



FIGURE 38. Untitled

Working with My Dad



When I came back from graduating, he felt that I was old enough that I could help. But I'd rather run around and cause trouble. When I came back, the Elders that I used to learn from were gone. My mom was working at the boarding school at Santa Rosa as a cook, and my dad had picked up his own business of selling stuff out of his truck. He would drive to different villages, and then the following week, he'd start all over again. Sometimes he wouldn't make it to all of them. Then he'd wait until the following week to go to them on a different route.

There is one [artwork] that I did a couple of years ago that was a big tree with this person who sells produce and different food and stuff to the people (fig. 38). He would go in the wagon and pick up the stuff that he's going to sell, and he'd go back to each village, and he'd stay for a couple of days and sell to the people who would come around. He would be trying to find a special tree and park under there, and the people would come. The people didn't have any money, so they'd bring chickens and trade for that. The tree was more extended, so I spent a lot of time, trying to make it a certain way. That was interesting.

He started with that when I was eight or nine. But things started changing in the sixties. That's when he actually bought a truck, just to sell. Before that he used to just sell at home. There would be a line of people. They would come over and buy stuff anytime, twenty-four hours. At night somebody'd be knocking on the door, wanting to buy

cigarettes. I wouldn't let them in. But during the day, we'd leave the door open and they would come in. You'd see them coming, so you are already waiting and tell them, "Come in," and they could come in. They wanted the bottled soda. And then when drunks come over, they don't have no sense of respect for anybody, for you or for close relatives. They just create trouble with somebody. They drive away the customers. To take care of that problem, he quit selling. He was giving everybody credit who didn't have any money.

There used to be a store there of my mom's relatives. That's where he got the idea of doing it because they made their house into a store. When we went to church, they'd take me over there and get a soda for ten cents for a bottle. That's where he got his idea and started doing it.

He quit doing the planting and stuff like that because when the car came that took his energy because you could move around faster. A lot of things changed when electricity and water came. They had quit hauling water because water was brought to our house. The horses that we had, we gave them away, and some of them we sold. We could use the truck and the car to get around.

It got to a point where he tried to do what he had done earlier. He'd go to the cotton fields, where they would chop cotton. But there were



FIGURE 39. *Memory of the Music*

no jobs there. So he let people know if they still want to do that he would drive them. But that means that you have to get up early in the morning to get there by six o'clock to work all day, and then come back late at night, drop everybody off, come home, eat, and go to sleep. And early the next morning, get up and go again, pick up everybody, and try to do what they used to do. It was long. Back then it was a dirt road, so it took them about an hour or hour and a half to get where they were going. Then coming back, somebody would want to stop in town, and next thing that you know, some of them head for the bars right away, so it's hard to get them out of the bars to go back home. And tomorrow we'll be back again. He finally quit, and he started selling different things like food out of his truck.

He would get beer or wine. The districts vote on whether it is dry or wet. If you are a dry district, then you can have a fiesta, a celebration, but you have to quit at one o'clock. The wet district goes all night. They dance all night like they used to all over the reservation. 'Til it got bad. He got an old Coke machine, and the only way he could hide it was to put all the stuff on the bottom of the case. The whole thing opens up, but he would put it at the bottom and put the hood on top in case the cops stopped him.

Before, it was mainly the older people and the people who drank wine. Then the drinking age got younger and they wanted beer, so he got that. That's when I really started drinking. If you go out and sell beer and people find out you have alcohol, then people come out of the woodwork, your relatives and stuff. At first they would buy, but when they run out of money, they would ask for credit. He used to give it to them, but they would never pay it back. When he'd try to get the money back, they would just get mad. Then the relatives won't talk to you anymore, won't come over to your house because they owe you money. So everything changed.

He got mad, quit, and started selling soda and candy. From that he learned that he could get other things, things that the O'dham ate a long time ago, that are no longer around because they don't plant anymore. So he goes and buys the stuff where he can find it, the stuff they used to eat. And he starts driving to the different villages, going west, south, east. From that, I started going with him. I just watched him, how he did it. I would drive the truck and go to the different villages, and he would tell me which way to start. Later, it came to where he would drive, and when we got to the village, I would stay in the back

and he'd drive up to the house and I'd hand out the stuff that everybody wanted. He would always carry potatoes and whatever he could get that the people eat, like the little squash, *shapijk*. He would go to the fields in Casa Grande or Coolidge and pick out the ones that he wanted, the little ones.



FIGURE 40. Untitled

And they had *ga'iseesa*, that's corn that's roasted and then ground up real nice. Then you cook that and put a little lard in it. It tastes real good. Pretty soon he started selling the ground-up stuff, but it was in big chunks. But they wanted it real fine. So they'd usually come back and complain about the corn. When it got too much, he usually would tell whoever buys it that you have to grind it up some more. That went on until Mexicans started selling on this side [of the border]. So then he quit.

Watermelons and cantaloupes, honeydews. They have their own name for each one. The honeydew, they call it *miloni* . . . "old man cheeks with his nose," smooth and every-

thing. And cantaloupes they call *o'oki ha tohtoni*, "old women's knees," because they are rough. They have different names for the watermelons. During watermelon season, he'd go fill up the truck, a big truck with a lot of watermelons, take it home, put them in boxes, and then start selling them, taking them around. Even when the season ends, and they'd all toast and rot, he would still take them, and the old people still bought them because they wanted something juicy. Sometimes you could barely taste the watermelon. I would tell him, "Why are you still selling this? I thought they were past the sweetness phase." But they would still ask for them. The taste didn't matter; it was the juice that they wanted. Because I guess a lot of them were toothless. [laughing]

During the winter season, starting in December or in November, they'd go to the orchards and get big boxes of oranges and dump them in the truck and fill it up and drive home. And they [my parents] used to have apricot trees. They would cover them so the birds wouldn't eat them. They would grab them when they were still green because they



FIGURE 41. Untitled

wouldn't leave them up there for the birds. So they would let them ripen in the box. He already had the boxes, the heavy-duty boxes, and filled those up and stacked them and then started selling them. Especially during the winter when there is no fruit growing around the reservation, a lot of the older people really like them because they want something with juice. They would say, "Fill it up for a dollar," or anything that is small enough to put in their bag.

He would go to Mexico, by The Gate [an informal crossing point at the border between the United States and Mexico near Sasabee, Arizona], buy cheese, cut it up, weigh it, and put prices on it. It would be

gone by the time we'd get back home. Everybody bought it. We used to make O'dham cheese too. They would come to the house to buy it, buy it for \$5. About five inches in diameter, some of them were bigger. Those, I think, were \$10 or \$15. Every morning we'd go over and milk the cows and watch them make it, and by the evening it would kind of be like cottage cheese. We'd eat that with tortillas. [laughing] After that, they would put it in this ring, pack it in there, wrap it up, and put stuff on there to drain all the fluid out. Then they let it sit overnight, maybe part of the day. Then they took it out and people would show up to buy it before he started selling it on the road. He always liked that. It was good.

At one point he found out that he could make snow cones, and he got a crusher. He would crush the ice. He got the barrels that are insulated, that can keep things cool. He'd fill them with shaved ice and maybe have three or four barrels. He drove around and all the kids would come out and be dancing around. I saw this guy one time and he said, "Hey, you used to come to my village to sell stuff, snow cones." And his mother said, "Yeah, they used to run out there, jump around." They knew my dad's name was Salwa, and they would run out there and yell, "Salwa, Salwa, Salwa." I'd see them as we'd drive up, but I never heard what they were saying. She told me that later on.

He would buy other things, like sodas since they no longer bottled them. So he would go to Mexico and pick up all the cases of bottles. Then have the customers bring back the bottles and take them back and get the money. They liked that a lot. Right now I don't think anybody would do it now. If there was a dance, he'd go and get a lot of cases, and more candy and chips and things that the kids like. At night while the dance is going on, the customers would buy candy and cigarettes. And those big barrels [of shaved ice for snow cones], by the morning, most of them would have turned white, but they still came to get them, down to the last one when it's just water. I'd stay up there on the truck all night, until morning.

Then he started going to buy wholesale. He learned all that. When I began to understand, I realized the work it took him to change when he did something. Here in Tucson, he'd go to the wholesalers and buy stuff. He started selling bread and cakes and pies. He started with the day-olds, Holsum bread and Rainbow, and he would sell at his own price. Sometimes it's low and sometimes it's whatever he can. And

he'd check out the source and see how much they are selling it for. All that stuff.

So that worked out for us, until he couldn't do it anymore. Then I went out and started it for two or three years before I came to Tucson and started staying here, every chance I got. He would be still doing it, but not as much as he used to. I'd go help him, sometimes go by myself to pick up things. He knew everybody, some from when he was picking cotton. So every time he would go, he would stop and talk and talk, before he goes on. He knew a lot of those people. When I went, I would cover more because I didn't really know too many of the relatives. I know some of my relatives, but I didn't talk with them. Sometimes they would ask about him and it would take long. But I covered most of the west end. And the next time I went out, I would do the east end, and the south part in one day. And the next day I'd just go around the center and the villages.

These guys [owned the old store at Santa Rosa]. I think they're from Oklahoma, I guess. Their dad set it up. Back then they weren't paying anything, until later [the district] got them to pay \$50 a year. [laughing] They don't have it anymore. They finally told them that the district was going to take over the store. So they quit and the district found out that there is like a sink hole underneath there. These guys have been pouring cement in there to try to keep it up. Finally after they left it, they told the district about the sink hole. [laughing] The district used the store for a while, until they said, "We got to get out of here." So now the only district store is the one at Quijotoa, way out there, about seventeen or eighteen miles [from Santa Rosa village].

My dad wanted to build a store. He picked the area near the Children's Shrine. There were some young guys, I guess, that were being drunk up there and they were trashing it. So he thought he'd wait for one of us to come home and start it out again, build the store, so we could take over. But it never happened.

I wanted to do that. I went back and I renewed the land claim that he [my dad] got. It would be good for a grocery store, but in the middle of the store I should make an art store. So I just never did anything. Now people are afraid because it is right there near the Children's Shrine. You can see where the water when it started to flood, that's where the water went. They all knew my dad and that it was already set by him. It was his already. I just changed it to my name. It's a really good spot.

People heading to Rocky Point [Mexico], they go through there. One time they closed the road somewhere, and there was a line of cars going through there, all day and all night, just a line of cars. When I was up there, by the rock there, I was sitting up there and watching all the cars, all the headlights at night. And I was thinking, "Man!"



FIGURE 42. My Dad, Louis Chano