

## Smithsonian purchases a work by Archive Member Chuck Ramirez

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Seven Days: Breakfast Tacos, the limited edition large-format photograph by archive member Chuck Ramirez (1962-2010) has been purchased by the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

According to Ruiz-Healy Art, which handles the Ramirez estate, Ramirez was a major force in the San Antonio art community before his untimely death in a 2010 cycling accident. A 2002 Artpace resident, Ramirez' work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. As an artist and graphic designer, Ramirez employed the visual and conceptual techniques found in contemporary advertising and package design, isolating and re-contextualizing familiar objects to explore cultural identity, mortality, and consumerism through his photographs and installations.

Seven Days: Breakfast Tacos is representative of this tendency. One in a series of seven highly formalized tableaux documenting the remains of seven distinct, already-consumed meals, Breakfast Tacos is replete with specific references: foil taco wrappers, plastic salsa cups, beverage cans and mostly-empty coffee mugs. Taking visual cues from local tastes and popular culture (often including references to regional food chains, characteristic packaging, or culturally specific events) as well as the long artistic tradition of the vanitas still life painting, the Seven Days series addresses the fragility of life, by using symbolic reminders of life's impermanence.

Ramirez's work will be included in the upcoming exhibition Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art, which will be on view at the American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. from October 25, 2012 to March 2014.