

...and the best for expression and enterprise

# Plastic Arts School Calendar, II

By CONNIE UNDERHILL  
Magazine Editor

For the second year in a row the students of Antonio Martorell's silkscreen class at the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture Plastic Arts School have produced a calendar for their class project — and once again produced the best art buy in town.

The calendar, which for various reasons including the timing of the

school year, is a little late for its calendar purposes, consists of 14 silkscreens, each signed and numbered. The 14 include a January 1979 — to take care of the lateness problem next year — and one for good measure. The calendar itself is very handsome and clever in conception, consisting of a heavy cardboard mounting printed in silver on black with windows for the prints and for the month. The months are separated from the prints although designed by

the same artist, so that the prints can later be framed easily.

Last year's calendar was so well received that the students have this year upped the series to 500. The 77 calendar was also an outstanding artistic success. It was selected as one of the best publications of 1977 by the American Institute of Graphics Art. Proceeds from sales — the calendars are \$45 each — will go toward a European work-study trip for the students. Sales from last year's calendar and from silkscreened greeting cards

made possible work-study trips to Mexico and the United States.

The students who worked on the calendar under Martorell's direction are: Miguel Almodovar, Hector Alvarez, Maritza Cantero, Mayra Cordova, Sixto Cotto, Miguel Angel Cruz, Ruben Cruz, Bethzaida Gonzalez, Victor Maldonado, Poli Marichal, Israel Ortiz, Vanessa Pineiro, Katherine Rullan, Felix Vega.

The calendars may be purchased in the school office on the grounds of El Morro.

## JANUARY



by Mayra Cordova

## FEBRUARY



by Israel Ortiz

## MARCH



by Felix Vega

## APRIL



by Sixto Cotto

## MAY



by Victor Maldonado

## JUNE



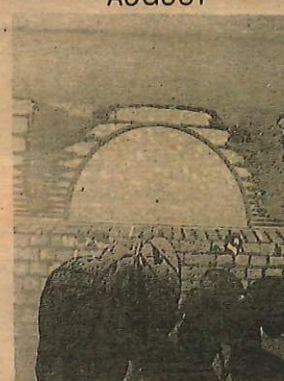
by Maritza Cantero

## JULY



by Poli Marichal

## AUGUST



by Katherine Rullan

## SEPTEMBER



by Ruben Cruz

## OCTOBER



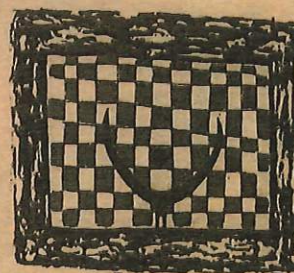
by Vanessa Pineiro

## NOVEMBER



by Miguel Angel Cruz

## DECEMBER



by Bethzaida Gonzalez

Photographed by PIPO GRAJALES

*"Plaza San José" by Leoncio Concepción**"La Perla" by Leoncio Concepción**(detail) "Portrait of a Negro Fruit Vendor" by Juan Rosado*

city. In this way legends are maintained and created.

Concepción had five dynamic San Juan scenes on exhibit in the recently closed "Arte Primitivo Puertorriqueño," at the Trapiche Gallery in Old San Juan.

Trapiche isn't a real gallery since it's doors are closed most of the time, "against theft," I am told, and the two small rooms are very badly lighted, which propitiates thefts. The five paintings were brisk but nice pot-boilers. Quality control is the one trouble with primitives. They keep pouring works out, but at humble prices, so it is not a gyp at all. At the Trapiche exhibition, there were also seven nice works by Manuel Hernandez, 15 happy scenes by Jose Ruiz and a wonderfully colored church by Isaura Mergal. She is an Op colorist out to outdo the Haitians.

Jose Manuel Figueroa, who also showed at the Trapiche, was once a primitive, actually self-taught, but he apparently eyed the works of the professionals around him at the Division of Community Education where he works to study linear perspective. The

result was his five awkward beginner's works as seen from his drawing table at the division.

Figueroa's two works at the Museum of Fine Arts, in the upstairs gallery, are no longer primitive. The perspective of "Barrio Talante" is quite satisfactory as is its realistic yet haunting yellow light illuminating the dirty world. His sketch of a mountain is unhappily unfinished but it shows how in about two years of work anybody can learn to paint and draw, academically, if only they desire it intensely. Why did he kill himself? What rebellion against a dirty world was his death?

Eduardo Vera's almost primitive, yet very plastic painting, of stray dogs in the museum show has been exhibited in more museums in Canada and the United States than any other Puerto Rican painting. It captured our "poor dog life" myth for art.

Luis German Cajigas' "Calle San Sebastian" of 1957 is quite clumsy, but not quite primitive enough. It's a little tired and rough-cornered compared to his recent works which follow the same pattern. Cajigas, like the image-making santeros, always fol-

lows the same patterns of work. Somehow, however, the recent works are less painterly, too sure of themselves and their correct perspective, though the color in some is quite luminous.

Notice that in the same room with Leoncio and Hernandez, the works by Juan de Prey and Angel Botello are also quite dark.

De Preys' "Canaveral," with its sky and rhythmically over-organized bright green sugar cane has ominous black shadows, as does his "Nina." The same for Botello's "Maternidad," which contains another kind of primitivism but is too sophisticated to be true. Compare his "Maternidad" with Campeche's, "Virgen de Belen," which shows very "primitive" drawing in the limbs. Bad drawing actually.

I cannot stomach Europe's use of the word "primitive" to mean only those works which do not follow the linear and aerial perspective of the Cuatrocento. Only ego-and-man-centered Europe needed to invent perspective to suggest space in art. The other continents created space through the gestalt principles of superposition of planes, placement up

and down the picture plane, declining size and other sensorial hints.

I believe the real meaning of "primitiveness" has to go back to pre-logical thinking when all the parts of the world were animated by magic spirits when man had to be emotionally spontaneous or be killed and when man's cosmo-vision saw the world not as physical facts or scientific phenomenae but as elemental and magic intuitions and archetypes. It is this kind of primitiveness to which Puerto Rico's art should aspire. It is this primitiveness and primeval force which is the source of all great art, especially of true expressionism.

But to do that we have to explode with some passion and thus be able to follow Levy-Bruhl's "law of participation" in the primitive cosmos. This pre-logical passion would automatically "animate" or put a spirit into whatever we are passionate about, let's say, our art. Then our resultant art "totems" would really be potent and epic.

So far we have created more "totems," which means we are more passionate about sports and politics than art.

**GALERIA OLIER**

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.

**GENERAL ARCHIVES**

Old Bacardi Building, Puerta de Tierra. Current exhibition: "Body Sculptures" by silversmith Robert Friedmann.

**HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF PUERTO RICO**

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

**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 exhibit: Works by students in Prof Ernesto L. Roselle's stained glass work shop

**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: "Reproductions and falsifications."

**MUSEO DEL GRABADO LATINOAMERICANO**

Casa de los Contraluzes. 101 San Sebastian St., Plaza San Jose second floor. Open every day from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Current show: Prints and photos by Francisco Copello.

**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 exhibit: "Grupo Irente" paintings by Paul Camacho, Lopez Max Diaz, Luis Hernandez Cruz and Antonio Navia

**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.

**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: Paintings by the Argentine artist Perez Celis