years, Jesus Medina, added a sink and bathroom, and lived there with his son for a few years. By 1992-93, the front rooms of the old school had also been converted into studio space for Susan to work on her iron sculptures and weaving.

In 1990, Luis and Susan bought the second of their three Hondo properties, the White Mountain Apple Shed, an old building once used in apple processing. Referred to simply as the Apple Shed, it is located east on Chavez Canyon Road just north of Highway 70. They purchased the building to move the potentially hazardous casting and painting operations away from the house. According to Susan Jimenez, they bought the larger and more versatile Apple Shed specifically for Luis to create a large-scale sculpture of a buffalo stampede that was commissioned by the Denver International Airport. From 1990 until Luis' death in 2006, the Apple was essential to Jimenez's sculptural process. Black Jack's barn is located on the same lot. The horse served as model for both his equestrian sculptures, including his first public piece, *Vaquero*, and his final one, *Mustang*.

³⁰ After the Hondo Elementary School closed in 1955, a local businessman purchased the school, which he used to process to process apples. He stored them within the thick rock walls of the gymnasium basement and cleaned and packed them above in the gymnasium. (S. Jimenez, Personal communication, April 30, 2014).

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

In 1996, Luis and Susan purchased a ranch they named "Los Angelitos," tucked behind the foothills to the southeast in Alamo Canyon. The ranch included a small house and expanses of lush valley, side canyons, rolling hills, and abundant wildlife that provided Luis with inspiration and images for his prints, lithographs, and sculptures.

Luis was killed on June 13, 2006 in a studio accident when a large piece of the 32-foot *Mustang* pinning him against a support beam.³¹ His funeral was held in the studio above his house, where he was killed. His obituary appeared in major American newspapers, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson ordered that flags be flown at half-staff, and the United States House of Representatives passed a resolution recognizing Luis's contributions to American art.

After Luis' funeral, his sculptural pieces that were on loan were returned to his studio space, where they remain today. The Apple Shed also remains largely in the same state as it was in 2006. Finished and unfinished works, molds, paints, fiberglass, lithography stones, sculpting and printing tools remain in the studio.

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³¹ *Mustang* was completed by Jimenez's studio assistants after his death, and currently stands outside the Denver International Airport where it has generated significant dialogue since its installation.

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

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Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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Interview with Luis Jimenez. Retrieved January 31, 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-7AKv9xqyk..>

Personal Interviews

Jimenez, Susan B. Interview by Steven Moffson and Rick Juliani. Tape recording and written record. Hondo, New Mexico, April 30-May 1, 2014.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Center for Southwest Research, UNM, ABQ, NM

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 19 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude References
(Carry Lat/Long coordinates six decimal places to the right)

Jimenez House and Studio

A	33.389042	-105.278374
	Latitude	Longitude

Jimenez Apple Shed

A	33.379843	-105.254085
	Latitude	Longitude
C	33.378065	-105.250796
	Latitude	Longitude
E	33.379340	-105.254686
	Latitude	Longitude

B	33.379825	-105.250785
	Latitude	Longitude
D	33.378022	-105.253518
	Latitude	Longitude

Jimenez, Luis A., Jr., and Susan B. Jimenez
House and Studio

Lincoln County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is indicated by a heavy black line on an attached map drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Jimenez House and Studios includes the intact property historically associated with the lives of Susan and Luis Jimenez and the artistic production of Luis Jimenez from 1985 to 2006.

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