



**Finding aid to the
Lee W. Lenz amate collection,
1944-2017, undated**

**California Botanic Garden
1500 North College Avenue
Claremont, California 91711
909-625-8767
<https://www.calbg.org>**

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Lee W. Lenz amate collection

Dates: 1944-2017, undated

Collection Identifier: C.4

Creator: Lenz, Lee W.

Extent: 3.7 linear feet (4 boxes)

Abstract: The collection contains Mexican amate paper crafts, objects associated with the manufacturing of amate paper, other traditional Mexican handicrafts, and reference materials on papermaking. The collection was assembled by Lee W. Lenz, former director of California Botanic Garden.

Finding aid author: Rachel Poutasse

Languages: Collection material is in English and Spanish.

Repository: California Botanic Garden, 1500 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711; 909-625-8767; <https://www.calbg.org>.

Administrative Information

Access restrictions: The collection is open to research. Contact the repository for access.

Acquisition Information: The collection was donated to California Botanical Garden by Lee W. Lenz in 2017. One book was donated by Sam Garcia in memory of Lee W. Lenz in 2020.

Preferred Citation: Lee W. Lenz amate collection, 1944-2017, C.4, California Botanic Garden, Claremont, California, 91711.

Publication rights: Copyright of the materials in this collection is held by California Botanic Garden. Consult the Librarian for details.

Processing Information: The collection was processed by Irene Holiman in 2017. The finding aid was written by Rachel Poutasse in 2021.

Indexing Terms

Contributors

Lenz, Lee W.

Subjects – Topics

Indigenous art--Mexico

Paper art--Mexico

Genres and Forms of Materials

Amate paper

Books

Cut-paper work

Historical Note

Amate is a bark-based paper with origins in pre-Columbian Mexico. Originally used for religious purposes and in the creation of codices, the Spanish attempted to eradicate indigenous papermaking practices during the colonial period. However, papermaking knowledge and crafts survived among some indigenous groups, most notably the Otomi and Nahuatl. In the 20th century, there was a resurgence of interest in amate paper crafts, with new commercial uses emerging in addition to traditional ritual purposes.

The collection was assembled by Lee W. Lenz (1915-2019), former director of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (now California Botanic Garden). Some items in the collection were used for a 2017 California Botanic Garden Library exhibition.

Sources:

Sandstrom, Alan R. and Pamela E. Sandstrom. *Traditional Papermaking and Paper Craft Figures of Mexico*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

Scope and Content of the Collection

The collection contains Mexican amate paper crafts (cut-outs and paintings), papermaking materials, and other handicrafts. The names of creators, origins, and dates of creation of the crafts and papermaking materials are unknown in nearly every case. The collection also includes reference materials on Mexican papermaking and materials for a 2017 California Botanic Garden Library exhibition.

Series I. Mexican handicrafts and papermaking materials contains amate paper cut-outs, amate paintings, objects used in the manufacture of amate paper such as bark fibers, and a small number of other traditional handicrafts.

Series II. Reference and exhibition materials contains publications about Mexican papermaking, a map of Mexico, and interpretation from the 2017 exhibition.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series.

Series I. Mexican handicrafts and papermaking materials, undated

Series II. Reference and exhibition materials, 1944-2017, undated

Container List

Series I. Mexican handicrafts and papermaking materials, undated

Box 2, Folder 1: **Amate fibers, undated**

Box 3, Folder 2: **Amate paintings, undated**

Scope and contents note: Label on original packaging reads “Hecho en Guerrero México, Artesanías ‘El Cavario’” with contact information.

Box 3, Folder 3-6: **Amate paper figures, undated**

Box 3, Folder 1: **Amate tribute papers, undated**

Box 2: **Board with amate fibers, undated**

Box 4: **Miniature ceramic candelabras, undated**

Box 4: **Volcanic stone for pounding amate fibers, undated**

Series II. Reference and exhibition materials, 1944-2017, undated

Box 2, Folder 2-4: **Black-and-white prints of the papermaking process, undated**

Scope and contents note: Images reproduced from *Witchcraft and Pre-Columbian Paper/Brujerías y Papel Precolombino*.

Box 1: ***El Papel Indígena Mexicano: Historia y Supervivencia*, Hans Lenz, 1948**

Box 3, Folder 7: **Interpretation for exhibition, 2017**

Box 1: **Map of Mexico, 1995**

Box 1: ***Mexican Indian Paper: Its History and Survival*, Hans Lenz, 1961**

Box 1: ***The Aztec and Maya Papermakers*, Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, 1944**

Box 1: ***This Week/Esta Semana*, Federal Tourist Bureau, 1946 June 22-28**

Scope and contents note: Contains article on papermaking by Bodil Christensen.

Box 1: ***Traditional Papermaking and Paper Cult Figures of Mexico*, Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela E. Sandstrom, 1986**

Box 1: ***Witchcraft and Pre-Columbian Paper/Brujerías y Papel Precolombino*, Bodil Christensen/Samuel Marti, 1988**