

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

October 06, 2021

HDRC CASE NO: 2021-486
ADDRESS: 327 W COMMERCE ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 105 BLK LOT ARB A-9, A-10 & A-13
ZONING: D, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Andi Rodriguez/Centro San Antonio
OWNER: Patrick Shearer/331 WEST COMMERCE L P
TYPE OF WORK: Mural installation
APPLICATION RECEIVED: September 09, 2021
60-DAY REVIEW: Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

The applicant requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install a mural on the east elevation of 327 W Commerce.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Exterior Maintenance and Alterations

2. Materials: Masonry and Stucco

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Paint*—Avoid painting historically unpainted surfaces. Exceptions may be made for severely deteriorated material where other consolidation or stabilization methods are not appropriate. When painting is acceptable, utilize a water permeable paint to avoid trapping water within the masonry.
- ii. *Clear area*—Keep the area where masonry or stucco meets the ground clear of water, moisture, and vegetation.
- iii. *Vegetation*—Avoid allowing ivy or other vegetation to grow on masonry or stucco walls, as it may loosen mortar and stucco and increase trapped moisture.

iv. *Cleaning*—Use the gentlest means possible to clean masonry and stucco when needed, as improper cleaning can damage the surface. Avoid the use of any abrasive, strong chemical, sandblasting, or high-pressure cleaning method.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

i. *Patching*—Repair masonry or stucco by patching or replacing it with in-kind materials whenever possible. Utilize similar materials that are compatible with the original in terms of composition, texture, application technique, color, and detail, when in-kind replacement is not possible. EIFS is not an appropriate patching or replacement material for stucco.

ii. *Repointing*—The removal of old or deteriorated mortar should be done carefully by a professional to ensure that masonry units are not damaged in the process. Use mortar that matches the original in color, profile, and composition when repointing. Incompatible mortar can exceed the strength of historic masonry and results in deterioration. Ensure that the new joint matches the profile of the old joint when viewed in section. It is recommended that a test panel is prepared to ensure the mortar is the right strength and color.

iii. *Removing paint*—Take care when removing paint from masonry as the paint may be providing a protectant layer or hiding modifications to the building. Use the gentlest means possible, such as alkaline poultice cleaners and strippers, to remove paint from masonry.

iv. *Removing stucco*—Remove stucco from masonry surfaces where it is historically inappropriate. Prepare a test panel to ensure that underlying masonry has not been irreversibly damaged before proceeding.

FINDINGS:

- a. The property located at 327 W Commerce is a 2-story brick commercial structure constructed circa 1890. The east elevation facing San Pedro Creek was previously a parti-wall and consists of exposed brick and layers of plaster and paint. The elevation features previous interior opening that have been enclosed. Centro is hiring local artists to enliven the streets, reflecting positive energy onto local businesses within the neighborhood. Centro San Antonio's initiative, "Art Everywhere," is designed to bring color and life to the urban core. These temporary art

installations are intended to grace buildings downtown and tell the community's stories with artistic vibrancy. The mural proposed is "En El Norte" by Alan Serna. The proposed mural is temporary and can be removed at the owner's request. The property is within the Zona Cultural.

- b. PUBLIC ART – The applicant has proposed to install a mural on the east elevation of the structure. The mural proposed is "En El Norte" by Alan Serna, depicting three generations of women in the artist's family. "Art Everywhere" deliberately selects works of art that tells personal stories from the community, especially in Zona Cultural. The mural may be as large as 15' x 20' feet. Composition of the piece is proposed as artwork on a removable substrate which will not harm the environment nor the building; this mural is temporary and can be removed at the owner's request. Staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- c. MURAL INSTALLATION – The applicant is requesting to install a public mural that will be painted offsite on a substrate material that will be installed on the brick. Previous mural installations on brick have been approved to use Polytab, a non-woven fabric that is commonly part of large public mural art projects. Polytab is applied to masonry often using Nova Gel and squeegeed to the surface. A gel coated is generally applied at the edge seams to create a seamless effect. The Polytab can be easily removed using hand tools with minimal, if any, damage to the existing brick. Centro has proposed to install the mural on a thin vinyl substrate similar to Polytab, that does not need to be primed with multiple coats of acrylic, as it is already weatherproof and provides a cleaner removal of the material and adhesive. Centro has proposed to use eco-friendly ink and adhesive that will not contain petroleum solvents. As the proposal does not include painting the exterior historic brick façade, staff finds the proposal consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines but finds that final product specifications for the substrate should be submitted to staff for review.
- d. According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, historically unpainted brick should not be painted. Brick structures built prior to the 1870s were largely constructed of handmade bricks, which were generally softer, more porous, and weaker than bricks made at the turn of the 20th century. These handmade bricks were frequently painted or coated because the strength of the brick was insufficient without a coating for stabilization. However, as machine-made bricks became the standard during the latter half of the 19th century, bricks became inherently stronger and did not require paint or coatings for protection and strength. These bricks commonly featured harder "dress" surfaces, which were meant to face the exterior of the structure and remain unpainted. Painting historically unpainted brick on structures of this era can lead to trapped water in the porous material, eventually destroying the brick due to the damaging effects of water infiltration and freeze-thaw cycles. The existing brick on the east façade was formerly a parti-wall that was devoid of ornamentation. Staff finds modifications to non-primary facades and parti-walls appropriate and finds that the proposed temporary mural and paint product on a removable substrate will not negatively impact the integrity of the existing masonry.

RECOMMENDATION:

Due to the applicant's extensive research into the proposed application and the request to install the mural on a temporary removable substrate, staff finds the proposal appropriate.

Staff recommends approval based on findings a through d with the following stipulation:

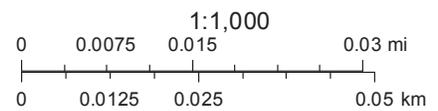
- i. That the applicant submits final product specifications for the proposed substrate to staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

City of San Antonio One Stop

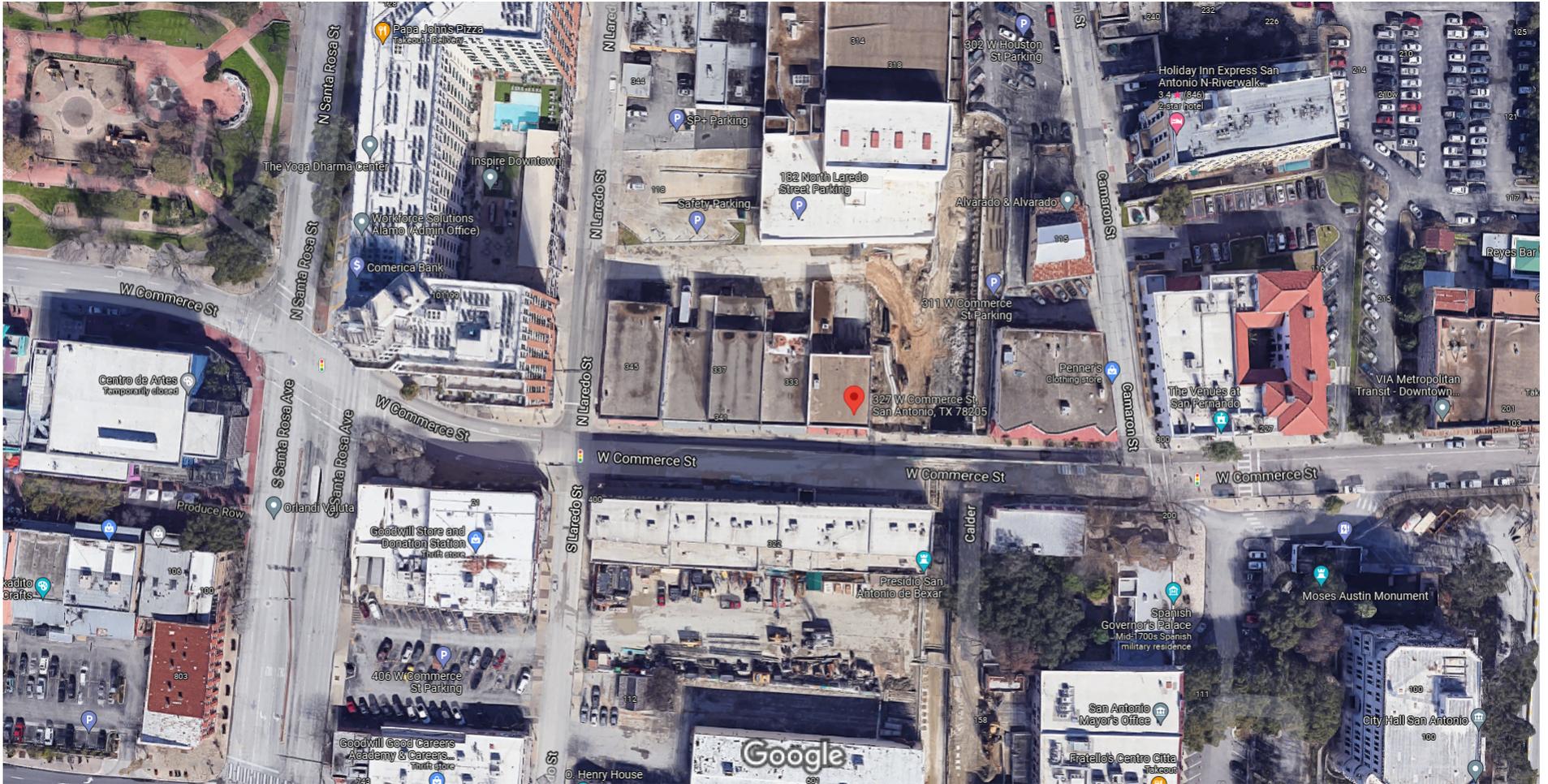


October 1, 2021

 User drawn lines

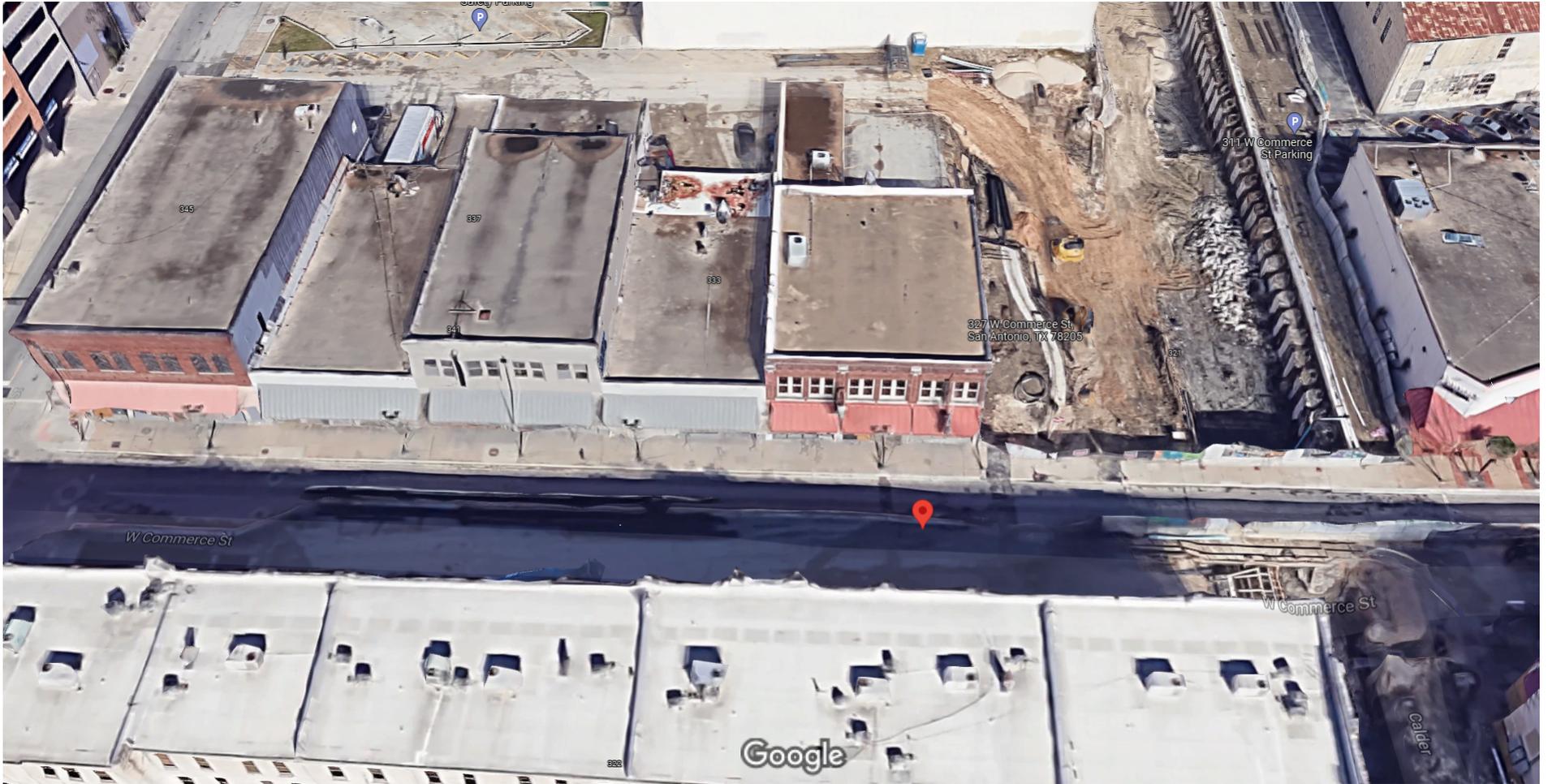


Google Maps 327 W Commerce St



Imagery ©2021 Google, Map data ©2021 Google 50 ft

Google Maps 327 W Commerce St



Imagery ©2021 Google, Map data ©2021 Google 20 ft

Google Maps 327 W Commerce St



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TEXAS STATE

Golden 50's

WEST

10

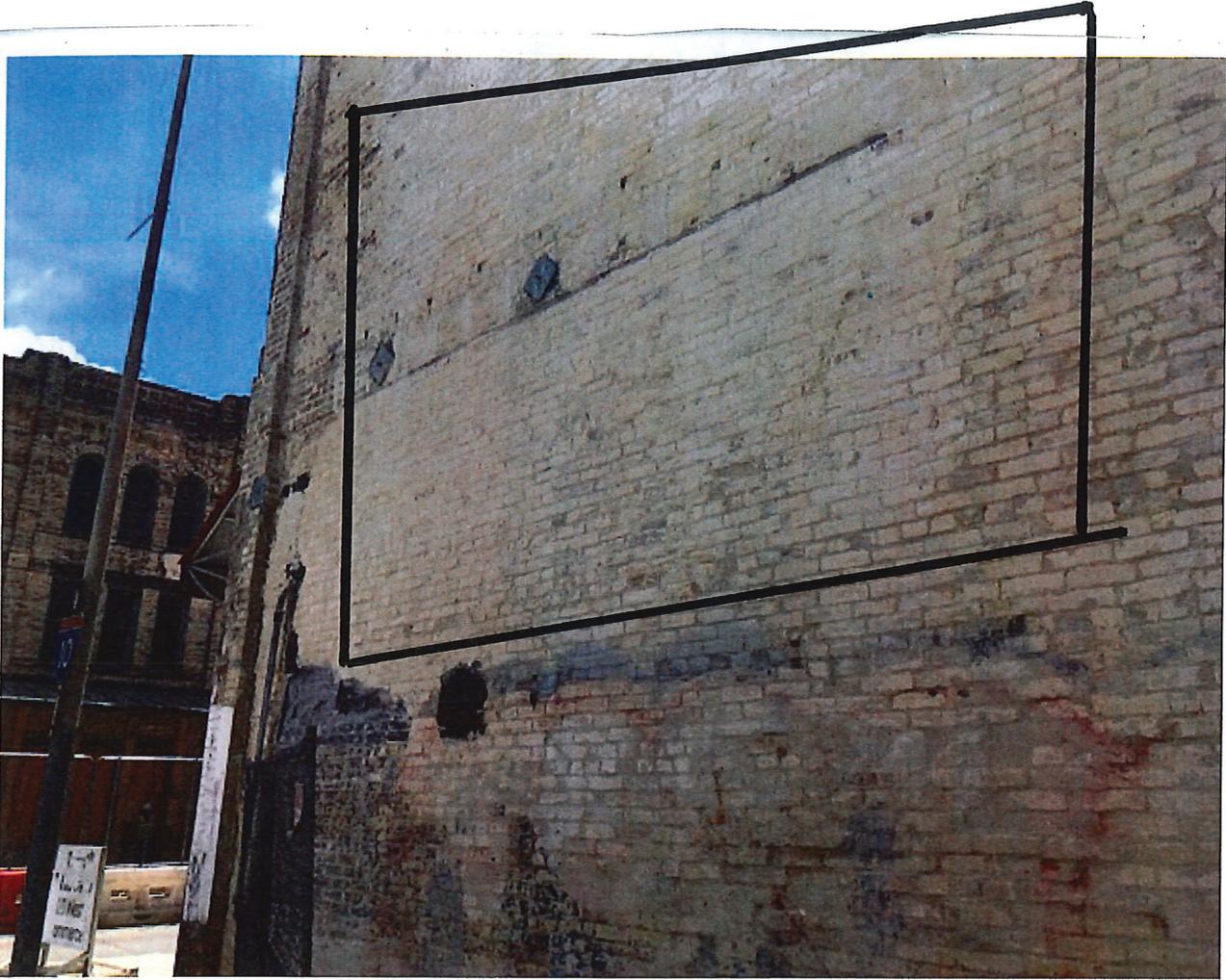
RIGHT LANE

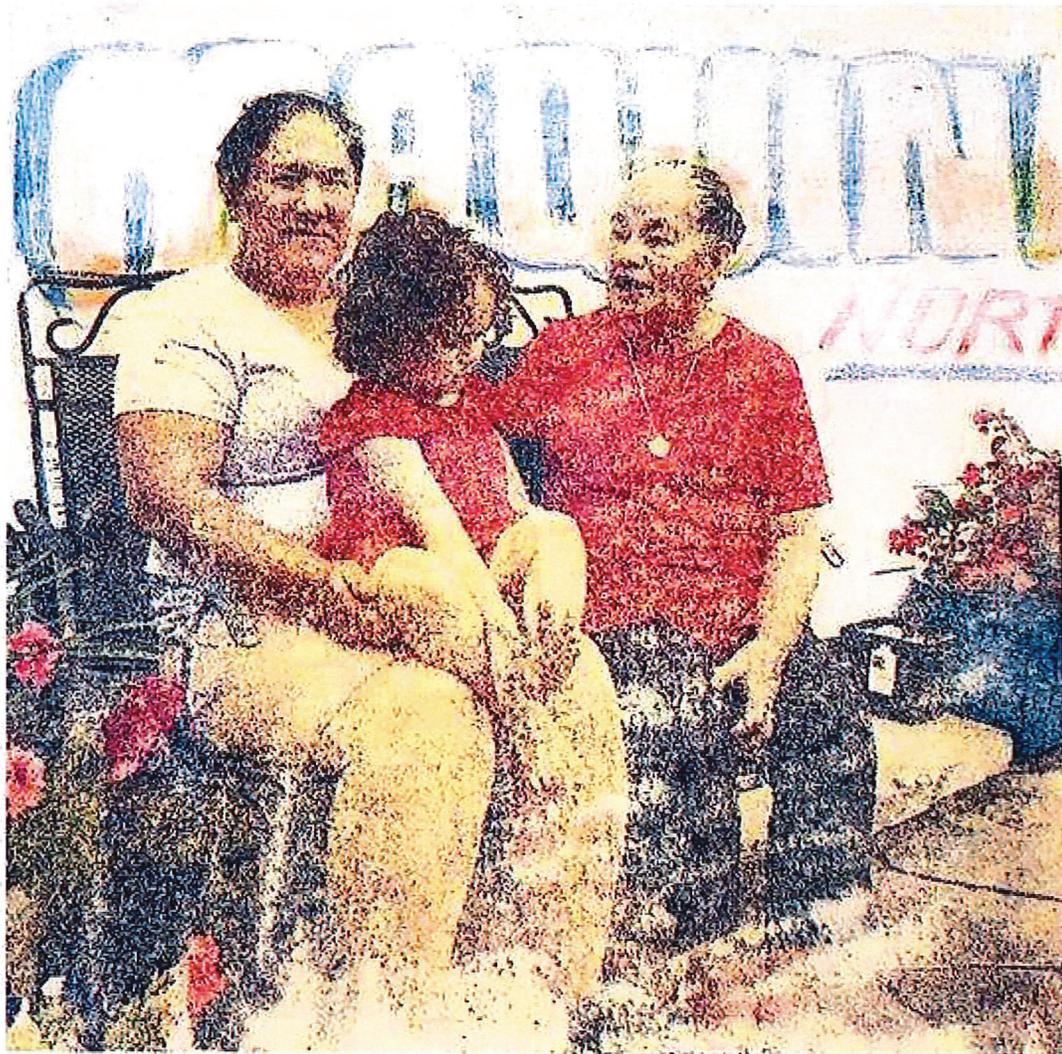
Texas
Public Radio
321 West
Commerce

HOT TAMALES DAILY 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM

No Left Turn

327 W
Commerce





2020

Transfer Photograph, Acrylic Paint, Graphite, Colored Pencil

10 x 10

La Maquina Norteña is from a series titled En El Norte (In the north) that depicts my family's roles in the United States and pairs them with a series of works titled En El Ranch (In the Ranch) to show what ives were like prior to coming to the United States. This piece depicts 3 generations of Serna Women, My mother, My Grandmother and My Niece. La Maquina Norteña translates to "The Northern Machine". Since moving to