

# Second Mobil Art Contest



**FIRST PRIZE** A "Composicion" by Daniel Lind

By FELIX BONILLA NORAT  
 Special To The STAR

Mobil Oil (Caribe) Inc. has joined the elite group of banking and other businesses that have become annual patrons of the Puerto Rican Arts. Its second annual art contest for young people from 18 to 30 years of age, drew 76 entries for the top prizes of \$1,000 and \$500.

First prize was won by Daniel Lind, a young painter from Loiza Aldea, second prize by Gabriel Cruz Diaz, a teacher at the Luchetti School, third prize by Arnaldo Roche, an architectural student and fourth prize by Sandra Martinez of Humacao.

Judges were Osiris Delgado, Luis Hernandez Cruz, Linda Gregory, Antonio Molina and Felix Bonilla.

Mobil also awarded its second annual group of prizes to professionals within a particular field, this year the field of music. Winners of silver trays were Hector Campos Parsi, Carmelina Ortiz del Rivero, Luisita Rodriguez, Jesus Maria Sanroma and Amaury Veray.

Earlier this year Mobil donated

\$5,000 to help in the restoration of San Jose Church in Old San Juan and the prize money for the essay and short story contest held in connection with the "First Millenium of the Spanish Language."

Although culture supplied by large companies, I feel could be as dangerous for the arts as government-supplied culture, the businesses that have been sponsoring these contests have had nothing whatever to say about the awarding of the prizes, or even the display of the prize winning works. Such things have been left to the jurors.

At no time in my many years as a juror have I felt any pressure. Any jostling came from the jurors alone and even that was eliminated when the point system of judging came into popularity some years ago. Each juror prepares his own winner's list and each name on it is given points such as four points for a winner, one for fourth place and so on, until one artist gets a majority. Sometimes the results are surprisingly varied if the jury is varied in taste. Some prizes

are given unanimously, such as Lind's prize in the present contest.

Lind used to tie his figures together with swinging arcs and menace them with sharp scythes and horned moons, symbols of matriarchal goddesses. Now his figures have begun to wax rounder and the arcs have disappeared. The figures now are surrounded only by light and are sometimes light sources themselves. All of them suggest the African gods celebrated in Loiza, his territory.

Lind's color is lighter now. White-smokey lights predominate over the dark areas as if his figures were inside smokey temples. Greys also predominated. Saturated patches travel in the picture within a given figure or from one figure to another. Sometimes this color interchange tactic is too obvious or simplistic but it can work well.

His "Composicion No. 2" and "Composicion No. 7" show the rhythmic possibilities of the tactic.

Lind's \$1,000 first prize buys one of his pictures for Mobil's permanent collection here in Puerto Rico. The



**SECOND PRIZE** "Cria" by

second prize of \$500 awarded to Gabriel Cruz Diaz also buys one of his pictures for the collection. Third and fourth prizes of \$300 and \$200 do not buy the works.

Gabriel Cruz is not a hyper-realist although he uses photographic documents to start his works. Hyper-realists pursue the photographic document itself, a document such as a snapshot or portrait.

Gabriel tries to be painterly with his use of photos, and he may use several as different views in one single picture, trying to fuse them into one single painterly reality which because of its origins may become a magically charged unreality. So far he has not succeeded in this fusion, though he almost got to it in his "Baquine," which is not in this contest.

His simpler "Cria" is a vignette of a negro mother and child symbolically anchored to a yellow ochre plot of land which is completely and symbolically surrounded by an empty blue sky. The mother's purple dress is almost painterly and has less of the



Gabriel Cruz Diaz

"painted drawing" effect Gabriel normally gets. He almost consistently evades use of the always cool shade between lights and shadows.

A similar use of photographic documentation, local colors and evasion of the cool shade is seen in the work of third prize winner Arnaldo Roche.

His "En un mundo de soledad" shows a busy street intersection in which every passerby is isolated and alone, busy with his or her own thoughts. The autonomy of daring to be alone as individuals is not implied but rather the opposite. Automatism of the individuals within the mass is what is implied. The mass is the isolating mantle for each particle and each particle is alike.

Arnaldo uses a domino square effect in his sky above and foreground below, as if the whole realistic scene came fresh from a geometrical world.

The best colorist in the show is Sandra Martinez, fourth prize winner with her only picture here. She probably would have won a higher prize had she sent more of her works, as



THIRD PRIZE "En el mundo de soledad" by Arnaldo Roche

all the others did. Since the Mobil Oil and Royal Bank of Canada contests are practically simultaneous, artists who produce slowly are at a disadvantage. But I believe it is appropriate that contests for the young be held early in the autumn, as openers for the exhibition year. Let the slowpokes beware. It may be good for them. Five of Sandra's best works are being shown at the UPR Museum show of five UPR graduates. She apparently put peer loyalty above competitive enterprise. But her case does bring to mind how competition prizes do not always measure the best, but the most competitive. Both values are needed for our future in art.

Sandra's "Mujer roja" in the Mobil show is a handsome semi-abstract figure. It is nicely balanced in its cools and its warms and sufficiently tactile without exaggeration except in the applique parts. Wisely, she submerged those parts in darkness.

Honorable mentions were won by Ramon Frontera, Raisa Fernandez, Rebecca Castrillo and Joaquin Reyes. Reyes probably may also have won a regular prize if he had entered more works, but he is husbanding them for his show at Botello Gallery.

Of course, entering many works in these contests does not guarantee winning. Sometimes the opposite happens as when too repetitive a competitor is automatically put aside by the jury members. One-shot cases happen, such as that of Sandra Martinez. She won a prize with only one work entered. But if the contest calls for several works by an artist, the jury naturally has to take all of them into consideration. Sometimes one picture

will detract from others, sometimes it will help others by the same artist. The prize is given to the artist, not to any individual picture.

In any case, the "Pintor Imaginario" by Joaquin Reyes is a very satisfactory work in his incorrigible mixed-media manner. Notice the simplicity and rhythm of the colors and planes used, notice the intensity of characterization. Joaquin can really say a lot with the least effort, and such economy is automatically artful. His very small "Triste" serigraph has similar characteristics. This consistency of style is a sign of cohesion in his own individuality as a person and as an artist.

Raisa Fernandez has an interesting triptych wall hanging made of squares of dyed cloth with raised padded details. The three squares are tied together with bright white borders and the triptych tied together with a bright green border. Reds are absent and merely implied in some of the predominant warm yellows. It is quite a restrained yet effective palette for a Puerto Rican artist.

Rebecca Castrillo, an innate expressionist, is now pursuing her Master's degree in New York and, of all things, at last is using geometry in her forms. Puerto Rican art apparently has few out-and-out expressionists such as Rebecca was. Our art goes for the classical mix of organic and inorganic forms, biology and geometry both, such as that in Rebecca's present work. She still suggests the finca or landscape in compositions such as her "Paisaje Frio" here and is still wild of gesture but the rhythms begin to be controlled. At this moment they are controlled



FOURTH PRIZE "Mujer roja" by Sandra Martinez

locally by each geometric shape and its push and pull. Let's hope she gets to control all of them in each picture.

Once the prizes were decided it was nice to enjoy several works such as those by "hipico" Juan Garriga, of a rider and a trumpet player, or his other collage of a front-galloping horse set against plastered betting slips. The satisfactory and simple pencil drawings by Luis A. Cortes are quite luminous. "Chubasco" has some nice mixed-media etched vignettes of Goyesque intensity. Sixto Cotto's serigraph of a mountain range landscape maintains a nice color. Kalvin Santiago shows two tense girls in stark light against the figure of a religiously upstanding man against a blue and light temple. Roland Burges does not seem to develop a rhythm for his paint applications; the energies go to the peripheries as if through sheer inertia of the whirled pigments. Carlos Ferran is creating a strangely attractive abstract world. Luis Ivan Marques shows figures with a far-away look stemming from Beardsley, Oscar Wilde and Art Nouveau. Luisa Molinary has a nice landscape with staccato contrasts.

But the most interesting mano a mano duel here is between two landscape painters, L. Torres de la Haba and Andy Bueso who are poles apart aesthetically. Torres de la Haba seems to know color, Andy knows form but not color. I wish they could go out on painting trips together. I also wish they could exhibit together, for a better view of each other.

These art contests between peers seems to be very useful. More power to Mobil.