

June 12, 1977

# ART

## Guaraguao Gallery and the Nation

By FELIX BONILLA NORAT  
Special to the STAR

It may seem lackluster compared to the varied flashing lights and sounds that animated its first months but there is a humble life going on at the Centro Nacional de las Artes on Callejon de la Capilla in Old San Juan.

Besides the lonely artist souls who work in its scraggle heights, of whom I spoke in my previous article on the center's Guaraguao Gallery, there are also various art classes held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for whosoever applies, whether they can pay or not. Julio Diaz Santos has been holding a children's drawing class for more than a year, Luis Garcia Sanchez holds painting classes, Eli Barreto has serigraphy classes, and commercial art is in the works. Why don't you investigate, if there is a young person you want to help in the field of plastic arts?

Please try to pay for the classes if you go, for the center has no money, even for the modest incomplete catalog used for its present show. Of course they could rig their own gelatin and printing outfit very cheaply glycerin — in a kitchen pan which is

good for editions of about 100 as its name "hectograph" implies. But it seems such humble neolithic means are forgotten nowadays by modern artists who are used to sophisticated printing methods.

The present show is of disparate quality, and includes some fine small works dating from the 50's and 60's down to today. These are owned, and some may be sold, by Heriberto Arroyo Rios, a collector, who worked for years as a printer of serigraphs for the Division of Community Education, then with Taller Bija and now with the center, and was thus in a position, he says, to collect about 700 posters and other works by the many artists he worked with. Sometime printers are paid in kind, not money, by the artists. Arroyo intends to rotate his fine specimens in this show.

Talking serigraph shop with him, I was glad to confirm that Carlos Irizarry's excellent serigraph "Puerto Rican Transculturation" based on and beyond Frade's "El Pan Nuestro," was done with about eight different printings, or "colors," a quite professional accomplishment. I reminded him that Eduardo Vera Cortes' "La Llegada" of 1953 was done with at least 14 or

more, which I considered too many printings, and he amazed me by saying that Rafael Tufino's nice "Fiestas en Calle San Sebastian, 1975," used 18 different colors or printings and that Isabel Bernal's fine "Fortaleza (Navidad) 1975" used 23 printings. I wonder how many she used for her lovely small "Bajamar, Puerta de Tierra."

I consider that 14 "colors" or printings for Antonio Maldonado's attractively tactile "Calle Cruz, Night-time, 1970" continues to be a lot. On the other hand his watercolor in this show demonstrates his good command of this very quick and economical medium.

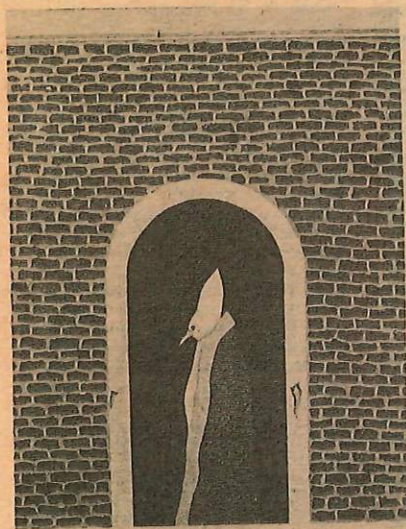
It is time that these wonderful colleagues of mine began to think of economy as a principle of art, that "less" usually means "more" in art. It's time to better plan the printing sequences of all the colors and the color transparencies, opacities and viscosities in serigraphy to produce the very fine effects they do get but with less silk-screens and less printings. That means less improvisation as they go on. Beyond 10 printings or screens, with all their potential, serig-

raphy turns into an effective medium especially if art for our masses is desired.

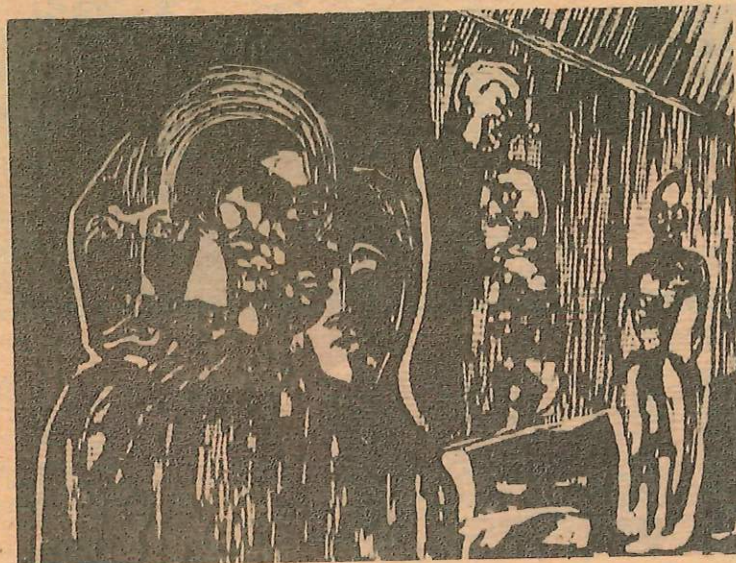
In the controversy pointed out by the "Sin Nombre" jury, that our graphic arts are better than our painting (which remains to be proved) graphic artists who produce serigraphs with countless printings come out as frustrated painters.

As an example of sophisticated color and serigraphic printing economy in this show, I point out "Mi Escalera, 1975" by Julio Diaz Santos, produced with an unbelievable three printings only, and "El Cuco '76" by Avilio Cajigas, of three printings too, including the varnish. Cajiga's "Bodegon '16" is another economical work, produced with only two silk-stencils but with five colors in one of them. The second stencil ties all the colors and shapes together nicely.

Another fine serigraph by Julio Diaz Santos is "El Sube y Baja, '77," and it is done with only seven flat-color printings, no textures at all. Textures could have added more color effects. "El Sube y Baja" is la Perla's cog name for the treacherous movements of tides and waves. Diaz Santos is



"Pajaro de lo oscuro" (serigraph, 1976)  
by Joaquín



"Desconocido" (woodcut 1977) by Salvador Benítez



"Calle de San Sebastián"

## GALLERIES

### CARNEGIE EXHIBITION HALL

Carnegie Library Ponce de León Ave.  
Stop 1. Puerta de Tierra. 724-1046 Open  
Mon. to Fr. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sat. 9 a.m.  
to 5:30 p.m. Current Show: First UNESCO  
photo show

### CASA DEL LIBRO

255 Calle del Cristo 723-0354  
Open Mon. to Fri. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sat. 2 to 5 p.m.  
"Current Show: The Art of the Watermark"

### EL TRAPICHE GALLERY

200 Cristo St. San Juan. Open Mon. to Fri. 10  
to 12 and 1 to 4. Sat. 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Cur-  
rent exhibit: "La postal Artística en  
Puerto Rico."

### ESTUDIO 1818

1818 Fndz Juncos. 727-7860. Mon to Sat 9-5.  
Oils, Woodcuts, Graphics by local artists. Cur-  
rent show: Woodcuts by Enrique Elustondo

### GALERIA BOTELLO

208 Cristo St. 723-9997  
Prints, painting and sculpture, mostly by Puerto  
Rican artists.

### GALERIA COABEY

Calle San Sebastián 101

### GALERIA DE LA CASA CAMPECHE

200 Calle San Sebastián Open Tues. to Sat 12  
p.m. to 6 p.m. 723-5251

### GALERIA FOTOGRAFIA PL 900

Ponce de León 900, Santurce. 725-2617 open  
9-5 daily except Tuesday and Wednesday.  
Current show: Photos by the  
Puerto Rican photographers Ass'n.

### GALERIA GUARAGUAO

National Art Center. Callejon de la  
Capilla. Old San Juan. Current Exhibition  
by Rafael Tufino, Carlos Raquel Rivera,  
Manuel Hernandez, Isabel Bernal and An-  
tonio Maldonado.

### GALERIA GUATIBIRI

1003 Gonzalez Ave., Santa Rita  
Open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m.  
p.m.

# onal Arts Center: alive and, well...

growing as an artist with his economical and sophisticated primitive realism in painting also. As a painter he is on the razor's edge between his two present oils, "Gallina Prieta, '77," quite reasonably well realized, and "Pinones, '76," a tourist's enterprise.

There is a very good 1976 enigmatic serigraph "Pajaro de lo Oscuro" (Bird of Darkness) by Joaquin Reyes. Against a black door space under an ominous band of negritude, a profiled erect bird-presence stands, covered with a red mantle. On the white border of the door two cracks are so ambiguously modeled as to appear like rodent tail-ends or "like many things," Reyes tells me laughingly. You go and guess yourself. Any guess you make about both bird and cracks is OK by Reyes but probably not OK for some unmentioned parts of our social establishment. It is veiled tactics like this one, which the aristocracy of France had to admire and guess at, which ended by cutting their heads off on the guillotine. Reyes is so innocent! Villon, the French pre-revolutionary poet, would have loved his works and "offensive-defensive" tactics. His is nice semi-

geometry cum semi-realistic "flesh" or substance a la criolla, a nice "banderilla" to keep all "bulls" guessing and jumping.

Two primeval forces here show very strong expressionistic works. Miguel Sanchez exhibits "Political Prisoner, 1972," in oils, and two other clenched fist and/or Taino Indian ancestor images of the barricade arts. His color is too raw, both in quality and quantity, and his drawing grotesque but the energy is tremendous. Let's hope he tames it.

The other un-tamed force is Salvador Benitez, whose three expressionistic works "Desconocido" (woodcut '77), "Witches in White," (woodcut '72) and "Esquizofrenia," (linoleum '76) have the energy and style of the German expressionists at the beginning of this century, yet he never heard of them, he claims. I met him years ago at an art class given by Ruben Rivera Aponte. Benitez insists loyally that "Ruben is worth much more in art than very many other artists who are better known." The three Benitez works above are an even better commentary on Ruben's worth. They may need more polish — but polish might be dangerous for

primeval forces even though Carlos Osorio, who used to be a primeval force too, seems quite alive and polished in the "Madre," (oil on paper, 1959) in this show.

Luis G. Sanchez frustrated me with four monotonously spaced and colored paintings. He can create better planar divisions than those here, with more variety of color, size and shape. Luis German Cajiga's usual serigraphs, such as "Calle San Sebastian, '1975" are never frustrating, not quite, even with all their usualness. And unusual as usual are the works here by Angel Casiano.

El Barreto, in charge of the art center, has a collage-and-module-mind in many things he does, as shown by his recent one-man show by his interesting serigraphy in somber reds and black in this show. He uses ready-mades for his silk-screens; for example the various commercial T-shirt stencils which he superimposes on one single work here. The danger in such superimpositions is that the result can at first hand appear casual and jerry-built as if he had to produce something right away, had to use what was available right

away. You don't have to produce, Barreto. You'll do better if you don't force yourself to produce.

As for keeping the Guaraguao Gallery filled, which is always problematic specially when many artist stay aloof or don't produce, I wonder if he can't contact the various art-teaching centers on the island, including the University of Puerto Rico, the Plastic Arts School, the Art Students League and the many others which hold art student exhibits, for selections for Guaraguao exhibition of beginning artists. If sophisticated artists don't knock on the door, Barreto should look around, by mail at least.

Lost of beginners from all over the island ask me where to start exhibiting. The center could arrange island-wide shows, or else, groupings from individual art centers. If he visits the present Royal Bank of Canada's exhibit of works by 15-to-21-year-old young people, his eyes may open to the many possible candidates of all ages from all over the island. He can occasionally hold the sophisticated adult exhibits he hopes for. Otherwise he is condemned to the lukewarm quality of this present exhibit, with its many very familiar works.



(serigraph 1975) by Rafael Tufino



"Cemi de oro" (1977) by Adrian Garcia



"Collage" (1974) by Eli Barreto



"Fortaleza, Navidad" (serigraph 1975) by Isabel Bernal

## GALERIA MARIA RECHANY

Magdalena 1363 Open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon. to Sat. 725-4828. Paintings, and prints by Puerto Rican artists.

## GALERIA OLLER

Calle Escorial 366, Caparra Hts. 782-3171 Open Tues to Thurs. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Fri 2-9; Sat. 9-20 Paintings and Graphics by Puerto Rican artists.

## GALERIA PITIRRE

Condado Convention Center. 723-6090 Ext. 1632. Open Tues to Thurs. 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Fri to Sun. 12 to 8 p.m. Current Show: Paul Camacho, paintings and graphics

## MANOS

Convention Center, Condado. Contemporary ceramics by the Caparra Studio.

## MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES

Instituto de Cultura 253 Cristo St. 723-2320. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oils, prints and graphics. Current show: Drawings and boxes by Julio Micheli and Andres Rodriguez Sanyos

## MUSEO DE LA FUNDACION

Behind Tapia Theater, Plaza Colon 725-5962. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mon. Indian Artifacts and sculpture. Current show: "In honor of the Tainos of the Dominican Republic.

## MUSEO DEL GRABADO LATINOAMERICANO

Casa de los Contrafuertes. 101 San Sebastian St., Plaza San Jose second floor. Open every day from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Current show. Peruvian prints from Taller '72.

## MUSEO DE LOS SANTOS

Instituto de Cultura, Casa de los contrafuertes, Plaza San Jose. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## MUSEO DEL CONVENTO DE SANTO DOMINGO

Instituto de Cultura. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Corner Cristo and Norzagaray. Plaza San Jose, 724-0700, 724-0702. Current show: Sculpture by Tomas Batista

## MUSEO HISTORICO

1396 Giorgetti St. Santurce 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon to Fri. Collection of art, history culture, industry, costumes, stamps, coins. Guides available.

## PONCE MUSEUM OF ART

Las Americas Ave. 842-6215. Open Wed. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sun. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Current Exhibition: Works by Angel Botello, Roberto Moya and Rolando Lopez Dirube.

## UPR MUSEUM

764-0000 Ext. 2452 or 2456 Open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays; 1 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. 10 to 5. Current Show: 9th annual exhibition of Fine Arts students work.