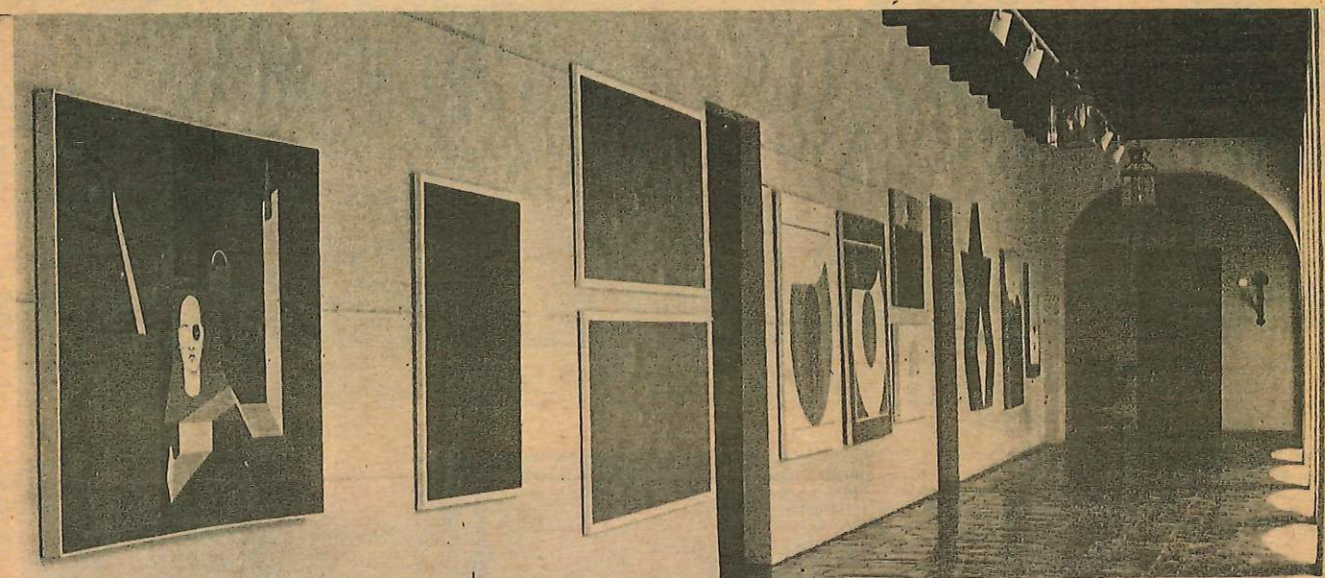




THE NEW GENERATION OF PUERTO RICAN ARTISTS

Photographed by Jose Garcia



The Dominican Convent is the setting for the "new generation" show.

By CONNIE UNDERHILL
magazine editor

Thirty artists who bill themselves as "puertorriquenos de la nueva generacion" (Puerto Ricans of the New Generation) are holding an exhibit at the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture's Dominican Convent which opened, auspiciously, on Friday the 13th, taking up with its 75 works the entire ground floor of the convent, obviously a major show for the island.

What makes a new generation?

Is it new as opposed to old? Is that in years? In techniques? In philosophy? Does it mean a breaking away?

For answering questions regarding art, few are better qualified than Felix Bonilla Norat who has taught at least one generation of Puerto Rican artists and belongs to another. He has taught painting and color theory at the University of Puerto Rico for 18 years and for longer than that has made the rounds of openings and exhibits and has never failed to speak his mind. He has also managed in that time to be friend, advisor and teacher to a good number of both the "new" and the "old" generation, a balance not easy to attain.

And when the group of artists, the "New Generation" decided both to form and exhibit they asked Bonilla to write a catalog for it that would place them in perspective in the island art world.

Why did the group decide to call itself the "New Generation?"

"That was one of the things," Bonilla said referring to perspective, "the group didn't have a name. From the time of the founding of the Centro de Arte Puertorriqueno about 20 years ago, all the groups had names, from Mirador Azul ... to Sol 13. The institute asked this group... artists who had done

well at the galleries for the past three, four, even ten years... for a name. It grew like Mopsy. In the beginning it wasn't a planned thing..."

The planning took place then under a committee of artists some of whom were also participating in the organization of the new Centro de Arte at San Francisco and Callejon de Gambaro: Carlos Irizarry, Wilfredo Chiesa, Edwin Mauras, Jose Bonilla Ryan, Heriberto Gonzalez and Rafael Rivera Rosa.

"The group met for months," Bonilla said, "to find out what were their characteristics and their aims. They decided not to admit students (to the show) and to be Puerto Ricans. When the Latin Americans write the history of Latin American art they don't include us and when the Americans have a show at the Whitney they don't include us so we have to fend for ourselves, is one way they put it. The way I see it," said Bonilla, "it's not strictly nationalism, it's a defense mechanism and defense mechanism in art can be limiting ... On the other hand, banding together into gangs — I call them gangs — can be energizing, can create great energy..."

Bonilla, who is apparently in his energetic late 40s, turned out to be 62 years old. He has the glittering, alert eye of the artist even though at this time of the morning, it — and they — were half-closed, over his oatmeal. It was 9 a.m., raining, and Bonilla had just gotten up. In front of him besides the oatmeal, a bottle of Puerto Rican honey, a cup of coffee and a great number of active ants, Bonilla had a sheet of paper about two feet square, covered with names, dates, events, arrows, numbers and squares, on which he had been diagraming the Puerto Rican art history memory by

memory as it occurred to him, for the group.

"I was drawn to this group," he was explaining, "because they were hunting in their art—unconsciously, I pointed, it out to them — for a synthesis of what had gone before them. And what's gone before them are the groups of the past 20 years..."

"The art of Puerto Rico began with social realism as far back as Oller and even Campeche. But 20 years ago, the Social realists included Tufino, Julio Rosado del Valle, Homar, Felix Bonilla, (Himself. He was reading from a list.) Carlos Osorio, Tony Maldonado, Felix Rodriguez Baez and, believe it or not, even Rafael Rivera Garcia.

"That kind of art, because it was too possessive evolved into various groups ...and then it was softened by poetic and symbolic details by such artists as Marin, Bolossi, Alberti, Domingo Garcia (at the beginning) and Carlos Marichal. They all dealt with things poetic — that is not quite social realism, but a mixture of social realism and symbolism. Hernandez Cruz was also coming into his own then with landscapes that were part of realism and yet looked like abstractions. Francisco Rodon was also part of that movement, which lasted from about 1960 to 1966.

"And then all of a sudden we got the ultra-geometric rush, which I claim was not exactly due to New York influences ...at least I know that several of my students didn't go into it because of New York. They were all doing it: Domingo Lopez, Domingo Garcia (the later Garcia), Eli Barretto, Edwin Mauras, Lope Max Diaz, Luis Hernandez Cruz, Bourraseau, Carlos Irizarry, Jeffrey Leder, Rafael Colon Morales..."

Bonilla lives on the shore drive of Catano maybe 20 feet from the bay.

The water was slapping the shore in the rain, and pouring in a cascade from a drainpipe outside the window where Bonilla was sitting. Bonilla too was wide awake by this time and really into his subject: "A reason for the strictly geometric emphasis was the political and social stresses of the times. There was a division within the Popular Party; 'El Grupo de los 22' and Sanchez Vilella topped it off, first with his divorce and then his marriage... All of these stresses and the stress in the NPP made society cry out for something predictable and definite, something to affirm. Geometry is that kind of thing; it represents the human hunger for predictability in very unpredictable moments... it's a search for security.

"This group (The New Generation) has gone beyond that. They accept geometry as a background. Which means that some of the unsureness is still at hand, some of the same social conditions. But they are turning this geometry into a kind of subliminal landscape without details. They have the ground — the geometry — and in front of it place objects like the human figure which float, repose or do things.

"Most of this bunch call themselves apolitical but they have ideas of what the world should be. They don't like to bring politics into their work but as persons they act — they do things — they put up posters. (Yes, they are mostly Independentistas. They say they will use a silver bullet for me. Not this group, the last group said that.)

"It interests me that the ('New Generation') are trying so blatantly to bring together such extremes as geometry and biology. They do the human figure sometimes with photographic modeling. It's a blatant

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THE NEW GENERATION:

Jaime Romano
Carmelo Fontanez
Domingo Lopez

Edwin Mauras
Lope Max Diaz
Carlos Irizarry

Joaquin Mercado
Raul Zayas Lopez
Ivonne Torres

Antonio Navia
Ellaism Cruz
Jose Bonilla Ryan

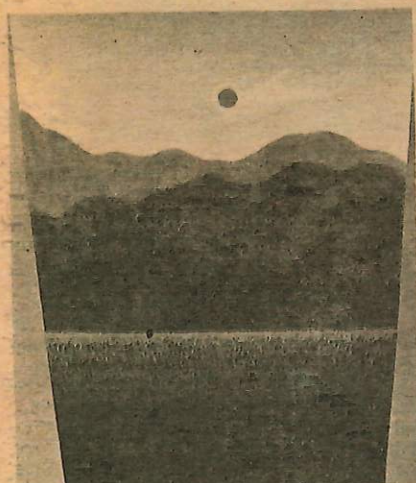


Homenaje al Elefante "El Fec" by Isais Mojica Valcarcel



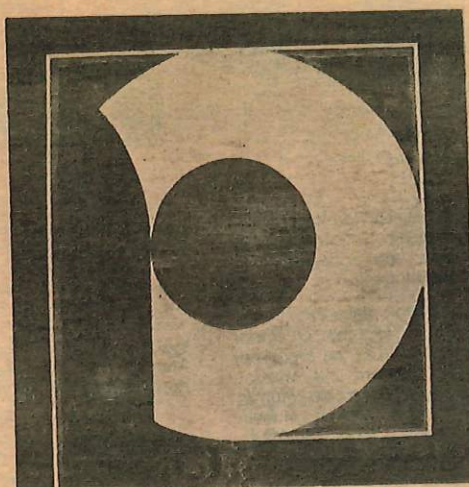
El Veterano

by Juan Batista Salas



Emisario

by Joaquin Reyes



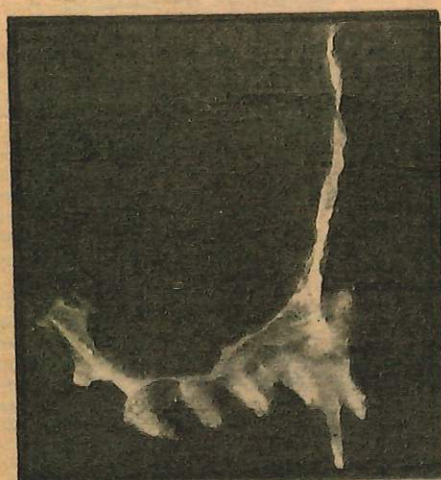
Abraxas

by Wilfredo Chilesa

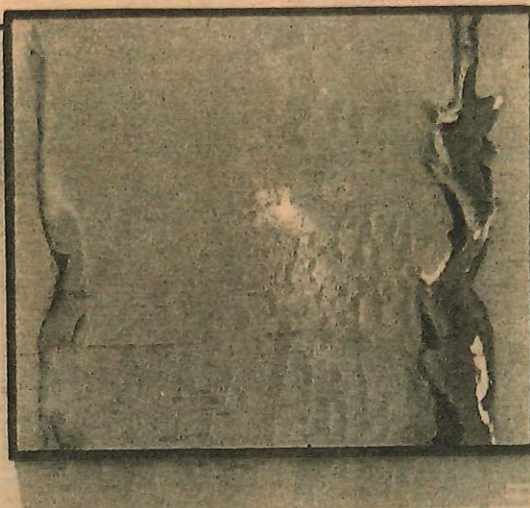


Tejido

by Isabel Vazquez



1. Amanecer 6:00 a.m. Verano 10:00 a.m. '3. Diciembre 6:00 a.m.



by Carmelo Fontanez

SUNDAY SAN JUAN STAR MAGAZINE

Wilfredo Chiesa
Carmen Iris Parrilla
Rafael Rivera Rosa

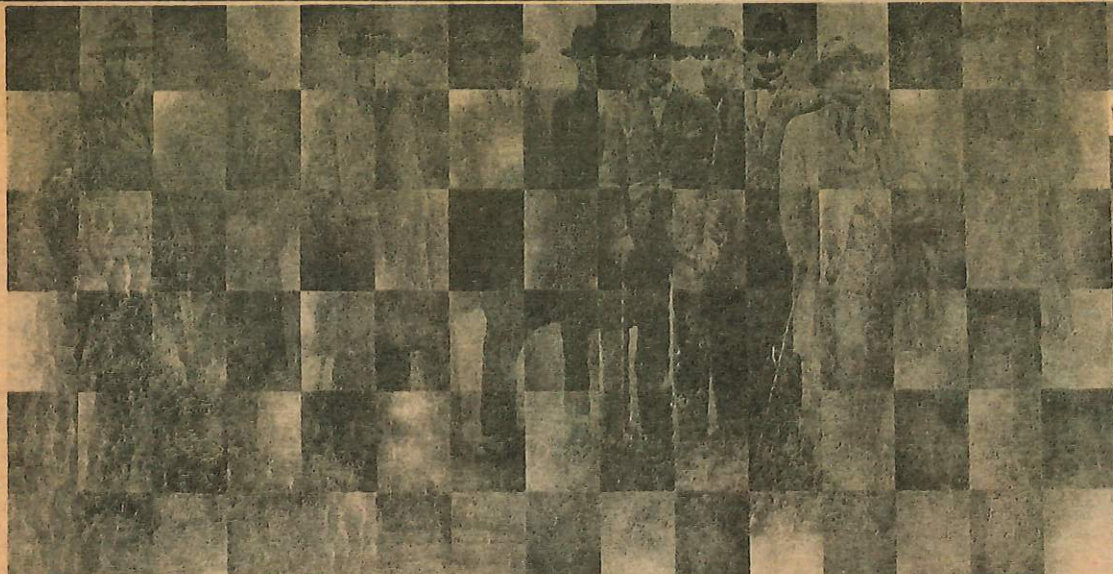
Juan Batista Salas
Jose Luis Rochet
Joaquin Reyes

Julio Suarez
Isabel Vazquez
Maria E. Somoza

Luis Alonso
Sobrinho
Juan Alvarez O'Neill

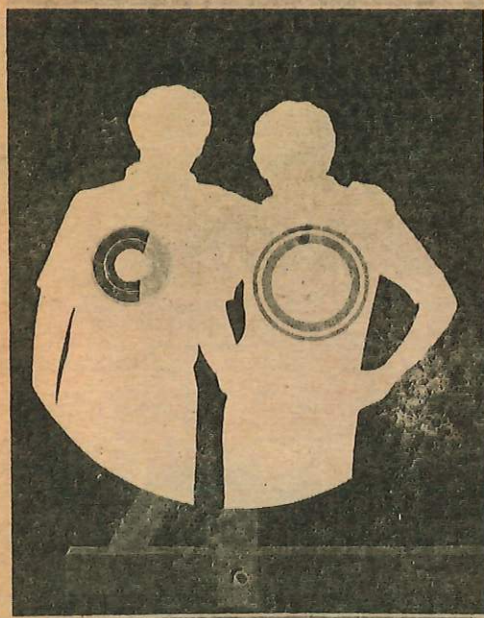
Juan Ramon Velazquez
Fernando Andrade
Frances del Toro

Isaias Mojica
Heriberto Gonzalez
Eli Barreto



Dada Documenta

by Carlos Irizarry



Mundo Nuevo

by Rafael Rivera Rosa



Homenaje a Picasso

by Eliasim Cruz Colon

(Continued from Page 5)
joining of opposites. But some of the work tells me that they can synthesize the themes...

"The language of geometry is security, predictability, a search for essentials in form. It could also be something to catch the soul of the beast. In Paleolithic times, in the cave drawings next to the beasts were vertical and horizontal lines which may have been magical cages to capture the souls of the animals.

"So this joining of the opposites has been done in art history before. That's why I'm attracted to the group. Because few moments in art history have had that so-called classic moment of rest when everything is balanced.

I doubt if Apollo or Dionysus would allow it. I don't know whether it will work (for the "New Generation"). I have tried it for years in my own work. But I like pretentious people because they have to work harder. As a Puerto Rican elder of the tribe, I can say anything that forces them to work harder I am for.

"And what is its social significance?

"The biological-and-geometrical represents the Hernandez-Colon administration with its severe code of law; the church and family abdicating to the legislature to legislate on things that properly belong to the family and the church. For example, morality and abortion.

"The present group represents

Puerto Rico in a kind of flux. They are doing in painting what politicians are trying to do to the ELA (Estado Libre Asociado) — trying to join extremes. In that way we are all living the same moment in history. We are all in accord.

"What (the "New Generation") are doing is kind of blatant, kind of obvious. There is no finesse in their joining of the elements yet. They have not begun to fuse together, to really integrate, neither in the art nor the morality issues nor the federal-insular relationships...

"I look at them with nostalgia because like all groups it will die. But I am hoping they will stay long enough to fill up a vacuum..."

GALLERIES

ATENEO PUERTORRIQUENO

Ponce de Leon Ave. Stop 1
Open: Mon. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

CARNEGIE EXHIBITION HALL

Carnegie Library
Ponce de Leon Ave., Stop 1
Puerta de Tierra 724-1046
Open Mon. to Fri. 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sat. 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. closed Sun.
Current Show: Sculpture by Raquel Leoy and wood carvings by Orlando Monteagudo

GALERIA BOTELLO

208 Cristo St. 723-2879 Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Sun. Oils, graphic, acrylics, sculpture and Santos. Work of Latin-American Artists

GALERIA BOTELLO (at Caribe Hilton)

723-1330. Open Mon. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sun.

Work by Angel Botello.

GALERIA COLIBRI

156 Calle Cristo 725-2840. Open Mon. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Sun. Current Show: "Blind Knot." New paintings and graphics by Omar Rayo.

GALERIA DE LAS AMERICAS

152 Fortaleza Street 723-5787, 725-1455. Open Tues. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Sun. and Mon. International drawings and paintings.

GALERIA DEL PATIO

107 San Jose St. Current Show: Paintings by Gamelyn Rodriguez.

GALERIA EL MORRO

360 Luna St. 724-1159 Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sun. and Mon. Paintings, graphics and sculpture. Current Show: Photographs by Hector Mendez Caratin.

GALERIA SANTIAGO

207 Cristo St. 723-4895. Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Sun.

LA CASA DEL LIBRO

265 Cristo St. 723-0354. Open Mon. to Fri. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat. 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Sun. Current Show: Exhibition of votive images and photographs in the book of Teodoro Vidal.

MUSEO ARQUEOLOGICO

Behind Tapla Theater, Plaza Colon
Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Closed Sun. and Mon. Indian artifacts and sculpture.

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: Acrylics by Jaime Romano

MUSEO DE ARTE

Universidad de Puerto Rico Rio Piedras 784-0000, Ext. 477 or 478. Open Mon. to Fri. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sun.

Current Show: Tres Bienales del Grabado Latinoamericano—70, 72 y 74.

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, 724-4825.

Current Show: Puerto Rican artists of the New Generation.

MUSEO DEL GRABADO LATINOAMERICANO

Casa de los Contrafuertes, 101 San Sebastian St., Plaza San Jose second floor. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

PONCE MUSEUM OF ART

Las Americas Ave. 842-6215. Open Tues. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mon. Paintings by Qairis Delgado and Bart Mayol.

TALLER CUCUBANO

Vasallo 144 Santurce. Current Show: Drawings by Juan Ramon Velazquez.