

Tenth Annual UPR Students Show

By FELIX BONILLA NORAT
Special to the STAR

The 10th Annual Exhibit of UPR Art Students now at the UPR Museum merits a visit before it closes next Saturday. A few days later the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture Plastic Arts School will open its Annual Students Show on the same premises, at the UPR Museum.

And so you should go back right away to compare the present crop of artists our two institutions are turning out. It is almost a "mano a mano" display which in bullfighting rings brings out the best in each bullfighter. It is questionable though if it works in art since art gut-works are produced without any help from "oles" or other public displays. Those come later in art, if ever.

By holding both exhibits the UPR is doing its job of informing all of us, and itself, about any differences that may show up between the two institutions. Such differences could be due to the curriculum design at the two schools. Less than one out of six

courses in the UPR Art Department is a workshop course. Such a proportion doesn't allow enough physical practice for art's many techniques. At the institute the workshop courses prevail. There are five out of six. This proportion may not offer enough academic preparation for art's many conceptual development.

But the students shows will demonstrate, I am betting, that the students themselves are compensating.

At the present exhibit you will see that the UPR students press for technical and manual proficiency to such an extent that they closely study their teachers' manner of work. You can easily spot the Buscaglia sculpture students, the Hernandez Cruz colorists, the Lope Max and Carola Vega constructors of form as was vividly pointed out to me by some visiting institute students who were voraciously studying the "terrain" where they will show their own works soon. Certainly, UPR art teachers do not encourage being aped but if their students act like sponges, how can that be helped?

As for the institute school, the students seem to be pressing for conceptual liberties, taking chances or disregarding technical proficiency or "professional finish." Since I love both form and content, both sides of the painterly arts, and I also love both schools, I am watching to see if what the reconnoitering student told me is true, that the institute exhibit will show freer and deeper work than that of the UPR exhibit. If it is true, it will prove to me that our future in the arts will be assured by our student artists themselves without much help from the curriculum.

At the UPR Museum now the stand-out artist is Angel Rodriguez Diaz. Rodriguez is ready to seek his masters degree elsewhere and his painterly qualities, his color and compositional ability will do us proud wherever he goes. His various oils, two collographs and a lithograph are consistently good. He is at last using greater tonal contrast in his work, his world used to be crepuscular. And some color glow begins to show in his largest work here (Composicion II).

Notice the red area on the ground, painted with different red hues and saturations within only one tonal value, and see how it is reflected in the under part of the median horizontal shape in the picture.

His various "Forma Interior" compositions reflect a pursuit of a realistic round shape alive and struggling within imprisoning squares. The organic form may end almost deflated on the floor as in "Forma en interior amarillo," or it may jump in the air and gnash its teeth in frenzy, as in "Forma interior" in cooler colors. Evidently his whole system is ready to break away from all of us squares. I wish him to remember that excessive tonal contrast and highly modelled shapes in Renaissance space may kill good color and end as illustrations. Also, they may kill something of the poetic crepuscular mystery he has gotten in some of his best works done these past four years at UPR and before. But maybe he is tired of the magic twilight mysteries.

Sandra Martinez has some interesting organic compositions but as is



(no title) By Rafael Trelles



"Forma en el interior amarillo" by Angel Rodriguez Diaz



"Columna de la vida" by Lourdes Martinez



(no title) by Judy Gallego

GALLERIES

ART STUDENTS LEAGUE

Plaza San Jose, Old San Juan. Open daily, except Sundays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Tuesdays and Wednesdays to 9 p.m. Current show: drawings and graphics by Carlos Suenos Ortiz; "Prehistoria erotica"

CARNEGIE EXHIBITION HALL

Carnegie Library Ponce de Leon 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.

CASA BLANCA MUSEO Casa Blanca. Entrance at end of Calle San Sebastian.

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. "The Art of the Calendar."

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 show: U.P.R. School of Architecture's "Six Graphic Arts Workshop Portfolios."

GALERIA BOTELLO

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

GALERIA COABEY

101 San Sebastian St., Old San Juan 723-1018.

GALERIA CONDADO

Convention Center. Open 11-7 every day. 723-6090. Ext 1632 Exhibition of work by local artists.

GALERIA DE BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

102 De Diego, Santurce. 725-1135. Mon-Fri 9-9 Sat & Sun 9-6 Sculpture and Graphics. Current show: works by Rafael Ferrer.

GALERIA DE DISENOS CARIBBEAN

Palmas del Mar, Humacao. Mon-Sat. 10-1 and 2-6; Sunday 2-6. 852-3450 Ext.2507. Works by Roberto Moya and others.

GALERIA FOTOGRAFIA PL 900

Ponce de Leon 900, Santurce 725-2617 open 9-5 daily except Tuesday and Wednesday. Current show: Recent photographs by Pablo Cambo.

GALERIA LA CALETA

70 Caleta de San Juan. Old San Juan. 723-8627. Paintings and prints by proprietor Luis Cajigas, ceramics, graphics and sculpture.

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.

usual when form is pursued too strongly, her color is muddy. Her textures with collaged metal fabric are too mechanical. She models each area of color with white for the lights and black for the shadows, a simplistic solution. She should go back to the many-hued colors with which she started. A blue area can have many hues from green blues through blues to violet blues, each with many possible saturations or kinds of neutrality, and they all stay together as one single color area if they are all held to the one single tonal value or grade of darkness to lightness necessary for the area. It is not necessary to adopt impressionistic techniques to get good color, as Hernandez Cruz proved with his initial abstract landscapes.

Ramon Frontera's textuologies use some small impressionist touches of complementary colors within his reasonably many-hued flat color areas. But the scale of those touches is too small and can be seen only close-up when they almost glow. But they disappear at a distance, as texture does

also. So his simple shapes lose their physical beauty at a distance. He has to establish different area relationships so that the small touches can be enjoyed when seen from afar also.

Judy Vallejo's acrylic painting (without a title) is an interesting composition but the color is simplistic: straight thalo blue with white for the sky, and pinks and creams for the square. She should practice with more hues and saturations.

Jose Ramos relief works in fiber-glass are between painting and sculpture and are quite playfully visual and technically proficient. I'll look forward to his one man show coming soon.

Among the sculptures, the Rafael Trelles huge minimalist orange work in wood is like an impressive three dimensional logotype. His all-blue bondo work seems to depict three Al Capp shmooos, a mother and two children. Somehow his drawings are more intensely personal and communicative, as in one of a scrambled gnome, and another of a very pensive one. His drawings of heads in the last

student contest were quite good also, as studies for paintings with many hues. His previous impressionist experience should help him get good color. He doesn't have to adopt the small touches; it's enough to vary hues and saturations within the tonal value for the desired area.

Two sculptures in moulded polyester are realistic and dare to go into spatial movement. I think the one by Lourdes Martinez "Columna de la vida" has a more controlled elan and is handsomer anatomically; the "Alma Mater" by Nayda Pol has too voluminous a base which prevents its flight into space. Its textures are a little tired and the contortions in the figures are not really reflected in the anatomy though the volumes as such follow each other well.

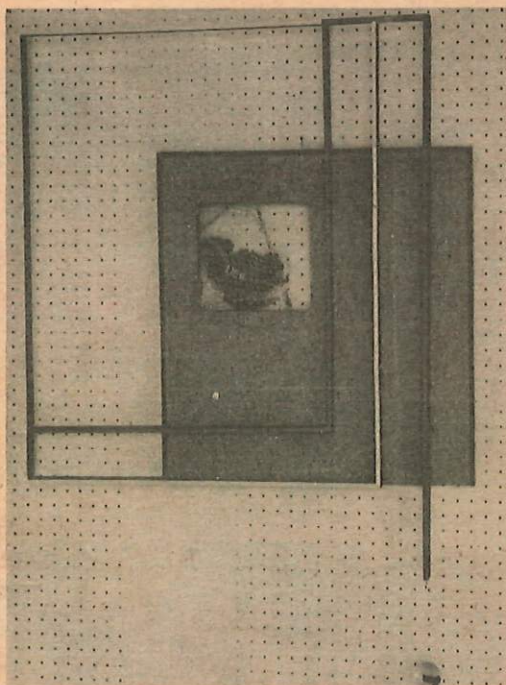
The Jose Manuel Emeric construction, "Vieques I," is awkwardly but symbolically open since it is unbalanced and pulled down by the hanging ball. The shapes are anchored by a kind of window which shows Vieques being lifted away by a U.S.

Marine loading net. Myrna de Jesus Pizarro has a nice construction with optical art possibilities. I wish she'd dare use stronger interacting colors in similar works. Mayra Molinary has done five simple strong heads like islands or cells, one crying for the others in "Trance," a linoleum cut.

I also liked the acrylic "Vision y ritmo" sculpture by Ana Rita Gonzalez with its flat columnar relationships. Her "Aparte" is also a nice white-on-white letrist relief-collograph. I liked many of the other color collographs in the show. Susan Herrero is doing a good job as teacher of graphics at both UPR and the institute where I recently saw an excellent exhibit of graphics by her students and Jose R. Alicea's.

This year's student show is more colorful than last year's but it is too dutifully orderly yet, as if the students needed to produce sure things before graduation. They could do better if they trusted themselves more.

Now let's see what the School of Plastic Arts brings to the museum.



"Vieques I" by Jose Manuel Emeric



"Alma de la amistad" by Ramon Frontera



"Niño mundo" by Guillermo F. Morales

GALERIA MUNICIPIO

City Hall, Old San Juan. Current show: Collective show 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. 9-2. Paintings and Graphics by Puerto Rican artists.

GALERIA RAQUEL

San Jose 257, Old San Juan. Mon. to Sat. 10-6;

HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF PUERTO RICO

1396 Georgetti, Santurce. Mon. to Fri. 9 to 4. A summary of history of P.R. in antique objects.

LA FORTALEZA

End of Fortaleza St., Old San Juan. Open only during business hours.

MANOS

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

MUSEO DE LA ESCUELA DE ARTES PLASTICAS

El Morro Grounds Mon. to Fri. 8 to 5. Sat. 2 to 5. Current Show: Works by sculpture students of Tomas Batista and Rafael Lopez del Campo.

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.

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 exhibits: Portfolios by E. Deira, R. Guiltelson, A. Berni, E. Mc Entire, J. Santiago and L. Rosado.

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. Current show: "Album de familia y obra grafica" by Antonio Martorell

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 Show: Retrospective exhibition by Lorenzo Homar.

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. Saturday and Sundays, 10 to 5. Current show: 10th Annual Exhibit of Finer Arts Students Work.