

Luis German Cajiga

WHERE: IPRC Dominican Convent

WHEN: until July 31

ON EXHIBIT: 130 serigraphs

By FELIX BONILLA NORAT

Special to the STAR

Let us not deny what Luis German Cajiga is not. He is not an aesthete since aesthetes are people "who make much or over-much of the sense of the beautiful," according to Webster, and Cajiga prefers to make more of the common sense of his art.

Aesthetic thinking separates the beautiful quality of an object from its moral and especially from its useful qualities. To Cajiga's thinking, each of his works is useful and moral and therefore popular and beautiful, true to his people and to its moment of rendition. What more could you ask for?

"My prints aim at being popular," says Cajiga. Eventually I hope to print some works in larger editions in order to sell them cheaper to more people in more towns. Look at my 'Gurabo' print: the edition is already practically sold out, mostly to professionals from Gurabo working in San Juan. It gives me pleasure to thus bring a bit of nostalgia, morale and peace to their hearts."

The 'Gurabo' print is one of the handsome pieces here, with lovely blues and greens, ochres and reds. Simple of composition, as are most of the other works on view, "Gurabo" was so lovingly produced that Cajiga used more than 10 stencils, colors or printings, in a hard-headed and generous belief that more is more in art. More moral? I ask. He pokes fun at my contention.

I have always liked Cajiga's sense of playful awareness even when he is "hard-headed," which means he knows his way around and sticks to it for better or worse. He does know his way. His figurative style and his images have the same character they had 27 years ago when, helped by dona Inez de Munoz Marin, he went to the Division of Community Education graphics department to work, under Irene Delano, as an ambitious jibarito from Quebradillas, which he reflects lovingly and often in his work.

A moral and morale attitude is a part of Cajigas' personality. He was a Seventh Day Adventist minister for many years, salaried for full-time service to his church.

Now he is a part-time preacher, and earns his living through art classes given in his home, and sometimes at Inter-American University art sales. Since the early 1950's he has sold countless paintings and almost 11,000 prints. The 130 prints in this show vary from editions of 35 each to several hundred. They are quite reasonable in price and represent quite a professional output considering that besides preaching he had to serve two years in the Army and to study for a bachelors degree for the ministry. In 1975 he finished his master's degree in education at Inter American University.

In other words, he is a trained professional, yet in his art he



In 1975 Luis German Cajiga prepared this self-portrait-poster for a 15 year retrospective of his work.

continues the same "folkloric" style and themes he developed early in the 50's, and makes no bones about it. He has the timeless attitude of our santeros; some of his figures are even santo-like in style - short, squat and simplified of gesture, drape and technique. Some occasional heavy baroque details creep

in, as in his 1961 "Crucifixion," a linoleum cut with serigraphic color, but normally his is a simple santo style in his figure work, and an orthodox realism in his landscape or urban "lincaas." His is a world to afflict your nostalgia on. Lately, his "style" has taken on a crayon like granular look which when used all over a work makes it appear monotonous of texture, not as clean-cut as his previous works.

Cajiga resents it if you say his world is of touristic figures and scenes, since he claims few tourists buy his work; his clientele is Puerto Rican. At the Piltre and Coabey galleries in the middle of tourist territories they tell me that ordinarily no tourists buy from them. Yet Angel Botello makes a living in such territories, and sells at higher prices. Are tourists led by prices? Actually, there are many kinds of tourists, from millionaires to secretaries and barbers, just as there are in Puerto Rico.

Both Botello and Cajiga use "folklore" figurations in their work but Botello is much more sophisticated in color and technique and more modernly planar, whereas Cajiga models his figures three-dimensionally, in the baroque manner.

Graphics, santos, painting, sculpture and ceramics are, home-workshop industries. Lots of our artists are thus seeking refuge not in cooperative workshops such as in our official schools but in their own basic family production units of which both Independentista and "parallel economy" voices have spoken. I am amazed at how many of our artists are mounting their own workshops, some complete with printing press.

At this moment Cajiga is exhibiting his posters in the Planning Board library at Minillas government center. At the same time he is finishing the installation of his "Galeria La Caleta" in San Juan, which he plans to open by the end of this month. Thus some art galleries close, to be succeeded by newer ones.

An interesting development of Cajiga's serigraphic work is manifested in his large sized (28" x 38") "Quebradillas No. 3;" and "Caleta de las Monjas" which are printed directly on smooth canvas. It worries me that some people may eventually think they are original paintings which they decidedly are not, since they run to editions of 48 and 45 respectively, and are not rich enough in their tactile "painted" matter. Also the Caleta print took all of 30 printings including four differently tinted varnished plus, of all things, some hand-retouching, which negates the printer's code. The graphic artist here is acting like a frustrated painter. Each of these prints is \$250 whereas his 18" x 33" prints are \$60.00 and his 10" x 8" ones are \$30.00.

Printing on canvas can liberate graphics in many ways including size and framing but it can also bring other kinds of imprisonment for the soul if not the body or the pocketbook. Be careful, Cajiga, and be explicit on signing the serigraphed works.



"Sandy"



"Pescador"



"Quebradillas, No. 3"



"Casero"

Photos by EDDIE CRESPO

GALLERIES

CARNEGIE EXHIBITION HALL
Carnegie Library Ponce de Leon Ave. Stop 1. Puerta de Tierra. 724-1046. Open Mon. to Fri. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sat. 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Current Show: Silkscreens and monotypes in series by Peter Gaztambide.

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 TRAPICE GALLERY
200 Cristo St. San Juan. Open Mon. to Sat. 10 to 12 and 1 to 4. Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Current 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.

GALERI BOTELLO
208 Cristo St. 723-9987. Prints, painting and sculpture, mostly by Puerto Rican artists.

GALERIA DE LA CASA CAMPECHE
200 Calle San Sebastian Open Tues. to Sat. 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. 723-5252.

GALERIA FOTOGRAFIA PL 900
Ponce de Leon 900, Santurce. 725-2617 open 9-5 daily except Tuesday and Wednesday. Current show: Photographs by Frank Kollago

MANOS
Convention Center. Condado. Contemporary ceramics by the Caparra Studio. Current show: "Clay and Something Else."

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.

HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF PUERTO RICO
1396 Georgetti, Santurce. Mon. to Fri. 9 to 4. A summary of history of P.R. in antique objects. City Hall Old San Juan.

LA GALERIA
Callejon de la Capilla. Old San Juan. Present show: an exhibition of prints by Dessie Martinez.

MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES
Instituto de Cultura 253 Cristo St. 723-2320. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oil, prints and graphics.

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 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.

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: Photographs by Sylvia Calzada and drawings and graphics by Maritza Davila.

SALON ISABEL II
City Hall Old San Juan. Current Show: Paintings by P.C. Pena Arrieta

UPR MUSEUM
764-0000 Ext. 2452 or 2456. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 5. Current Show: Collective exhibit, "Pintura Puertorriquena."