



## NEH funding facts:

In FY2000, UC was awarded \$2.9 million from NEH.

The budget of the NEH is less than one percent of the budget of National Institutes of Health.

The UC Humanities Research Institute has been awarded a challenge grant from NEH (page 7).

UC Santa Barbara's museum has used NEH funds to help produce a major show about Chicano posters in California (pages 4-5).

NEH and UC Riverside are preserving California's local newspapers (page 3).

An NEH grant will help provide new storage facilities for the UC Berkeley Hearst Museum's collection of American Indian baskets (page 2).



UCLA's Fowler Museum is helping high school students study Ghanian kente cloth with help from NEH (page 6).

## NEH helps UC preserve California's multifaceted cultural heritage

The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the University of California \$2.9 million in grants in fiscal year 2000. These awards will help UC researchers preserve California's heritage at a time of dynamic growth and change.

NEH research funds are precious to UC scholars simply because there are so few federal dollars available. Created in 1966, NEH is the only federal agency dedicated to supporting research, education, and public programs in the humanities. After a period of strong growth in the 1970s, NEH has struggled with low and uneven funding. The NEH budget was slashed by 36 percent in 1995, when Congress considered eliminating the agency.

Since then, NEH chairman William R. Ferris has developed bipartisan support for the agency, and the NEH budget has grown to \$120 million for FY2001. By comparison, this amount is less than one percent of the funding for the National Institutes of Health, the largest of the federal research agencies.

Federal research funding has driven scientific discovery and technological innovation. Science and technology have helped create a digital age. Yet it is the humanities that will help us learn how to live – and live well – in this new world we have created for ourselves.

Modern Western humanities arose alongside the printing press, and will continue to evolve along with the Internet. High-tech think tanks like Xerox PARC in San Jose, CA, have begun to hire humanistic scholars. The critical, ethical and aesthetic investigations that are the hallmark of the humanities have become increasingly important in the continuing development of digital technology itself.

California's globalized, knowledge-driven economy is the sixth largest in the world. The glue that will hold this diverse and vibrant society together is a sense of what is best in our many cultures and histories. The NEH and UC are preserving the state's heritage to give all Californians a better sense of who we are, where we came from, and where we are going.

*Science and technology have helped create a digital age. Yet it is the humanities that will help us learn how to live – and live well – in this new world we have created for ourselves.*



# California's Hidden Local History

Most of California's local history does not lie in history books or in university archives. It lies, often forgotten and disintegrating, in county courthouse storerooms and in dusty attics.

For the sheer volume of information they contain, newspapers are the single most important printed records of human activity. The daily lives of the California's residents are documented in its newspapers, which often serve as the sole source of such information.

Starting with the Monterey *Californian* in 1846, California has produced roughly 20,000 newspapers in 39 languages. The NEH-funded California Newspaper Project has identified 11,000 of them, and is racing to microfilm the remaining copies before they disappear forever.

The California Newspaper Project is led by UC Riverside professor Henry L. Snyder, historian and head of UC Riverside's Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research. Leading the newspaper project has forced Snyder into many different roles – Sacramento lobbyist, archivist and rural detective.

It is the role of rural detective that Snyder has relished the most. In 1906, the state Legislature required counties to keep copies of the newspaper of record for the county seat. After the law lapsed, many collections were turned over to local libraries, historical societies or were left in storage. Many more were discarded. Snyder and his staff have visited every county seat in California, determined to find any remaining copies of the newspapers.



UC Riverside historian Henry L. Snyder among stacks of newspapers waiting to be microfilmed.

In the attic of a house in Winton that had once served as the office of the local publisher, Snyder found complete editions of four local newspapers. By the time he was ready to return with a rental truck to collect the newspapers, the house had been destroyed in a fire. "Thirty-five years of the local history of eight communities in northern Merced County were gone just like that," says Snyder.

The project cannot afford to document every single California newspaper it locates. Left out will be trade and high school newspapers, unless they are the only source of local history. Some newspapers from military bases will be included, along with the newspapers produced in the Japanese internment camps during World War II.

"Even with a wonderful, dedicated staff, the project sometimes seems overwhelming," says Snyder. "Many newspapers will have to be left out and will be forgotten. But the thousands we save will be a tremendous asset to the historians of tomorrow."



Assistant project director Andrea Vanek displays a Feb. 15, 1948, edition of the Hokubei Mainichi, a San Francisco Japanese community newspaper.

# CHICANO POSTERS

## *Politics as Art*



CEMA Director Salvador Güereña and UCSB Museum's Marla Berns review Chicano fine art posters.

For Chicanos, the poster was the vehicle of political awakening. At first just a flyer to announce community events, the poster evolved alongside the growing



"Huelga", Andrew Zemeño, 1965. Offset, collection of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

political activism of Americans of Mexican descent in the 1960s. As the farmworker leader Cesar Chavez began to organize in the fields, so Chicano graphic artists began to develop their craft in a series of

posters that called attention to the plight of farmworkers – and to the other concerns of Chicanos.

From Sacramento's Royal Chicano Air Force in the north, to San Diego's Centro Cultural De la Raza in the south, the artists' *centros* emerged as focal points for socializing, fostering new creative talent and printing posters. Working outside the boundaries of the mainstream art world, Chicano artists developed their own styles and sensibilities. Fusing contemporary community concerns with traditional Mexican motifs, artists like Louie "The Foot" Gonzalez, Ester Hernandez and Rupert Garcia created a brilliant synthesis of art and politics.

UC Santa Barbara's University Art Museum has brought together over 100 of these posters for *Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California*. The show features prints from UC Santa Barbara library's California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives (CEMA) and from the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Los Angeles.

Under the guidance of UCSB Museum director Marla Berns, the show developed after years of hard work by several people. Although smaller shows with narrower themes have displayed some of these posters, *Just Another Poster?* is the first comprehensive exhibit of Chicano posters, including a catalogue with several original essays by scholars in many different fields.

With the CEMA collection of almost 4,000 posters available nearby at the UCSB library, the exhibit was a natural for the UCSB museum. Berns first conceived the show in 1994 and formed an advisory committee that included members of the *centros*.

"Our main objective with the show was to bring to Chicano graphic arts the critical attention it deserves," says Berns. "The posters are important historically – and they are powerful as art."

The decision was made to have the show curated by an interdisciplinary group of scholars. This



"Sun Mad", Ester Hernandez, 1982. Silkscreen, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives.

# CHICANO POSTERS

## Art as Politics



"Viet Nam Aztlan", Malaquias Montoya, 1972. Offset, Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

team included UC faculty working in the areas of art history and ethnic studies, as well as outside scholars and curators – Tere Romo, the curator of San Francisco's Mexican Museum, Carol Wells, executive director of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, Salvador Güereña, director of CEMA, and art historian Holly Barnet of the University of New Mexico.

Although many of the Chicano posters are rooted in the struggle for farmworker rights, the exhibit also displays fine art posters printed by Chicano artists. Most of the early posters were printed by silkscreen, while some of the newer posters are produced with digital techniques.

There is not a single unified "Chicano style," any more than the political concerns of Chicanos are uniform. The variety of posters in the show express the variety within California's Chicano communities – from farmworkers' issues in the Central Valley to education politics in Los Angeles to border concerns in San Diego.

Common to Chicano poster art is a debt to the *Taller de Grafica Popular*, founded in Mexico City in 1937, which likewise produced posters in response to political events. Its collective methods provided a strong model for the formation of *centros* in California.

Another common motif is the *calavera* (skeleton) of the Mexican holiday *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). The artists' use of the *calavera* can be traced to the satirical art of Mexico's most famous late 19th century graphic artist Jose Guadalupe Posada, who critiqued political and social programs with skeletal figures.

The exhibit will tour with displays at the UCLA Fowler Museum, the Museum of California in Oakland, the Mexican Museum in San Francisco, the Merced Multicultural Arts Center and the Jersey City Museum of New Jersey.

The show has been partially funded by the NEH through the California Council for the Humanities, along with several other



"Yes on 14", Louie 'The Foot' Gonzalez, 1976. Silkscreen, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives.

funders. Says Berns, "We're grateful to NEH – via the California Council for the Humanities – and our other funders for their support of *Just Another Poster?* Without them we would have never been able to share this body of work with audiences in California and the rest of the world."



"¡Cesen Deportación!", Rupert Garcia, 1973. Silkscreen, collection of the artist.

# Ghanaian Kente and African American Identity

The strip-woven cloth called kente, made by the Asante peoples of Ghana and the Ewe peoples of Ghana and Togo, is the best known of all African textiles. Kente has its origins in the former Gold Coast of West Africa as festive dress for special occasions.

Although kente retains its esteemed role in Asante and Ewe society, during the post colonial era much has changed in the way the textile is used. Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, preferred it as formal dress and went so far to install it behind the throne in the Ghanaian Parliament. For this leader, kente symbolized African pride, and its artistry and vibrancy communicated his vision of the newly independent nation.

Over the past 40 years, the cloth has been transformed into hats, ties, shoes, and many other accessories on both sides of the Atlantic. Kente patterns have also developed a life



Family members of master weaver Samuel Cophie display his work in Bonwire, Ghana. Photo courtesy of Doran Ross, 1997.



Seth Cophie weaving kente in Bonwire, Ghana. Photo courtesy of Anne Spencer, 1977.

of their own and have been appropriated as surface designs for everything from Band-Aids and balloons to greeting cards and book covers.

Kente has come to evoke and to celebrate a shared cultural heritage, bridging two continents. During the 1990s, sale of African and African-style fabrics reached \$14 billion in the United States, and kente was by far the hottest-selling item. Originally a royal cloth, in the United States kente has come to both symbolize and project a popular conception of African heritage.

In 1998, UCLA's Fowler Museum published *Wrapped in Pride: Ghanaian Kente and African American Identity*. Funded in part by the NEH, the book documented not only kente as it is produced and worn in Ghana, but also what it means for African Americans. In a unique community program sponsored by the Fowler Museum, 18 high school students in Los

Angeles immersed themselves in the study of kente. They queried vendors, artists, community leaders, the clergy, and the public at large about its meaning and use. The students documented parades, family celebrations and public gatherings in which kente was displayed or worn. Class assignments and readings led them to consider aspects of African art and history rarely included in conventional high school courses.

The students discovered that within their communities opinions about the meaning of kente were as rich and varied as the patterns on the cloth itself. They documented heartfelt and often passionate expressions of the roles kente plays in private life, in business, and in the messages it conveys to audi-



Kente stoles featured at UCLA graduation, 1998. Photo courtesy of Betsy D. Quick.

ences and congregations. Does one feel different when wearing kente? What are the responsibilities imposed by kente's Ghanaian origins? Will kente survive the vagaries of America's fickle marketplace?

When woven together, the answers to these and other questions create a fascinating picture of how an art form and cultural tradition come to be defined and reconstructed in new and different cultural settings

# HUMANITIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE



The National Endowment for the Humanities recently awarded the UC Humanities Research Institute a generous challenge grant. Thanks

to the institute's NEH Challenge Grant Campaign, HRI is accomplishing three crucial objectives. One is the establishment of a fund for residential fellowships for scholars from outside the University of California. Another is the creation of restricted funds for specific disciplines and areas of research. Finally, the institute will use endowment funds for joint programs to be undertaken with other centers of research or institutions such as California's state and community colleges and secondary schools.

The UC Humanities Research Institute was established in 1987 to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge due to both specialized training and the structure of most educational institutions. By bridging gaps between and among humanities disciplines, and by breaking down barriers that isolate those disciplines from the social and natural sciences, such interdisciplinary collaboration often leads to new knowledge.

HRI is located on the campus of UC Irvine. Its space includes 23 individual offices for resident fellows. At the heart of HRI's mission are residential group research projects. Through these programs, HRI serves as a catalyst for research, mobilizing the strengths of the UC system to foster intellectual community across and beyond campus boundaries.

One example is the 1990 project, "Bioethics: Anticipating Ethical Issues of New Development in Genetic

and Genetic Technology." This project examined the compelling moral, political and social issues raised by genetics. The project team is comprised of a broadly interdisciplinary group of scholars – including physicists, biologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, philosophers, and lawyers. The book on their findings is entitled *Are Genes Us? The Social Consequences of the New Genetics*, published by Rutgers University Press.

Another project, "Microcosms: Objects of Knowledge," asks what role museum collections will play in a world where most knowledge is stored digitally. The project focuses on how UC uses its collections of objects to produce knowledge. "Microcosms" will eventually

produce a policy paper recommending how UC's holdings of objects – which number second only to the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution – should be treated.

HRI is launching another research initiative on immigration. "Starting Over, Moving On: Revisioning a 'Nation of Immigration'" focuses on issues and developments surrounding immigration within the larger context of globalization. It concerns especially the importance of cultural dimensions of immigration. In posing questions of social

value, belonging, citizenship and identity, HRI seeks to make available for wider discussion one of the critical political and cultural issues of our time.

"The NEH funds will enable the institute to include more specialists from institutions outside of the UC system in its work," says UC President Richard C. Atkinson. "In addition, the endowment will make it possible for the institute to establish programs with California's state and community colleges."



Humanities fellows from the Microcosms project at HRI on the UC Irvine campus.

# UC Humanities Commission report expected later this year

Two years ago, University of California President Richard C. Atkinson established a universitywide commission to recommend ways of ensuring the continued vitality of humanities programs at the university.

The commission's charge was framed by the understanding that the humanities are vital to the mission of the University of California as the most distinguished land-grant university in the United States, and that strengthening and honoring the contributions of the humanities to research, teaching and public service will benefit the university, the state, and the nation.

The Humanities Commission consists of 24 distinguished faculty and is co-chaired by University Professor Hayden White of UC Santa Cruz and Karen Lawrence, dean of the School of Humanities at UC Irvine. The commission has divided its focus into five areas: graduate student support and employ-

ment, interdisciplinarity, literacy and ethics, research support and multicampus collaborations, and outreach. The commission will issue its recommendations later this year.

“The humanities are committed not only to the study, but also and above all to the promotion of social values and cultural ideals of a community,” says White. “The humanities presume that communities change over time and that their values must be constantly revised and refurbished.”

*Hayden White*

Although the work of the commission focuses mostly on the humanities within the University of California, it also sees its task as helping the university formulate its 21st century role as a national and international model for the humanities in higher education.



*The humanities are committed not only to the study, but also and above all to the promotion of social values and cultural ideals of a community. The humanities presume that communities change over time and that their values must be constantly revised and refurbished.*

#### For more information about research funding at UC, please contact:

Allison Rosenberg  
Director, Research Policy and Development  
Office of Research  
UC Office of the President  
1111 Franklin St., 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200  
voice: (510) 987-9474  
fax: (510) 987-9456

#### In Washington, D.C. please contact:

UC Office of Federal Government Relations  
1523 New Hampshire Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
voice: (202) 588-0002  
fax: (202) 785-2669

#### For Recent Publications please see:

[www.ucop.edu/research/profiles.html](http://www.ucop.edu/research/profiles.html)

Publications about federal research funding at UC are produced quarterly by the UCOP Office of Research with assistance from the UCOP Office of University External Affairs.

writing: Michael Barnes  
editing: Phillip G. Torrez  
design: Linn Lee