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DONALD WOODS

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Juan Sanchez

In his daily environment, art academia, the halls of the renowned art school Cooper Union, Juan appears ill at ease. He is brooding--involved in personal thoughts on what must be personal matters. Ascending in the elevator, he watches the lights carefully, impatiently. His up-turned head is round; its occipital structure equals its face and forehead in mass. His hair is nappy at the neck's nape. It grows naturally sparse and unattended at the forehead where it thins to show a shiny scalp. His beard wanders around dark lips and chin and up and around his ears without interruption. It has no designated pattern or razor designed side burns. It grows at its own discretion; nature determines its course. He leaves the elevator, directing his massiveness with ease. His body mimics its head in shape and formation.

As he speaks Juan's pensiveness resolves. The deep thoughts are revealed; the artist exposes the canvas of his active mind. "I can't deal with art for art's sake," he states. Juan Sanchez is a painter/photographer whose works are political in content. His canvases are categorized as figurative and collagist: combining photographs, painting, drawing and the written word. Juan's work aspires to the tasks of consciousness raising. He elaborates "The work has to relate to a broad group of people and not cater to an elite sector of the populace, even though that sector really controls the dissemination of information pertaining to the arts."

The political activism of his art has evolved from his life experience. Born in Brooklyn in the mid-1950's, Juan grew up in a "welfare family". He recalls "We went through a lot of heavy changes economically." His visual image making was encouraged and questioned in el barrio. "What's that?, What's it supposed to be?" were likely responses to Juan's early studies of shape, color and form.

In 1973, with the onset of formal fine arts training at Cooper Union,

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Donald Woods

Juan began incorporating his burgeoning political ideologies into his paintings. Juan is a New Yorican (a New York born Puerto Rican) and his involvement in the liberation struggle of Puerto Rico took precedent over all of the political movements of that era. His concept in creating works relative to that struggle is that the works educate his people culturally, historically and politically. His paintings include quotations from fellow Puerto Rican activist and illustrations of the deaths of others at the hand of the enemy. The ultimate goal of the movement is the liberation of Puerto Rico from America's colonial repression. Participants in the effort believe that the United States has milked the island of its mineral and agricultural wealth under the guise of the so-called common wealth. Juan's contribution to the movement have taken many forms.

He has created posters and designed newspapers that graphically deliver the message "Viva Puerto Rico Libre." However, Juan's major works are large and striking canvases of many textures and multiple imagery. In describing the people's response to his work on the issues, Juan concludes "... I don't have to explain it; I elaborate; I supply additional information. I'm making a statement. They read it and it communicates to people that normally don't perceive issues in such a form because they're bogged down in their daily survival routine."

After Juan earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Cooper Union, he explored the world of commercial art. He found work in one of the city's many color processing laboratories, producing color prints and dye transfers for a myriad of advertising accounts--from Burger King to Hustler Magazine. Juan laughingly recalls that 18 month period as his introduction to adult hood.

With a new sense of conviction, Juan began graduate study at Rutgers University under the tutelage of an outstanding faculty which included Leon Golub. Juan's study with Golub, whose own works deal with social and political issues, proved most fruitful. Juan completed his graduate study,

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a Master of Fine Arts, in 1980. To support himself as a full-time artist he sought and won an artist residency at the Henry Street Settlement, the lower east side cultural center. While participating in exhibitions and teaching classes at Henry Street, Juan took a stab at the multi-faceted role of curator. "Beyond Aesthetics"--an exhibit of works, by other up-and-comings, dealing with societal ills--was the result. Henry Street Gallery's reputation as vanguard for the avante-garde was bolstered and the "Beyond Aesthetics" show was a tremendous success.

Juan has curated a number of rather successful exhibitions, since his first triumph. Each show has related to Juan's concept of art with purpose. "Evidence", an exhibit of photographs by a number of third world photographers, was mounted at Henry Street Gallery in 1983 and "Ritual and Rhythm" at the Kenekalaba House, examined the phenomenon of music, as it inspires the fine arts.

Juan is expressive and giving in discussions of art and it's relation to social struggle. Although critics accuse him of pure propagandizing, Juan forges on. He is relentless in his search for the bridge between his formalistic aesthetics and strong social commentary. His attributes--expressiveness, passion and conviction--probably influenced the administration of Cooper Union in assigning Juan the role of Admissions Officer. In choosing the students who will attend Cooper, Juan reviews portfolios interviews candidates and makes recommendations on admittance. As a faculty member he is able to influence young artist. Juan makes his students aware of political art works and movements, like his current passion for "Arts against Apartheid".

The racist regime of South Africa is being attacked from all sides including the American arts front. The Foundation for the Community of Artist, of which Juan is a very active member, has developed an artist call for a city-wide multi-site exhibition of artworks with anti-apartheid themes. Juan is at the forefront of this effort, using his connections and experiences as curator to develop exhibit sites and support. He lends

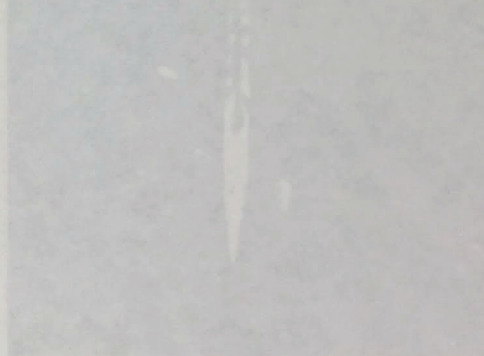
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his energy to yet another cause and explains "...Our history here (in the United States) is so relevant to all that goes on in South Africa. I'm making a solidarity gesture to another oppressed people, and at the same time hoping to influence public opinion in the United States in an election year."

The ebb and flow of conversation produce many emotional highs. The artist paints a verbal portrait of his motivations and inspirations. Juan's passions are his work and the world around him. Injustice, revolution societal ills and the solutions color both spheres. The complexities of the world's problems is an enormous concept to decipher--a large and intricate canvas to paint. As the elevator descends, Juan is deep in thought. He broods. Juan Sanchez, engrossed in personal thoughts on the whole world's personal matters.



Juan Sanchez, "Thought," 1980. Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches.

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Culture and Survival

A conversation with Juan Sanchez, a painter and curator of the Lower East Side exhibition, *RITUAL AND RHYTHM: VISUAL FORCES FOR SURVIVAL*, and two of the participating artists, the Cuban born painter, Ana Mendieta, and sculptor, Willie Birch.

By Eva Cockcroft

A&A: Juan, what is the exhibition about?
Juan: This exhibition derived from another show that I did earlier this year titled *BEYOND AESTHETICS: ART OF NECESSITY BY ARTISTS OF CONSCIENCE*, a collection of works by artists committed to making strong political statements about the atrocities taking place not only in the United States but around the world. *BEYOND AESTHETICS* emphasized the negative side of humanity—man doing wrong to other men. In terms of peoples' response the show was somewhat successful, but, I realized that I was bringing out only the negative or oppressive side of people and hadn't touched upon the question of how people survive.

That's where *RITUAL AND RHYTHM: VISUAL FORCES FOR SURVIVAL* comes in. How do people continue to exist throughout the many years of oppression? For *RITUAL AND RHYTHM*, I decided to invite a number of artists working in different media and coming from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. I asked each of them to create a piece that dealt with culture, religion, language or customs in terms of how people survive all of the negative confrontations that they have to deal with on a daily basis.

A&A: Not very long ago, I read some essays by the African thinker, Amilcar Cabral, in which he talks about culture as being in some sense the vanguard of revolutionary activity. According to Cabral, the domination of a people can only be maintained through the permanent and organized repression of the cultural life of the people concerned. That makes the retrieval of the old and development of a new culture an important element in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

Ans: I think that's absolutely true. Case in point. I just got back from New Mexico a few days ago, and that is exactly what has been done to a lot of the North American Indians like the Pueblo Indians in the Southwest. In order to be controlled and manipulated, their culture was destroyed. That way the people become powerless. This is a very important issue to have clear in all of our minds.

Willie: For myself, I like to feel that if you don't know your culture, then it's very difficult for you to like yourself. As an artist, I find that what is important is expressing my culture in a way that enables other people see it and be able to get into themselves and love what they come out. There is always a cultural impetus in my work. That is a force that people can rally around and relate to during hard times.

A&A: When I looked at the show, I was struck by the sophistication of most of the work in terms of aesthetics and the mainstream art world. It would not have looked out of place in a large gallery or museum space. Yet, it is presented at Kenkeleba House which is located in one of the worst areas of the Lower East Side. Why did you choose to put it there and how does it relate to the people in the area where it is?

Juan: This society has an unreal emphasis that culture only pertains to people of a certain socio-economic class and educational level. Kenkeleba House is located in Lower East Side Manhattan where the people are primarily Hispanics and Blacks. It is a neighborhood that is really falling apart and has become very decadent in terms of drug traffic, of people dying of overdoses. In all reality what's going on in that area is a certain form of genocide using drugs to eliminate particular groups of people.

Kenkeleba founded his place there to generate a certain kind of cultural and creative energy that would hopefully survive such a neighborhood. Joe Overstreet and Corinne Jennings, the two individuals who direct Kenkeleba House felt a need to go into such a neighborhood to work with the children. Other than putting together exhibitions, they also arrange poetry readings and writing and art workshops. They're not getting huge grants. Basically, they're working with a budget from their own pockets.

This kind of exhibition is a cultural necessity that the mainstream art world doesn't pay much attention to. In Soho, this exhibition would be for a group of people who are either fellow artists or critics—and I feel my effort isn't really necessary there. It doesn't serve a particular progressive function, whereas a neighborhood such as Ave B and C in the lower East Side really needs that kind of nutrition, that kind of growth.

Ans: That is why, an artist like myself, who may not necessarily have a political image, by participating in an exhibition like this—that's your contribution. On another level, I would like to add that we are all political beings. I remember that when I was in school I never liked economics and never wanted to deal with it. Now, I have to deal with economics, its part of my reality. Politics are too. I think that everything we do in life is a matter of choice and making choices.

To me art has been my salvation. I was sent to this country by my parents when I was thirteen and raised in an orphanage in the Midwest at a time when it was not "in" or "neat" to be Hispanic. There were no programs in any schools to deal with people



Willie Birch, "Promises", 1982, installation.
 Photo by Doreen Day.

who did not speak English. It was a difficult time—I felt a lot of anger, I still do. I know if I had not discovered art, I would have been a criminal. Theodore Adorno has said, "all works of art are uncommitted crimes." My art comes out of rage and displacement. Although the image may not be a very rageful image, I think all art comes out of sublimated rage. So I certainly can identify with the whole thing that's happening in the lower East Side.

Willie: The show at Kenkeleba House is a reflection of just what's going down at this moment. It's a show about content. I was reading the *New York Times* last Sunday (Oct. 31) and Grace Glueck keeps talking about content in art. Well the content of Hispanics and Blacks, that has been in our work for years, long before the corporate structure decided that future work in America must have content.

A&A: Are you all saying that you see your artwork as serving a political function?

Willie: It has to be because by my very nature, as Ana Mendieta said, I am political. Just the fact that I make a statement in a society that negates my existence makes me political. The cry of the sixties in terms of Black people is Jesse Jackson's statement, "I am somebody." That cry still exists and my art reflects that I am somebody regardless of what you see out there or what may be put on Marlboro's walls.

Ans: When the mainstream Art World decided to promote art that has content, it means that we have to look deeper and decide what kind of content are we talking about? Are we talking about the kind of social information that is irrelevant to the majority of people and only relevant to a few? **Ans:** I have to disagree. It's a confused issue to talk about content. It is one thing to have figurative art or pseudo expressionistic art—but for me, I judge a work of art from the gut. That work is gutless. It may have an im-

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age that is expressionistic or whatever, but it's superficial. There's nothing behind it because we're living in a sterilized, dehumanized society.

I've been told that in English to speak about humanism carries a bad taste, at least as far as the philosophers are concerned. I guess, because "the Humanists" were not really humanist. But I do believe in human beings and I consider myself a humanist. That means that my work deals with the conditions of myself and other people.

Juan: The point of the matter is that artists who are really creating art from a gut level and not superficially—whether overtly political, cultural, or subliminally political—is that we try our darndest to make our work transcend. It transcends to a level of universal ideals that surpasses what's being accepted in the mainstream art world. Mainstream art is really tailor-made design for an immediate need or moment of acceptance. In our case we're going against the grain. Not only do we give them a little bit of what they want, but we always go beyond that—and they don't want that beyond.

Willie: I don't look at what I do as going beyond anything. I do it because that's what I feel and however it comes out it comes out. People tell me it comes out different from what the mainstream likes, but I'm not consciously trying to make art that goes against any system.

Juan: What I mean is that in terms of our particular needs—which are somewhat reflective of the needs of the majority—third world people, low income families and so on—we're really contributing to and fulfilling that necessity which is not part of the necessity of a bourgeois society. That's what I meant by against the grain.

Ans: That reminds me of a statement by a friend of mine that "the art that is being made today is about the suffering of the bourgeoisie."

A&A: I have a problem connecting what I saw to the idea of visual forces for survival. I saw some very beautiful pieces of art, but—

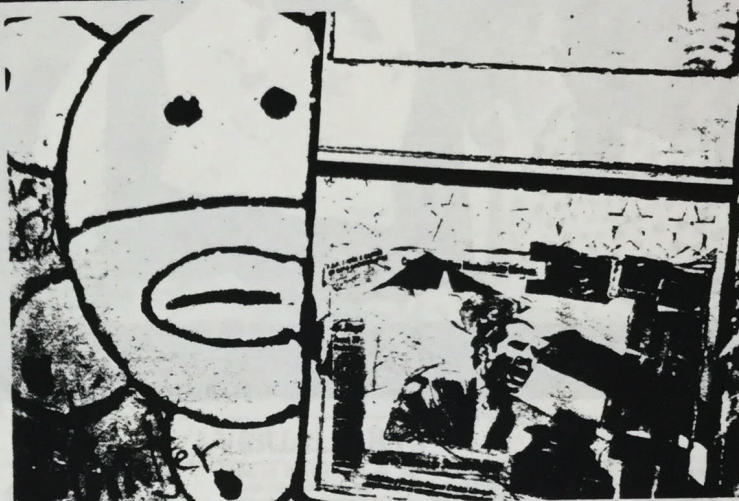
Ans: Beauty is exactly what helps us to survive. That is one of the issues that I have with political art. You see a lot of ugly political art. Now who's going to save our soul and our spirit. You need beauty in the world if you are going to survive.

A&A: O.K. I don't want to put down beauty. But I want to go beyond that to the question of whether emphasizing ritual and myth is really a force for survival or a step backward.

Juan: There is a statement that Malcolm X once made about cutting off the branches and even the roots of a tree. You end up with a tree trunk which, like a human torso, does not have any information about what kind of a tree it is or where its roots really come from. It is as if you were floating in midair with no information about your past, or your present, and more than likely, you're at a loss about the future.

What makes this show progressive is that we're going back to those roots. We're giving people, our people in general since we're talking about universal culture, all the necessary roots. Information that is still alive and well today at least in other parts of the world. We are giving them that information that they have lost or have been taken away from them. It's like going backward to get to the roots and giving it an incredible thrust into the future.

Willie: I don't believe that culture has ever



Juan Sanchez, "Afro-Ibero-Tulsa", 1982, mixed media.
Photo by Juan Sanchez.



Ana Mendez, "Madrugada", 1982, mixed media.
Photo by Juan Sanchez.

left us. As a visual artist all I'm doing is making people aware of what's around them. Juan and I were talking one night about something that Robert Harris Thomson made me aware of. He talked about how people build chapels in the backs of cars. If you look at a lot of the taxis you see that these men have little altars right in the back of their cars. Now, if as a visual artist I pick this up and put it in a different setting, its

still the same thing. All I'm doing is connecting that brother up with myself and all I'm saying is that there is that connection, there is that line. And the more people become aware visually of how they are connected and how they do things on conscious and unconscious levels, that pulls us together as a people and gives us a force to move for a common goal which is our freedom. That's what it comes down to. That's what that show is about.

Ritual and Rhythm: Visual Forces For Survival at Kenkeleba House, 214 East 2nd St. included work by the following artists: Dianne Arndt, Willie Birch, A. Kimberlin

Blackburn, Catti, Papo Colo, Tim Duch, Jimmie Durham, Mary Beth Edelson, Eugenio Espinosa, Lillian Gandia, Crista Grauer, Marina Gutierrez, David Hammons, Robin Holder, Noah Jernison, William Jung, James McCoy, Ana Mendieta, Vernita Nemeos, Lorenzo Pace, Catalina Parra, Patricia Phipps, Helen Evans Ram-saran, Charlotte Richardson, Faith Ring-gold, Sophie Rivera, Juan Sanchez, Grace Williams, Gilberto Wilson, Charles Yuen, and took place from October 17 to November 21, 1982. There is a catalog available.

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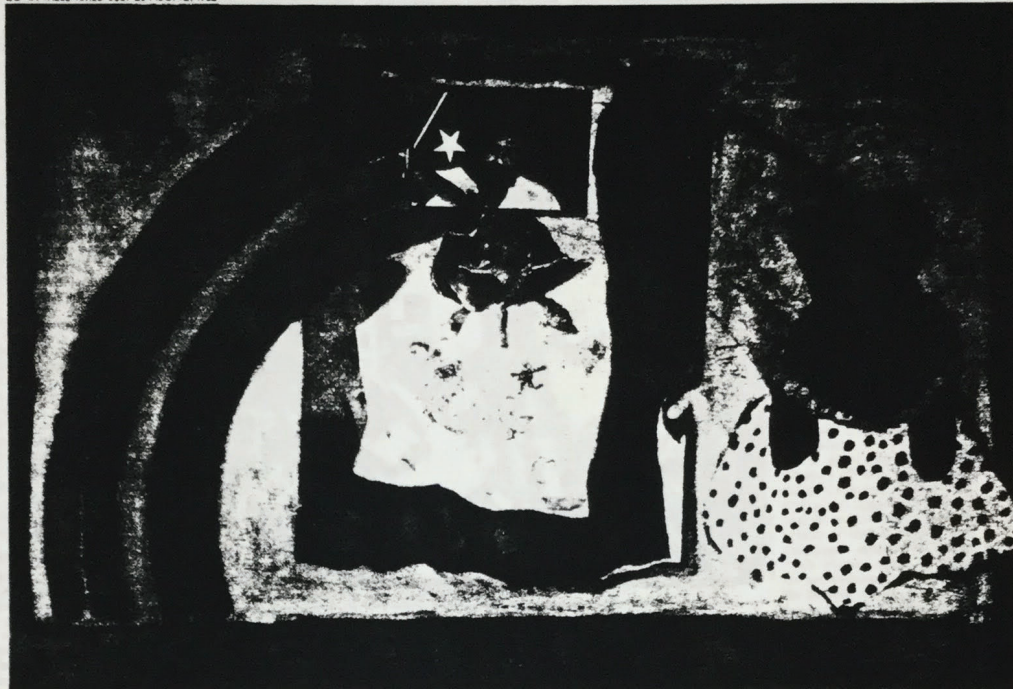
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"Mi Madre," by Juan Sanchez

VISUAL ARTS

The outrage of the artist

By Lucy R. Lippard

About 13 years ago, antiwar activist Ron Wolin and I asked a number of artists we respected to design posters opposing the Vietnam war. The artists, many of whom were downright famous, took the idea seriously. But the results, while often decorative and/or clever, were disappointing. At the time I didn't understand why, or what we were demanding.

I've since realized it takes years to develop a formally effective way to express social outrage, and there are few models, since activist art isn't exactly taught in schools. You can't just drop in and make a good oppositional artwork, no matter how good you are. It's a highly specialized task, like the development of any other art form. And you've got to find time and energy for political organizing and education, because in this field, to be out of touch is to be out of steam.

Moreover, "political art" has never been defined and is still in its infant stages. Many still labor under the delusion that it is a creature of the left, that establishmentarian neutrality is not "political." Others see no middle-ground between propaganda and prettifying. Now and then the artworld tolerance for "political art" expands a bit and topicality briefly becomes popular, because of pressures from the outside world. At the same time, alas, the term itself veers toward

meaninglessness.

I can recall two such periods—1968 and 1975—and now we seem to be into another one. The time seems ripe to air a few related issues, to avoid divisiveness and also to sharpen our analyses as we approach the inevitable peak of attention during the nuclear freeze campaign.

I have mixed feelings about this phenomenon. On the one hand, I'd like (ideally) all artists to be socially responsible people,

The present political situation is sending socially-conscious artists into the streets. But it's driving them back into their studios as well.

whatever their art is. I'd like a healthy portion of them to be involved in both professional and grassroots productions that deal with specific issues and work directly with activist groups. On that hand, I'm really happy to see more and more visual artists jumping on the anti-Reagan and pro-disarmament bandwagon, because the support is always great to have and I know from past experience that a few will stay with us for the long haul, once the band stops playing.

On the other hand, it can be hard for those who have worked steadily for years to watch newcomers (a few of them dilettantes and opportunists) get a modest

share of the too-small pie reserved for "political art," especially when the newcomers' politics are naive, nonexistent or even hostile to the left. And on the third hand, nobody wants to discourage anyone from joining up, so any such dog-in-the-managerism has to be scrutinized not only with guilt but also with honesty and a certain pragmatism.

In the mid-'70s there was a tendency among progressive art groups to criticize everyone who wasn't correcter than correct. Since nobody knew what that was, everybody got criticized, severely limiting the possibility for any strong theory or praxis to emerge before it got shot down. If you ventured into the art world to educate and to make

There are also cries of careerism and co-optation, in which the most difficult of our contradictions are exposed. One kind of co-optation is when you or your work get used by the dominant culture differently than you had intended, or it gets neutralized by the wrong context. But as Jerry Kearns has pointed out, there's another, perhaps more lethal kind of co-optation—when you censor yourself because of fear, defeatism or rage, when you let go of the notions of beauty, scale, complexity and visionary grandeur, when you get backed up against the copying machine forever. It's not easy to figure out one's individual options between the extremes—total immersion in the queasy ethics of the art commodity system or furious rejection of all it stands for, which can lead to the wrong noses getting cut off to spite the wrong faces.

Making banners.

As the disarmament movement swells and trembles, visual artists are mobilizing in numbers unseen since the invasion of Cambodia sparked the intense, if short-lived, Art Strike. Our image-makers—grassroots and avant-garde—are once again struggling to elevate slogans to symbols, to provide, literally, the banners beneath which the people will march to doom or defiance. The present political situation, with its demand for fast answers, is not only sending conscious artists into the streets, but into their studios as well, where they are taking a deeper look at their long-term needs and goals.

So it's a good time to consider distinctions between activist art and a progressive high art—that is, an art designed to participate directly in structural change, one that criticizes existing structures

from more of a distance—always bearing in mind that the two are often made by the same artists for different contexts. With a little luck, all this activity will also defuse the terror many artworld artists have of being "used" by the left, and reveal the ways orders from the right somehow escape this onus.

I've seen a batch of "political" shows in the last month or two, some in unexpected places. When I expressed frustration with their unevenness, a friend pointed out that most of the high art we see in galleries represents a year's or several years' work. "Timely" shows, on the other hand, are reactive; they have to tackle one issue after another—a scattershot technique partially forced on us by previous invisibility and lack of support or communication.

This leaves little time to analyze and comprehend form and content when the content, at least, keeps changing. But the



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urgency also engenders a growing political consciousness and a spontaneous immediacy lacking in much "high art." Few progressive artists have been able to put all their energy into development of a formal vocabulary for political analysis, and fewer still have not frequently dropped their individual research to support this or that demo, issue or theme show. At the social core of the contradictions, progressive artists work is in the relationship between individual and collective artmaking. At the esthetic core is the relationship between form and politics.

Both in the galleries and in the streets, we are seeing a lot of skulls, bombs, missiles, suggestions for Raygun control, bloody dollar signs and TMI reactors, top hats and rags, peasants and generals, mutants and mushrooms, flames and fists. Extremes. I'm not making fun of these images. As emblems they can be used with force and directness, sometimes with subtlety and freshness. June 12th proved that. What finally counts, though, is how deeply they reach, whether they are merely provocative or provoke thought and action as well.

Clarity and extremes.

The art on June 12 had three basic mandates: to make people terrified of nuclear war, not to make people feel helpless before their terror, and to help them understand its roots in domestic and foreign policy, or state terrorism. Clearly you can't reach out to a million people, no matter how brilliant your talents and good your intentions, unless you know what you think about the issues on a level more complex than basic ban-the-bomb black.

At "The Fate of the Art"—a recent Political Art Documentation and Distribution-sponsored evening of slides and discussion to evaluate the visual contributions to June 12—there were several passionate pleas for political clarity as well as esthetic integrity. The issue of words (any? how many?) in visual art came up, as it always does. For instance, one woman raised the interesting problem of cross-rhetoric, such as the parallels between the anti-war "Choose Life" and the anti-abortion "Pro-Life" slogans.

If there's a plethora of extremes—of victims and enemies—in oppositional art, it's not the artists' fault. The art isn't going to go beyond the politics, just as on an individual basis it can't go beyond the artist's own politics. For this reason, the compromised notion of a nuclear freeze looks cool to artists whose liberalism turns reactionary when

they perceive the strings attached—the vital cords of non-intervention, anti-racism and sexism, redirection of funds to social needs and unilateral U.S. disarmament.

At one point during the June 12th evaluation, someone summed up the steps toward a strategic marriage of political clarity and imaginative form: Decide what image to make, where and how best to display it, and why

ed outrage. I'm told that in the barrio, Sanchez' work has inspired and organized for years now. In the art world, it opens us up to new ways of seeing what surrounds us.

Like street demonstrations, "political art shows" sometimes seem primarily to reinforce the commitments of the artists and other converted participants. This is no small thing, much as we also pursue a broader effec-

artist's name. It turned out to be Peter Gourfain, whose abstract sculpture I'd admired since the mid-'60s. In May he had a show at the MOA Gallery in New York.

In the drawings and raucous clay reliefs shown there, and in the demo banners and big cartooned pots and monumental sculptures not seen there, Gourfain's dominant motif is a double frieze of wild-eyed "Romanesque" heads in profile, toothy

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sciousness, to produce an unexpected explosion of serial art. Rather than looking to specific issues and then trying to find a form in which to best express his opinions, he has found his form in the history of art itself. Romanesque relief, Celtic illumination, and the Coptic *clan* of Ethiopian "primitivism" are fused with a raw energy resembling the powerful alienation of a few "New Wave" artists.

I don't know if Gourfain calls himself a Marxist, but he is certainly a materialist in the grand sense. His use of the Romanesque style reminds us how ancient the struggle is. His figures convey The People without resorting to proletarian clichés. They tug and haul at each other, upside down and rightside up, entwined in desperate contact, never at rest, humanity caught in serpentine human-made coils. Some seem to be giving and some taking away, some building and some betraying. Consumption competes with communication.

The gaunt, bearded figures (virtually all men and apparent self-portraits) talk in objects and body parts, suggesting the Celtic urge to transformation through hybrids of form and action. The determined oralism of Gourfain's imagery might be about the contemporary artist's hunger for the love, respect, dignity and power denied him in this society. Visual artists are not supposed to know how to talk—one way of keeping them in the infantile pattern of unfocused anger and dependence appropriate to the art-world playpen. Actually, not many people are given a voice in this word-riddled society, and what is said often resembles the crap pouring from the mouths of Gourfain's protagonists.

In his banners, in his monumental terra-cotta relief doors commemorating the Kent State murders, and in the giant *Roundabout*, a 9 x 22-foot wooden tower depicting a whole history of political struggle—in all of these, Gourfain does what left artists are supposed to do. He makes our dissatisfaction tangible and urges us on to criticism and resistance. His subjects are often not explicit, and his iconography is often ambiguous. His art is straining at its bonds, trying to do what art can't do yet.

A silkscreen in the show—brasher than the drawings—does include words. It says "Much has been said. Now much must be done."

Lucy R. Lippard writes frequently on art and politics in *The Village Voice*. She excerpted this article from a series that appeared there in May and June.



Puppet at June 12 disarmament rally, New York

The art isn't going to go beyond the politics, just as on an individual basis it can't go beyond the artist's own politics.

iveness. Yet such shows also demonstrate that subjects like race, class, sex, militarism and unemployment can fit into the same art molds as any other subject. This in turn combats taboos but can be depressing, because we work in a context in which form dominates and content continues to be submerged. It is therefore exhilarating to find artists who are getting it all together, usually after long, hard work both in and out of both art and political domains.

Ferocious impatience.

A year ago, a friend showed me slides of a banner he'd photographed at an El Salvador demonstration. It was a fierce, brilliantly colored frieze of helmeted heads over a mass of smaller figures divided by a river of knife-like flames. He didn't know the

mouths gaping open to swallow or to spew out grasping hands and various object-symbols—coins, nails, a fish, a wrench, pliers, paintbrushes. The impact of this iconography of need and greed is almost physiological. I felt a kind of visual gag reflex.

Gourfain's subject matter might be a ferocious impatience with what people do to each other. Grimacing with anxiety and anguish, unable to shut up, heads and legs imprisoned in chairs, or boating desperately on a sea of fire, his repeated figures make physical such social emotions as despair and anger about corruption or war, and the possible incompatibility of humanism and human beings.

A former Minimalist, Gourfain uses repetition and cross-reference, fertilized by a red-diaper baby's complex political con-



Peter Gourfain's "Omnivorous Hunger"

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Puerto Rican Nationalist Art: A History, A Tradition, A Necessity

"A people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be culturally free unless, without under-

By JUAN SANCHEZ and RAFAEL COLON MORALES

control over, thus making Puerto Rico a truly anomalous society. The people today have little access to their past, a blurred understanding of their present

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one of the pillars of subsequent cultural development which led to the shaping of the Puerto Rican nation. Some of the visual archetypes which may be said to still have a hold on the Puerto Rican imagination, as well as being unique contributions to world culture, are: the Cemi, the Djuo and the stone collars. The folklore, myths and legends also had a life which prolonged itself for many centuries even after the genocide which followed the European invasion. It must be pointed out that Spain, after draining the island of its gold and other mineral riches, converted it into a military outpost to defend the commerce and loot from the American continent. The rest of the island was left to fend for itself. Runaway slaves (Black slavery was brought to Puerto Rico at the time) and Spanish outcasts, (Jews, Moors, and deserters) and the remaining



has existed a rift between the active cultural workers and the political vanguard. Their energies have been expended in separate directions and at times, even at cross purposes. Real cooperation between cultural and political leadership calls for a clear and sophisticated theoretical understanding, and joint, practical activities in the education of the people.

Puerto Rican history has documented events which in today's mainstream art world would be labeled as "art performances." These are artistic events in which invitation cards were not sent out for people to come and see. These events derive from rituals that goes as far back as Taino and African culture. In 1928, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, brought a seed

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control over, thus making Puerto Rico a truly anomalous society. The people today have little access to their past, a blurred understanding of their present,

The artist, like the writer, has the obligation to be of use; his paintings must be a book that teaches; it must serve to better the human condition; it must castigate evil and exalt virtue.

Francisco Oller
1833 - 1917

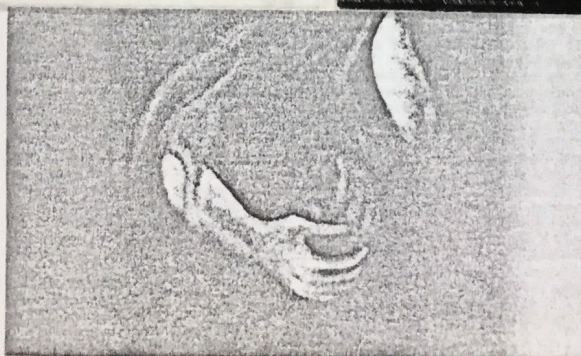
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"A people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be culturally free unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture. The latter is nourished by the living reality of the environment and rejects harmful influences as much as any kind of submission to foreign cultures. We see therefore that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture."

Amílcar Cabral
National Liberation of Guinea Bissau
from French Colonialism

There have already been numerous attempts to present Puerto Rican culture in all its intrinsic purity as a supra-social phenomenon corresponding only to the interpretation of authors who are not committed to the independence of the island. At present, our culture has taken on an artificial autonomy, assuming a definition of the colonial class struggle of Puerto Rican Nationalism; and anti-imperialist opposition toward colonialism as a mere resistance to North American culture. As a result of cultural genocide, a critical reaffirmation of what Puerto Rican Nationalism is has to serve the people through cultural expressions that have strong relationships and act as a base for the Puerto Rican struggle for class, culture, and national liberation.

The Catholic, Indian and African influence, with Spanish culture serving as the superstructure, are the embodiment of the whole in Puerto Rican culture that has been most recently recognized and cherished. The importance of these influences within the present reality have resulted from the development of our historical past, therefore, making these elements far too important to be omitted. The people's awareness of the value of these elements can be recognized as Nationalism. Puerto Rican national culture can be attributed to the geographic area of an island, small in size, but strategically situated in relationship to Europe, Africa and the American continent. It has been a focal point in which the movement of people within and away from the Caribbean has always demonstrated strong nationalistic ties even before European colonialism, when the island was first known to the Indians as Borikén.

When the Spaniards came to the island, a struggle was already taking place between the tribes inhabiting the island. The Spaniards used this struggle to assert themselves in order to facilitate the subjugation of the island. From the native people of Borikén, we have a vast cultural output which constitutes one of the pillars of subsequent cultural development which led to the shaping of the Puerto Rican nation. Some of the visual archetypes which may be said to still have a hold on the Puerto Rican imagination, as well as being unique contributions to world culture, are: the Cemi, the Djuo and the stone collars. The folklore, myths and legends also had a life which prolonged itself for many centuries even after the genocide which followed the European invasion. It must be pointed out that Spain, after draining the island of its gold and other mineral riches, converted it into a military outpost to defend the commerce and loot from the American continent. The rest of the island was left to fend for itself. Runaway slaves (Black slavery was brought to Puerto Rico at the time) and Spanish outcasts, (Jews, Moors, and deserters) and the remaining

tribal people intermingled during these first centuries. The neglect and isolation afforded to them by the Spaniards permitted the formulation of what was to become the core of Puerto Rican national culture.

Puerto Rican art has its sophisticated expressions in the art of Jose Campeche (1751-1809) and Francisco Oller (1833-1919) followed by other artists like Carlos Raquel Rivera, Jose R. Alicea, Rafael Tufino and Olga Albizu. Jose Campeche was the first painter recognized in the history of Puerto Rico. He was an artist of African descent who had achieved recognition and fame in his life time. The *Student*, painted by Francisco Oller, the great impressionist, along with paintings by Cezanne, Van Gogh, Renoir, Manet and Pissarro, hangs in the Louvre in Paris. Oller, a Puerto Rican, along with Whistler, are the only two American painters who

have achieved this distinction. He was the only Spanish-speaking artist who played a part in the French Impressionist Movement. That sophisticated energy manifested itself in a more popular expression in the handicrafts of the people, especially in the carving of saints' figures, vigigantes and in the weaving of straw hats and hamacas, to name a few.

Since the time of the North American invasion and occupation of the island of Puerto Rico, the indigenous culture has been constantly threatened by the cultural impositions of the invaders. Their own culture provided the islanders with common understanding and patterns of behavior. This provided cohesiveness and unity, and for the continuity of the island society. The cultural impositions of conquest had created a situation of rapid cultural change in a direction which Puerto Ricans had no

control over, thus making Puerto Rico a truly anomalous society. The people today have little access to their past, a blurred understanding of their present, and no directions for the future. "Americanization" assumes the appearance of an existential universality in everyday Puerto Rican life. The result of this creates a very desperate, almost catastrophic vision of the future of Puerto Rican culture, reflecting a sense of impotence and defenselessness in the face of an irreversible, unalterable process: the "Americanization" of Puerto Ricans. Since the American occupation, increases in suicide, divorce, physiological and psychological illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, delinquency, and theft have made Puerto Rico a showcase of colonialism to the world. In the first decades, Christmas celebrations had become a business enterprise. The Three Kings have reached the land of no return, and Santa Claus has abandoned his cold, lonely home at the North Pole for the warmth and congeniality of the tropics. As in North America, expensive cards and gifts are the present symbols of Christmas in Puerto Rico.

Asserting the impression that Puerto Ricans do not have a culture creates a condition that will not permit us to go very far. That assertion is in our schooling (on the island as well as in the metropolis) to presuppose the impossibility of linking the cultural aspects of class struggle to the economic and political struggle.

The concept of Puerto Rican nationalism is not the aspiration or the driving force of the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie. In present day Puerto Rico, the local bourgeoisie is not only not national, but its political and cultural projections are clearly anti-national, even though it masks its position under the banner of cultural integrity. In the colony, we are not dealing with a bourgeoisie that rallies the people in defense of national culture as a way of standing up to the power of imperialism. On the contrary, the defense for national integrity has been used to maintain the oppressive status quo. It is the existing metropolis/colony relationship itself that serves to guarantee the survival of the contemporary Puerto Rican bourgeoisie. The local bourgeoisie being no more than an overseas appendage of the North American bourgeoisie, the hierarchy of cultural elements in the colony necessarily follows the patterns of that class which is, ultimately, the real ruling class: the North American Bourgeoisie.

There is a pressing need in the cultural front in which dual responsibilities of the active cultural workers and the political vanguard must unite. For too long in the cultural front, there has existed a rift between the active cultural workers and the political vanguard. Their energies have been expended in separate directions and at times, even at cross purposes. Real cooperation between cultural and political leadership calls for a clear and sophisticated theoretical understanding, and joint, practical activities in the education of the people.

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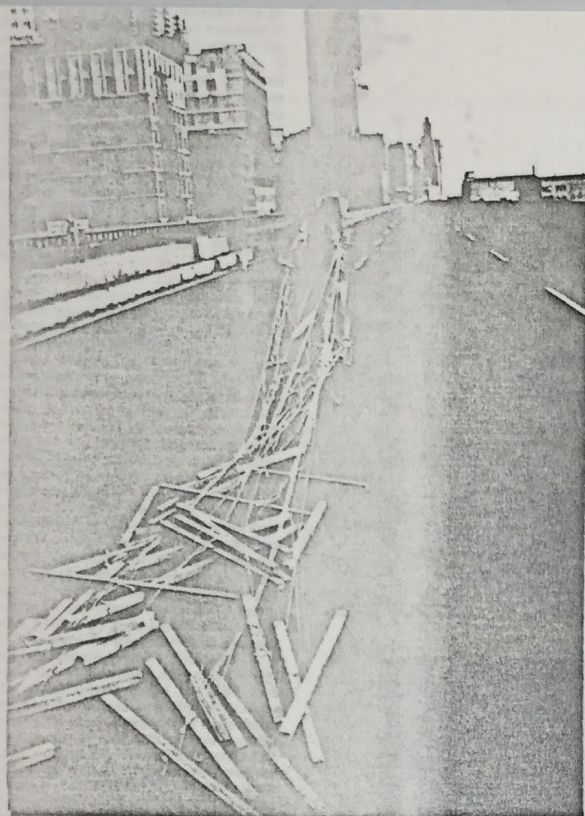
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to Puerto Rico and planted it in the town of Lares. He picked the seed from the Tamarind tree, planted since the nineteenth century in the Bolívar Plaza, in Caracas, Venezuela, to commemorate the independence of South America. This became part of an on-going historical performance in which, later on, in celebration of "El Grito de Lares" the full grown tree became part of a monument made out of concrete; an obelisk, becoming two symbols standing in the Plaza of La Revolución. Another instance occurred during the insurrection of Jayuya in the early 1950's. The Nationalist Party congregated at the Blanca Canales farm of the town of Coabey. They marched down the river passing an ancient Taino monument called "La Piedra Escrita" (The Written Stone). The stone has petroglyphs (a language of Taino symbols) and is located in a tribal burial ground. Coabey is the legendary land of the dead; a cemetery of the souls of the aborigines. That sixteen foot stone, and crossing a Taino cemetery was part of the action and performance of an attempt by a group of Nationalists to liberate the town of Jayuya from the U.S. government through revolution. An even more dramatic event took place in the Ponce Massacre, in 1937, in which President Roosevelt ordered through the governor of Puerto Rico, General Winthrop, to halt a peaceful parade by whatever means most effective. Semi-militarized police, armed with machine guns, wounded and killed over 200 persons at the parade which was sponsored by the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party on Palm Sunday. A young young Nationalist set up in the

rain of bullets and wrote on a concrete wall with his own bloodied finger, "Viva La Republica! Abajo Los Asesinos!", minutes before he died.

The energy existent in the Puerto Rican community pertaining to music, dance, theatre and the visual arts are outstanding examples of cultural diversity. Yes most of these cultural examples do not really constitute the whole culture, nor even its most essential core. On many levels these artistic outputs, today, being by necessity attached to the established cultural apparatus, really only serve to distort the day to day social interaction of Puerto Ricans and other workers which is the real locus of cultural experience. The emotional and intellectual impact of generational conflict, the availability of new technology, the breakdown of family and religious customs and the oppressive reality of urban life necessarily elude the articulated cultural expression.

There is a need in cultural theory and criticism to probe deeper into the social basis of our culture. By drawing from everyday cultural experiences, we may recognize more clearly the working class contours of our culture. Only in this manner can we be able to set distinctive national features, which seem to loom so well and definitively in perspective, the broader historical movement of the people. Such an approach can destroy the powerful currents and profound implications, as well as the ominous dangers of a multinational cultural situation in a imperialist society.

... and the idea of

the only recourse for Puerto Rican artists like Elizam Escobar, a Puerto Rican prisoner of war who has gone beyond his paint brushes and has taken arms against North American imperialism; Taller Boricua, a collective of community-involved artists which deals with Afro-Jibaro-Taino aesthetics; Carlos Raquel Rivera, Carlos Irizarry, Marina Guitierrez, Vilma Maldonado Reyes, Lorenzo Homar and Myrna Baez, among others, who create art that deals with the basis of Puerto Rican reality, past and present. These artists reflect the momentous historical events of past generations: dismemberment of the colony with the migration of masses of its people as wage-laborers, and the growth and development of the new community in a radically different economic, political and cultural circumstance.

New York City has proven to be good grounds for the radicalization of Puerto Rican youths. The Puerto Rican Young Lords Party, a revolutionary organization originating in Chicago and formed in New York City in the summer of 1969 (and whose influence rapidly spread to Puerto Rican communities throughout this country and the island) is proof of that concern toward the social, economic and political realities of our community with a movement towards militant activism.

This concern has resulted in the spread of Puerto Rican art supporting the ideals of independence into the streets. There is no better example of living art history today than that of a mural. Murals all over New York City, on the Lower East Side, El Barrio, Los Sures, El Bronx and Brooklyn, particularly those designed by Alfredo Hernandez, Manny Vega, and Victor Collazo, are gifts of love from the artist. It is one of the most affecting visual performances than an artist of the community can give to his people. Artists like the Mexican muralists Siquieros, Rivera, Orozco and the revolutionary murals and posters of Cuba, Nicaragua, and the rest of Latin America and South Africa have had a direct affect and influence on the Puerto Rican artist. This results in strong revolutionary ideology with cultural, religious and historical references to the past and present. The muralist in an urban environment always encounters a sense of personal elation at seeing a product through from beginning to end while mingling and exchanging reactions and ideas with the people. The interrelationship with the community is encouraging. It becomes a daily event during the procession of the mural. Homemade cakes, "arroz con pollo," and other hispanic dishes circulate around the artists at work. The people recognize what the mural illustrates; events and symbols that are reflective of their heritage and pride; the whole activity is greatly appreciated. These murals, particularly the ones on Fourth Street and Avenue C, Delancey and Forsyth Streets and Rivington and Chrystie Streets, were created in hopes that they could open doors for the rest of the world to realize the Puerto Rican and other Latinos in terms of culture and pride against the social and political oppression and repression that the community receives on a daily basis. The art on these walls is one of the very few weapons that exists against the deafness of history. It is a distant cry, derivative of the slums, rats and roaches and of ghetto life. Murals are alternative forms reacting against a totally closed system. Street paintings have the added advantage of being more public and accessible than the established mainstream art world because they are out in the open where anyone who passes by, regardless of race, class or economic position may view them. These murals portray a reality that is far more true to the reactions of the Puerto Rican working class than the "reality" existing in the modernist art world. What people believe in, think and feel is what is important and these murals are part of that reality.

point where personal expressions are everywhere in the city; Puerto Rican flags, (a reduction of the U.S. flag to one star and three stripes) is a symbol which has its own history of oppression since it was illegal to exhibit, and is spray-painted on walls, subway trains and stations, cars, abandoned buildings, storefronts and clothing. They are the examples of living consciousness in forms of graffiti that can be traced and compared to the Mexican muralist, generated by similar conditions. Graffiti is an urban provincial art, almost anonymous in style but full of cries for recognition with a need to communicate in the most illegal manner. There is also constant activity taking place week after week. Poster announcing political rallies or activities layered on top of other posters creates an interesting textural surface accompanied by the wear and tear of time. More impressive are the content of these graphics; issues dealing with Puerto Rican independence with a range of different political lines and slogans. The whole activity of pasting a poster right on top of paper-cluttered walls along with the act of poster as a swiftly as possible, (since it is an illegal activity and one might get caught) is an added element that determines and underlines the risk and importance of such actions. It is an act derivative of the expressive and creative necessity to communicate in the most public of places. Protest and ideology are cluttered along with advertisements for hispanic products, dances, parades and concerts, within the same context of Puerto Rican Nationalism. The confrontation of layered statements, gestures, colors and textures creates its own spirituality transcending itself as a statement that where it is situated is right where it belongs, within the flow of the Puerto Rican community. This, of course, is totally aimed with the intention of communication that leads to education, mobilization and consciousness of the reality surrounding the Puerto Rican people.

The political ideology, the primary thrust of intention, is what is brought to the analytical level of attention. The fusion of modernist trends with the primary concern for social change in the Puerto Rican liberation struggle, provokes the humanizing dialogue among the community that will result in the naming of their world. To "know your own" is a necessity for a people living in a hostile society; a society which fails to acknowledge in its education system that Puerto Ricans art. The fight to reveal to the people their own power of representation is an important aspect of contemporary artists today.

Carlos Raquel Rivera is one of a number of artists whose biography gives strong clues to the political/artistic climate existing in the island for the past three decades and has influenced and inspired Puerto Rican artists in New York. Carlos Raquel Rivera is essentially a self-taught artist who is famous for a series of linoleum cut prints such as the one titled, "La Massacre de Ponce." It depicts, in miniature form, the shooting of the Nationalist marchers on Palm Sunday in front of the slender wooden houses of Ponce. Gigantically out of proportion, an American bald eagle overpowers the scene. The dramatic change in proportion between the eagle overpowers the scene. The dramatic change in proportion between the eagle and the town gives the graphic a peculiar spatial tension. Other titles from the series include: "Huracan del Norte" (Hurricane from the North) and "Los Elecciones Coloniales" (Colonial Elections). Both graphics have similar styles of versatility with space and as the titles imply, exhibit strong political awareness. Carlos Raquel Rivera is also known for his public act of taking down the North American flag from the pole of El Morro's U.S. Marine Base and replacing it with the Puerto Rican flag.

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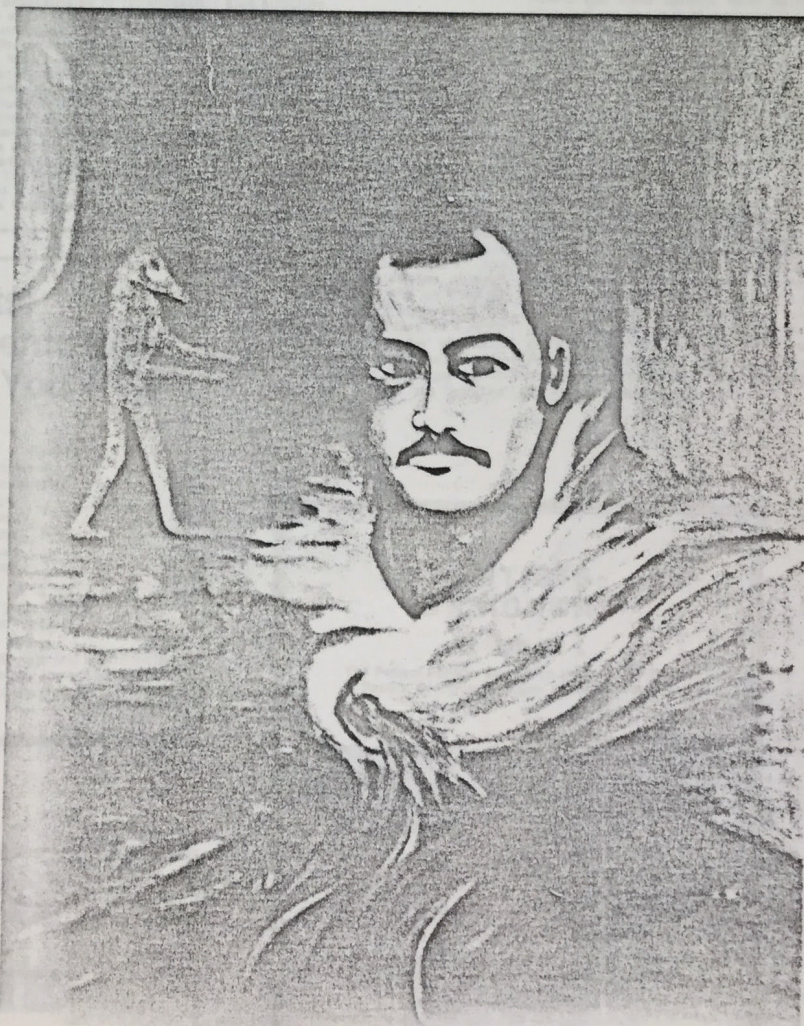
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Another encounter was between the artist and an institutionalized museum in Puerto Rico. As a result of one of his paintings being exhibited under a politically degrading situation, the artist took the painting off the wall and shredded it to pieces with a small axe. He then paid back the collector, who had loaned the work to the museum, the value of his work. This act was really a defense of the right of all artists to have a say in the exhibition of their work. In the summer of 1980, a retrospective of his work was held at El Museo Del Barrio, curated by Jacqueline Biaggi, in New York City.

Puerto Rican art in New York is quite urban in experience and attitude, with the notion of art being a product of culture and culture being the lifestyle of a people which sustains itself with continuous development of various cultural influences. This concept in itself involves the very process of art which also involves the risk of that of Albizu Campos when it comes to artistic performances. Painter and performing artist Carlos Irizarry is that type of artist who, as a result of such attitudes, now finds himself in jail. Carlos Irizarry is an artist who developed in New York. As early as 1960 he was included in a book portraying Latin American artists. In 1967 he went to Puerto Rico where he introduced techniques in photo silkscreen and plexiglass. In 1968, in what might have been termed a proto-performance, he opened a gallery on sixty-eighth street near Park Avenue. He put up a huge sign, calling his gallery "Puerto Rican Arts." A court trial immediately ensued, in which the artist was brought to court and ordered to remove the offending sign, giving the block association their racist victory. Illegal art has always been a forte with Irizarry; a most humorous performance was a time when he streaked in Calle San Sebastian, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, running from one end of the block to the other. Another performance dealt with the now-famous "mock-bomb" stunt. Tying and exposing a fake bomb around this waist, he approached President Ford who was in Puerto Rico for a convention. When tried in court, his defense of this act as being merely a conceptual art performance brought him acquittal. The one act after the "mock-bomb" performance was the one which presently holds him in a Florida prison. This resulted from an actual conceptual performance piece in which he handed the pilot of a plane a note to call President Carter and ask him to release the four Puerto Rican Nationalist political prisoners, in route to Puerto Rico from New York. The plane, headed back for J.F.K. Airport where he was arrested. Even though Irizarry did not have any type of weapon on him, he was accused of hijacking the plane. That act of August 15, 1979, was, according to Irizarry, a performance which was really a symbolic attack; an act of conceptual art to dramatize the colonial status of Puerto Rico. Interestingly enough, 1979 was the year when the Puerto Rican Nationalists, Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores and Oscar Collazo were released with a pardon from President Carter.

The very process of art is a similar concept to painter, sculptor, and performing artist Papo Colo. The only difference is that Colo's performances are really set up for an audience and are not risking anything but the performance itself. Taking into account his attitude of creating no boundaries between mediums and using whatever medium necessary for the sole purpose of achieving a philosophical/political statement, Colo uses the process of art in his performances that involve and educate people about issues, culture and art. The summer of 1977 marked a particular performance titled *Superman 51*. The tying of 51 long pieces of wood onto his body with the intention of running across the West Side Highway was a symbolic attempt to challenge imperialist forces that intend to make Puerto



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Rico its 51st state. The idealistic search and fight for national integrity from within the belly of the monster (the West Side Highway being Uncle Sam) even when predetermined defeat is at hand, illustrates the frustrating defeat and encouraging small victories of his people and the de-mystifying role of the hero/villain Superman (imperialism) as a multi-level attempt at communicating an issue with both seriousness and humor.

The psychodramatic etching and paintings of Marina Gutierrez, address similar issues; the ecological threat to the fishing island of Vieques by the United States Navy, the assassination of activist Angel Rodriguez Cristobal and the social struggle of the Latino woman in male chauvinist Latin America. Her figurative mixed media style and sense of color has a psychological dream-like silence when the issues have violent elements. Her portrayals tend to lean towards the internalized subjugation, oppression and repression of the human character in relation to the external realities. The paintings of Vilma Maldonado Reyes also have a dream-like quality to them. However, her portraits of Puerto Rican prisoners of war are more deeply rooted to the symbolism of Taino references as ancient warriors whose traditions are still being carried by people like Dylcia Pagan, Maria Hayder Torres and Elizam Escobar with great dignity. Vilma Maldonado Reyes further humanizes these present day freedom fighters as people of conscious sacrifice and courage. The artists mentioned in this article are only a few examples of many that do not complement the stereotypical images of Puerto Ricans and Latinos portrayed on television shows and in films such as *Badge 343* and *Fort*

Apache; The Bronx, portraying us as a jubilant, criminally sick and happy race of people who are only into drugs, drinking and "partying and sex."

"For centuries we have been taught that we are a small, quiet, insignificant, shuffling people who cannot govern ourselves and who are very happy having outside government control our lives. We are taught that revolution is the work of maniacs and fanatics and has nothing to do with nice, docile spics. Yet we have not been quiet."

The Puerto Rican Young Lords Party
New York City, 1970.

Our Puerto Rican history for the past 400 years has been a history of continuous struggle and tragedies as a result of our colonial state and the need to become and independent nation. More than one-third of all Puerto Rican women of child bearing age were sterilized by a program which the United States government was instrumental in planning, billed as a means to combat overpopulation and unemployment. This continues to be the highest rate of genocidal sterilization in the world. On November 11, 1979, Angel Cristobal, a farmer from Ciales, Puerto Rico, was assassinated in Tallahassee, Florida as a political prisoner committed to the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico, particularly the removal of the U.S. Navy out of Vieques.

The present problem is the intention of dissolving the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, by censoring and misdirecting the cultural integrity of the Puerto Rican artist and the closing down of galleries and museums in the island. This was brought an influx of artists to New York. The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture has a history of presenting art exhibitions, theatre, multi-media presen-

tations and archeval historical presentations of the most historical awareness. The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture is in the process of being dismantled while artists and the general public have created a united front in defense of cultural nationalism. Artists in protest abstained from the Puerto Rican Graphic Biennial at the Institute in 1981, as an anti-cultural administration which is now under the directorship of Leticia del Rosario, nuclear scientist. The artists put together a counter-exhibition somewhere else. The exhibition became a success, in that the artists presented a common front and set up a show under their own sponsorship and not under that of an imperialist, anti-national government. The closing of galleries and the developing low morale and standards within the colonial militancy of the present government is the reaction against a people moving closer toward the ideals of freedom. As a result of this, the reactionary forces become more blatantly destructive. Cultural genocide has been a United States policy every since the taking over of the island around the turn of the century. The worst aspect of this type of situation is that of neglect, alienation, powerlessness and silence. This afflicts most of our people. Alienation is precisely the one element linking Puerto Ricans and other working class people outside of the art world's elite structure.

Puerto Rican art, particularly that which supports Puerto Rican independence, is an attempt to reinforce the concept that art of revolutionary norms can create an institution, outside of what already exists, that considers itself part of a people's everyday lives. It is an attempt to create a movement that engages people in reacting-reflecting, loving-using, making and incorporating art into their lives, their homes, with an understanding if themselves. It is a necessity to create artistic development within the Puerto Rican movement, educating and helping children and adults to know themselves through history as they were and as they are now, arming them with both the knowledge and alternatives for a better future. Modernist attempts in Puerto Rican art elevate consciousness by the use of materials in an experimental fashion to bring forth the peoples'

awareness of who they are. The creativity and research involved deals with specific questions. Why is this knowledge of culture hidden? Where is one to find such information? How has the painter, the poet, and the musician expressed in the past and the present the roots of our culture and the struggle? How can the artist today educate a community, absent from its country, within a system of oppression?

All artists should be familiar with the images people create and understand. Their task is to consciously combat the forces in this system that try to use them and make their creative efforts mere commodities, cutting them off from the masses. Their work should realize and support the aspirations, needs and movements of thousands insofar as the artist remains the primary source of artistic and cultural expression. We must face the fact that the development of North American art has almost totally ignored the input of its racial and ethnic minorities. If there is going to be any representation of didactic art in exhibitions, presentations and articles, a fair representation of the Puerto Rican along with the Native American Indian, the African American, Asians and other Latinos, must be included. If not, the lack of representation by Third World artists who deal with the issues of art and politics is to be taken as an insult to the true values of art for the sake of humanity. If there is really truth to the saying that change does not evolve, that it is sought and gained through struggle then that necessity will continue until the fruits of our spirited labor are heard, suppression not withstanding.

Juan Sanchez is a painter and photographer presently curating an exhibition to political art titled *Beyond Aesthetics: Art of Necessity by Artists of Conscience to be shown in the Spring at the Henry Street Settlement Arts for Living Center*. Rafael Colon Morales is a painter, teacher and lecturer. He is currently in an exhibition in *El Museo del Barrio* dealing with Puerto Rican art and Taino symbolism and is also an artist in residence at the Clock Tower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources.

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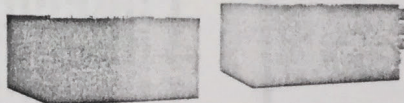
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Art

PHOTOGRAPHY VIEW

ANDY GRUNDBERG

The Power To Convince Has Faded

The entry of photography into museums and galleries has not been without its casualties. Foremost among them has been social documentary photography — the kind of photography that deals directly with the human condition and is frequently referred to as "concerned" or "humanistic." While some efforts have been made to rationalize this activity within the art arena — the International Center of Photography in particular is committed to such a project — generally it has been bypassed in the rush to celebrate photography as an art form. When it does enter into the gallery world and into photography history books (as it has in the case of Lewis Hine and W. Eugene Smith, for example), content invariably takes a back seat to style.

However vestigial and ill-fitting within the art world, humanist social documentary photography continues to attract a great number of practitioners, and even to make its presence felt at the edges of the gallery scene. This month, especially, seems filled with exhibitions emphasizing such social themes as poverty, ethnicity, urban life and Third World culture. There are pictures of Times Square street life as seen over a span of 40 years by Lou Stoumen, at the International Center of Photography (1150 Fifth Avenue, through Aug. 14); images depicting Jewish life in Britain by Judy Goldhill, at the Jewish Museum (1109 Fifth Avenue, through Sept. 25), and, at the Henry Street Settlement, a group show called "Evidence" featuring 12 photographers committed to the camera as an agent of social change (406 Grand Street, through July 24).

There are rather obvious precedents for all this work. Mr. Stoumen's pictures of Times Square and environs, for example, are reminiscent of a whole corpus of urban street imagery done in the 30's and 40's under the auspices of the Photo League. They are not without their individual charms, though, since they sympathetically detail the human comedy as it reveals itself in public. The older images, the best of which date from 1940, also have the great advantage of inducing nostalgia, even in viewers unborn at the time. In one, a tour-bus guide addresses his captive audience through a megaphone; in another, a newspaper headline shouts "To Hell With Hitler." These



Lou Stoumen's "After 35!" (1940)—His older images induce nostalgia.

1940 pictures seemed fueled by the threat of world war; Mr. Stoumen seems to have felt it necessary to record the texture of a society about to undergo dramatic changes.

His more recent pictures are less intriguing, though, perhaps because they lack this sense of necessity. To compare images taken some 40 years apart is an interesting diversion, which the exhibition encourages by juxtaposing them — Burger Kings replace Horn and Hardarts, black faces replace white ones — but it hardly compensates for the lack of excitement in the recent work. These pictures of the 80's could almost have been taken by a tourist — which, considering that Mr. Stoumen forsook New York for Los Angeles many years ago, he practically is. Perhaps in 40 more years they will acquire the aura of nostalgia present in the prewar pictures, but I doubt that they will have any more immediacy.

Miss Goldhill's 35 black-and-white photographs at the Jewish Museum are firmly planted in the English documentary tradition, which finds its recent roots in the early work of Bill Brandt. They come replete with delightful wit, trenchant irony and feature a high-contrast printing style that is typically British. Within these conventions the photographer explores the grounds between stereotypical Englishness (fox hunts and races at Ascot) and stereotypical Jewishness (Kosher butchers and anti-P.L.O. demonstrators). She has photographed assimilated Jews whose heritage can only be guessed at and those so unassimilated their nationality comes as a surprise. Who would know for sure; were his picture not pre-

sented in the context of this show, that Jonathan Miller was a Jew? Do the British care? Judging from another of Miss Goldhill's portraits, of a taxi driver who flies the British and Israeli flags from his front seat, distinguishing Jewishness from Britishness is often no simple matter.

This is the documentary problem with "A British Portrait": while we are given evidence that Jews indeed exist in Britain, we never discover what is essentially English about their Jewishness, or what is essentially Jewish about their Englishness. Most likely Miss Goldhill is making a point about the ambiguities that adhere to the overlap of Jewish and British cultural life, but the ambiguities are carried over into the pictures. How would her picture of men writing a Torah differ if it were taken in Brooklyn instead of London? To the extent that it would be exactly the same, the documentary meaning of these pictures is blurred.

"Evidence," at the Henry Street Settlement, is firmly planted in the American documentary tradition of Hine, the Farm Security Administration, the Photo League and Eugene Smith, although traces of Henri Cartier-Bresson's decisive-moment influence creep in on occasion. The show is aimed at demonstrating the perseverance of photography that "conveys a deep commitment to humanistic values and concerns," according to its curator, Juan Sanchez. The evidence he has assembled, while not exhaustive of the genre, is substantial. Beside big-name talents such as Bruce Davidson and Larry Fink, whose exhibition records are extensive, the show includes

a number of lesser-known photographers of surprising merit.

The pictures of Jules Allen, Angel Franco and Gilberto Wilson, in particular, suggest that compelling, fertile visual possibilities still remain within the confines of social documentation. Mr. Allen documents life in an inner-city boxing gym, Mr. Franco chronicles the crimes and punishments within the purview of "Fort Apache," the infamous Bronx police precinct, and Mr. Wilson surveys black church life with a directness that makes a virtue of sentimentality. These are hardly new subjects for documentary photography, but the photographers manage to make them vivid nonetheless. However, for all the freshness of their perceptions of life's tragedies and triumphs, their work suffers from being so firmly rooted in an acquired style. This gives the work a complacency at odds with the spirit of the exhibition.

For all their good intentions, in short, none of the photographs I have been discussing have as great an impact as their makers might intend. The unfortunate truth is, we can no longer take them at face value. Their power to convince us, to outrage us, to move us to act, has faded. What's left — for all but the most naive viewers — is style, a system of conventionalized depiction that can only evoke conventionalized responses. Just as war photographs seem invariably to repeat themselves — death in Cambodia looking much like death on Guadalcanal — these pictures begin to look not only like their antecedents but also like each other. Consequently, as Susan Sontag has pointed out, they can dull our capacity for emotionally responding in critical and, one might hope, socially useful ways.

This speaks to the point that advocates of Post-Modernist art have been making, namely that in our image-saturated world we no longer have "innocent" responses. As critic Douglas Crimp has said in the context of nature photography, "the presence that such photographs have for us is the presence of déjà vu." The same holds true for many social documentary photographs. Thus the urge of many younger photographers to recycle and reform existing imagery — in an attempt to challenge the ennui of our retinas and the diminution of our responses — begins to make sense as a new kind of socially concerned photography.

The issue, ultimately, is not so much about documentation as it is about art, a word that most socially committed photographers would rather leave unuttered. The evidence of "Evidence," as well as of Mr. Stoumen's and Miss Goldhill's shows, is that what is missing today is not a wellspring of compassionate and caring documentary photographers, but new ways of transferring feelings onto paper as images. As seen in Mr. Stoumen's early work, a sense of urgency may provide the necessary impetus for invention, but outside of the crisis atmosphere of Post-Modernist discourse, that urgency is noticeably lacking. ■

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LATINO NEW YORK

CINCO PINTORES

Detail: Juan Sanchez

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NUEVA YORK LATINO

Special Supplement on Latin American Artists begins on page 9.

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ART & ARTISTS

Published by the Foundation for the Community of Artists

Formerly *Artworkers News*

Volume 12, Number 8, July 1983

A Special Supplement on Latin American Artists begins on page 9

Six Nicaraguan Painters 10
Betty La Duke visits six Nicaraguan painters and discusses with them their work in the context of political action.

I Discover Gabriel Garcia Marquez 14
Maria Thereza Alves tells about growing up alien in the U.S. and Garcia Marquez discusses the role of writers today.

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and more . . .



Collage by Juan Sanchez

"In the standard publishers contract in the U.S., the publisher has all of the rights for the whole life of the writer. I find it strange that American writers have accepted this."

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Special Supplement on Latin American Artists begins on page 9.

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"Mujeres Nueve" leaves room for growth, which says alot for the emerging Latina struggling to bring forth her observations as well as struggling to acquire knowledge. Its signs. Its stories. The almost natural way these Latinas leave themselves open to optimism. That takes alot of courage.

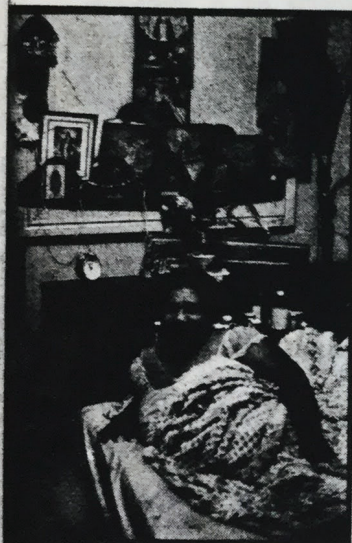
The exhibit has its moments. It has its pitfalls and its stirring awakenings. The print selections could have been graced with a better editing job which at times completely disrupted the flow of the exhibit's statement. Individual collections of photographs were not

properly placed. Some took away from the other. What hampered the exhibit even more was the apparent lack of "technical" know how of some of the women in the group. Yet, all in all the "ostentatiousness" of Mujeres Nueve could be better fulfilled by severe editing and publication in a major photography magazine.

Credit is due to Miss Collazo, who put faith in what she wanted to accomplish and saw it through.

This was a "First" for the Puerto Rican woman in New York, but not the last.

FRANCISCO REYES II



JUAN SANCHEZ PHOTO EXHIBIT 4th STREET GALLERY

The photography of Juan Sanchez reflects the struggle of a unique individual and, in a broader context, that of the Nuyorican.

A glance around the room immediately tells the viewer who this artist is and where he's coming from. Over a third of the photographs include the flag of Puerto Rico—waving high above trees, painted on a basketball hoop or worn as a blouse. Another third are portraits (with an aura of vague resignation) of parents and their children, a young couple, a family united by grief and a series of the artist's mother. The rest of these

melancholy pictures are still-lives: littered sidewalks, a composition of *velas* and *santos*, and doorways in the ghetto.

Birthdays and *rosarios*, demonstrations in the park and kids playing in the streets—all of these rituals and activities are recreated by Mr. Sanchez' camera with a disturbing familiarity and an unmistakable Latino sensibility and sympathy.

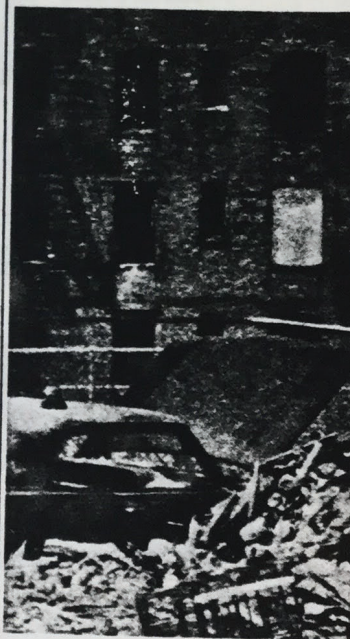
A friend who accompanied me complained: "Alright already, enough with the *bandera puer-torriquena*, enough with these sad-looking people." Granted, taken merely as a collection of individual works, the images and emotions in these photographs appear repetitious, monotonous and even exaggerated. But stepping back, the images fuse, the pathos seems to lessen, and the viewer is allowed the panorama of a particular human landscape: The soul of the Nuyorican.

These photographs disprove unequivocally the theory that a work of art embracing a social stance is merely a tool of propaganda. always reserved, Sanchez avoids the obvious and the over-stated. His vision of the urban Puerto Rican is not a romantic celebration, nor is an ear-shattering cry of poverty and frustration, nor a call to arms. It is rather a quiet mourning for those little deaths the Latino may die each day as a victim of imperialism and exploitation.

—AMALIA PENA

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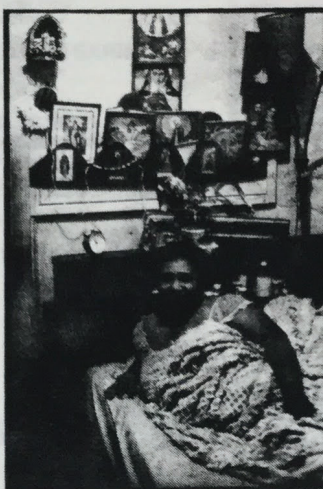
A PHOTO EXHIBITION

Recently photographer Juan Sanchez had his work displayed at The Cooper Union Building of Arts and Science at 41 Cooper St. Juan's photos illustrate specifically where he is coming from. The emphasis is on culture, to show realities—"As It Is"—according to Juan.

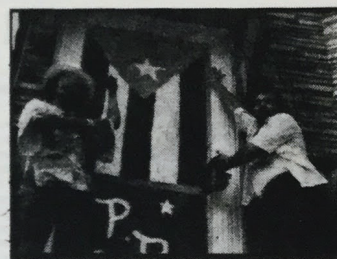
The softness of the black and white photographs in this exhibition give reason to believe why he is so talented. Initially, these prints were made in color and transposed to black and white negatives, giving them brown tones rather than the usual harsh black and white tonality. Without a doubt this technique helps the photos present a certain spirituality that is very inherent in the Lation experience.

Juan Sanchez is involved in other art forms. He is a senior at Cooper Union, majoring in Art. Besides photography,

Review by Doris Elisa Rivera



he paints. After showing me his paintings, I was undecided on which form he controls more. Nevertheless, his artistic message, whether in painting or photography, is a realistic view of the plight of Latinos. It is a strong message that has impact. Multi-talented and proud of his work, Juan Sanchez is an artist that we can expect to hear more from in the future. We should all be proud of his work.



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WASHINGTON MARKET REVIEW

May 19, 1982

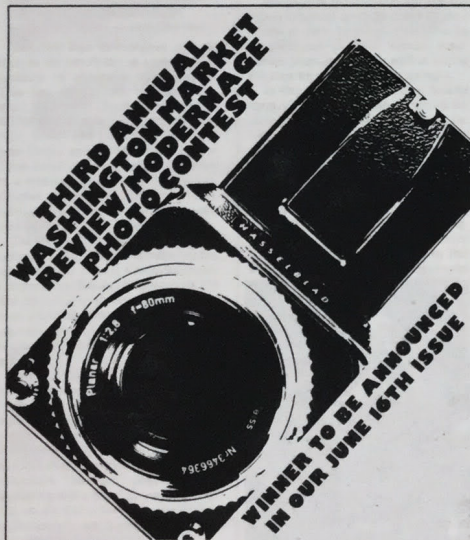
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to search for a man who once stabbed her. By the time we have traversed the many silly twists of the plot over three acts, we hardly even notice that Sandrina ends up marrying her one-time attacker. Fortunately, pretty tunes do abound, and one can hear the beginnings of the great things which were to follow later in Mozart works. Donna Elvira, Don Giovanni's second love, can be heard clearly in Arminda's vengeance aria. Finta's second act forest scene is a clear predecessor of the fourth act of *Nozze di Figaro*, with people

hopping behind trees and under hedges in the moonlight to good comic effect.

In Friday's cast (there are two casts) the Sandrina was Monique Finney. Her former attacker was David Kellett. Jane Franklin Peters, Erik Dahl, Timothy La Fontaine, Andrea Morgan Matthews, and April Joy Stevens completed a largely well-balanced cast. Scott Thompson accompanied excellently at the piano, joined quite effectively by the able continuo work of Andrew DeMasi's harpsichord.

Art**"Visual Politics" Is Too Strident**

By WILLIAM NABERS

The political commitment of the artist is being tested all over town these days. The current show at the Alternative Museum again raises the question: Can a work of art have political impact?

The exhibition "Visual Politics" groups together 12 artists whose work is dominated to different degrees by political metaphor. Yet this is not an aggressive show. Each artist tends to confirm rather than challenge accepted points of view, and each does so in a way that is quite conventional. "Visual Politics" offers solidarity with its audience. The show will not provoke or disturb the viewer, and will not lead him to question the politics of aesthetics. Neither the subject matter nor the form of expression is radical here. (The current Franklin Furnace installation, which disconcertingly converts gallery space into a travel agency, does demand those things of its audience, for example, and is more truly political in intent and effect.)

The work in "Visual Politics," then, is mainstream. It is appropriate that Robert Rauschenberg is (next to Lenin) the most influential image-maker acknowledged in the Alternative Museum show. Rauschenberg's use of news-photo collage, infused his prints of the 1960s with instant political import, and they became emblems of the decade. In this show, evidence is presented that Rauschenberg influenced the graphic design of work as varied as that of Jose Morales, Juan Sanchez, and perhaps even Peter Waite.

Morales paints boxed, blindfolded profiles, and, in one case, sets these against a virtual catalog of the military-industrial complex: a photo of the National Guard, and silhouette cutouts of cash registers, oil derricks, and corporate executives. These "Self-Made Men" are isolated in an empty ground, and further immobilized by large red arrows.

Juan Sanchez, in his "Freedom Dream" paintings, also incorporates collage. One features a photograph of two children on a mattress in the street, matched with a panel of antimacassar heavily painted over in bright orange. The vivid child-like impasto and graffiti flower-faces in which Sanchez often sets his images suggest domestic security gone awry. Poetry and slogans reinforce the theme: "Puerto Rico es una Colonia."

Peter Waite also shares an interest in collage, of a more deliberately controlled sort. He has printed maps (in this case of Detroit and Leningrad) on film sheets, as if for overhead projection, and targeted them with concentric circles to delineate the scope of bomb blasts. There are saucer-like pointers at ground zero. Two of the prints are colored with thick, clear pigment, suggesting topographical maps; two other maps are overlaid on photographed symbols of the cities to be destroyed: an equestrian statue in Leningrad, a factory in Detroit. Waite's maps, with their repetitive, descriptive detail, illustrate the spirit, if not the letter, of Jonathan Schell's essays, *The Fate of the Earth*.

The photographer Daniel Kazimierski pairs images less subtly. In his group of large (30" x 40") photographs, plush oversize magazine ads are placed next to scenes of casual urban destruction: a beautiful couple in evening clothes lean on a balustrade in a Martell brandy ad; the opposite picture shows a colonnaded public band-shell defaced by graffiti and punched with holes, revealing a park beyond. It is curious that Kazimierski chooses to defeat his images in this way. If his photograph was not so tendentiously displayed—if it were seen for its own sake without overt editorializing—it might be both a striking image and an effective expression of decay.

This is the stance of too much of the work in "Visual Politics." Forced into a corner by the artist's statement, the audience is not allowed to think. Again and again we are instead told how to react. Ben Sakoguchi's work, which is also based on advertising, exists only to instruct: his orange-crate labels on small canvases parody the colorful California style of the originals, and transform Americana into alternative propaganda: buy Agent Orange Brand, and "Defoliate for Democracy." Skewer the art market: pair an Ellsworth Kelly panel with the institutionalized elderly, and claim, Reagan-wise, that "Less is More."

Less is more in the work of Steve Miller. That is, the wit is not forced, and in the context of "Visual Politics," is very good-humored. Though Miller takes on the corporate world—his canvases are visual aids for the Reagan era, with graphs of economic conditions painted on fabric or snakeskin—they are funny and effective because each is built upon a visual pun: the "Liquid Assets" graph floats on a schematized blue-

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WASHINGTON MARKET REVIEW

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green ocean; the graph in "Stormy Weather" is a metallic lightning bolt slashing across the canvas. Merely by inviting us to follow through and make the connection, Miller is more generous—and in his play between word and image closer to visual politics—than many others represented in the show.

The strongest works—which are also less insistent about their specific political content—are those by Randy Lee White and Despo Magoni. White's canvases are horizon-less landscapes dotted with American Indians on horseback, oil wells, the U.S. calvary, and a Ford pickup. White has a very deft ink line. His meticulously drawn objects, splattered with Appaloosa ink spots, are reminiscent of Steinberg drawings. His borders are sometimes defined by totemic crosses or teepees, sometimes the absence of border is noted by a triangular slash at the corner of the canvas. White's flat designs straightforwardly employ native American history and religion.

Despo Magoni's work is much more violent. Her large "Hostages Held" is the most powerful image in the show. Enormous de Kooning-like figures—sexual-y explicit—are tensely drawn on news-

paper collage. The related chalk and crayon drawings of heads show that Magoni has mastered an expressionist technique which transforms bone and tendon into strong line. Her pencil studies take a news photo of a Vietnamese child and flay it down to an anatomical examination.

"Visual Politics" is presided over by the image of Lenin. His iconic profile is featured in work by Alexander Koslaw, and in the large piece, "What Is To Be Drunk?" which dominates the first gallery. In this work by Frances Torres, a copy of the Manifesto spins under the Lenin portrait; under that, a table laden with rum and vodka is propped up by French bread and a butter dish. Directly opposite, at the reception desk, an Alternative Museum placard reads: "We Need Your Help. Government Cuts Are Already Affecting Us."

Now that is visual politics. What is the bread and butter of non-profit arts organizations but state support? This accidental visual confrontation raises the kind of question one might have expected of such an exhibition, had it truly sought to examine how the perception of our society and of our art are shaped and manipulated.

Music/Pop

"Alternative" Radio Network To Air

By NORMAN PRUSSLIN

The New York metropolitan area will soon be the beneficiary of a new tri-state coalition of alternative radio stations. This past March 30th, representatives from WFUV-FM (Fordham University), WFUM-FM (Ursula College, East Orange, N.J.), WPRN-FM (University of Bridgeport, Conn.) and WUSB-FM (S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook) met to discuss the formation of a regional network that will provide creative, informative, and innovative radio programming to a metro area audience starved for "non-hyped" radio.

The four stations were classified as non-commercial educational operations years ago when the Federal Communications Commission allocated 20 spots on the FM dial (88.1-91.9) to universities, municipalities, school districts and other non-profit organizations in order to provide public service, and academically oriented, programming.

In recent years, many of these stations have set their sights on the void left by the "tightening up" of America's commercial stations in all aspects of music, news and public affairs programs. WFUV, WFUM, WPRN and WUSB are radio stations that have good signal strength, a long history of alternative "free-form" progressive programming and a desire to use their position on the dial to better the community understanding and appreciation of issues that are of importance to us all.

The coalition is planning to offer radio programming that will be co-produced (utilizing the best talent of each station) and that will air simultaneously, a move that will turn a relatively small local audience in each signal area into a listenership that can participate in discussion of issues throughout the tri-state region.

Members of the coalition feel that the initial broadcast needs to reflect the best efforts of those involved. It needs to be programming that will warrant mainstream press attention as well as setting the stage for future broadcast attempts.

To this end, the stations have decided upon a late June simulcast discussing the state of non-commercial radio in the 1980s. This "special" kind of radio's role, successes, failures and future will be discussed by the programmers themselves. Listeners from the tri-state area will have an opportunity to participate in the discussion via a call-in segment that will immediately follow the produced segment. The isolation that many listeners of non-commercial radio often times feel should begin to dissipate. A powerful



Alberto Hunter is at The Cookery on Dec. 3 at 8 p.m. airing on WNET/THIRTEEN.

metropolitan area non-commercial alternative radio service is probably the remedy to our run-of-the-mill media-induced societal ills. I will keep you posted on developments as they are announced.

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Page C8 Winston-Salem Journal, Winston-Salem, N.C., Sunday, November 6, 1983

Gallery

By Faith Heller



Of Cultures and Media

The paintings, sculptures and photographs in "Traditions and Modern Configurations" — in the Scales Fine Arts Center at Wake Forest University — reflect the traditions and political concerns of the artists' cultures.

While the works of these 10 contemporary artists are indicative of their particular cultures, they also display current artistic styles and media, creating powerful juxtapositions of old and new ideas.

The two large black-and-white photographs in "From the Labyrinth of Life Series," by Ana Medieta, are images of works that cannot be shown in a gallery. They are earthworks — huge relief compositions made on the ground from what looks like ridges of mud.

Ms. Medieta seems to be trying to make archetypal forms — images from our collective unconscious. And the swirling, abstracted female figures that she creates are reminiscent of the contours of prehistoric fertility goddesses and ancient spiral mandalas.

Jaun Sanchez's mixed-media paintings combine the stark reality of photojournalism with the softer but no less real impact of graffiti. His most powerful piece, "A Puerto Rican Prisoner of War and Much People," uses oil, acrylic, photography and wax to bring to life the essence of the revolutionary spirit.

On a large, blown-up black-and-white image, in the center of the picture plane Puerto Rican Americans march in protest — some holding the flag of Puerto Rico and one man holding a sign that reads, "They are not terrorists they are freedom fighters." Above the photograph, along the top edge of the canvas, are yellowed and ragged newspaper clippings describing the alleged torture of a prisoner who shot a policeman during a protest march in Mexico. Around the photograph and newspaper, the canvas is layered with paint, creating the feeling of old cement. "Viva P.R. Libre" is spray-painted across the bottom.

In a lighter vein, Tseng Kwong Chi's "East

Meets West" consists of four large photographs of Japan's Disney World. In the first image, a very serious-looking oriental man stands next to a smiling and waving Mickey Mouse, and in the second, next to a silly-looking chipmunk. In the third picture, the same man is accompanied by Goofy and finally by Donald Duck.

In Jimmie Durham's "Red," the right side of the picture plane is filled with red-related words and phrases such as "rouge," "Russia," "Scarlet Letter," "scarlet woman" and "red-skin." At the bottom of this list is a red-painted photograph of an American Indian. The left side of the composition contains a large star, a small snake, an upside-down devil and various geometric shapes — all rendered in assorted shades of red.

Papo Colo, a Puerto Rican living in New York, is the recipient of a 1983 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in painting. His abrasively colored, acrylic canvases seem to reflect his love for the beaches and bright blue waters of his native country. In "The Bather," a barely discernable female figure lies on the beach holding a fish, behind a schematic palm tree, while waves wash over her.

Colo's huge charcoal drawings are much more interesting than his paintings. In "Multiple Warriors," the picture surface is filled with masklike faces. Two arms holding a sword reach outward from the staring mass.

"Traditions and Modern Configurations" was organized by AAA Art, a non-profit artist's group based in Brooklyn. The curators are Kathryn McGlynn of AAA Art and Victor Facinto, director of the Wake Forest art gallery. It will continue in the downstairs gallery of the Scales Fine Arts Center through Nov. 13.

"Natchez Victorian Children," an exhibition of photographic portraits by the late black photographer Henry Norman, will hang in the upstairs gallery through Nov. 13.

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ART

By Lucy R. Lippard

About 13 years ago, peace activist Ron Wolin and I asked a number of artists we respected to design posters opposing the Vietnam war. The artists, many of whom were downright famous, took the idea seriously. But the results, while often decorative and/or clever, were disappointing. At the time, I didn't understand why, or what we were demanding. Imagine a bunch of still-life painters being asked to turn out one forceful abstraction. I've since realized that you can't just drop in and make a good oppositional artwork, no matter how good you are. It's a highly specialized task and takes long hard work, formal and theoretical development like any other art form—with time for political organizing and education added in. Moreover, "political art" has never been defined and is still in its infant stages. Many still labor under the delusion that it is a creature of the Left alone, that establishmentarian neutrality is not "political." Others see no middle ground between propaganda and prestiffing.

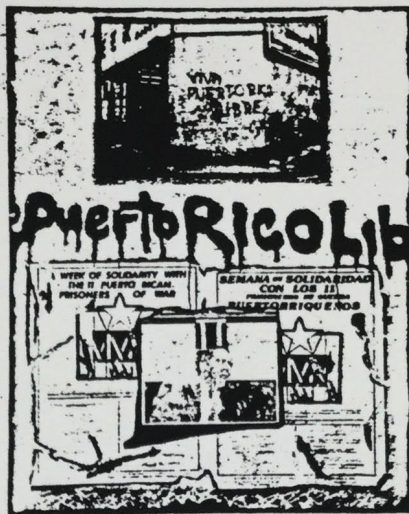
Now and then the art world tolerance for "political art" expands a bit and topicality briefly becomes popular, due to pressures from the outside world. At the same time, alas, the term itself veers toward meaninglessness. I can recall two such periods (1968 and 1975) and now we seem to be into another one. I have mixed feelings about this phenomenon. The time seems ripe to air a few of the related issues in the interest of avoiding divisiveness and also of sharpening our analyses as we approach the inevitable peak of attention during the nuclear freeze campaign.

On the other hand, I'd like (ideally) all artists to be socially responsible people, whatever their art is; I'd like a healthy proportion of them to be involved in both professional and grass-roots productions that deal with specific issues and work with activist groups. On that hand, I'm really happy to see more and more visual artists jumping on the anti-Reagan and pro-disarmament bandwagon, because the support is always great to have and I know from past experience that a few will stay with us for the long haul, once the band stops playing.

On the other hand, it can be hard for those who have worked steadily for years to watch newcomers (a few of them dilettantes and opportunists) get a modest portion of the too-small pie reserved for "political art," especially when the newcomers' politics are naive, nonexistent, or just brand new. And on the third hand, nobody wants to discourage anyone from joining up, so any such dog-in-the-mangerism has to be scrutinized not only with guilt but with honesty and a certain realism as to the situation at hand.

The Left (but not the Left alone) is always plagued by a certain amount of bitterness and dissension around unshared workloads and guilt-tripping. It's the economics of oppression. In the mid '70s there was a tendency among oppositional art groups to criticize everyone who wasn't correcter than correct; since nobody knew what that was, everybody got criticized, severely limiting the possibility for any strong theory or praxis to emerge before it got shot down. If you ventured into the art world to educate and to make your alternatives visible, somebody would say you'd been assimilated, ripped off, or sold out. If you stayed in your studio and worked because it had become important to prove that the Left was "quality" too, that diverted your energies from collective work and somebody said you'd opted out. There has also been an inclination to cry Stalipist at anyone who has done their homework and tried to develop a political analysis of their own; then there's the avant-garde anarchism that holds out for the "freedom" of art to be caring but disconnected.

Then there are the cries of "careerism" and "co-optation" in which the most difficult of our contradictions are exposed.

Sanchez's *Puerto Rico Libre*: damn good painter, damn strong politics

A Small Slice of Whose Pie?

One kind of co-optation is when you or your work get used by the dominant culture differently than you had intended, or it gets neutralized by the wrong context. But as Jerry Kearns has pointed out, there's another, perhaps more lethal kind of co-optation. That's when you censor yourself because of fear, defeatism, or rage and don't use the system, when you let go of the notion of beauty, scale, complexity, and visionary grandeur, when you get backed up against the copying machine forever. It's not easy to figure out one's individual options between the extremes—total immersion in the queasy ethics of the art commodity system or furious rejection of all it stands for, which can lead to the wrong noses getting cut off to spite the wrong faces.

I offer all of this thought-in-progress as a framework in which to look at the oppositional art we are being exposed to, hoping that between us all we'll come up with a variety of potential solutions. The problem is how to be collectively both supportive and critical, to open things up and retain our aesthetic integrity, to oppose without being absorbed by the opposition, and above all how to make symbols and images that will move both maker and viewer to concerted clarity.

The catalyst for this particular diatribe was a phone call I received recently from Gino Rodriguez at the Alternative Museum about coverage of their current "Visual Politics" show. I intensely dislike being called and asked to review things; it always has the opposite effect from that intended. But Rodriguez's complaint that the Alternative Museum had been doing these shows all along and token shows by usually

uncommitted galleries were receiving "his" coverage was so close to what I'd been worrying about, it would have been pigheaded not to follow it up. (Note to callers: lightning doesn't strike twice.)

So "Visual Politics" was a good show, as group shows go. There were large or multiple works by 14 artists of widely varied ages, styles, ethnic and geographical backgrounds. (They were born from 1936 to 1954 in Russia, Poland, Iran, Spain, Greece, an Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and elsewhere in the U.S.; only one of them is a woman. I mention all this because such a variety at least guarantees one kind of heterogeneity that is sorely lacking in most mainstream shows.) The politics were sometimes hard to decipher but the spirit was willing and the formal quality was altogether high. "Visual Politics," then, was successful as an art show. How politically effective it can be, or even how generally involved much of the work is, is more problematic. This is true of virtually all such shows, many of which I've selected myself. It is one of the major dilemmas we all face. Like street demonstrations, sometimes a "political art show" seems primarily to reinforce the commitments of the artists and other converted participants. This is no small thing, much as we also expect a broader pressure. Such shows also demonstrate that subjects like race, sex, class, militarism, and unemployment can fit into the same art molds as any other subjects. This combats taboos, but can also be depressing because we work in a context in which form dominates and content continues to be submerged.

"Visual Politics" offered a range of the ways progressive artists take on the issues.

Mel Edwards's *Idala for February 21* is an abstract sculpture made of metal, chain, barbed wire, and a machete. It speaks of resistance through its resonant materials more than its formal vocabulary. Daniel Kasimieraki's pointed pairing of New York photographs and advertisements (like Lanson's notorious "Too Bad You Weren't Invited" with a "Beware of Attack Dogs" sign) is a familiar strategy but particularly well done, producing shocks of social recognition. Benedict Fernandez's stark photos of quasi-military right-wing meetings are also formally strong and scary. Randy Lee White's *Onslaught* recalled the continuing American wars against minorities with a deceptively lyrical painting of an Indian war, sharpened by the device of huge horses' hooves plunging up from the lower margin, as though the viewer/painter were facing the U.S. cavalry.

On the cleverer side, David Hammons's *Cocktails for a Summer Night* are the Molotov brand, more factual than critical. As was the other alcoholic entry—Francisco Torres's "What Is To Be Drunk?"—a takeoff on Lenin and the Russian/Chinese/Polish vodka dilemma. (I liked his show at Elise Meyer last month much better; it too dealt with consumer products and ideologies, in that case large drawings of Cadillacs and limousines with direct comments on their use in various "people's" bureaucracies.) Steve Miller's camouflaged paintings on war and the stock market were also more effective in his larger office installation at Artists' Space last month, which introduced a truly "foreign" environment.

Among the liveliest works were Ben Sakoguchi's small and skillful oil satires of grotesque subject matter (a quadriplegic, embraced by a beauty queen, proclaiming how proud he'd be to go back to war) ironically portrayed in the cheerful, colorful style of ads for oranges. Every detail was witty and the element of rage was not communicated expressively but by its very containment in a "funny" form. These little paintings won't change the world single-handedly, but they are a welcome relief from post-Picassoid expressionism and illegible conceptual ambiguities. They can cause a surprised chuckle, which is a lot. They reminded me of Erika Rothenberg's stylistically different but hilarious suggestions for TV spots for an antiracist spaghetti sauce which would have been a good addition to this show, especially since the woman's viewpoint was so lacking. At the Radical Humor Festival, Barbara Ehrenreich and Robin Tyler agreed that a good leftist joke is a good analysis, and that you're approaching a good analysis when you begin to giggle.

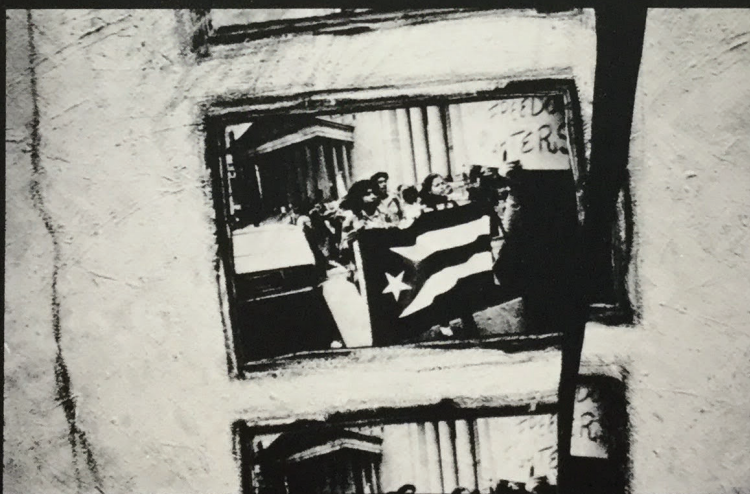
One of the most consistently strong contributors to this and other such shows in the last few years has been Juan Sanchez. I was glad to get a chance to see several of his canvases together at the Inter Latin American Gallery on West 42nd Street. He was in a two-man show with Dominican artist Manuel Macarrulla's brisk, painterly oils of masked Latin *carnaval* figures. What makes Sanchez's art so much more effective than most is not only the fact that he is a damn good painter, but also his passionate and unconflicting commitment to the cause of Puerto Rican independence. He skillfully fuses experimental oil-painting techniques (which he uses as a frame or background with an inventive span of patterns, colors, images, and words) and the more urgent street mediums (through photos). He integrates photographs, graffiti, slogans, collaged leaflets, a drawing by his mother, poetry, quotations from Puerto Rican culture heroes and activists (many of whom are women), and archaeological motifs from the indigenous Taino Indians. Each painting represents and communicates an entire culture as well as a directed outrage. I'm told that in the barrio, Sanchez's work inspires and organizes. In the art world, it teaches us new ways of seeing what surrounds us. ("Visual Politics," The Alternative Museum, 17 White Street, closed, 966-4444; "Macarrulla/Sanchez," Inter Latin American Gallery, 420 West 42nd Street, 2nd floor, closed, 695-6134) ■

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MANUEL MACARRULLA "El carnaval del Santo" 7' x 9' detail



JUAN SANCHEZ Untitled 6' x 8' detail

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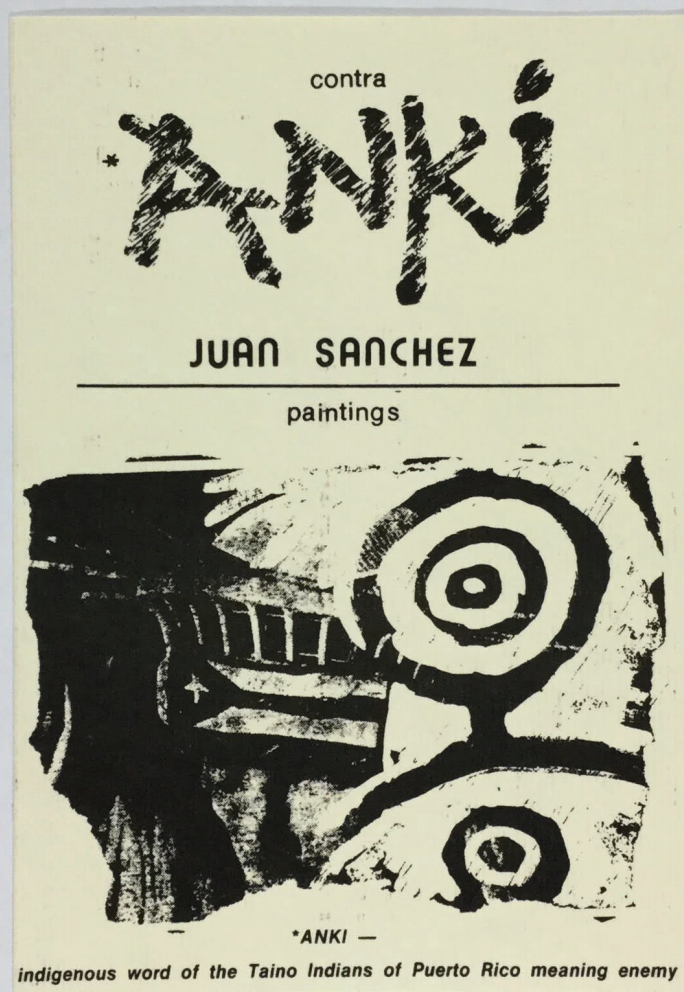
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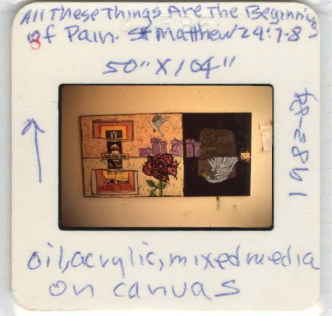
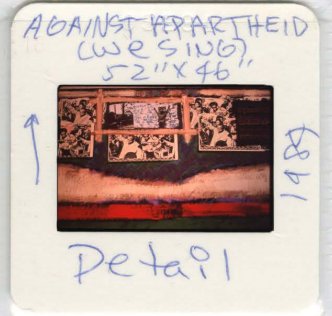
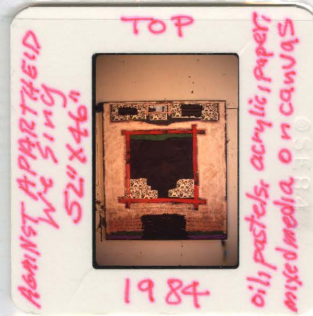
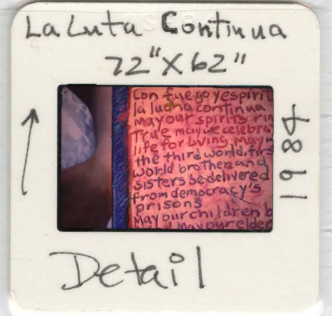
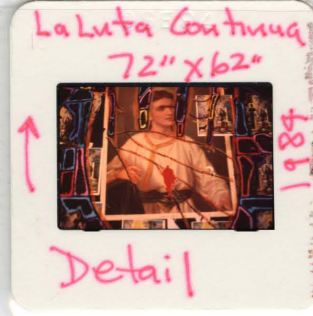
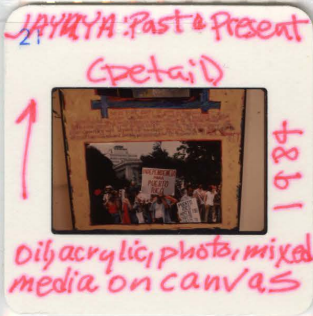
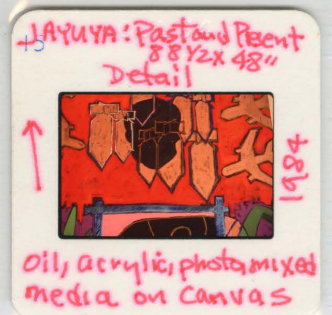
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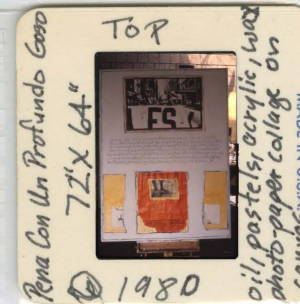
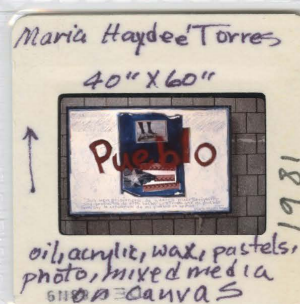
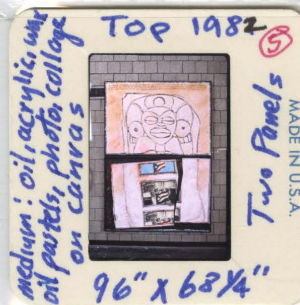
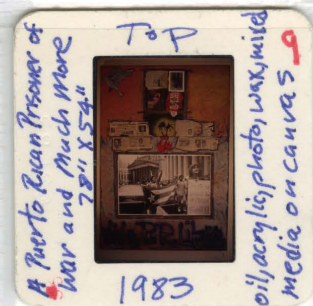
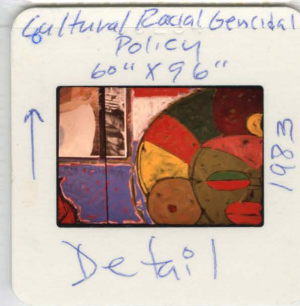
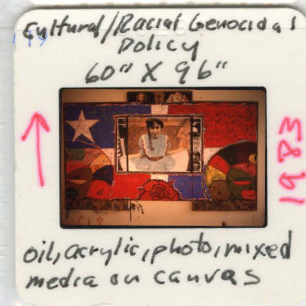
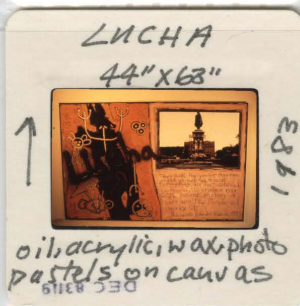
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FREEDOM WITHIN

Paintings By JUAN SANCHEZ/Installation By ALFREDO JAAR

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FOREWORD

The title of this exhibition might have been: "Art and Politics: Two American Views." Juan Sanchez is a Puerto Rican American; Alfredo Jaar is a Latin American (Chilean). Both live in New York City producing art that comes as much from their particular American point of view as it does from their experience of the United States.

Maria Thereza Alves, a Brazilian photographer and writer, chose two artists whose art was concerned with speaking either to or about particular communities and the political issues confronting them. While her choice of artists reveals her personal affinities, the result of her choice is no stereotype either of political art or of art by non-white or non-North Americans. In addition, both artists quickly dispel the still too popular belief that political art sacrifices aesthetic quality to become little more than propaganda. Setting in motion a complex dialogue between on the one hand what the two artists share and on the other hand their equally important differences of artistic strategy and audience, the exhibition aims at a deeper understanding of the work of both than might have been possible had they been exhibited separately.

James H. Rubin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank curators James H. Rubin, Associate Professor, Department of Art, SUNY at Stony Brook, and Maria Thereza Alves for organizing and developing this exhibition. I also wish to express my appreciation to Ms. Alves for contributing the essay for this catalogue.

Thanks are also due to Gary Floyd, Technical Director, and Jay Strivey, Assistant Technical Director, Fine Arts Center, for their installation assistance and exhibition lighting; Michael Gian-grasso, Arja Hihnala, George Olson, Barbara Sant Anna, Art Gallery Assistants and Louise Lander-ville, Gallery Intern, for their help with the exhibition.

Most of all, I want to thank Juan Sanchez and Alfredo Jaar for sharing their work with the Stony Brook Community.

*Rhonda Cooper
Director*

Catalogue Design: ALFREDO JAAR and JUAN SANCHEZ

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Juan Sanchez
Para Julia de
Mixed media

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Brazilian photographer Beatriz Schiller recently said that, "In Latin America an artist stands for resistance in people's minds. Here in the United States, I think an artist stands for, and often looks for, acceptance. In every aspect of U.S. life there is an underlying motivation of mass acceptance, of trying to please, that leads to less freedom. In Latin America there is censorship; here there is self-censorship. What is essential for an artist is intellectual freedom within..."

Alfredo Jaar and Juan Sanchez are two Latin American artists who strive for, utilize, and celebrate that intellectual freedom within. In their very different ways, Jaar and Sanchez each engage the political realities of their situation as artists living in the U.S., specifically New York, while their respective countries are adversely effected by actions and policies of the U.S. government. Neither Jaar nor Sanchez are ashamed of their passion for truth, integrity, and communication. Each has said that communication is one of the most important aspects of his work as an artist. Each has taken resistance as an integral part of art work, wherein political commitment is not a new "trend" in art but is a natural and necessary component of life.

In one way the differences in style and approach between these two artists can be seen as a reflection of their different nationalities: Alfredo Jaar is Chilean, Juan Sanchez is Puerto Rican. But in a more important and more profound way, these two artists search from within and without for highly individualized and specific engagement with their art and the public. In that sense their works are more related than they are different.



Juan Sanchez
Para Julia de Burgos II, 1985 (detail)
Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 66"

"All art is political. All art, because of its nature, defines its audience. For example, if you have an exhibit of abstract art you have to take into account that there is only a sector of the population that appreciates abstract art. You have to take into account the fact that abstract art does not have a direct link to political statement-making — and that in itself is a political statement." Juan Sanchez

Juan Sanchez is an ardent Puerto Rican nationalist who grew up in the Brooklyn ghettos. He has an acute sense of continuing Puerto Rican history and struggle and a finely-tuned rage toward U.S. colonization of his homeland. In his own writing he makes no separation between Puerto Rican history and Puerto Rican art. He makes every possible connection, even connecting the planting of a seed by the Puerto Rican patriot Pedro Albizu Campos to performance art and also to Taino and African rituals.

Sanchez feels that the U.S. tries to annihilate Puerto Rican culture. For him, the facts are unarguable: more than one-third of all Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age were sterilized by the U.S. government, and almost half of the population has been forced to live in the U.S. because of such factors on the island as more than 20% unemployment, two-thirds of the population living below the poverty level, and 60% forced to rely on food stamps. Puerto Rico imports 90% of its food while 13% of its arable land is controlled by the U.S. military. Pharmaceutical corporations despoil water and air. The 20/20 Plan calls for the stripmining of the mineral riches of the island and its conversion into a nuclear park. For years English was the only language taught in schools, and even today most textbooks are in English. The U.S. makes a great profit from these acts: fully one-tenth of all U.S. profits from overseas investments come from this small island country.

Juan Sanchez is a part of the resistance to this situation, which the United Nations Committee on De-colonization has officially declared an illegal colonization by the U.S. That resistance is itself part of a longer history of resistance to foreign invasion and domination that began with the Taino Indians. Sanchez has said, "Political art is a medium used as a weapon to hopefully recapture or regain the positive energy of celebration — to regain the goodness of humanity."

His resistance is not sour — not rhetoric — it is a positive force seen clearly in his paintings. He utilizes well the various layers of Puerto Rican history and visually, almost tactile-ly, connects them to the everyday reality of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. He uses the layers of posters, graffiti, and pronouncements found on every available space in the barrios as an effective metaphor and reclaims the energy that they echo.

His work titled "Jayuya: Past and Present" (1984), is an excellent but typical example of his use of the technique of historical and visual layers. The painting is a mixture of oil, acrylic, photo, and other media that "recaptures" the visual space of the barrio with strong celebratory colors. The tactile textures combine to place photos, posters, and the colors in a continuum that fuses the Taino resistance with that of the barrio. In that context the overt political statement about the 1950 insurrection in Jayuya, which was brutally smashed by the U.S. Army, becomes a cry of revolution exactly like the "Grito de Lares" in the 19th century and the cry of Jayuya itself.

Juan Sanchez doesn't pull any punches. He does not let the past swallow the present. He has included in his works every Puerto Rican patriot, from Julia de Burgos to William Morales to Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, who was imprisoned, tortured, and killed in a Florida prison in 1979 because of his participation in a demonstration against the U.S. Navy on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. But always his paintings balance rage portrayed with the vibrant colors, flowers, and rainbows of a directed hope. His use of form and color draw us to the message.

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There is a mastery in Sanchez's work that can come only from the integrity of mastering artistic technique for more important purposes. As he says, "I feel that artists are responsible human beings. That responsibility has a part to play in our art and personal life."

It is a terrible irony that New York, the financial heart of the U.S. government and its corporations, which have so great an effect on the lives of South Americans, is now the second home of so many of them. That irony is not lost on Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar. He is properly obsessed with the mythologizing and manipulation of the press and broadcasting. "My work re-examines the collective memory of the South American people in the light of my individual experience from the United States, that is, seventh row center."

Jaar's work is energetic, innovative, and, most of all, thought-probing. His installations have sometimes been called conceptual, but they are finely planned aesthetically, with a great deal of care and respect for the audience. It might better be called semiological art. Jaar is concerned with audience response as part of the work of art and seeks to involve those people who are not part of the mainstream art world. In his words, "Art is communication. That does not mean that one only gives a message through art, but also that the audience must receive it and answer. If the audience does not answer there is no communication."

Jaar has stated that one of his primary interests is in the power and influence the media has over our lives; in how the media translates facts into news and images. The media creates a world of fiction, and its images are then perceived as reality. He has said that he is presently concerned with how the news media describes itself and how it talks about politics and social concerns.

He does not think of himself as a political artist and fights the whole limiting — and to him ideological — idea of labels. Like most Latin Americans he seems to feel that social engagement is more natural than special and that any work or profession has political connotations. He may have a more particular insight into this than most artists because Jaar works fulltime as an architect and graphic designer.

His installations use graphic design extensively, but he also uses the use, the public iconography, of graphic design and its public artifacts, such as neon signs, signs, and posters as phenomena, words, and words-in-conjunction-with-images, which to Jaar are always ideological. He employs anything that is part of the public media domain, such as video, but deliberately excludes the private or individualistic contributions that the established artworld prizes so much.

Perhaps one of the things most distinctive about Jaar's work is an acute intelligence and urbanity that is more than a match for the jumble of consumer-packaged mis-information systems he tackles with such energy that he has been called both "generous and poetic" and "chaotic." He employs his wit and his clarity with such an edge that we must "answer" his messages about messages whether we want to or not.

He described a work he had done in Chile in the '70s, wherein he used the outward form of a journalist in the street: "I did some surveys about Happiness, as part of a larger project called Studies about Happiness. The work lasted two years and included, among other things, polls, photographs, video, and transcripts of one hundred interviews of happy and unhappy people. I even used large billboards to ask my question, 'Are You Happy?'; and offered an installation in the museum where anyone could go and respond. More than a thousand people participated in this project."

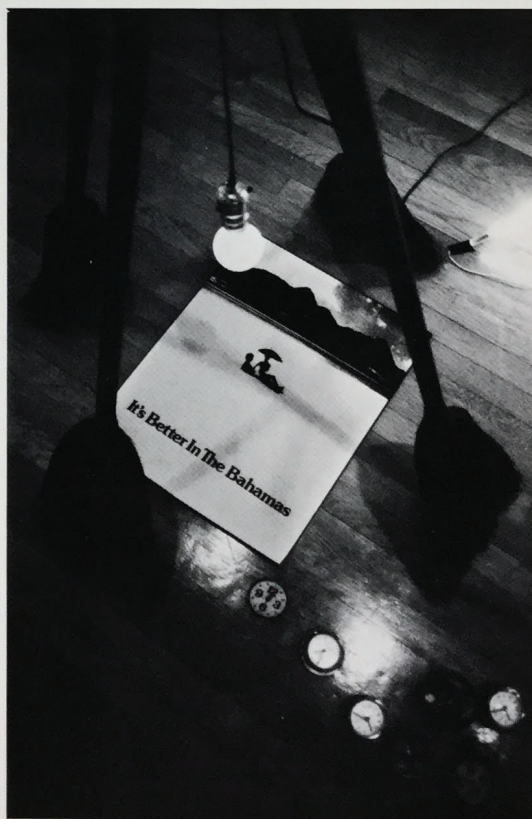
In the U.S., he says, that would not work because people are too cool. It is a country where one must try to make people participate. That is a key for entering Alfredo Jaar's work.

Juan Sanchez and Alfredo Jaar approach art and their audiences differently. Sanchez, living in a city with hundreds of thousands of his oppressed countrymen, may see his art as primarily for them. Jaar, whose fellow exiles are scattered all over the world, sees his primary audience as the people around him — the "typical Americans." Both produce art that is socially engaged and that is, each in its own way, essentially Latin American in spirit and universal in effect.

Alfredo Jaar sums up well with his answer to someone's question, "Do you miss Chile?" "No. Not the Chile that I know. What I miss is Latin America, the Latin America that could be, that should be."

Maria Thereza Alves
Guest Curator
Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1985

Maria Thereza Alves, born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, is an artist and writer presently living in New York. She founded the Brazilian Information Center and was recently awarded the Academy of American Poets Prize at the Cooper Union where she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. She has also been awarded a fellowship for younger poets at Bucknell University. Her participation in helping coordinate Artist Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America led her to co-curate MYTH & HISTORY: Central American Art Today at the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art in New York, 1985.



Alfredo Jaar
Untitled, 1983
Installation (detail), 96 x 192 x 96"

JUAN



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Transforman
1985 (detail)
Mixed media
(diptych), 3

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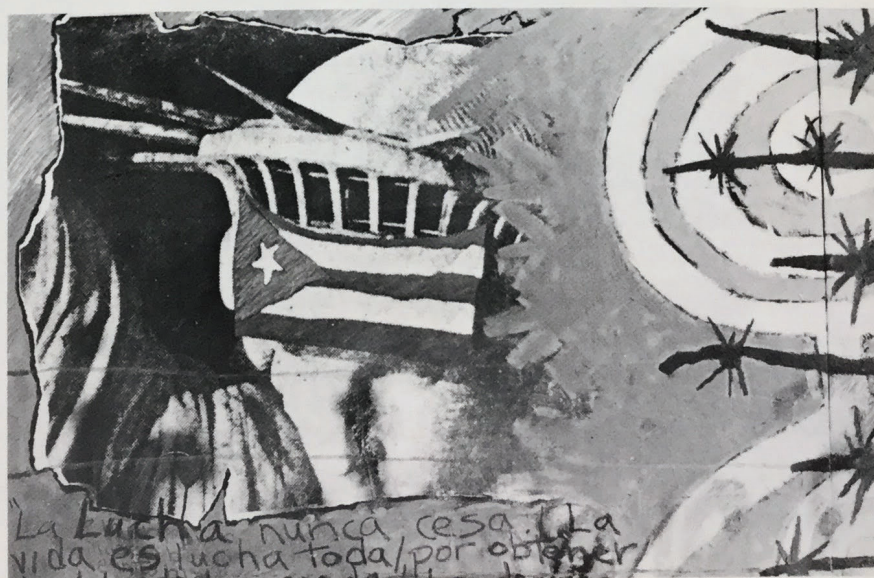
JUAN SANCHEZ / PAINTINGS



Cultural Racial
Genocidal Policy
1983
Mixed media on canvas
(triptych), 60 x 96"

"Social protest art is a confrontation against the frustrating injustices of everyday life. It shatters false illusions by making realities explicit and concrete in a society that is antagonistic to truth and humane values. Art can transend to many levels of truth if done with responsibility."

From a statement by the artist in "Beyond Aesthetic: Art of Necessity By Artists of Conscience," Exhibition Catalogue, NY 1982.



Transformando Luchas
1985 (detail)
Mixed media on canvas
(diptych), 36 x 88"

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A Puerto Rican Prisoner of War and Much More, 1983
Mixed media on canvas (diptych), 78 x 54"

"If art of social/political content has any precise meaning, it is contained within the definition of its purpose and role in realizing, reflecting, supporting and becoming part of the aspirations, needs and movements of oppressed people."

From a statement by the artist in "Beyond Aesthetic: Art of Necessity By Artists of Conscience," Exhibition Catalogue, NY 1982.

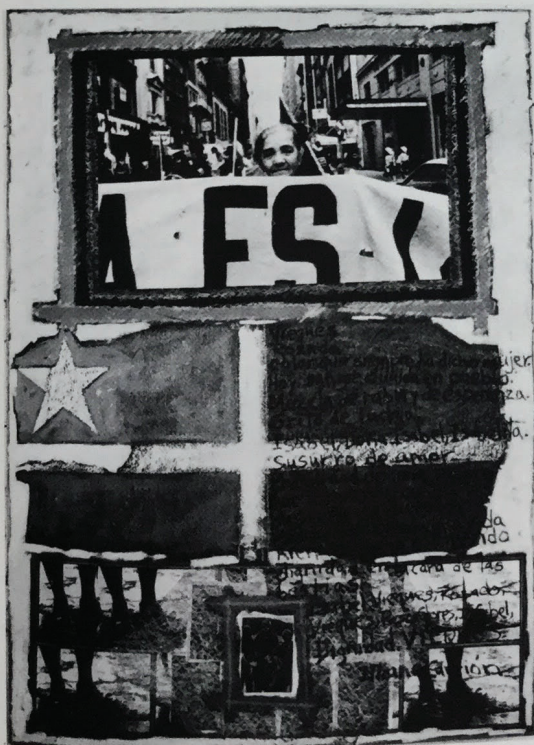
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Isabel Vieques,
Mixed media on

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To the brothers and sisters in struggle in South Africa; mi gente del pueblo libre de Nicaragua; all Puerto Rican POW's and political prisoners and to the memory of a great poet, patriot and inspiration, Don Juan Antonio Corretjer . . . el otro maestro, I dedicate my paintings and extend my solidarity and love.



Isabel, Vieques, Rosado, 1984
Mixed media on canvas, 64 x 46"

JUAN SANCHEZ

Born in New York City, 1954
Studied Painting and Photography at Rutgers University, New Jersey (MFA, 1980)
and at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York (B.F.A. 1977)

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 *Anki: Indigenous Word of the Taino Indian Meaning Enemy*, John Jay College Gallery, NYC
- 1980 *Lucha*, Douglas College, New Brunswick, NJ
- 1979 *Mi Mundo*, Amherst College, University of Massachusetts
- Mi Mundo*, East Harlem Cultural Center, NYC
- Mi Gente*, Fourth Street Photo Gallery, NYC

SELECTED TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 1982 *The Island*, Intar Latin American Gallery, NYC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 *Whitney Biennial: Group Material/Americana*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC,
Not Just Another Pretty Picture, P.S. 122, NYC
Art Against Apartheid, Pennsylvania State University, Fogelville
- 1984 *First Havana Biennial*, City of Havana Cuba Pavilion, Havana, Cuba
Disarming Images: Art for Nuclear Disarmament, Art Museum Association of America, (exhibition on a 1984-86 tour throughout the United States)
Call & Response: Art On Central America, Colby Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine
Words equals/does not equal Pictures, Bronx Museum of the Arts, NYC
Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America, Judson Church, NYC
- 1983 *Contemporary Latin American Art*, The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia
Events: La Gran Pasión, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, NYC
Traditions & Modern Configurations, Monogram Gallery, NYC, Wake Forrest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Portraits: On a Human Scale, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC
Evidence: 12 Photographers, The Henry Street Settlement Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, NYC (curated by Juan Sanchez)
- 1982 *Photo Starts*, Bronx Museum of the Arts, NYC
Visual Politics, The Alternative Museum, NYC
Beyond Aesthetics: Art of Necessity by Artist of Conscience, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, Henry Street Settlement Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, NYC (curated by Juan Sanchez)
Ritual & Rhythms: Visual Forces for Survival, Kenkeleba House Gallery, NYC (curated by Juan Sanchez)
- 1981 *The Prison Show: Realities & Representations*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC
- 1980 *Young Painters: 1980*, Bronx Museum of the Arts, NYC

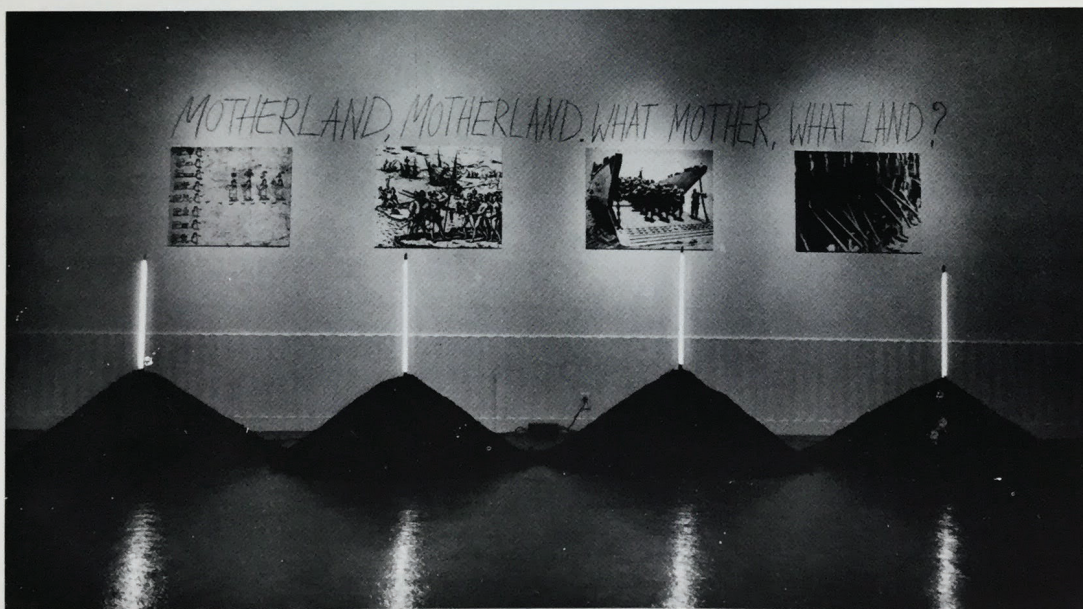
GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 1984 Third World Artists Printmaking Fellowship (Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, NYC)
- 1983 NEA Painting Fellowship (National Endowment for the Arts)
CAPS Painting Fellowship (Creative Artists Program Service)
- 1981 Artists Space, NYC

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ALFREDO JAAR / INSTALLATIONS

“My work focuses on the widening gap between the ‘so-called’ Third World Countries and the ‘so-called’ Developed Nations. My work deals with both worlds at the same time because no other alternative seems to me real enough.”



Motherland, Motherland. What Mother, What Land?, 1984
Installation, 81 x 218 x 72"



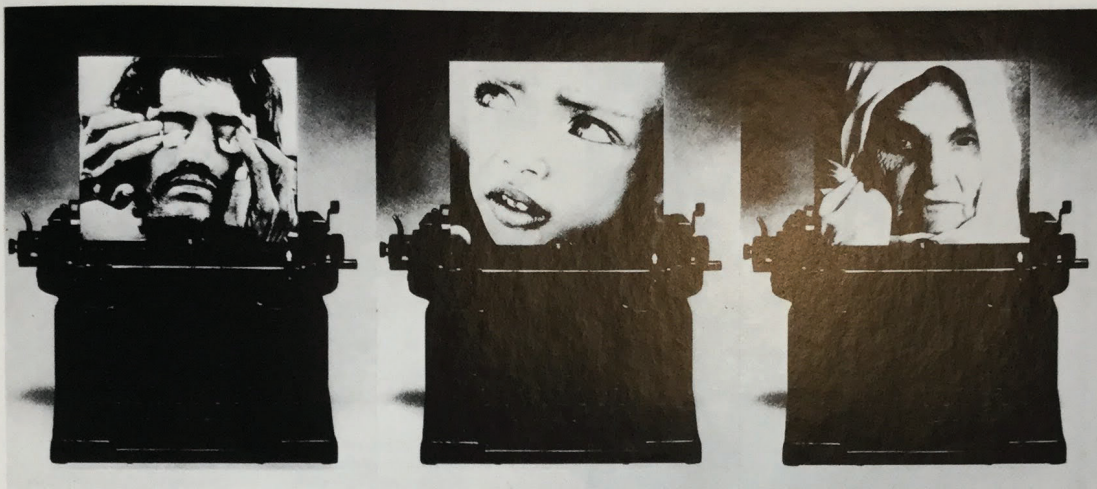
The Power of Word
Installation (detail)

“Y
a chance,
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Introduction to a D
1985
Poster, 22 x 22"

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The Power of Words, 1985
Installation (detail), 156 x 384 x 144"

*"You don't have
a chance, but take it."*

Herbert Achternbusch

ONIONS

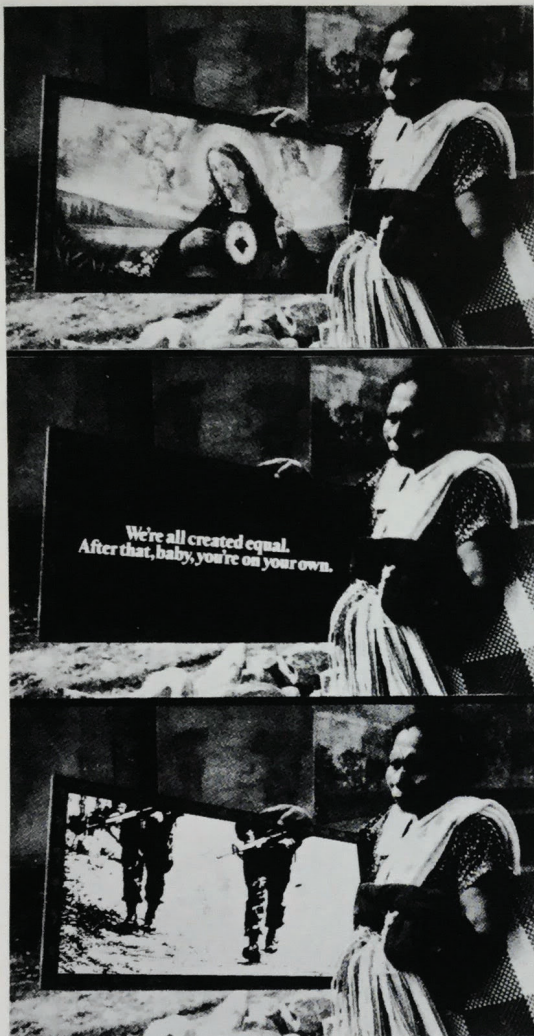


THEY have eyes filled with tears,
as if from the effect of a peeled onion,
but there are no peeled onions,
there are no onions at all.

Introduction to a Distant World/Part One (C),
1985
Poster, 22 x 22"

INTRODUCTION TO A DISTANT WORLD/PART ONE (C)

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Untitled, 1984
Installation, 72 x 44 x 12"

"My work is about political societies and the pursuit of happiness. Art must be our last effort to preserve humanity."

ALFREDO JAAR

Born in Santiago, Chile, 1956
Studied Architecture at the University of Chile (B.A. 1981)
and Filmmaking at the American Center, Santiago (1978-79).
Lives in New York since 1982.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 Grey Art Gallery, New York University, NYC
- 1979 C.A.L. Gallery, Santiago, Chile

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 *Disinformation*, Alternative Museum, NYC
Not Just Any Pretty Picture, P.S. 122, NYC
Diaz, Dittborn, Jaar, Leppe, C.A.Y.C., Buenos Aires
Between Science and Fiction, Sao Paulo Bienal, Sao Paulo
- 1984 *Chronicles*, Intar, NYC
Selections, Artists Space, NYC
Vision and Conscience, University Art Gallery at SUNY Binghamton, New York
Aqui, Fisher Gallery at USC, Los Angeles, California
Art and Ideology, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, NYC
Call and Response, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine
Philosophies On The Art Process, Makkom, Amsterdam
Visual Thinking, Art Awareness Gallery, Lexington, New York
L'Esprit Encyclopedique, New York Public Library, NYC
- 1983 *In/Out*, Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC (curated by Alfredo Jaar)
Contemporary Latin-American Artists, The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia
Terminal New York, Brooklyn Army Terminal, Brooklyn, New York
Chile, Chile, Cayman Gallery, NYC
Hispanic Achievement In The Arts, Equitable Gallery, NYC
- 1982 *Art Biennial Of Paris*, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris
Contextos, Galeria Sur, Santiago
Second Video Festival, Instituto Chileno-Frances de Cultura, Santiago
- 1981 *Fifth International Art Biennial*, Valparaiso, Chile
Grafica Chilena Contemporanea, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago
First Video Festival, Instituto Chileno-Frances de Cultura, Santiago
Second UC Art Biennial, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago
- 1980 *Centennial Year Exhibition*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago
National Printmaking Salon, U.C., Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago
- 1979 *First Art Biennial, U.C.*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago
Fifth Exhibition, C.N. De Valores, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 1985 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, New York
- 1984 Artists Space, New York
- 1982 Pacific Foundation, Santiago
- 1974 Air France, Paris

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PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS AT THE ART GALLERY

- 1975 FACULTY EXHIBITION
- 1976 MICHELLE STUART
RECENT DRAWINGS (AN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS EXHIBITION)
SALVATORE ROMANO
- 1977 MEL PEKARSKY
JUDITH BERNSTEIN
HERBERT BAYER (AN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS EXHIBITION)
- 1978 LEON GOLUB
WOMEN ARTISTS FROM NEW YORK
JANET FISH
ROSEMARY MAYER
THE SISTER CHAPEL
- 1979 SHIRLEY GORELICK
ALAN SONFIST
HOWARDENA PINDELL
ROY LICHTENSTEIN
- 1980 BENNY ANDREWS
ALEX KATZ
EIGHT FROM NEW YORK
ARTISTS FROM QUEENS
OTTO PIENE
STONY BROOK 11, THE STUDIO FACULTY
- 1981 ALICE NEEL
55 MERCER: 10 SCULPTORS
JOHN LITTLE
IRA JOEL HABER
LEON POLK SMITH
- 1982 FOUR SCULPTORS
CECILE ABISH
JACK YOUNGERMAN
ALAN SHIELDS
THE STONY BROOK ALUMNI INVITATIONAL
ANN MCCOY
- 1983 THE WAR SHOW
CERAMIC DIRECTIONS: A CONTEMPORARY OVERVIEW
CINDY SHERMAN
THE FACULTY SHOW
- 1984 BERNARD APTEKAR: ART AND POLITICS
ERIC STALLER: LIGHT YEARS
NORMAN BLUHM: SEVEN FROM THE SEVENTIES
EDWARD COUNTEY 1921-1984
CARL ANDRE: SCULPTURE
LEWIS HINE IN EUROPE: 1918-1919
- 1985 FRANCESC TORRES: PATHS OF GLORY
HOMAGE TO BOLOTOWSKY: 1935-1981

Director RHONDA COOPER

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK



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OCTOBER 8 - NOVEMBER 13, 1985
THE FINE ARTS CENTER ART GALLERY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK

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Juan Sánchez
346 South 3rd Street Apt. i
Brooklyn, New York 11211
(718) 782-8419

EDUCATION Rutgers University, The Mason Gross School of the Arts- Master of Fine Arts (MFA), New Brunswick, New Jersey 1980

The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art- Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), New York, New York 1977

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

John Jay College Wall Gallery, ANKI, NYC, 1985

Walters Hall Gallery of Douglas College, Lucha, New Brunswick, NJ, 1980

Amherst College of The University of Massachusette, Mi Mundo, Amherst, Massachusette, 1979

The Fourth Street Photo Gallery, Mi Gente, NYC, 1979

The East Harlem Cultural Center, Mi Mundo, NYC, 1979

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

The Whitney Museum of American Art, The 1985 Biennial Exhibition: Group Material: Americana, NYC, 1985

EXIT ART, SURPLUS: Today's Art in an Overpopulated City, NYC, 1985

P.S. 122, Not Just Any Pretty Picture, NYC, 1985

Pennsylvania State University, Art Against Apartheid, Fogelville, Pennsylvania, 1985

District Council 37, Art Against Apartheid, NYC, 1985

The Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, The Henry Street Settlement, Art Against Apartheid, NYC, 1984

Dramatis Personae Gallery, Racist America, NYC, 1984

New York Shakespeare Theatre/El Museo del Barrio, MIND HARBORS, NYC, 1984

Judson Church, Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America, NYC, 1984

The Rotunda Gallery, The Caribbean Influence, NYC, 1984

Colby Museum of Art, Call & Response: Art On Central America, Waterville, Maine, 1984

TWEED-The Gallery, IN THE PINK, Plainfield, NJ, 1984

PADD (Political Art Documentation/Distribution, American Artists in Solidarity, Nicaragua, Central America, 1984

Bronx Museum of The Arts, Words ≠ Pictures, NYC, 1984

City of Havana Cuba Pavilion, FIRST HAVANA BIENNIAL, Havana, Cuba, 1984

The Art Museum Association of America, DISARMING IMAGES: Art for Nuclear Disarmament, 1984-1986 (Exhibition on a two year tour to these Museums and Art Centers: The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; University Art Gallery, San Diego State University, California; Museum of Art, Washington State University, Pullman; New York State Museum, Albany; University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute Museum of Art, Utica, New York; Fine Arts Gallery,

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena; Yellowstone Art Center, Billings, Montana and The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York.

TWEED- The Gallery, PEACE ON EARTH: Pastorials and Politics, Plainfield, NJ 1983

The Chrysler Museum, Contemporary Latin American Art, Norfolk, Virginia 1983

The Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, The Henry Street Settlement, NY; The Pyramid Gallery, Rochester, NY; Michael C. Rockefeller Gallery at S.U.N.Y. Fredonia, NY, CAPS PAINTING 1982-83 1983-1984

El Museo del Barrio, OCTOPUS, invited artist to collaborate on panel sculpture by Papo Colo, sponsored by Exit Art, NYC 1983

Rincón Taino, Puerto Rico: América Latina, NYC 1983

Mongram Gallery, NYC; Wake Forrest University, Winston-Salem, NC, Traditions and Modern Configurations 1983

Galería Ollantay, ROOTS, NYC 1983

The New Museum of Contemporary Art, EVENTS: La Gran Pasión, NYC 1983

The Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, The Henry Street Settlement, EVIDENCE: Twelve Photographers, NYC (Curated by Juan Sánchez) 1983

Group Material, SUBCULTURE, exhibiting art in city buses, Boston 1983

Morivivi Gallery, TRANSFERS: Uptown/Downtown, NYC 1983

Galería Venezuela, Textos Infernos, NYC 1983

Paul Robeson Center Gallery, Rutgers University, IMAGES AND IDENTITIES: Art and Artists of Puerto Rican Heritage, Newark, NJ 1983

Just Above Midtown Gallery, PHOTOGRAPHY: New Approaches, NYC 1983

William Paterson College, People of Color, Wayne, NJ 1983

Whitney Museum of American (Downtown), PORTRAITS: On a Human Scale, NYC 1983

Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center/Gallery 1199, LATINO NEW YORK: Five Painters, NYC 1983

Equitable Gallery, Todos Uno, NYC 1982

The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Photo Start, NYC 1982

TWEED- The Gallery, TALK TO ME: Words in Art, Plainfield, NJ 1982

Taller Latinoamericano, LUCHAR: An Exhibition For The People of Central America, NYC 1982

Kenkelebra House Gallery, RITUAL & RHYTHM: Visual Forces for Survival, NYC (Curated by Juan Sánchez) 1982

American Indian Community House Gallery, The Four Directions, NYC 1982

City Gallery, Art From Henry Street, NYC 1982

The Alternative Museum, Visual Politics, NYC 1982

Intar Latin American Gallery, The Island (Two-man show with Manuel Maracarulla), NYC 1982

Kenkelebra House Gallery, VICES AND VIRTUES, NYC 1982

The Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, The Henry Street Settlement, BEYOND AESTHETICS: Art of Necessity by Artists of Conscience, NYC, also exhibited at Rutgers University/Mason Gross School of the Arts, New Brunswick, NJ (Curated by Juan Sánchez) 1982

The New Jersey State Museum, The Rutgers University Twentieth MFA Show, Newark, NJ 1982

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El Museo de Arte de Ponce, Galería Aboy, Plaza de las América, Primera Muestra de Fotografía Puertorriqueña Contemporánea, Ponce, San Juan, Puerto Rico 1981-1984 (Exhibition organized by the Consejo Puertorriqueño de Fotografía to travel from Puerto Rico to Chicago, New York and Barcelona, Spain)

Group Material, The M5 Show, Artist exhibit art on the M5, M3, M4 & M20 bus lines, NYC December-January, 1981-82

City Gallery, NYC; The Equitable Gallery, NYC; Walters Hall Gallery of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, HISPANIC ARTISTS OF NEW YORK, (Produced by The Association of Hispanic Arts) 1981

Houghton Gallery, The Cooper Union, PHOTOGRAPHY: Products of the Seventies, NYC 1981

Whitney Museum of American Art (Downtown), THE PRISON SHOW: Realities & Representations, NYC 1981

Group Material, ENTHUSIASM, NYC 1981

The New Museum of American Art, EVENTS: Artists Invite Artists, NYC 1981

The Westbeth Gallery, Voices Expressing What Is, NYC 1981

Group Material, The Aesthetics of Consumption, NYC 1981

The Bronx Museum of the Arts, YOUNG PAINTERS: 1980, NYC 1980

The Caymán Gallery, TRENDS III, NYC 1980

Middlesex County College, Sixth Annual Tribute to Puerto Rico, Edison, NJ 1979

Brooklyn College, Latin Expression Week, NYC 1977

PANAL TALKS & SLIDE PRESENTATION/LECTURES

22 Wooster Gallery, Talking Ritualism, NYC 1984

The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Meet The Artists, (Artist Fellowship-NEA), NYC 1983

WBAI radio, Evidence, Radio talk show with Spencer Richards on Ritual & Rhythm exhibition, NYC 1982

Channel 5(WORTV), BEYOND AESTHETICS: Art of Necessity by Artists of Conscience, Black News 1982

Channel 5(WORTV), Vices and Virtues, Black News, 1982

Channel 13(PBS), PEACE ON EARTH: Pastorials and Politics, State of the Arts 1983

PADD(Political Art Documentation/distribution), CULTURE & STRUGGLE: Hispanic Artists in New York, NYC 1982

Martin Luther King, JR. Cultural Center (Bread & Roses, 1199), Latino New York, NYC 1983

Soho 20 Gallery, PHOTO START: Using the Photographic Image as an Initial Stimulus in Art, (ArtistTalkOnArt), NYC 1982

Rutgers University, Art As A Social & Political Act, New Brunswick, NJ 1982

The Landmark Gallery, The Necessity of Aesthetics in Political Art, (Artists TalkOnArt), NYC 1982

The Educational Alliance, Talk On Activist Art, NYC 1981

The Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center, The Henry Street Settlement, Mi Mundo, NYC 1981

The Cooper Union Saturday Program, 1975-1984, NYC

Amherst College of The University of Massachusetts, Mi Mundo, 1979

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PUBLICATIONS

Lucy Lippard, GET THE MESSAGE? A Decade of Art for Social Change, (E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1984, New York, N.Y.), p. 283-284

ART & ARTISTS, Visual Artists and Anti-Apartheid by Jimmie Durham and Juan Sánchez, Volume 12, Number 7, June 1983

ArtWorkersNews, PUERTO RICAN NATIONALIST ART: A History, A Tradition, A Necessity by Juan Sánchez and Rafael Colon Morales, Volume 11, Number 9, May 1982

REVIEWS/ARTICLES/MENTIONS

Art In America, REPORT FROM HAVANA: The First Biennial of Latin American Art by Luis Camnitzer, December 1984

The Black Collegian, Art Against Apartheid, November/December 1984

THE CITY SUN, Racism American Style, Sept. 5-11, 1984

The Village Voice, ARTBEAT: The Politics of Culture (mention by Dorothy Friedman), Volume XXIX, Number 41, October 9, 1984

East Village Eye, Central America Calling: WHY ARE WE THERE? by Spencer Rumsey, Volume V, Number 40, February, 1984

Art Papers, HEADLINES, HEADLINES, HEADLINES: Advocacy Criticism as Activism by Lucy Lippard, Volume 8, Number 1, January-February, 1984

Philadelphia Inquirer, Art in 80's Changes Direction by Stephan Salisbury, Sunday, January 16, 1983

The New York Times, The Power to Convince Has Faded by Andy Grundberg, July 17, 1983

La Voz Hispana de Nueva York, Nueva York Latino: Cinco Pintores Comprometidos by Juan Bujan, Marzo 24-31, 1983

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Art & Artists, Culture & Survival by Eva Cockcroft, Volume 12, Number 3, NYC, February, 1983

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ArtSpeak, The Surge of Political Art by Vernita Nemec, Volume II, Number 24, June 10, 1982

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Latin New York Magazine, Mi Gente, A Photo Exhibition by Doris Elisa Rivera, Volume 5, Number 1, June 1977

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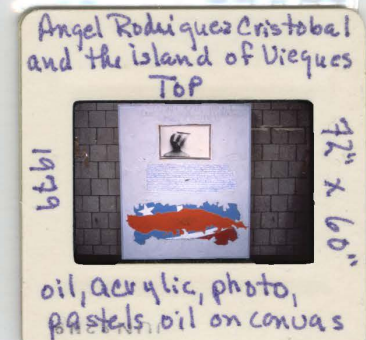
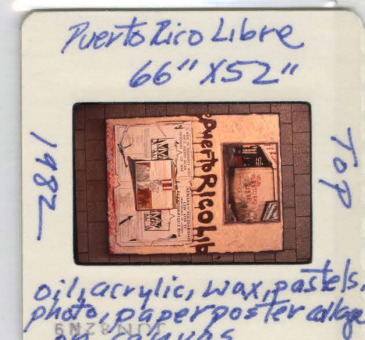
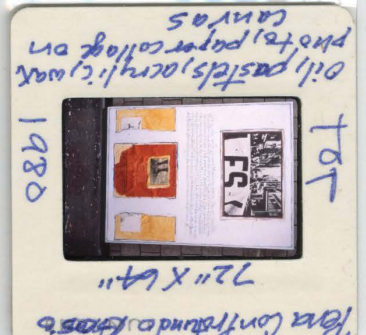
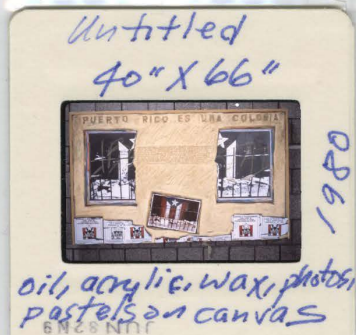
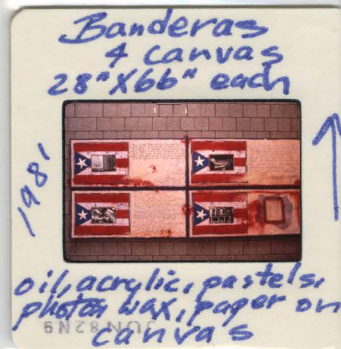
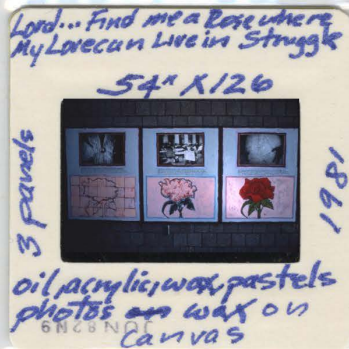
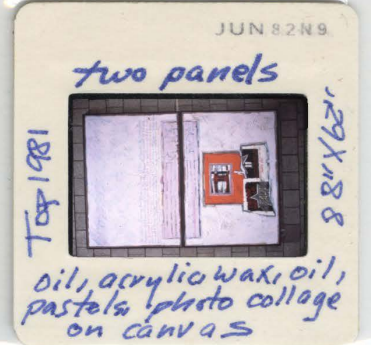
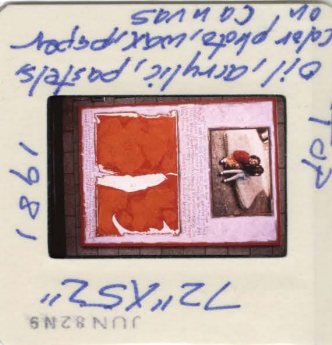
Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine, NYC

AWARDS

CAPS Painting Fellowship (Creative Artist Program Service) 1983
NEA Painting Fellowship (National Endowment for the Arts) 1983

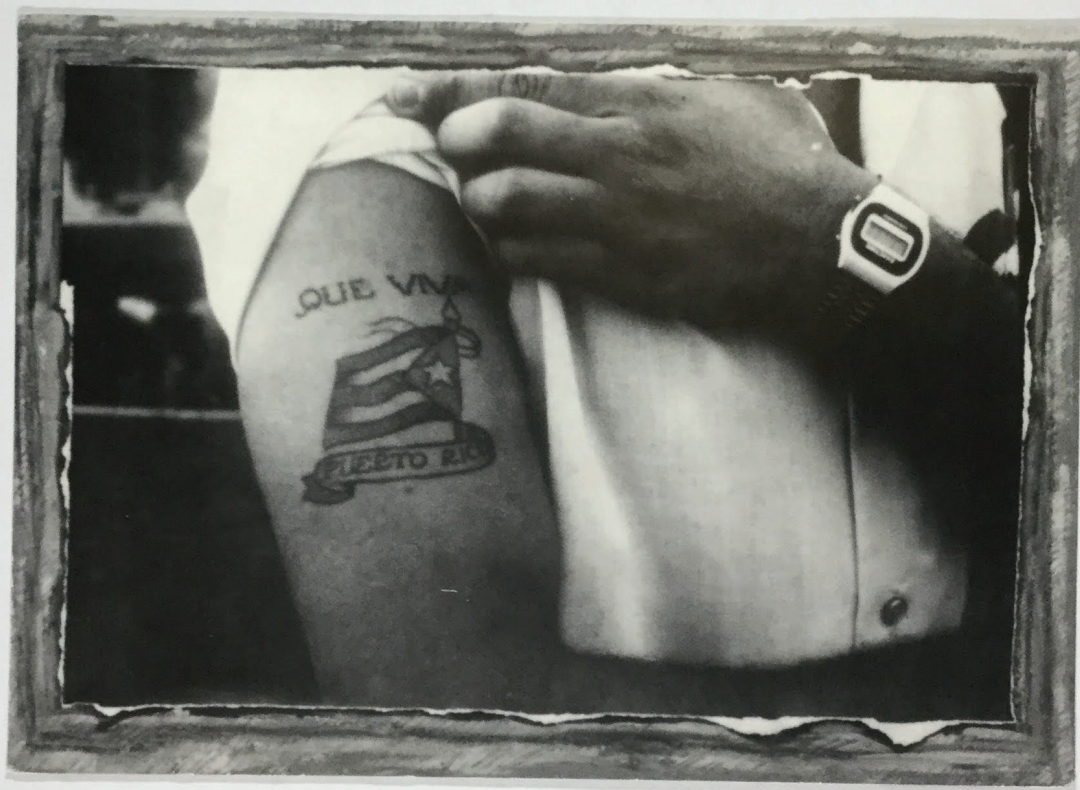
THIRD WORLD ARTISTS PRINTMAKING FELLOWSHIP (Robert Blackburn Printmaking
workshop) 1984-85

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The Most Cultural Thing You Can Do, 1983, oil and collage on canvas, 58 x 44" (detail)

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4 POETS READING
June 23, 1989
7:30 p.m.

JUAN SANCHEZ **Rican/Structed Convictions**

June 17 - July 22, 1989
Opening Saturday, June 17, 6-8 PM

Catalog available with essays by Lucy R. Lippard and Shifra M. Goldman, \$12 pp.
This exhibition and catalog funded by The Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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You are cordially invited to attend the opening reception of

FREEDOM
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Paintings by Juan Sanchez/Installation by Alfredo Jaar

curated by Maria Thereza Alves and James H. Rubin

at the Art Gallery, Fine Arts Center
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Saturday, October 12, from 6 - 8 P.M.

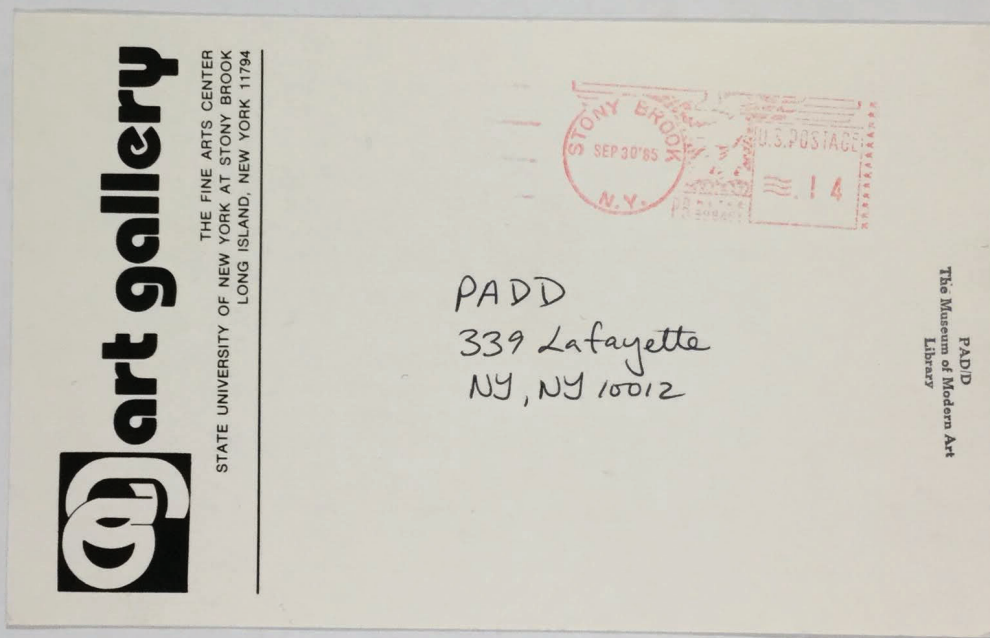
Exhibition dates: October 8 - November 13, 1985

Gallery hours: 1 - 5 P.M. Tuesday through Saturday

The Gallery will be open before some Main Stage Performances/For info: (516) 246-6846

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Cityarts Workshop, Inc.
625 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

DEDICATION: FRIDAY, OCT. 23 - 11 A.M.

**"LOUIS ARMSTRONG
THE PREVALENCE OF LOVE, DEVOTION,
AND JAZZ"**

designed by **JUAN SANCHEZ**

assisted by Sojin Kim and Jolie Shulman
107-10 Northern Blvd., Corona

Produced by Cityarts Workshop, Inc. and sponsored
by Elmcot Youth and Adult Activities, Inc.; Queens
Overall Economic Development Corp.; and the New
York City Office of Business Development. Funding
also provided by the Northern Blvd. Merchants
Association; The NYS Division of Substance Abuse;
the Exxon Community Summer Jobs Program; and
Mr. Alton Cobette.

Special thanks to Edward I. Koch, Mayor; Alair A. Townsend, Deputy
Mayor; Gary Kesner, Commissioner; Claire Shulman, Queens
Borough President; and Helen Marshall, Assemblywoman.

Cityarts programs are supported with public funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council
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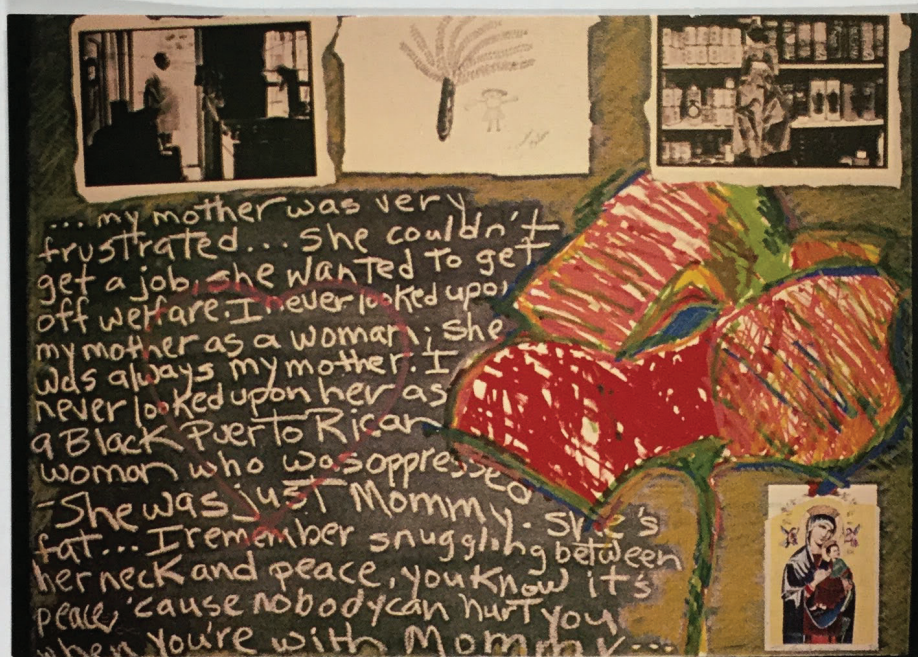
Lucy Lippard
138 Prince Street
New York, NY 10012

Photo: Susan Rosengarten

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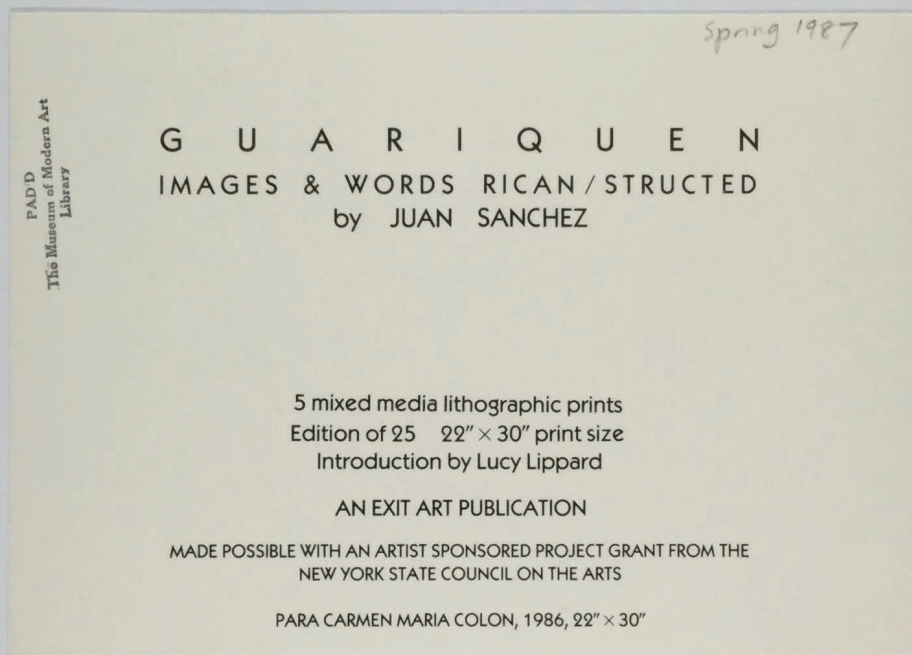
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EXHIBITIONS • PUBLICATIONS • SPECIAL PROJECTS

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JUAN SANCHEZ
RICAN/STRUCTURED CONVICTIONS

June 17 - July 22, 1989

EXIT ART will present the first critical overview of a large body of this artist's mixed media paintings and prints from 1982-1989. Juan Sanchez, an artist and activist, confronts the fragmented culture and politics of Puerto Rico in his paintings and prints. Collage, painted images, photographs, and writings reflect his interest in the pressing issues of political resistance, cultural alienation, and daily existence intertwined in Puerto Rican-American history. Sanchez's work creates a unique dialogue on the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, and the question of Puerto Rican political and cultural identity, collectively and individually.

A comprehensive color catalog will be published by **EXIT ART** in conjunction with the exhibition. It will contain essays by Lucy Lippard, writer, and contributing editor to Art in America; and Shifra M. Goldman, art historian and author who writes extensively on Latin American art; reproductions of Sanchez's work; his biography & bibliography.

This exhibition is made possible in part with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. The catalog is funded by a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation.

EXIT
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