

# J

is for Jiménez

## ABOUT THE ART

Luis Jiménez was a sculptor. He made large sculptures out of fiberglass that are most often displayed in public places. They are brightly colored and depict scenes from the American West. Fiberglass is not a traditional material for sculptures. It is usually used to make cars and boats. Jiménez starts with more typical sculpture materials of steel and clay and then casts the fiberglass molds over them. He then airbrushes the bright colors and covers them with epoxy to make them shiny. Plains Art Museum is privileged to own three of his sculptures: *Sodbuster*, *Barfly* and *End of the Trail (with Electric Sunset)*. When displayed, *Barfly* and *End of the Trail* are indoor sculptures. *Sodbuster* is now displayed on the City of Fargo Civic plaza near the Fargo Public Library.

*End of the Trail (with Electric Sunset)* is based on a famous sculpture by James Earle Fraser named *End of the Trail* which he finished in 1915. That sculpture resides at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, OK. Both sculptures depict a lone warrior slumped over his horse, spear in hand. The Jiménez sculpture adds bold colors and a sunset that is lit with an arc of lightbulbs.

*Sodbuster* was commissioned by the City of Fargo in 1977. The sculpture stood on the corner of Main Ave. and Broadway for 20 years. It was donated to Plains Art Museum in 2002. In 2006 it was removed from that location because years of harsh weather and the nearby rumbling trains had taken a toll on the sculpture. It was sent to be restored. It was returned to Fargo and installed in the Civic Plaza in November 2019.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Luis Jiménez was born in El Paso, TX in 1940. He started working in his father's neon sign business at a very young age. It was there that he learned to spray paint and weld and work with the materials that he would eventually use in his artwork. He studied art and architecture at the University of Texas in Austin and earned a bachelor's degree in 1964. He then moved to Mexico City to study at the Ciudad Universitaria. He taught art at the University of Arizona and later the University of Houston before devoting all his time to his artwork. His work has been featured in museums all over the country. Jiménez died on June 13, 2006 when part of the sculpture he was working on fell on him in his studio.



Luis Jiménez, *End of the Trail (with Electric Sunset)* 1971, Fiberglass and Mixed Media Sculpture, Purchased with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts

# ART ACTIVITY

**VISIT *SODBUSTER*** *Sodbuster* is a public sculpture which means anyone can see it any time. Luis Jiménez wanted his art to be accessible to everyone. Caution: Please do not venture off the sidewalks!

**GO VISIT *SODBUSTER* IN THE FARGO CIVIC PLAZA NEAR THE DOWNTOWN FARGO PUBLIC LIBRARY.** If you have a chance before you go, watch the beginning of the PBS video mentioned in the Learn More section. What did Jiménez add to the dirt because he had recently been digging a well on his property. Find those things on the sculpture. Find where Jiménez signed his name to the sculpture.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE A PICTURE OF YOU VISITING THE SCULPTURE!** In the picture, point to the Jiménez signature on the sculpture. Post your photo to social media with the hashtag #fargosodbuster. We also want to know what you think of *Sodbuster*. Send an email to [education@plainsart.org](mailto:education@plainsart.org) with the following sentence: ***Sodbuster* is ...** (insert a one word description).



Luis Jimenez, *Sodbuster*, 1980-81, molded fiberglass, epoxy resin, acrylic urethane paint, 60 x 257 x 47 in. © 2012 Estate of Luis A. Jimenez, Jr. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## LEARN MORE

<https://www.ruidosonews.com/story/news/local/community/2019/04/17/luis-jimenez-artwork-trail-connects-new-mexico-az-texas-colorado-art/3452490002/>

Information about the Jiménez Trail - a route connecting cities in four states with work of Jiménez. Also included is a video of *Blue Mustang* at the Denver International Airport.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/colores-luis-jimenez/>

This is a longer video (25 min) that follows Jiménez at work in his studio. While much of the video is for a more mature audience (discussions of sensuality and politics), there is a brief discussion (at 2:21) of Fargo's *Sodbuster* before it was installed the first time.

<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/luis-jimenez-2459>

Video of Jiménez at work in his studio in 2009

