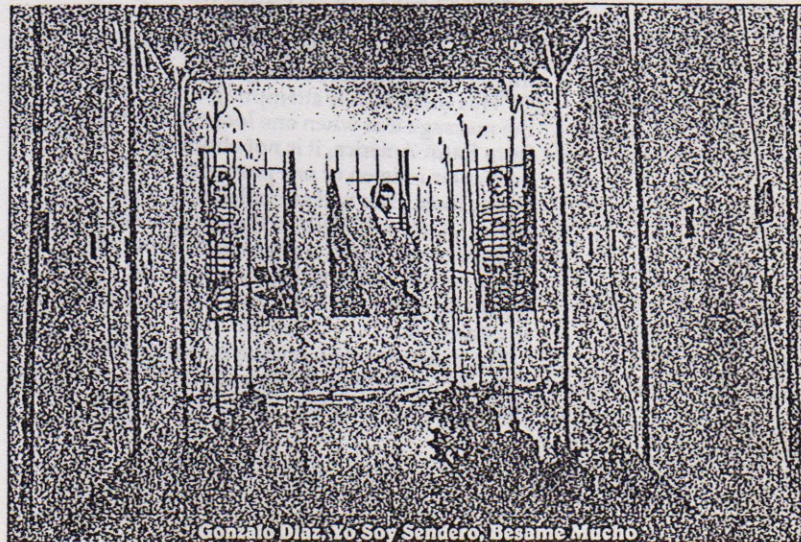
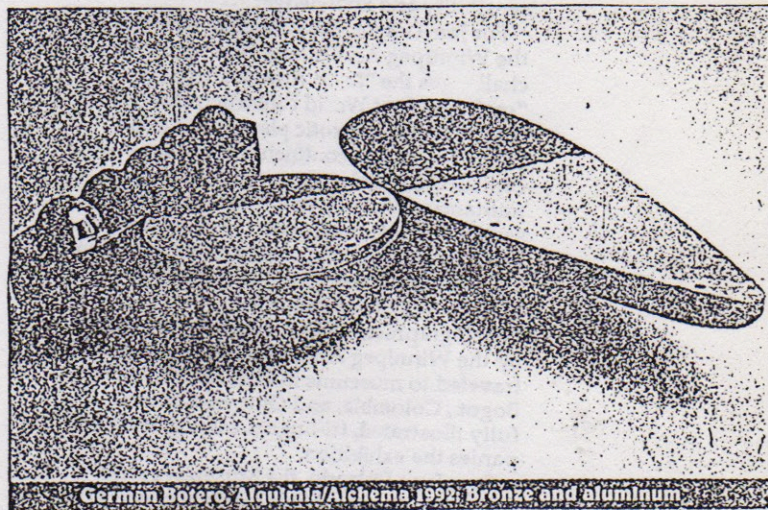
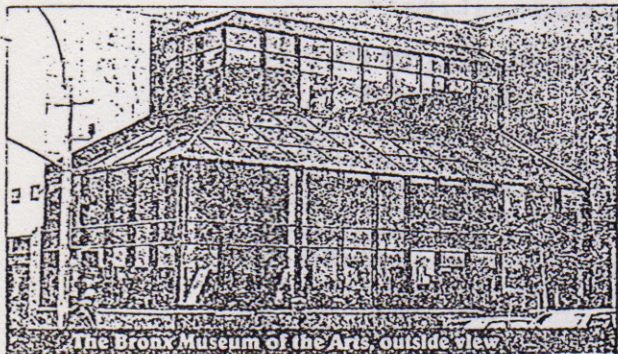


The Latin Quarter

Bronx Museum of the Arts hosts "Cartographies," an exhibition that maps the cultural diversity of Latin America



By Gail Mack

A major international exhibition entitled "Cartographies: 14 Artists from Latin America" opens October 7 at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse.

Organized and circulated by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Canada, "Cartographies" has been curated by Ivo Mesquita, a noted Brazilian authority on contemporary Latin American art.

The works in this exhibition — installation, painting, sculpture, mixed-media and photography — serve as a strong argument against the notion of a single "Latin American" identity. Taken as a whole, they reflect a continent with indigenous, European and African roots, as well as varied topography, history and culture.

The "maps" in "Cartographies" are the "imaginary maps [which break] with the limits imposed by geopolitics and institutionalized relationships. These are virtual maps," explains curator Ivo Mesquita, "maps of the imaginary... The exhibition therefore requires of the visitor the traveler's disposition... with roots not in nationality but in those territories under the rule of desire, sensibility and knowledge."

For Jon Tupper, the Associate Director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, "Cartographies" challenges the "Latin America" that is "mainly a First World construct, characterized as either an exotic place, pure and primitive, or as a continent driven by savage capitalism, social urgency and ideological militancy. We hope that 'Cartographies' serves as a reference point for changing the limiting assumptions of art and nationalism."

The Bronx Museum of the Arts will be the only United States venue for "Cartographies." The exhibition, organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, has previously traveled to museums in Caracas, Venezuela, Bogot, Colombia, and Ottawa, Canada. A fully illustrated, tri-lingual catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

Says Jane Delgado, the Museum's new executive director: "This exhibition will give people an opportunity to look at Latin American work in a very different way, and not look at it as being so singular in what it's communicating and its aesthetic. It's extraordinary art work, very strong."

"This exhibition is attempting to convey the message that when one looks at the work from Latin America, it is not about one particular religion or one particular racial, ethnic look. You will see influences from Africa, Asia, and Western Europe, as well as indigenous cultures. I am excited about this show because it fits so nicely with what I think our role is as the County Museum of the Borough."

The Bronx is a very unique borough in the City of New York, and the museum has a distinctive part to play. I see it becoming a

meeting ground of the various cultures that are such a vital part of the Bronx, a place where, through art, we look at contemporary issues that are of importance to residents, those who work in the Bronx or who have come through it at one point or another in their lives. I see us on the cutting edge, looking at the work of artists trying to have discussions about things they care about, that relate to them and to their communities."

Delgado said that the museum is also dedicated to providing a place for artists whose work might not normally be of interest to other museums and galleries, who "are very much grounded to setting their work in the context of their community. "That doesn't mean that someone who cannot get an exhibition somewhere else can immediately get an exhibition with us, but I think that we do serve a lot of artists who really don't have that much access to other venues in the museum or gallery worlds. This is not to suggest that the work of artists of color are the only artists that are exhibited at the Bronx Museum. We collect the works of Afro-Americans, Asians and Latinos, but exhibitions are related to contemporary themes or focus, and include artists of all races and ethnicities," Delgado explained.

"Cartographies" is presented with the financial support of The Canada Council, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., and Schneker International AG. Presentation at The Bronx Museum of the Arts is made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Community Day October 9

Music, poetry and dance will highlight Community Day at the museum on Sunday, October 9 from 2 to 6 p.m. Admission is free. The program includes family art workshops from 2 to 3:30 p.m.; and at 3 p.m., Exoterica, a local poetry group based at the An Real Bocht Cafe in Riverdale, will present renowned poet Kurtis Lamkin, recently appointed writer-in-residence at Eugene Lang College of The New School in Manhattan.

Also at 3 p.m., Yo-Robics will rap its positive message about health and exercise to a beat familiar to young people, combining "street smarts" with aerobics. The day concludes at 4:30 p.m. in the Museum's lower gallery with a concert of upbeat African music by Dominique Kanza and the African Machine Band.

The workshop is sponsored by the Bronx Health Plan. For more information on Community Day, on after-school programs for children and young people, and for membership information, call (718) 681-6000, ext. 41.