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Oral history interview with Consuelo Jimenez
Underwood, 2020 July 10

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Consuelo Jimenez Underwood on July 10, 2020. The interview took place At Jimenez Underwood's home in Cupertino, California, and was conducted by Matthew Simms for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's Pandemic Oral History Project.

This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

MATTHEW SIMMS: All right. Can you see that it says we're recording now?

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And then it says I don't—[inaudible] [*ding*—continue.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Okay.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Okay.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Now that's good. So I'm going to start by reading this. So this is Matthew Simms interviewing Consuelo Jimenez Underwood at her home in Cupertino, California, where it's probably pretty hot right now. It's hot now—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Eighty-five. Everybody's dying. I grew up in desert heat, okay? This is nothing. This is lovely. Okay, 120, then we can cry. Okay, 102. Okay, we get the air conditioning on. But 84? 88? Give me a break.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Oh, we're a bunch of wimps.

[They laugh.]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Well, it is Friday, July 10, 2020. And thank you so much for being part of this Archives of American Art. It's called the Pandemic Project. But um, but we just wanted to check in with you to see how you're doing. So how are you doing?

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I'm doing really well. I am really happy that none of us, our close ones at all have been affected by the virus. But we're all scaredy-cats, and I'm the number one scaredy-cat. And I'm kind of like, "Huh, I've always wanted to live isolated, alone in my home with just the cares being provided for." And that's what's happening. And I can't believe the whole world is living like me, you know, isolated. Oh, my gosh. You know, that's—I'm doing really well, because like I said, our loved ones are are healthy. We have a little bit of an income that—we're not starving. We're blessed. We're blessed. We're blessed. And so, I think the way I'm approaching this is, you know, my mandate is to create, create as much as possible and keep the wheel moving.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right. And, and what do you—what's occupying your attention right now? What kind of things—

[00:02:01]

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Oh, my gosh. There's like four or five things. I retired because I was just too busy with academia and the stuff. So right now, I've got the Ganges project, which is a mural of 3-1/2-foot by 27-foot mural in a home in—and I'm doing it via FaceTime. The young lady—the lady who wants it is an architect, and her daughter is a high school art major.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: She is like a painting graduate of San Jose State. She knows her way with brush. She knows her way with color. So we're doing the Ganges—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —the Ganges River as a borderline. You know my borderlines, right? Well, instead of a borderline, it's the Ganges. And it takes the whole 24 feet length of the wall over her archway of her mansion there. It is gorgeous. We're doing it on a canvas—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Oh, gosh.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —on the—and so I'm giving them the—my sketches. They are so—if they were my students, I'd give them an A plus for the semester in how tight and how good they are. [*Telephone rings.*]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So I'm like, Oh, my god. So as a result, Tufts is wanting me next spring. And I'm going. [*Telephone rings.*] I don't know if I want to do this, but I don't want to get on an airplane. But if this works—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —then I really want to do it Zoom time or FaceTime. [*Answering machine in background.*] And so—I'm sorry about that noise in the background but [laughs]—

MATTHEW SIMMS: It's reality.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So [laughs]— but—so I'm really happy that—I can't talk over her. [Laughs.] La vida. It's been—

MATTHEW SIMMS: If you could just tell me about this Ganges thing, because—so you're sharing sketches via FaceTime, but you have someone on the other end who is—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: They're translating. Because what I'm doing is I'm giving them—you know how you can get any image—let me turn this baby off.

[00:04:06]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Okay. Go on.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Oh, she did right now. Yeah, what I'm doing is, you know, how you could grid any image—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —and reproduce it in any way, shape, or form.

MATTHEW SIMMS: All right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So I drew my sketch, and I went, "Okay, put the Ganges in there. Tape it up."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And now mix this color. And I give them the color, and they mix it. And I—so apply it, so that it looks like this. And I gave them closeups of some of the borderlines I've done.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Well, this young lady, I'd give her things, and she comes out with, "Like this?" And I'm like, well blow me down. "This is better than what I was expecting." So as a result, it's super-duper good. And right now, we're at the last stages. And afterwards, I'll send you images of what I'm talking about. And it's all serendipity, because uh I got the—she gave me the flowers of India. I got the three flowers on that. I got the, got the Ganges all in there with distributaries.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And you can imagine what it—this—all of the activity of color

and then over that, overlaid because—so I know how to do it with stencils. I am putting three leaves of the—of a leaf that she sent me, and I went, "Okay." Well, the three—the leaf represents the fig tree that Buddha slept under. And it represents the three religions of the Ganges. And I selected three leaves to put all across the—the mural—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —and it's just—I was—I—really? The three religions that I went number three? And then she sends me—so we're going to have those three leaves as part of the three times as part of the image. The most beautiful part was, "Okay. This is the prayer." And I said, "You know, spirituality by law, I love that, you know." And what—and I really—what I'm doing it for is because I, I want to pay homage to the Ganges. It's one of the greatest rivers in the world, and I feel that it should have honor to it. Even though I've never been to it, I just said, "Oh, what a beautiful thing to show off its flowers, its life, its colors." And then I went, "Oh, is there—" you know, the—the writing is really beautiful, and they're very—they're very—they know their language, they know how to write. And so I went, "What about this prayer?" And it's a prayer to—it's about home.

[00:06:32]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And the main trees, it's like—it's like the Lord's Prayer but in a much more where they—where they interact the intellect, the physical—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —and the creative. And it's like a five-line thing. And I went, "Why don't we write—" we're going to flip. Now the Ganges is ready to make the crash over the Ganges, the final colors. One of the first color will be this bright pink. On top of that will be in this wave sea blue, foam blue. She's going to write this prayer in large letters like spider all across the Ganges just repeating it over and over again. And then we're going to mess it up with pens. It is incredible. Okay, incredible. The other one is I'm doing this project called—I've always wanted to do it, honoring the state documented wildflowers.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So on men's handkerchiefs, I'm making portraits with crayon onto these handkerchiefs to be connected with safety pins, and there will be all the state flowers, and on the bottom is all their names, their scientific names. Do you know how Adam went around and he documented and identified and—and did everything to those plants? Well, I'm doing that to those flowers, but I'm showing their beauty. And the—and I was like, "Fifty of them?" Because I started like four, right? I don't think we have a wall big enough to photograph all 50. Oh, no. So three days ago, I brought it down, I will just do the state border flowers of the north and the border flowers of Canada. And that's 17, an odd number, we'll just highlight California.

[00:08:10]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: The kick will be that the four border states and California will have embroidered all across the image the running family with the mom in front—in a very iridescent, see-through, beautiful, reflective thread.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Which carries through to your—to the—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes, totally. And then I'm going, "So it's only 17?" I can actually stitch like borders, you know, like the bottom of Navajo blankets, there's always a border.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I can stitch those borders on the bottom of—and it's going to be -- oh my God—so I'm so excited because that's something I can do while I'm sitting down and not wandering around. And then I've also—oh, Matthew, Matthew, this is the most incredible. I've been looking at this image for like two years. Two years, and I'm finally—I finished the Ganges.

Because on top of the Ganges, I wove. Do you see those?

MATTHEW SIMMS: Oh, my goodness. Look at the—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Those are the reflection elements that are going to go across the canvas after it's painted. We're going to suspend them with brass. You see, that took me like two seasons to weave all those. I obviously like Consuelo. I made two million. I need 1,000. So the extras we're going to use because they look beautiful interacting with each other. But—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Your living room—for a second, if you don't mind, is your living room right in that room?

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes. It's here. I'm going to show you. So, here.

[They laugh.]

Here's what I saw two or three years ago. Do you see the red-tailed blackbird hitting the border fence in Texas?

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah. Look at that.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I want to honor that.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So what I thought was, "Oh, my god. I'm going to make those strips out of this kind of weave with black and purple."

[00:10:02]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Right? Eight giant—eight-foot ones. And then in the middle, I'm going to—from here, that pattern—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —I'm going to weave those in squares and put them together in another weave structure and have them crash in—through window's pillars. I am so—but I rather put the Ganges to rest—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yes.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —before I start threading, because these babies are ready to rock and roll. I even have the print—this is what the—this is the map of—the pieces. Because I want a piece—I want to weave them and then put them together in a different weave structure than the wire that I've gotten going for the—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Okay. So those two are going on. And then I've got this one. Do you see that "Zen Threads?"

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: How—how threads helped me define and understand my life's journey?

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: The book, *Right View, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Conduct*. And each one is already lined up with images and some kind of paragraph. And I'm going to extend that to a book. So hopefully, I'm hoping in two years I can have a manuscript so that my friend who's publishing the book that's coming out next spring—Duke has already signed the contract publishing on the first anthology. And my friend says, "If you have a manuscript with your stuff, we can probably apply for a Guggenheim." I have no clue what that is. But she says a Guggenheim is for mature artists that want to do a parallel project.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah. Well, that's a great idea. I think that's—that's genius.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: No footnotes.

MATTHEW SIMMS: No?

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Just pure Consuelo and closeups. And then [laughs] Consuelo is crazy, right? Because we've only got 10 years hardly, you know. I'm going to be 80. I hope I could—you know, I could—I know on these other projects it take one or two years. But then—oh, my gosh. Oh, no. You don't—you know, you're going to—you're going to drop me. You're going to say, she's crazy. Get out—get us out of here.

[00:12:08]

MATTHEW SIMMS: No, I'm not.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Here's one of the studies for—I think this is a Montana flower. But let me show you the other idea that is just fabulous. So, I'm concerned, right? Because I know I can weave a loom for another 10 years. But—but—but—but—but—but— where is it? Where are they?

MATTHEW SIMMS: That's because your fingers are with arthritis, right? That's—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Well, yeah, arthritis, vision, stamina—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —you know. And I'm going, But Consuelo, what about your painting? You want to do painting after you can't weave.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: What are you going to paint?

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Well, I've been thinking about that. I mean, are you just going to start cold? Or you better start, you know, warming up. Look at this. Closeups of my— aren't they beautiful?

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, they're—they are. They're gorgeous.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: They are really stunning paintings, 3 by 5, you know.

MATTHEW SIMMS: That's a great idea.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I know. I don't have time. [Laughs.]

MATTHEW SIMMS: And a lot of those things were ephemeral, right? I mean, they were—you put them up and then they put them down.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Right. Yes. And they're great. Yes.

MATTHEW SIMMS: So now this would be a way to kind of—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Forever.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I have the canvas. I have the paints for this—this is the one that I did in—and these are just ideas because of the closeup. They're not—you know, I love the colors. I have the colors. I have the canvas in the other studio in Mendocino.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And I'm like, "Okay, we're going to start that. We're going to start that."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: But right now, we've got to finish the Ganges. We've got—we've got to do the—I want to do the birds. You know, there's—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: That's how I'm doing.

MATTHEW SIMMS: A lot of stuff happening.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: That's how I'm doing. Plus I just got on the advisory consult for the crafts in America in LA.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Wow.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Plus, you know, they're blessed. I'm blessed. So I'm doing really well because I have my family.

[00:14:02]—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —that takes care of me.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, I—Belinda, my daughter, "It's time to eat, mom. Come on. Let's eat." Marcos says, "Do you really want to do that?" You know. [Laughs.] But—

MATTHEW SIMMS: That's your husband?

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes, yes. So it's really—and then the grandson is going to live with us. Thank goodness, he's not going to go to ASU. He's in ASU one last year. He's going to do it online, but he's with us. So his job is to, "What? Babysit me?" I don't need baby huggy." [Laughs.]

MATTHEW SIMMS: I'm glad you're surrounded by people who are kind of—they're all—you're all —

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: They're all on board. They're all on board. They all know how important our work is. They all see the big picture as opposed to the me, me, me.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And that's what we're about. And you know, that's—that's the big one. All this stuff, I'd rather be doing scarves, you know. I'd rather be doing some—but if I have a chance to do something meaningful for the bigger picture that's going to last, that's what I'm going to do, like the birds.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Well, the—and speaking of bigger picture—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes?

MATTHEW SIMMS: —you know, your work is so important and speaks to so many things that are on so many people's minds right now, you know, nationally, internationally. I don't know what—what's your take on what's going on? I mean, what—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: It's—it's like a—it's not a wakeup call. But it's like the effect of karma.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: We wanted that border to separate us, well, we're separated.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know? We wanted a reason to live. Well, now we have to

think of family, not just our good times—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —or ourselves.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Because whatever we do affects our close friends. So now we have to think about that. And I'm going to—it was becoming such a me, me, me, me, me—and still is—generation or cultural view perspective that it was going a little weird—you know, a little off, off course. And so this is like, "Hey, wait a minute, do we really want to go there?" I mean, really? Do we—you know, I think that's what it is. It's like a, you know, "Wake up," like that, because if you want it, you get it. You know, you want borders, we got borders.

[00:16:23]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know? You want—you know, you—you want something to focus on? Yeah, our health and our family's health.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know? And if you don't care about nation, other nations are looking at our nation. If we want to be proud Americans—it's not so proud out there once you leave the country.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So it's such a cool thing in a really weird way.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And when I heard—and I was always like going around to these places of universities where there's young people, and I was always like, "Oh, my god. I felt so good that we had such bright discerning young minds."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Like I remember this one lady that was the one of the Black Lives Matter. She was interviewed, and they were asking her, "Well, what do you think? They arrested those three—those three policemen that were over there with that guy in—you know, they're putting him—you know, when they killed him, Floyd." And the girl went—and I was like, I guess she's going say, "Yeah, it's okay. It's pretty good, right direction." The young lady said, "Now? Now? After all this time, now? You want me to be happy that there was—now?" And I was like, "That's the difference between our generation and theirs."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: They're calling, you know, on it, you know. And so I feel like—and then I heard Obama speak.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And I felt he was happy that the young people were taking it on and going. That's it exactly what I was telling all these young people. I'm so happy you guys are here.

[00:18:04]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I'm so happy you guys are what you are.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Because you're the ones that are going lead us out of this

place, you know.

MATTHEW SIMMS: And you mentioned that. When I came to see you at your home, you were talking about, you know, at the university and—and kind of the, the big stories that get told about the country—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MATTHEW SIMMS: —and that kind of like play the game, and then make your difference. You know, you're sort of—I remember what you're saying like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Columbus and—you know, discovered America. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, whatever."

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes, yes.

MATTHEW SIMMS: And, you know—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Infiltrate.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Infiltrate.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Infiltrate. That was my mantra.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: It was a harsh word. But I had to be harsh, because I was coming from a harsh environment.

MATTHEW SIMMS: All right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, it was infiltrate. Get in there and then change—get to the place where you can have a touch of the wheel and kind of flip it with your little pinky, a little more in this direction, because I know I wasn't going to flip it around.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: But just in fact, you know. And it's so neat, because when I rant and rave to my family, it's so neat to see that, oh, my gosh, they're using the same terminology and way of looking at it two or three months later, but they're getting it.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And so, I think he's—I—and so how am I feeling here? I feel—I feel sad, because I know what the suffering is like.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Especially those kids, we still have them in cages.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, with adults unsupervised, with coronavirus, with tents in 110-degrees. We're still doing that as a nation. And so guess what? You guys have to live in cages too, your own home.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And be happy because your homes are pretty.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: So don't cry to me, you know.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right. Right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And so that's where I'm going. Okay. I'm not the one ranting and raving. The earth, the world is going, "You want to play? Let's play."

[00:20:03]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know.

MATTHEW SIMMS: I—we only have a couple minutes. But I think your work—I mean, your work is so wonderful because it deals with all these things in a—in a way that—that is also very beautiful. You know what I mean?

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes, it has to.

MATTHEW SIMMS: In other words, you don't worry much about the tradition carrying forward certain traditions of making, you know—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And thinking, think about the bigger picture, the birds, the bees, the skies.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I'm so happy there's not a lot of airplanes. Now we have clouds again—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —instead of pretend clouds that are made from the exhaust of the airplanes.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right. I know. And then, you know, the, the, the fish and the dolphins coming back and things like this—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I think I didn't—yeah.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah. We saw dolphins down in a place that we never see them. So—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yeah. It's, it's like, "Okay. You want to play? We play. Let's play." I mean, the world is so forgiving.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: It so loves us.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know. And at the same time, it's like, oh, my god, again—I feel it going, "oh, my god, you guys just don't get it"—you know, "come on, let's get it together." Because these issues about toil and nation and city and family, you keep going on since the Babylonian texts.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It's [inaudible].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know. It's the same issues.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: The king is too powerful. There's famine. You know, the kids don't listen to the elders, you know. The priests are all corrupt. I mean, those are the things that they were talking about in Babylon.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah. And like this, one of the things you do also is that borderline of languages too, you know. And that's a [inaudible]—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Oh, I grew up in that triangular. I didn't know—you know, that's why I don't know how to speak very well because I—I don't know whether I was thinking this way or that way or this way. And at first I was like, "Oh, my god, this is horrible." But now I'm going, "This is pretty neat."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And that's why I love it when I went to Europe. They not only

had one or two languages, these folks got five to three to seven languages down, you know. And I'm going, how come we think they were stupid over there? We just have to speak one. Are we really that much of a colonial nothing, you know? Because we're just a colony.

[00:22:11]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: We're just supposed to work and pay taxes. And instead of the form, here's your iPhone.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, and don't worry about anything. And yeah, the strong will survive.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Right. It's amazing. So I'm excited, okay?

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: But I'm also very scared. And I'm also very—like the reason I'm doing this stuff is for those dumb kids, you know, those people over there.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah. And you have to. You need the positive stuff, which I think is great. I mean, you're—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I have to. There's enough negative, and these young people—if I'm leaving this for the young people, they got to have more positive—you know, one of the main—one of the main quotes that came out of the Brown, and they're still using it over there, and I kept reminded of it is that when there's chaos, you know, that's a time to become—I don't know what I said. So they—that we reconstruct it again with beauty.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, that's what's so great about chaos. We can reconstruct again—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —in our own way. And if we make it the right—and that's why I love—I always knew a time of crisis was a time of shift.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: It's the time to shift gears. Shift views, shift filters.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Some things should. And now we're shifting.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: We're like, "We don't want this guy anymore."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Right, right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, and that's a great cultural shift.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: And I think this nation is so great. I think it's very savable—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —if we get this guy out. I—and I'm not worried anymore that he's not going—that's he's going to stay. He's not going to stay.

MATTHEW SIMMS: No, no.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: He's going to get kicked out.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, and I'm just hoping that the young people keep on—I was worried about the mass protests.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Because of the—I was really—but I saw that a lot of the protesters that were legit, they kept their distance, you know—

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: —you know, in the marches and—and then—and they tried. And so I'm, I'm worried about them in that sense, you know. And I'm worried that these older—elders are not taking care of them.

[00:24:12]

MATTHEW SIMMS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Putting ICE in charge of students that are foreign? ICE? Who would have no—the FBI and the CIA have no control over ICE.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah, yeah. Well—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: I know. We have so many issues.

[They laugh.]

MATTHEW SIMMS: What can you leave us with just to maybe finally—

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Oh, my gosh. Oh, the music of the '60s, "Carry On" and then "Talking about my generation."

MATTHEW SIMMS: Yeah.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: You know, remember the Generation? And here—well, my favorite, "Here they come again. Catch us if you can," you know. Got to get a move on. We were young with all of our might. And I'm thinking that's our generation, and that's the one that were being edited.

MATTHEW SIMMS: Well, thank you so much. And I hope to see you again in person soon, you know, in a trip up north. But, um, stay well. And I can't wait to see some images, maybe the Ganges or any other project.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Oh, I'm going to send you images of the—of the Ganges and what we're doing right now.

MATTHEW SIMMS: All right.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Because right now I think we're going to do the final painting stages, and then we'll do pastel and then attach these things, and onwards with the birds and the flowers. So [laughs]—

MATTHEW SIMMS: I'm going to—I'm going to go and turn this off, and we can talk a little bit more of them.

CONSUELO JIMENEZ UNDERWOOD: Yes.

MATTHEW SIMMS: All right. So—

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]

