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ART

AGUADILLA ART AWARDS



FIRST PRIZE, PAINTING: Fabian Sosa of Aguadilla for "Lamento"

By FELIX BONILLA NORAT
Special to the STAR
Watch Aguadilla.

Aguadilla may not be on the Ponce side in the continuing war between San Juan and Ponce. The war is waged in many unexpected ways. For example, San Juaneros have been known to take as many as three baths a day, each time using countless gallons of water which the parched Southwest needs.

Actually the war started in Agueybana's time. The Taino cacique ruled all of Puerto Rico from Guanica in the region of Guanica which is a hinterland of Ponce. Ever since then the invading northerners have tried to destroy all the spiritual, cultural, economic, social and art values of the southwest. The latest underhanded San Juan blows against Ponce are: taking its complete mail system away, liquifying the maritime potential of its wharfs, and taking Ponce customers away through its trojan horse, the "autopista" to San Juan. Away they go to shop.

And now comes the latest blow — Aguadilla may not be in Ponce's cultural camp anymore.

Using an agency known as the "Aguadilla Art Center," Aguadilla invited "all artists of the west of

Puerto Rico" to a contest in the engraving and painting skills held at the Aguadilla Regional College of the University of Puerto Rico. From Isabela, Camuy, San Sebastian, Moca, Las Marias, Guanica, San German, Sabana Grande, and Maricao, many artists were invited and many, many came, even from Cabo Rojo and Mayaguez, normally so independent within the republic of the southwest.

Juan D. Garcia Urrutia of the Institute of Culture's promotion department insists that no actual guerrilla war is expected so far since citizens of both sides prefer to fight straight and urbanely during regular production hours, from 8 to 5; then every day they declare a truce to take a bath, see TV go to the cultural centers.

"What you say is a fabrication", Antonio Loro says. "There's no war going on, this is a peaceful town. Since my wife and I founded El Centro de Arte de Aguadilla a year and a half ago, I have found peace and quiet here. So much so we have even decided to have our children here."

Naturally Loro's show of his two children is a tactic to deny everything about the war. He is a Venetian. The Venetians have learned dip-

lomacy to deal with all the invaders they have had on their lands since time began in the Adriatic. The Venice region was always a cross-roads region.

"Furthermore", Loro continues, "I am nobody's agent. I am proud the Aguadillians approve of my art center and my art school, which keep me very busy. If Aguadilla ever seceded from the union with San Juan, in that case, well... I am an Aguadillan. But that's only a local manner of speech. I am a real unionist."

I won't tell Loro I work for the Aibonito-Barranquitas-Cayey and Coamo (ABCC) Misty Mountain Empire; we are the superior ones. Let the low coastal towns subtract each other out, then we may design to rule the island through our higher jibaro arms and arts. Puerto Rico is a caldron few people suspect. We may yet create a civilization if we ever learn to add all cultural, social, economic and political promotion efforts.

"I am called an agent in the cultural promotion and production wars," Loro continues. "Agents receive money; I didn't receive a penny for my 'Expoeste' Art Contest and Salon, the first such for westerners. I went to the banks around

here, but they wouldn't help me, so I had to use my own art center supply money for the cash prizes and the expenses of printing invitations, posters, catalogs."

But what is this about the Aguadilla banks? Why wouldn't they help Aguadilla art causes? Loro's contest could have given the banks a nice display of free advertising and created cultural and economic goodwill for them. Are Aguadilla's banks under the pay of San Juan? Or of Ponce? Or the CIA?

No wonder we frown on bankers in my ABCC Misty Mountains; we would never hire banks for the sacred patriotic duties of cultural penetration. We use gourds to keep money in Aibonito and jibaros for everything else.

But maybe the banks are onto Aguadilla's plans for the future. Maybe I should spy from the inside.

So here I find myself as a juror in the Aguadilla Expoeste art contest. The art works are good, considering that they are done by the coastal tribes not by natives of my Misty Mountains. My fellow jurors — you guessed it — are known fifth columnists in the cultural promotion and production wars. They are coastal too, not jibaro enough, but they are all right: Juan D. Garcia Ur-

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 5 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 and "Relatos de un paisaje

asesinado" a book of serigraphs by Wilfredo Chilesa with poetry by Tomas Lopez Ramirez and music by Rafael Aponte Ledee.

EL TRAPICHE 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 Artistica en Puerto Rico."

ESTUDIO 1818

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

GALERIA BOTELLO

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

GALERIA COABEY

Calle San Sebastian 101

GALERIA GUARAGUAO

National Art Center. Callejon de la Capilla. Old San Juan.

GALERIA GUATIBIRI

1003 Gonzalez Ave., Santa Rita. Open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

GALERIA DE LA CASA CAMPECHE

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

GALERIA FOTOGRAFIA PL 900

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

LA GALERIA

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

MANOS

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



FIRST PRIZE, GRAPHICS: Jose Ramirez of Ramey for "Prisoner"



BEST PAINTER FROM AGUADILLA: Jose Antonio de Jesus for "Portrait of Gloria Kasse"

rutia is a paid agent for the Institute of Culture and Noemi Ruiz a professor at Inter-American University, is a fifth columnist for San German.

I cannily watch them at work. They demonstrate no sign of what Maximo Cerame Vivas reports as San German's "loss of faith" in the institute's non-handling of the Porta Coeli shrine.

The light in the CORA center used as a gallery wasn't the best but the place was ample and the sea breezes wonderful. The regional college students shouldn't be sleepy in the classrooms with that breeze. Loro had tried to get space in the middle of Aguadilla itself, but bureaucracy impeded or God knows what. So UPR's CORA gained.

The verdicts were as follows:

First prize in painting went to Fabian Sosa of Aguadilla for quite realistic, quite painterly and very luminous "Landscape" showing some wooden "casitas" under low glancing lights. The color was rich, the brushwork crisp, and the verdict unanimous. The picture demonstrates that Aguadilla continues to be a very "paintable" town with its different lines of houses at different heights, exactly as some 40 years ago, when water-colorist Arroyo Gely did his beautiful works on the same subject.

He died young or we would all know about him more than we do.

Second prizes was also unanimous, awarded to Mrs. Ivonne Schutter of Ramey Air Base for a water-color swarming with a strange color, light and appeal, crisply rendered, yet tenderly caressed in its rendition. We later found out that the young girl with flowing pig-tails in the picture was the painter's late daughter who drowned. She is shown as if to the left of the picture, away from the land and into the calling waters.

The work is a monument to the love and grief which magically charged the picture with its life.

Third prize went to a painting by Carmen Tirado of Aguada, "El Principito," with nice soft colors and somewhat painterly effects, but with awkward partitioning of the various scenes within the single work.

Madeline Acevedo of San Sebastian won the Grumbacher art supply prize for a nice small painterly "Still Life With Fruits." Though solved tonally a la Chardin and not chromatically a la Cezanne, I like it, and was surprised to find the painter is only 14 years. old. We need such candidates for our cultural promotion wars. As Juan Garcia Urrutia said in awarding the prizes in the name of the Institute of Culture (though it

was Antonio Loro who supplied the money). "This award is not so much for present and past efforts, as for your commitment to keep producing ever better works." Garcia evidently is a good strategist in the cultural wars; making recruits for the future under the nose of Aguadilla itself.

Jose Antonio de Jesus, only 17 years old, was declared "the best Aguadillian painter" for his "Portrait of Gloria Kasse," actually a sensitive, enamored drawing but with added painterly details and color. Sarah Santiago Rodriguez of Mayaguez, 18, won the "Aguadilla Art Center prize" for her two freely brushed, expressionistic, painterly landscape scenes. Her loose technique doesn't work so well in tighter interior still life, but I am betting on her future. She seems to enjoy paint as paint, a most important part of being a painter.

Honorable mentions went to Valentin Perez of Moca, Ivonne Schutter of Ramey, and Estela Robles of Aguadilla. I was surprised Estela didn't get a higher approval. She was the only "modern" constructivist in the show as seen in one of her works, was semi-realistic in another, "My Home," wherein she nicely stylizes a realistic subject, and then photo-realistic in her beach scene.

Quite a range. She'll have to direct her future efforts. I did like her work, but then, maybe its my UPR world view.

Except for Estela's, all the prizes went to reasonably "orthodox-realistic" works, as if orthodox realism were Aguadilla's style compared to the UPR's and the institute's very eclectic and willfully designed style as seen in student shows.

Surprisingly, the graphic arts entries were not as important nor as numerous as the painting entries, unlike most art contests in San Juan. Jose Rodriguez of Ramey Base won first prize for an intagliated "Prisoner," quite simple and strong, though too mellow in execution. Carmen Tirado of Aguada won second prize for sturdy cuts, and Diego Quintero of Mayaguez won the third and fourth prizes for interesting and willfully designed pieces. Other honorable mentions went to Gloria Luigi and Jose Rodriguez of Ramey, and Pedro Hernandez of Isabela.

All in all, "Expoeste" proved to be quite an additive effort in our cultural "wars" and Antonio Loro merits our thanks as cultural "war" financier and propagandist.

May we all learn from such unifying efforts.

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. Current show: Paintings by Michael Anguelo

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.

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. An exhibition of paintings by Wilfred Labiosa.

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.

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 Contralueres. 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.

MUSEO DE LOS SANTOS

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

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.

SALON ISABEL II

City Hall Old San Juan. an exhibition of paintings by Wilfred Labiosa.

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: Photographs by Jesus E. Marrero