



AMERICA ! AMERIKA

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REMERICA

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AMERIKA

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Organized and with an essay by
Juan Sánchez

Curatorial assistance and additional essays by
Enoc Perez and Miguelangel Ruiz

September 8 - October 30, 1992

Invited contributors
Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Peña

The ATW Communications Group, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Elizam Escobar,
Willie Birch, Rimer Cardillo, Papo Colo, Esperanza Cortés, Ismael Frigerio,
Rupert Garcia, William Jung, Leandro Katz, Kay Miller, Yong Soon Min,
Catalina Parra, Dennis Mario Rivera, Kukuli Velarde

Pax Americana Quincentennial

wild frontier

two consecutive life sentences

just cause

model minority

team spirit

salvaged savage

civilized benevolence

master canon

free trade zone

variety pak K-mart spiritualism

manifest destiny

desert storm

over determine

world bank

black face white mask

under class

wounded knee

YONG SOON MIN

Pax Americana

Quincentennial, 1992.

Photostat.

Acknowledgments

We are pleased to present *REMERICA ! AMERIKA: 1492-1992*, a group exhibition organized to coincide with the celebration of the quincentennial anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Juan Sánchez, Assistant Professor of Art, curated the exhibition to question the celebratory activities surrounding this anniversary.

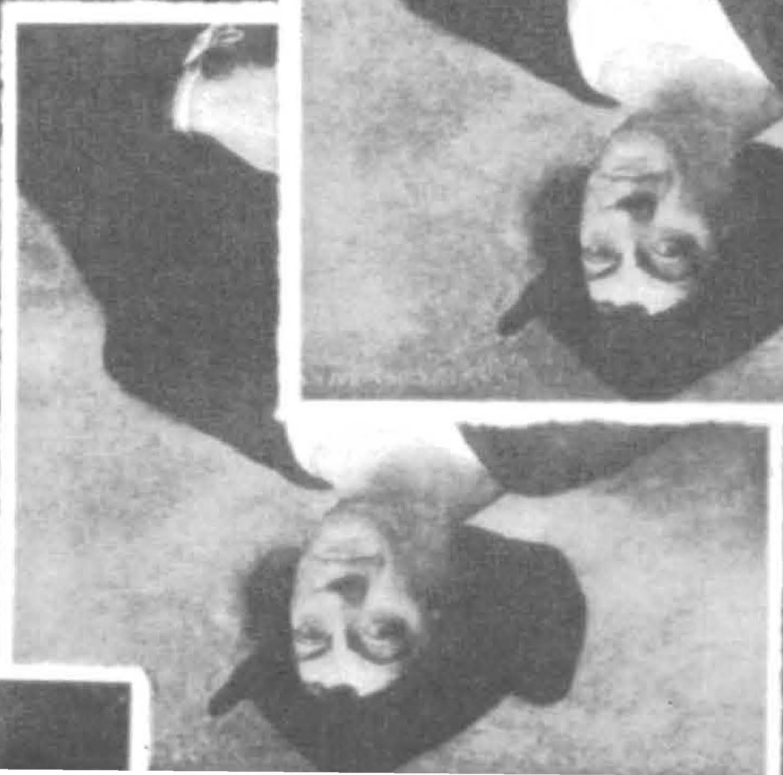
We are indebted to Professor Sánchez for bringing to our gallery the visual voices of a diverse group of artists from the African-American, Asian-American, Latin-American and Native-American communities. With this exhibition, we hope to validate the words of Barbara Jordan who said, "We honor cultural identity. America's strength is rooted in its diversity."

Professor Sánchez invited each artist to create an original work of art to be exhibited in the Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery at Hunter College and another work specifically for the artists' book which accompanies the exhibition. Professor Sánchez created the artwork for the invitation card and catalog cover. He also invited two Hunter College graduate students, Enoc Perez and Miguelangel Ruiz, to assist with the project and to contribute to the catalog. Professor Sánchez's vision for this project was that it be collaborative and in that endeavor he was, indeed, successful. We thank the participating artists who gave enthusiastically of their time and talents.

These generous artists involved with *REMERICA ! AMERIKA: 1492-1992* are: The ATW Communications Group, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Willie Birch, Rimer Cardillo, Papo Colo, Esperanza Cortés, Elizam Escobar, Ismael Frigerio, Rupert Garcia, William Jung, Leandro Katz, Kay Miller, Yong Soon Min, Catalina Parra, Dennis Mario Rivera and Kukuli Velarde. The catalog contains additional contributions by Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Peña.

For additional assistance in arranging loans we would like to thank Anne Kohs and Associates, Inc., San Francisco, California, and Jan Susler, Chicago, Illinois. We are also grateful to the Hunter College Office of Publications for their consummate professionalism. Once again the gallery staff has worked together valiantly to see a project realized and we are deeply indebted to them all, especially James Acevedo. Everyone involved with *REMERICA ! AMERIKA* appreciates the support of the members of the Gallery Committee and Sanford Wurmfeld, Director of the Galleries and Chair of the Department of Art. Without their commitment to offer a forum for dissenting opinions, this exhibition would never have been mounted.

Susan H. Edwards, *Curator*
Hunter College Art Galleries



REMERICA ! AMERIKA: Resurrecting "A Peoples' History" to Reaffirm Our Presence and Our Will to Emerge

History is a people's memory.
Malcolm X

*A "peoples' history" can serve as a guide to present
and succeeding generations in the continuing struggle
for change.*

Blanca Vazquez

*There is no answer to the question,
what are we born for?
There is no answer to the question,
why does one die?
...All I know is that as long as there is life, all is possible.
And that using whatever it is that one
has we can make sense of the absurd
for our arrival.
Even if I was invented, I can also
invent my own role and justify my
presence and will on earth.*

Ruben Blades
(lyrics from the song *Moonflower*)

JUAN SÁNCHEZ

Untitled, 1992.

Laser print collage,
color pencil and paper.
(photo: Beth Wesson)

We are now facing the so-called celebration of Cristoforo Colombo's "discovery of the new world." In this quincentennial celebration the word "encounter" is repeatedly used to evoke a positive notion that the "encounter" was a meeting between two civilizations and that the agenda of the European voyagers was collaboration, brotherhood and sharing and not larceny, destruction and genocide. This benign view of the "encounter" is now being challenged. Many believe it was a terribly inhumane collision.

Today this 500th-year celebration takes place in a world in turmoil. Colonialism, poverty, hunger, homelessness, foreign invasions and occupation, racism, immigration, cultural and ideological penetration, heterosexism, sexism and classism exist, creating a critical and historical continuous momentum. Individuals, especially people of color, are faced with economic insecurity and despair. A growing sense of powerlessness and frustration affects many who cannot contend with the racism and inequality that affects their everyday lives. For example, recent police brutality incited a series of riots in various parts of the United States. The progress and structures of moral human values are disintegrating within the agenda of the "new world order." Individual freedoms are closely linked with skin color and money. The human and civil rights fought for and won in the 1950s and 1960s are being ignored, suppressed and decimated while many institutions and social-political programs seem futile and self-serving. The "cold war" may be over with the dismantling of nuclear warheads but poison bio-chemical weapons laboratories do exist and more are being built in this country today. We are a society dependent on information from a media that supposedly records and reports the news, but frequently transforms and distorts it to favor its own values, interests and political agendas.

What is clear to those of us who have a very different perspective of the Cristoforo Colombo celebration is that it reflects the preservation of a colonialist and imperialist tradition. Slavery and genocide were two of many items on the colonialists' agenda, an agenda that continues to take shape, form and direction in South

Africa, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean and other parts of the world today.

"Should your majesties command it, all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile (Spain), or made slaves on the island. With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want."

from Cristoforo Colombo's shipboard log

Colonialism is like an epidemic — a widespread evil contagion, and like such a disease it created a 500-year plague of despair and death that engulfed and destroyed civilizations. The Niña, the Pinta and the Santa Maria are often referred to, in Spanish, as "las tres carabelas de Colon" meaning Colombo's caravels, the fast, light sailing ships. To many Latin Americans the caravels connote the "calaveras" of Cristoforo Colombo. "Calaveras," Spanish for skulls, is used metaphorically in Latin America to mean the arrival of death.

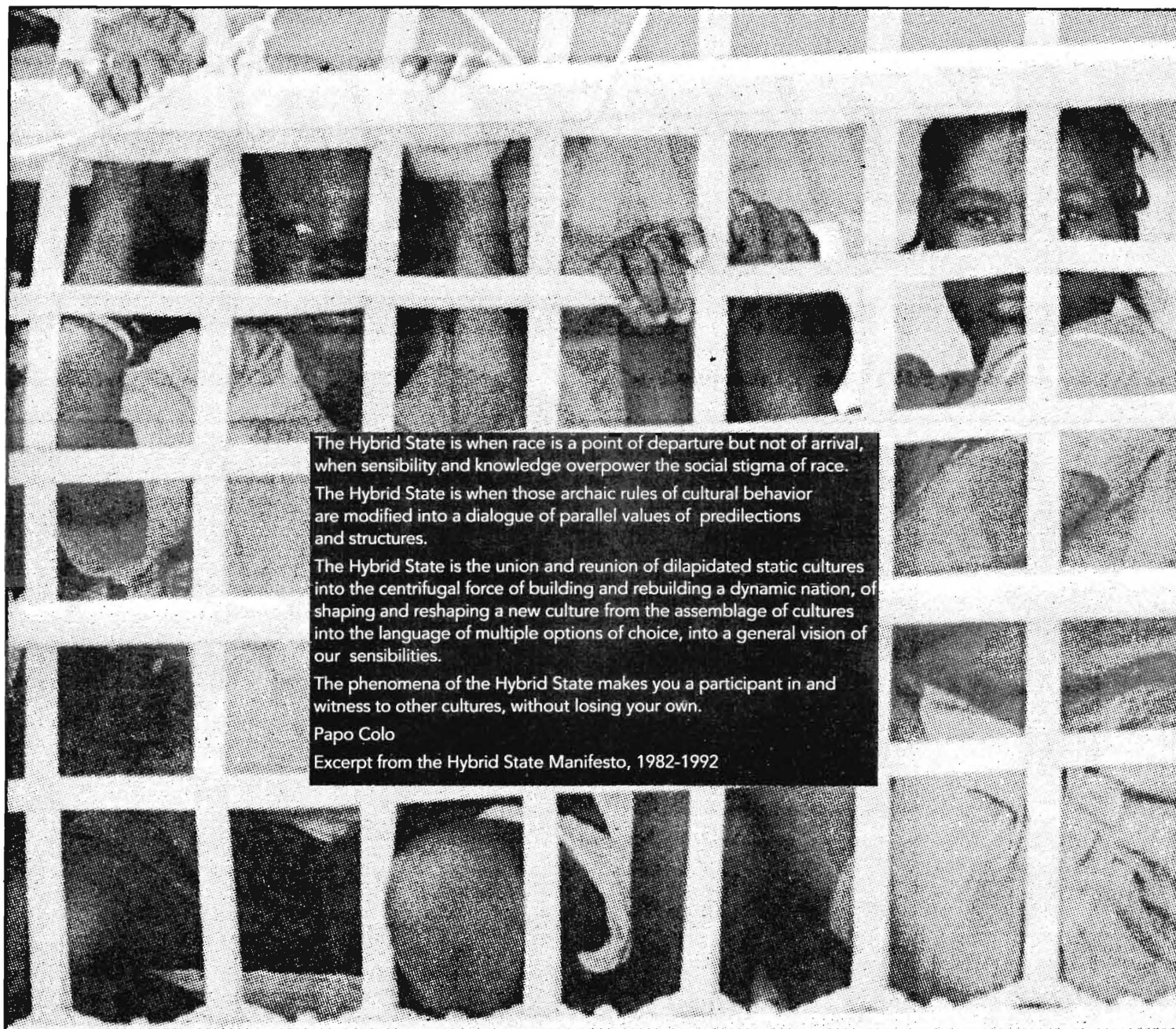
European colonialism contributed to genocidal events, but in North America other examples are evoked. It is undeniable that the famous national epics of the American Far West also resulted in the systematic massacre of indigenous nations even though those nations that have survived continue to stand, grow, create, fight and manifest themselves. Colonialism is economic, territorial and political exploitation. The United States government denies that there are political prisoners among a huge population in U.S. prisons. But Amnesty International has recognized that since the social upheavals of the 1960s, the number of political prisoners in the U.S. has grown dramatically, with well over 100 behind bars. Among them are African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, Puerto Ricans and North-American whites.

In spite of 500 years of genocide and physical conquest, spiritual conquest never took place. The cultures of people who survive colonialism continue to provide the essential energy of resistance. Cultural synthesis creates the means for the liberation of these peoples by organizing their beliefs, values and actions. Salsa musician, actor and activist Ruben Blades states that culture and

art can be "a by-product of spiritualism, an intrinsically rebellious expression of human possibility. It represents perhaps the purest and most powerful manifestation of inner strength."

REMERICA ! AMERIKA is an exhibition of works created especially for this show by Latin-American, African-American, Native-American and Asian-American, Chicano and Puerto Rican artists who work in a variety of media and differ in their treatments of content, styles and means of expression. The works respond to the absurd notion of the "discovery" of the "new world" whose civilization, in fact, goes back centuries before this "discovery." The conceit of a "discovery," from the European point of view, permitted the identification and labeling of certain groups as "other." This exhibition attempts to demonstrate the power and spirit of struggle and survival through culture, rituals, religion and celebration. It also attempts to dismantle, explore, analyze and conceptually work with visual and oral history. The artists are aware of how vital it is to retrieve from our own stories and memories the language of our lives, to nurture life itself and to give form and thought to the ways we uncover, discover, recreate and evoke the voices of memories that have been passed on for more than five hundred years. Memory is vital to us. It occupies a sacred place in our oral tradition, music, dance, poetry, theater and visual art as well as in our rituals and customs.

History is a narrative, and the way this narrative is written and who writes it becomes the narrative itself. According to the Puerto Rican historian Carlos Rodriguez-Fraticelli, "To write a history of any kind is to engage in politics: to make choices, to exclude, to recompose, to invent a story." **REMERICA ! AMERIKA** acknowledges that many aspects of our story have been omitted from the traditional history books and corrects instead the mythology written to justify colonialism, bias, racism and classism. Neither official history nor rhetoric concerning the quincentennial confronts the crucial questions, the concerns, the opinions and the perspectives of the Native Americans, Latin Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, among others. They also have been most directly affected and yet their voices and experiences have not been properly reflected.



The Hybrid State is when race is a point of departure but not of arrival, when sensibility and knowledge overpower the social stigma of race.

The Hybrid State is when those archaic rules of cultural behavior are modified into a dialogue of parallel values of predilections and structures.

The Hybrid State is the union and reunion of dilapidated static cultures into the centrifugal force of building and rebuilding a dynamic nation, of shaping and reshaping a new culture from the assemblage of cultures into the language of multiple options of choice, into a general vision of our sensibilities.

The phenomena of the Hybrid State makes you a participant in and witness to other cultures, without losing your own.

Papo Colo

Excerpt from the Hybrid State Manifesto, 1982-1992

OUR LANDSCAPE

OUR MEMORY

OUR HISTORY



REMERICA ! AMERIKA deals with obvious truths; in order to oppress, the oppressor needs a theory of oppressive action; and in order to become free, the oppressed also need theories of action. Native-American artist and activist, Jimmie Durham states that, "We do not have a clear political understanding of our own situation and of the enemy's methods. We cooperate in our own oppression." The colonizer/oppressor elaborates his theory of action without the people because he stands against them. Colonialism/oppression is a cultural and imperial invasion that manipulates people and, in turn, serves the ends of conquest. Ultimately, conquest becomes the means of domination. The artists in this show work under the conviction that every human being, no matter how "ignorant" or submerged in the "culture of silence" he or she may be, is capable of looking critically at his/her world in a dialectical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such an encounter, he or she can gradually perceive his/her personal and social reality and deal critically with it. In this respect the art in *REMERICA ! AMERIKA* reflects an insurgency that does not conform to subjugated intelligence.

"Remerica," a word created by the great African-American playwright, poet and activist, Amiri Baraka, mirrors the many feelings, attitudes and historical events ingrained in the memory and oral tradition of the oppressed. Remerica is an old, basic form of information transferral passed from generation to generation, questioning and challenging the history written by the colonists. Remerica is the cross-examination and deconstruction of an invented and inaccurate past to bring to light the concepts of truth, love, equality, justice and humanity. Remerica is about America, an antiithesis of "Amerika." Amerika, with the letter k, points to the fact that among many problems contrary to the

ISMAEL FRIGERIO

And It Was a Sacred City,
1992. Ash, galvanized wire,
gel, salt and stone.
(photo: Daniel Goodwin)

"American Dream," the United States can tolerate a Ku Klux Klansman running for governor of a state and campaigning for president of the United States, and consider this normal and "democratic."

The courage, dignity, creativity and methodology for physical and spiritual liberation represented in *REMERICA ! AMERIKA* addresses the fact that the day had already arrived, many years ago, when the will of the oppressed began to topple the unstable equilibrium of colonialism and imperialism. For the colonized as well as for the colonizer, there is no way out other than a complete end to colonization. The refusal of the oppressed to continue to live under colonialism is absolute. That is why a peoples' history always resurjects, throughout the ages, our Simon Bolivars, Toussaint L'Ouvertures, Harriet Tubmans, Leonard Peltiers, Assata Shakurs, Albizu Campos, Martin Luther Kings, Patrice Lumumbas, Ernesto (Che) Guevaras, Nelson Mandelas, Lolita Lebrons and Malcolm Xs, among many. As a people from a wide range of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds moving forward with the human urge for growth, freedom and life, we must affirm our nationalities, defend our culture, history, language and religion, and create a social/political system that will guarantee our freedom and social/political and economic equality.

*"[C]ertain art and certain poetry ...does not need new
gods nor legitimation other than the necessity of
freedom and life itself."*

Elizam Escobar

Artist and Puerto Rican political prisoner of war

It is in this spirit that the artists in *REMERICA ! AMERIKA* express in their art the positive, progressive values of our heritage in reasserting our cultural and historical integrity and roots. This same spirit has awakened us from the genocidal slow sleep of death imported by the three caravels/skulls of Cristoforo Columbo, and we now rejoice in life as we shift towards the light of hope.

Juan Sánchez

Thus the sadist's efforts to enslave the Other in his body by means of pleasure and pain, by appropriating the body in such a way that he treats it as flesh so as to reduce it to flesh. But this appropriation surpasses which it appropriates, for its purpose is to possess only in so far as the Other's freedom has been ensnared in it. This is why the sadist will want to manifest proof of the enslavement of the Other's freedom through the Other's desire. He will aim at making the Other ask for pardon, he will torture and threaten to force the Other to humiliate him.

At the same time, the sadist totally levels the sadism harbors a new motif. What the sadist seems to appropriate is in actuality the sadism of the Other as the victim. But this freedom is his only freedom out of the Other. And the more the sadist persists in making the Other as an instrument, the more this freedom escapes him. He can act upon the freedom only by making it an objective property of the Other-as-object; that is, on freedom in the midst of the world with its dead-possibilities. But since the sadist's goal is to recover his being-for-others, he misses it on principle, for the only Other with whom he has to do is the Other in the world who has only "images in his head" of the sadist assaulting

SECRET RELATIONS WITH OTHERS 527

... have not thought of... remain exhausted the
... of sex, still less that... attitudes toward the
... Other. We have wished simply to... sexual attitudes
... is a primary behavior... It is without say-
... ing that this behavior... the origi-
... inal contingency... of our own
... facticity... addition... is subject
... start... of emp...stitution.

[illegible]

As for the type of incalculable richness sadism would like to realize, this is precisely what is called the Offense. The offense is the Being of the Other which belongs to the Other, everything which is un-
 being, the Offense which appears as a psychical situation. It is to move at the transcendence as a transcendence-transcended; it is in act and is understood in terms of the situation and of the act pursued. Each movement therefore is apprehended in a perceptive process which in the present is based on the future. For this reason the graceful act has on the one hand the precision of a finely perfected machine and on the other hand the perfect unpredictability of

MIGUEL ANGEL RUIZ
Alabama, 1992.
Mixed media.

Towards Aesthetics in the Americas

What does it mean to be American? That question provided the impetus for this exhibition. Is this a land of immigrants, as is so often said? Is this the mythical "melting pot," where races and ethnicities are homogenized by a single creed? If so, what is that animal, the American? Americans cannot be simplistically defined as those individuals whose ancestors arrived on the Mayflower, nor can they be classified as Ellis Island arrivals or refugees from war or political persecution. America has always had Americans. Labeling the continents of the western hemisphere as the "new world" has alienated the indigenous peoples of these continents from their birthrights. By calling it "new," we deny the presence of pre-existing cultures.

I, as a Puerto Rican artist from the Bronx, realize that I am an American. Even though my ethnicity has been politicized by my United States citizenship, I believe in America. I have faith in the promise of liberty and prosperity. Lately, I have come to realize that no promise was made. The myth of America has weighed us all down, especially those of us who enjoy the privileges of second-class citizenship and, at times, colonial status. The myth of America has disenfranchised peoples of the Americas from their rightful heritage as Americans. It has dislocated their place in history.

What does it mean to be "politically correct?" Being "politically correct" connotes incorrectness. These terms imply a dichotomy of right and

wrong that has nothing to do with politics. The term "politically correct" is a symptom of a politicized sense of culture. By assimilating the phrase, we nullify the issue. We put it on the shelf. The goal is not another label. The term "correctness" veils truths that are not at root political but are truths that have been politicized in our time. These truths are more ancient than their politicization.

For many artists, the politicization of their identities as cultural sentinels has been a burden. Every artist in this exhibition has formulated a response to the given dogma of politics and culture, majority and minority, nationality and ethnicity, being and the other, us and them. This dialectic is not the creation of the artists themselves. It is thrust upon them as a precondition of societal existence. It is the ideological structure into which they are born. Through their creative visualization artists demystify the ideological structure of our society to expose its inherent disregard and blatant disrespect for the multiplicity of cultures that define our existence.

REMERICA ! AMERIKA is a call to redefine our realities within a pre-established context. All of the artists involved have used their art to express deeply felt convictions about politics and self. And they have also been doing it for many years. In the seventies, artist Papo Colo did a performance protesting the proposed statehood

WILLIE BIRCH
*Drawing for Paper Maché/
Mixed Media Wall Piece,*
1992. Pencil on paper.

of Puerto Rico, his native land. The performance, *Superman 51*, 1977, was a metaphorical portrait of the expatriate confronted with the politics of race. Fifty-one wooden sticks were attached to his body with rope. They represented the fifty-one states the U.S. would have if Puerto Rico were brought into the Union. He ran the length of the Westside Highway with this "baggage" until he collapsed. With his performance and through symbols and actions, Papo Colo expressed the belief that statehood would not change the conditions of Puerto Ricans but would only serve as a hollow action.

The work of one African-American painter, Willie Birch, has often been mislabelled as "naïve" or "quasi-naïf." More specifically, Birch paints straightforward genre scenes. We are never distracted by a display of painterly virtuosity. We are, however, forced to recast our preconceptions, to engage in an internal dialogue as a result of his disregard for pretense. His compositions appear as distinct observations rendered matter-of-factly and without over-intellectualized, formalist treatment. The paintings come to us as descendants of the American "folk" painting tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The matriarchal component of many of the cultures of the Americas has resurfaced in much of the work of these American artists. Esperanza Cortés is an artist who uses the female figure as a symbol for nature and power. Estranged from her homeland, Colombia, Esperanza combines her native figurative tradition with the modernist affinity for the two-dimensional plane. By placing her sculpted goddesses squarely in the middle of a color field, she interjects a "foreign" element that disrupts the continuity of that formalist device. Her flat, monochrome paintings are tactile surfaces that are given depth by the

hovering quality of her figures. With her art, Esperanza merges two cultures and presents a lost, socioreligious way of life. Her paintings are not mourning pictures, but celebratory signs that affirm life despite the impermeable backdrops.

The work of Chilean-born artist Catalina Parra, presents woman as nurturer, healer and storyteller. An artist who spent many of her earlier years in Germany, Catalina has made the collage aesthetic uniquely her own. In her artworks she decodes and dismantles media messages, then reconstructs them to communicate truisms about society and politics. She radically reshapes fragments of media messages through the undisguised use of tape, glue and thread. Catalina's collages often resemble conceptual wounds that never heal, reflecting the ruptured sense of culture that is very American.

The present time in art history can be defined as a moment of cultural reconquest. In spite of Eurocentric structuralization, American artists have succeeded in resurrecting and reconstructing their cultural worlds. Art has given the voiceless a voice. Artists are the means through which culture manifests itself.

This exhibition has been constructed to address, in a variety of ways, the contemporaneity of survival. It celebrates the perseverance of indigenous and inclusive cultures. It also partakes of the greatness that lies at the heart of the American spirit. It seeks to reconstruct values and beliefs that were thoughtlessly banished and methodically marginalized. This exhibition seeks to reawaken the spirit of reclamation that exists through the souls of our ancestors. It will also serve as an historical reference point from which broader sensibilities will surely emerge.

Miguelangel Ruiz, *MFA Candidate*



In *Protuario historico de Puerto Rico* (Historica Compendium of Puerto Rico), Tomas Blanco said that throughout history one of the island's most vital functions of was to serve as a frontier of collision. Puerto Ricans live on an island and this has always affected our development.

During pre-Columbian days the "Archaics" (a paleolithic human group) fought the "Aruacos" (a neolithic group) for the possession of the island. A thousand years later the Spanish came into the picture. They arrived when "Aruacos" (Taino) and the "Caribes" (neolithic peoples from the West Indies) were fighting a war, and a violent fight started between the indigenous inhabitants and the Europeans.

Throughout the Caribbean the arrival of the Spaniards signaled the beginning of an unequal relationship between oppressors and oppressed. Europeans lived apart from the natives. The native peoples, cruelly treated, suffered greatly and their population declined. To increase the available labor supply the Spaniards proposed to bring slaves from Africa. But Africans were first brought to Puerto Rico in 1511, that is, before the first battle between the native "Aruacos" and the Spanish. Our history is no accident, the Europeans knew what they were doing and acted according to plan. The business of slavery lasted for four centuries, establishing social, political and economic differences between the peoples of the Americas.

I lived in Puerto Rico for nineteen years before I moved to New York. During that time, I heard and saw many things that defy reason, things that denied the validity of our culture. An example

that comes to mind is upper class Puerto Ricans who speak English among themselves and send their children to private schools that teach Puerto Rican children in the English language. Our "intellectual groups" have also suffered from this colonial mentality. Only recently have legitimate examples of our culture been accepted into our "official culture."

Santos, carved and painted wooden figures, made for religious worship by local artists represent an example of this recent change. These artists are called "Santeros," and santos began to express our culture in this way in the eighteenth century when Santero Tiburcio Espada, a native craftsman, carved the first santos. Today, there are several families carrying on the tradition of santos on the island. Along with our carnival masks (from Loiza and Ponce), santos are objects with religious and symbolic purposes that are part of our culture. Only now are some examples of santos shown as an example of our "official culture." The colonial mentality is also found in the visual arts of Puerto Rico. In many cases, artists try to express Puerto Rican culture and, at the same time, desire to emulate the supposedly superior European art. Nonetheless, the Puerto Rican culture emerges. Our painting has been influenced by many important Latin-American, European and North-American art movements. These influences have always been interpreted by artists in ways that reflect Puerto Rico's political, economic and cultural conditions. This process has created an art that is unique to the island. These influences are present in the stylistic character of the work. A good examples of this is work of the generation of printmakers active during the 1950s: Carlos Raquel Rivera, Rafael Tufino, Lorenzo Homar and

ENOC PEREZ
Untitled, 1992.
Oil on paper.

Antonio Maldonado. Inspired by the political, economic, social and spiritual situation of the island, and influenced by the Mexican muralists, their work constitutes one of the most important contributions to Puerto Rican visual culture. Some artists are trying to elaborate on past contributions to develop new Puerto Rican visual arts. However, most Puerto Rican artists look to artistic developments abroad to try to achieve the same goals. The effort to develop a new Puerto Rican art based on developments abroad illustrates the failure of the colonial mentality to suppress Puerto Rican art and culture. The works of Puerto Rican artists will always relate to Puerto Rico, even if unintentionally. The symbolism, content, spirituality, colors and materials invested in the production of these works will always reflect our culture.

The colonial mentality is like a disease, one may suffer from it and not know one has it. It may make a person feel superior to his or her roots but in actuality such a person is losing sight of

himself or herself. The popular intelligence has been successful in spotting this condition in our society. There is a saying that "El que no tiene dinga tiene mandinga, si no tiene congo tiene caravali." (If you don't have African blood from one African tribe, you have it from another.) This refers to sections of Africa and is directed at those Puerto Ricans who deny their heritage — especially our African roots. This mentality is the product of 500 years of colonialism in our land. Foreign empires (Spanish and American) are primarily responsible for this, but unless we take responsibility for ourselves we won't be able to free ourselves. It was not until I left the island that I found how destructive this mentality is. In order to survive in the world outside of Puerto Rico, a strong consciousness of self is needed. If a person is not secure about himself or herself, then colonialism has succeeded. Understanding your own cultural background helps to complete your inner self.

Enoc Perez, *MFA*
Hunter College '92

LEANDRO KATZ
Untitled, 1992.
Photostat.

de las cosas naturales y la experiencia que de ellas tiene el demonio. Usaba también esta gente de ciertos caracteres o letras con las que escribían en sus libros sus cosas antiguas y sus ciencias, y con estas figuras y algunas señales de las mismas, entendían sus cosas y les daban a entender y enseñaban. Hallámosle gran número de libros de estas sus letras, y porque no tenían cosa en que no hubiese superstición y falsedades del demonio, se los quemamos todos, lo cual sintieron a maravilla y les dio mucha pena. De sus letras pondré aquí things of nature and knowledge which the Devil has of them. These people also used certain glyphs or letters in which they wrote down their ancient history and sciences in their books; and by means of these letters and figures and by certain marks contained in them, they could read about their affairs and taught others to read about them too. We found a great number of these books in Indian characters and because they contained nothing but superstition and the Devil's falsehoods we burned them all; and this they felt most bitterly and it caused them great grief. I will set down here an alphabet of these let-



Aborigines in the Western World

Performance Art in the west did not begin with Dadaist "events." Since the early days of the Conquest, "aboriginal samples" of people from Africa, Asia and the Americas were brought to Europe for aesthetic contemplation, scientific analysis and entertainment. They were forced first to take the place that Europeans had already created savages in their own medieval mythology; later, with the emergence of scientific rationalism, the "aborigines" on display served as proof of the natural superiority of European civilization, of its ability to exert control over and extract knowledge from the "primitive" world, and, ultimately, of the genetic inferiority of non-European races.

In most cases, the human beings who were exhibited did not choose to be on display. More benign versions continue to take place these days in festivals and amusement parks with the partial consent of the "primitives." The contemporary tourist industries and cultural ministries of several countries around the world still perpetuate the illusion of authenticity to cater to the western fascination with otherness. So do many artists.

**COCO FUSCO and
GUILLERMO GOMEZ-PEÑA**
*Two Undiscovered
Aborigines Visit Madrid.*
Performance, May 1992.
(photo: Peter Barker)

Over the last five hundred years Tahitians, Aztecs, Iroquois, Cherokees, Ojibways, Iowas, Mohawks, Botocudos, Guianese, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Nubians, Somalians, Singhalese, Patagonians, Terra del Fuegians, Kahucks, Anapondans, Zulus, Bushman, Australian Aborigines, Japanese, East Indians and Laplanders have been exhibited in the taverns, theaters, gardens, museums, zoos, circuses and world's fairs of Europe and the freak shows of the United States. Some examples:

1493 An Arawak brought back from the Caribbean by Columbus is left on display in the Spanish Court for two years until he dies of sadness.

1501 Eskimos are exhibited in Bristol, England.

1550s Native Americans are brought to France to build a Brazilian village in Rouen. The king of France orders his soldiers to burn the village as a performance. He likes the spectacle so much that he orders it restaged the next day.

1613 In writing *The Tempest* Shakespeare models his character Caliban on an "Indian" he has seen in an exhibition in London.

1617 Pocahontas, the Indian wife of John Rolfe, arrives in London to advertise Virginia tobacco. She dies of an English disease shortly thereafter.

1676 Wampanoag Chief Metacom is executed for inciting his people to rebel against the Puritans, and his head is publically displayed for 25 years in Massachusetts.

1810-1815 The Hottentot Venus (Saartje Benjamin) is exhibited throughout Europe. After her death, her genitals are dissected by French scientists and remain preserved to this day in the Musee de L'Homme, Paris.

1822 A Laplander family is displayed with live reindeer in The Egyptian Hall in London.

1823 Impresario William Bullock stages a Mexican "peasant" diorama in which a Mexican Indian youth is presented as an ethnographic specimen and museum docent.

1829 A Hottentot woman exhibited nude is the highlight of a ball given by the Duchess du Barry in Paris.

1834 After General Rivera's cavalry completed the massacre of all the Indians in Uruguay, four surviving Charruas are donated to the Natural Sciences Academy in Paris and are displayed to the French public as specimens of a vanished race. Three die within two months; one escapes and disappears never to be heard from again.

1844 George Catlin displays "Red Indians" in England.

1847 Four Bushmen on exhibit at The Egyptian Hall in London are written about by Charles Dickens.

1853 Thirteen Kaffirs are displayed in the St. George Gallery in Hyde Park, London.

1853 Pygmies dressed in European garb are displayed playing the piano in a British drawing room as proof of their potential for "civilization."

1853-1901 Maximo and Bartola, two microcephalic San Salvadorans, tour Europe and the Americas, eventually joining Barnum and Bailey's Circus. They are billed as "the last Aztec survivors of a mysterious jungle city called "Lxinaya."

1879 P.T. Barnum offers Queen Victoria \$100,000 for permission to exhibit captured warrior Zulu Chief Cetewayo. He is refused.

1882 W.C. Coup's circus announces the acquisition of "a troupe of genuine male and female Zulus."

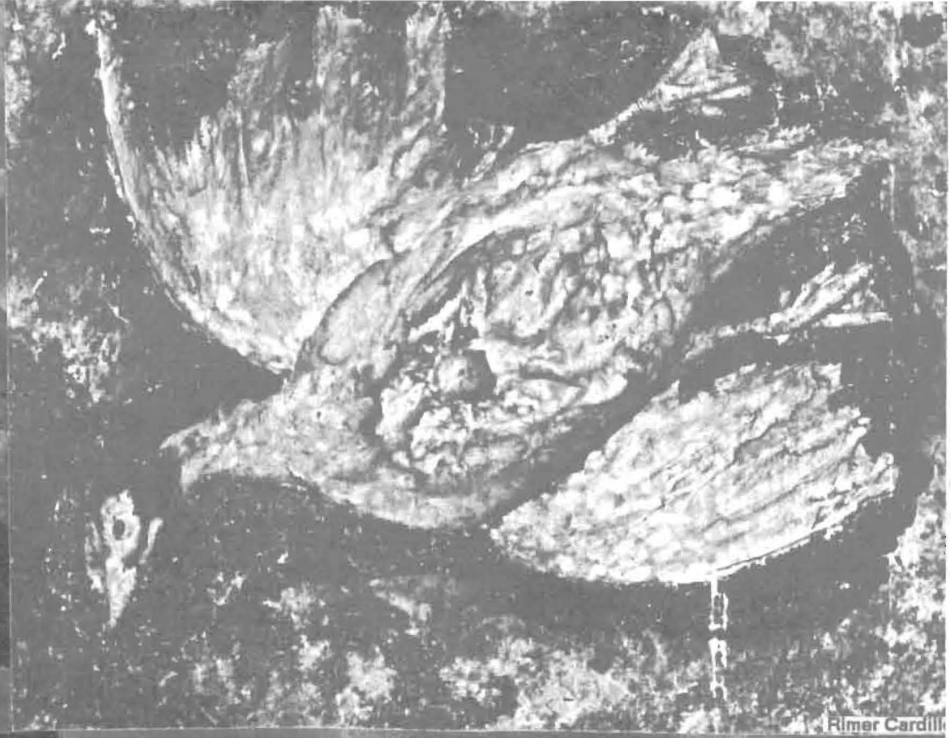
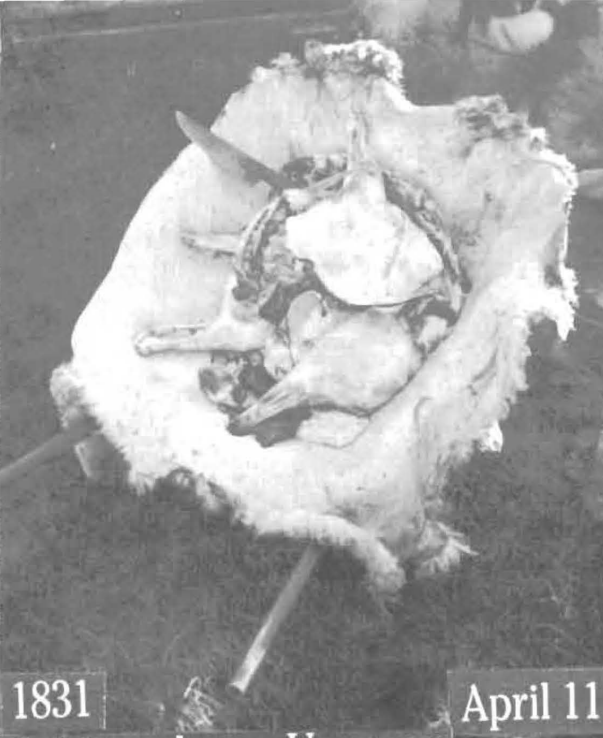
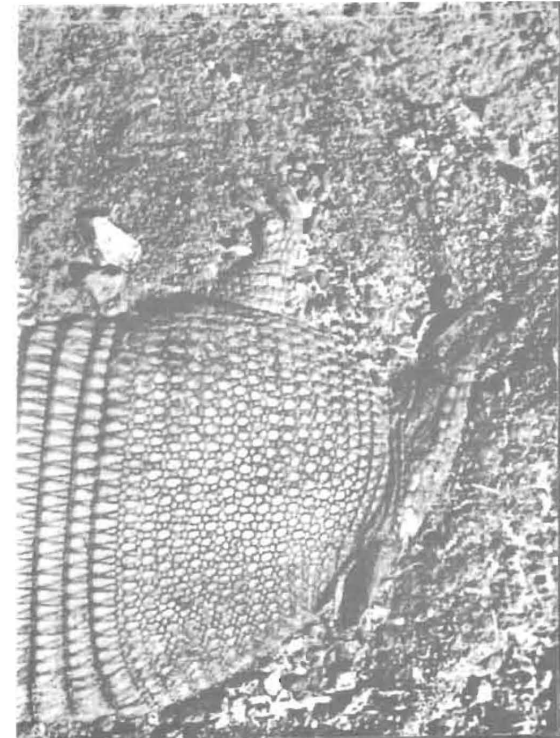
1896 A group of Ashanti women are exhibited in the Prater in Vienna.

1931 The Ringling Circus features fifteen Ubangis, including "the nine largest-lipped women in the Congo."

While most quincentenary celebrations focus on the European voyages to the Americas, it was actually these human exhibitions that enabled most Europeans to "discover" the "other." Our performance piece is a token gesture, then, in commemoration of 500 years of practices that inform contemporary multiculturalism in the west.

Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Peña

RIMER CARDILLO
Salsipuedes - Uruguay,
1992. Xerox, photograph,
collage on paper.



1831

April 11

Salsipuedes — Uruguay

Landowners and General Fructuoso Rivera, Presidente of

The

Uruguay, agreed to a final solution. The Charrúa Nation was to attend to a summit with President, and an ambush is planned.

Having camped by the side of the river Salsipuedes,

The Charrúas

were surprised and massacred.

Chief Pirú shouted at General Rivera: "Look your soldiers are killing friends!"

Bodies are stacked into wagons and taken to a near by lake were they were dumped.

1833

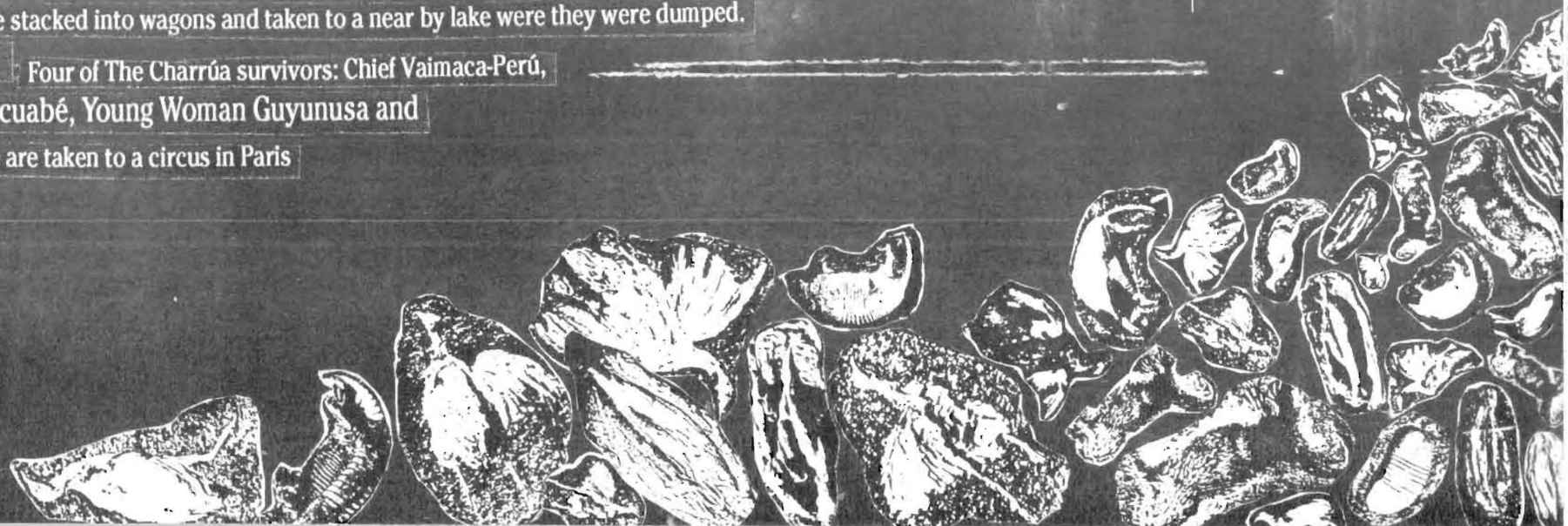
Montevideo

Four of The Charrúa survivors: Chief Vaimaca-Perú,

Young Warrior Tacuabé, Young Woman Guyunusa and

Medicine Man Senaqué are taken to a circus in Paris

to be exhibited.



Town Learns Indians Are Taking Most of It Back

New Lease Raises Revenue for Seneca Tribe, but Residents Fear Losing Their Homes

By LINDSEY GRUSON
Special to The New York Times

CARROLLTON, N.Y. — Dayrll Wetherby drove every nail in his house here.

A Vietnam veteran, he spent a decade building the split-level home: He hauled the stone for the foundation from a creek, felled and milled oaks for the three-inch-thick stairs, laid the floor joints, and hoisted the roof's center beam on his back.

But now the Seneca Indians are claiming the ownership of not just the Wetherbys' land, but their house and the homes of about 6,600 other residents of this village and the nearby town of Salamanca, a once bustling railway hub that is the only town in the country built almost entirely on an Indian reservation.

When the Wetherbys moved their house a mile to get it off the reservation, the tribe's leader said the Senecas still owned it. And in an explosive war of nerves, about 50 families have obtained permits to dynamite their homes rather than to turn them over to the Senecas.

Residents Increasingly Militant

"They say, 'If I can't have it, nobody is going to have it,'" said Joseph Fluent, president of the Salamanca Coalition of United Taxpayers or Scout, a group of 1,200 increasingly militant residents who captured every municipal office in recent elections. "I don't think they're going to accept the situation."

The residents have demanded a Congressional hearing that could reopen a wound bandaged over last month when President Bush signed an agreement to pay the Indians a total of \$60 million to make up for decades of exploitation.

The battle has already exposed long-simmering tensions between the Indians and the non-Indian residents, many of whom built homes, businesses and factories on land leased 99

Continued on Page B5

"All we're interested in is getting our land back," said Calvin John, head of the Seneca Nation of Indians, which claims it owns Salamanca, N.Y. "We need it because we're running out of land for our own people."

Town Learns Indians Want It Back

Continued From Page B1

years ago for as little as \$1 a year.

Both sides see themselves as victims fighting to preserve their heritage and to correct wrongs forced on them by outsiders. The Senecas say that residents are merely trying to continue a tradition of taking advantage of the Indians.

"This is just a sheep in wolf's clothing," said Calvin John, the Seneca President. "Their real beef is the rental payment. They've become accustomed to cheap rent. All we're interested in is getting our land back. We need it because we're running out of land for our own people."

Leases and Liquor

The dispute's roots stretch back centuries to when the area was a speck in a vast Seneca territory. When the first railroad companies began to lay tracks through the Allegheny River Valley in the mid-1800's, white settlers started making deals with the Senecas. Many were illegal, but by the time they were questioned, the city was thriving. Bowing to intense lobbying, Congress validated the leases in 1875.

Then in 1892 tribal leaders were reportedly plied with liquor and coerced into signing a 99-year agreement that all sides now agree was unjust. Negotiations to renew the lease, which expired Feb. 19, sputtered for a decade, creating uncertainty that accelerated the town's decline.

Driving through Salamanca now is like moving into America's Depression past: one low-slung, boarded-up building after another. Industrial skeletons sit vacant on shadowy side streets, ghosts of an era when the city was alive with a promising future and



The residents of Salamanca, N.Y. lease land from the Seneca tribe.

when freight cars, filled with logs, rattled dishes in dining rooms on the way to eastern markets.

The poverty becomes even more desperate outside of town, where most of the reservation's 3,500 Senecas live in ramshackle huts without plumbing.

A Sovereign Nation

The tension was only aggravated by last year's announcement of the new lease. It raised some rents to \$2,000 a year, from as little as \$1, as part of a 40-year lease worth a total of \$800,000 annually, and called on the state and Federal governments to pay the Senecas \$60 million.

The deal outraged many residents. And since 90 percent of Salamanca is on the Allegheny Reservation, a sovereign nation nestled against the Pennsylvania border 60 miles south of Buffalo, they cannot sue the Senecas

for contract violations.

"I'm a World War II veteran and lost a boy in Vietnam and I don't have any rights," protested Ronald Havers, a 67-year-old resident.

Members of Scout were also infuriated by the failure to address the question of who owns the homes, which under New York State law are assumed to belong to the landlord, the Indians. Both sides said the issue would have complicated the already intractable negotiations.

Jennifer Coleman, a lawyer for Scout who unsuccessfully challenged the deal, said she was rebuffed when she tried to raise the question. "We were told we're crazy," she said. "We were told the nation would never assert their ownership."

'It Was the American Dream'

But the residents worried.

When Mr. Wetherby moved into his house with his wife, Gail, there was little more a frame covered by black plastic. The bitter winter wind, sweeping off Lake Erie nearby, whistled through the home. To keep warm, the couple huddled around a wood stove in the basement.

"Our house: it was the American dream," Mrs. Wetherby said. She said she was so upset about the prospect of losing it that she couldn't sleep. "I wanted peace, just peace," she said.

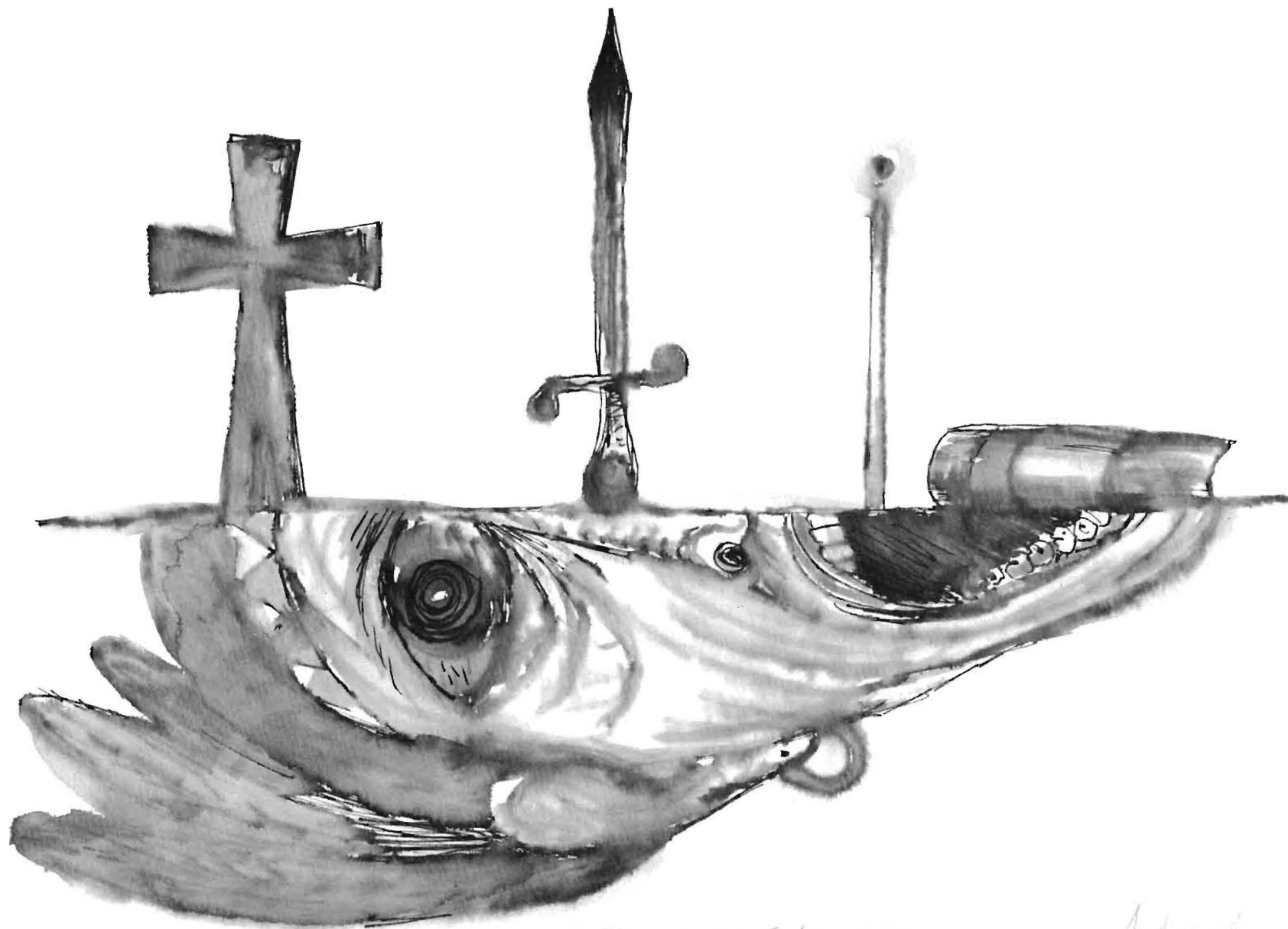
Her husband added: "This house is where my kids were born. Knowing that this situation is only going to get worse, I felt no one is going to take my home from me. No one."

Two months ago, the Wetherbys tried to make sure. They jacked up the house and moved it to a plot of family land a mile off the reservation. In a carefully worded letter, Mr. John, the Seneca leader, responded

"I d
wh

The New York Times
Monday Dec 2 / 91

Catalina Parra 1992



JUNE 1992

500 YEARS STILL LIFE

AZACETA

LUIZ CRUZ AZACETA *500 Years Still Life*, June 8, 1992. Pen and markers on paper.



Clashed photographs are: Top: A Paganini rally in Maragua, 2 days after the 1990 election day. Bottom: Ruins of a farming cooperative in Nicaragua after it was destroyed by a Contra attack, and an object activities by the early Spanish explorers.

RIDING THE WAVES

IMAGINE. YOU ARE IN A TROPICAL JUNGLE. A GROUP OF MEN ARE CHOPPING UP A COMPASSING. THEY RIP OUT A BONE. GET CLOSER. ONE OF THEM GRABS A PIECE OF FLESH AND THROWS IT IN YOUR FACE. SAYING, "MAYBE YOU'RE THE MOTHER OF THIS SON OF A BITCH". ANOTHER COMPA GETS HIT WITH THE BUTT OF A GUN. SOMEONE CUTS HIM WITH A BATONET AND BEGINS TO SUCK HIS BLOOD. HE TURNS TO

YOU AND SAYS, "LOOK, BASTARD, THIS IS THE WATER WE DRINK. THE BLOOD OF THIS RAPID DOG SON OF A BITCH..." HE TAKES SOME BLOOD AND SMEARS IT ON YOU, SAYING, "HOW TASTY IS MY LITTLE five-star rating. Now, for the moment, return to reality and think about this dream. Do you still believe this paradise is possible? Terrific. Royal Columbus Lines can take you there. Let us reward you for your faith.



EACH GENERATION BURROWS ITS PLOW THROUGH THE SOULS OF THE DEAD

ROYAL COLUMBUS LINES

1. After a text by Bartolome de las Casas, "History of the Indies", a clerk's eyewitness account of the Spanish Conquest of the Americas.
2. After an eyewitness account of a war crime committed by a group of soldiers in Nicaragua, its reported in "Compa Teno" in Nicaragua" by Reed Body.



RUPERT GARCIA *Calavera Cristobal*, 1990. Pastel on paper, 32 x 40 in. (Photo: M. Lee Fatherree, Berkeley, California)



6th Mar 22/196

ELIZAM ESCOBAR

88969-024

Autoretrato: 1992/

Self-Portrait: 1992,

22 Mayo 1992.

Acrylic over photograph

with stamps.

We must understand history as a live process. In today's debates and polemics about the events of 1492, we must talk about more than a long-time dead man (Columbus), or a long-time dead empire (Spain's), and we must judge and condemn those who continue in the present the injustices and atrocities of the past. Yesterday's "adventure of discovery" is today's "misadventure of concealment." In this sense, while hypocrisy reigns in the celebrations of "500 years of the discovery," the United States keeps Puerto Rico under direct colonial subordination, postponing for eternity our decolonization process while it conveniently champions the independence of other countries. It is easy to judge and condemn yesterday's Columbuses but difficult to do so with today's colonialists and neo-colonialists.

This year, 1992 is not just a symbolic date; it is a real historical opportunity to reconceive independence and self-determination — for peoples and nations, as well as individuals.

But these processes of liberation will not necessarily lead to a mature freedom unless they are transformed into total processes strong enough to defeat the alienation and fragmentation of the "postmodern" individual and the apolitical attitudes of serial collectivism (the make-believe "people" who "enjoy" a fictional democracy).

This alienation and fragmentation of the individual coupled with the apolitical stance of serial collectivism form a kind of mental colonialism (a global mental subordination to the media, first world structures and ideologies) that is epidemic and very difficult to defeat.

We — the progressive and revolutionary forces — must oppose this extraordinary force with the power of truth. And this power must be led at all possible levels by the power of the imagination.

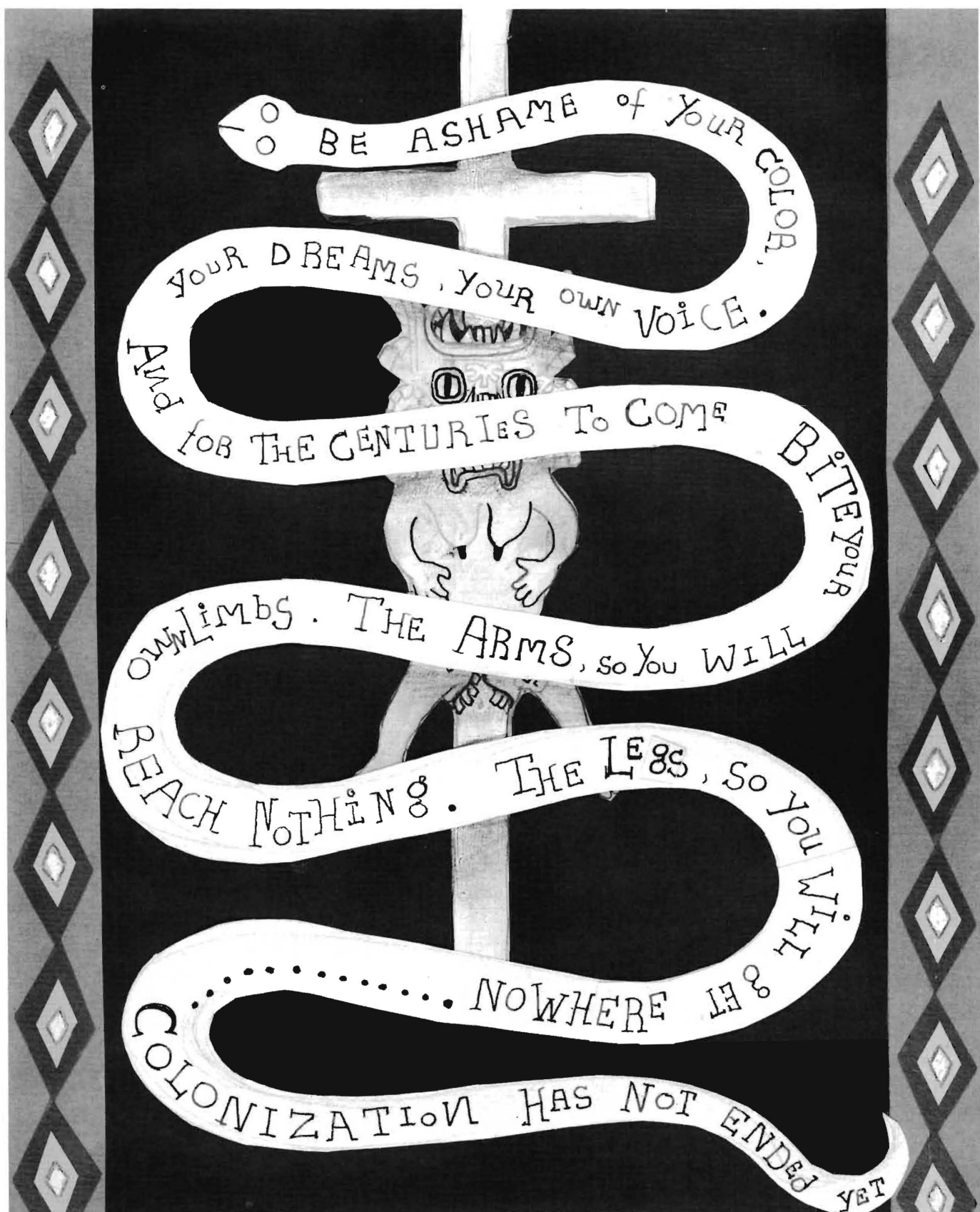
Through the political power of creative minds we must rediscover and reinvent new and necessary ways of cultural resistance that could lead to liberation. This means, for example, that at the cultural level we should look for ways to transform the pseudo-democratization process into a real one and push it to its limit. And, simultaneously, to provide an immediate content to the liberation of the human spirit through the work of art. This immediate content provided by the creative process is essential to maintain the necessary amount of faith not only in the future but in the present. It is also necessary, in order to oppose the plagues of global capitalism, the mistakes of manqué (bureaucratic) socialism, and all postponements of revolution.

The plagues unravelled by capitalist greed cannot be abated merely by taking state power or merely by going through a national liberation process. Revolution must be a total event dealing not only with problems of political-direct power, but with all aspects of our spiritual and material existence. And any form of liberation must be understood as a process that will lead us to a responsible and mature praxis of independence and liberty, to a plane of existence with no antagonistic contradiction between the individual and the collective, between difference and egalitarian society.

Specifically, the renovation of Marxist thought (instead of the mere application of Marxism to the particular conditions), and the incorporation of the radical existential experience of the excluded into the new political conceptions of reality and views of the future, are of vital importance in order to keep liberation struggles and revolution alive.

The artist, then, must incorporate, somehow, directly or indirectly, or both, the reality of this future that is already here.

Elizam Escobar



KUKULI VELARDE

Untitled, 1992.

Mixed media on paper.

We, The Colonized Ones

Several American and European countries are celebrating the introduction of the "Western world" to the Americas. Celebration, as such, should connote the benefits that the "Discovery" brought to Europe, but it does not. Rather it emphasizes the progress and development Europeans carried to the Americas.

"Progress" and "Development" from the European point of view meant to the indigenous Americans the decline of their population from 72 million or more in the XVth century to 4.5 million today.

1992 should be a date of mourning.

Invasion, conquest and genocide are historical facts obscured by the euphemism "cultural encounters."

Colonization, meaning social, economic and racial injustice, is still very much part of this continent's reality.

No matter how many voices proclaim America's liberation, our Non-western history is still pre-history, our Non-western cultural expressions are still folkloric, and our Non-western arts are still exotic handcrafts.

We are the bastards of a prolific "encounter" that lightens our skins and darkens our history.

That is the heritage we have gotten from the old world.

I, who belong to the ethnic "Hispanic" (a new term coined in this century to singularize Latin American diversity), cannot forget it.

I, part of this complex population that shares language and backwardness, do not want to forget it.

Millions of people were killed through the colonization of the Americas, a holocaust that began a long time ago and has not stopped yet. Invasions and genocide are timeless horrors.

However, History is not a movie plot. Let us cleanse our spirits from any anthropological and/or romantic influence and step back centuries. The indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, and the people who saw themselves torn from their cultural realities as the Africans did, were human beings. Neither better nor worse than you and me.

Let us render homage to them and to their descendants, we the colonized ones, who have stubbornly survived five hundred years of violence.

Kukuli Velarde

"¿cómo puedo querer al hombre que violó a mi madre, que mató a mi padre, que esclavizó a mis antepasados, que lanzó bombas atómicas en Japón, que mató a los indios y que tiene encerrado en barrios miserables me

malcom x

el papá de la colonia

E.L.A.

carcelero de Albizu

500 años de explotación ¿hasta cuando?

autores del genocidio AFRO Indigenista en América

ECUA JEI!!

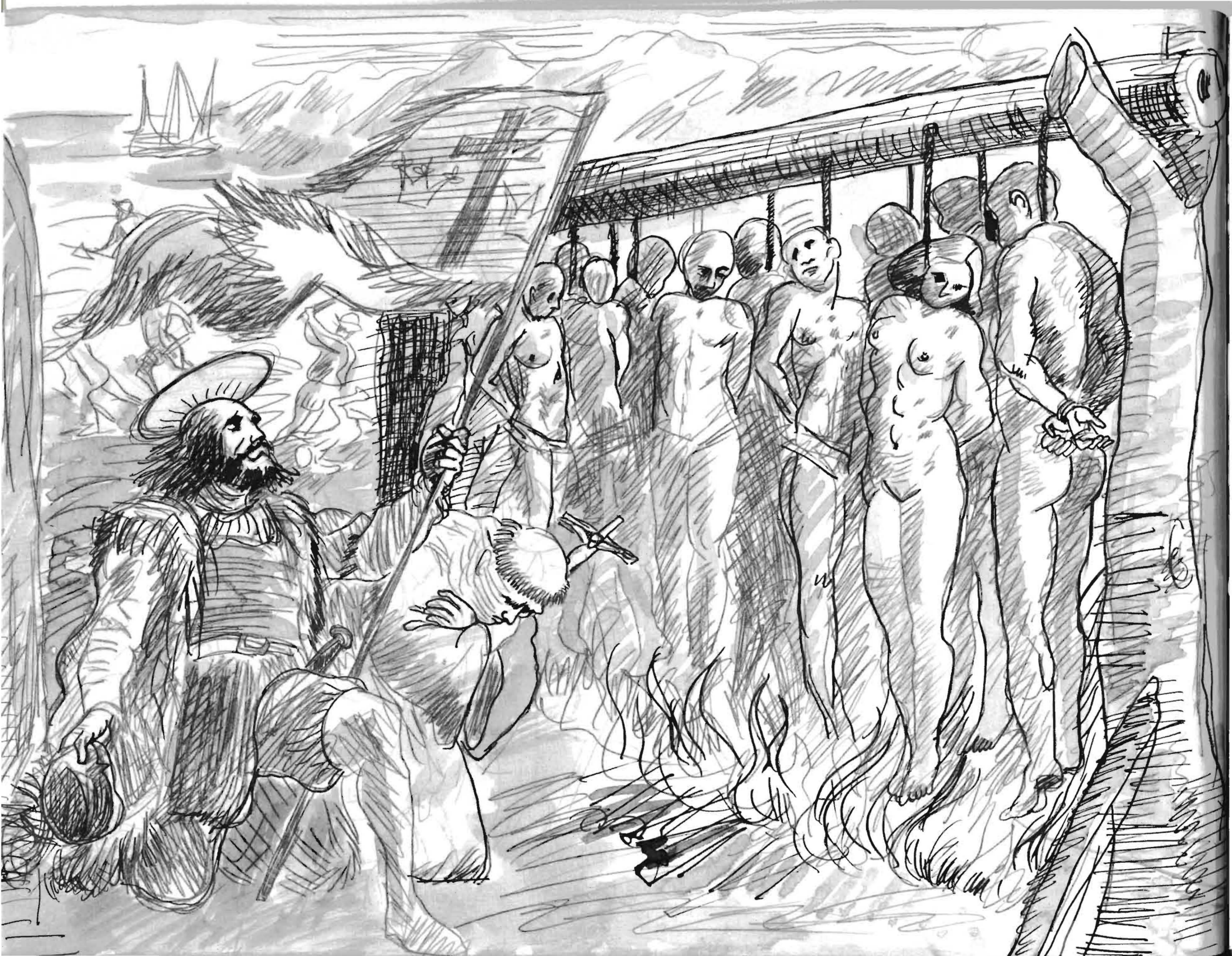
Casco Español utilizado por los verdugos conquistadores

DNR 1992



In a time of civilized blindness, I weave a subtle spirituality throughout my work which embraces and codifies the positive and negative elements of birth and death, fertility and impotence, love and hate, liberation and repression.

ESPERANZA CORTÉS
Untitled, 1992.
Ink on paper.



C hristopher Columbus,
Cristobal Colon,
liar, truth seeker
megalomaniac, saint
slave trader, humanitarian
Columbus, a nebulous figure
no real portrait exists,
idealized images instead,
America seeking a hero,
popularized by Irving

I am intrigued by how
Columbus' image has
been resurrected to suit the
needs of the period.
American Icon,
"...In 1492 Columbus
sailed the ocean blue..."

I played Columbus
in elementary school
I thought Columbus
was Chinese.
Now he is claimed by
Italians, Spanish, Portuguese,
Greeks, Jews, etc., etc., etc.,
What will the Columbus of
the future be like?

William Jung

WILLIAM JUNG
Cristóbal Colón the
pretender, 1992.
Pen, ink, and wash.

The most ordinary elements of creativity inherent in nature hold the power to engulf and transform all abuse from human self-centeredness. It is possible to be aware and actively engaged in this process by accepting the guidance of spiritual ancestors to connectively realize ourselves as nature, a unity of mind and matter. Only by conscious participation do we gain access to the needed energies for achieving full human potential.

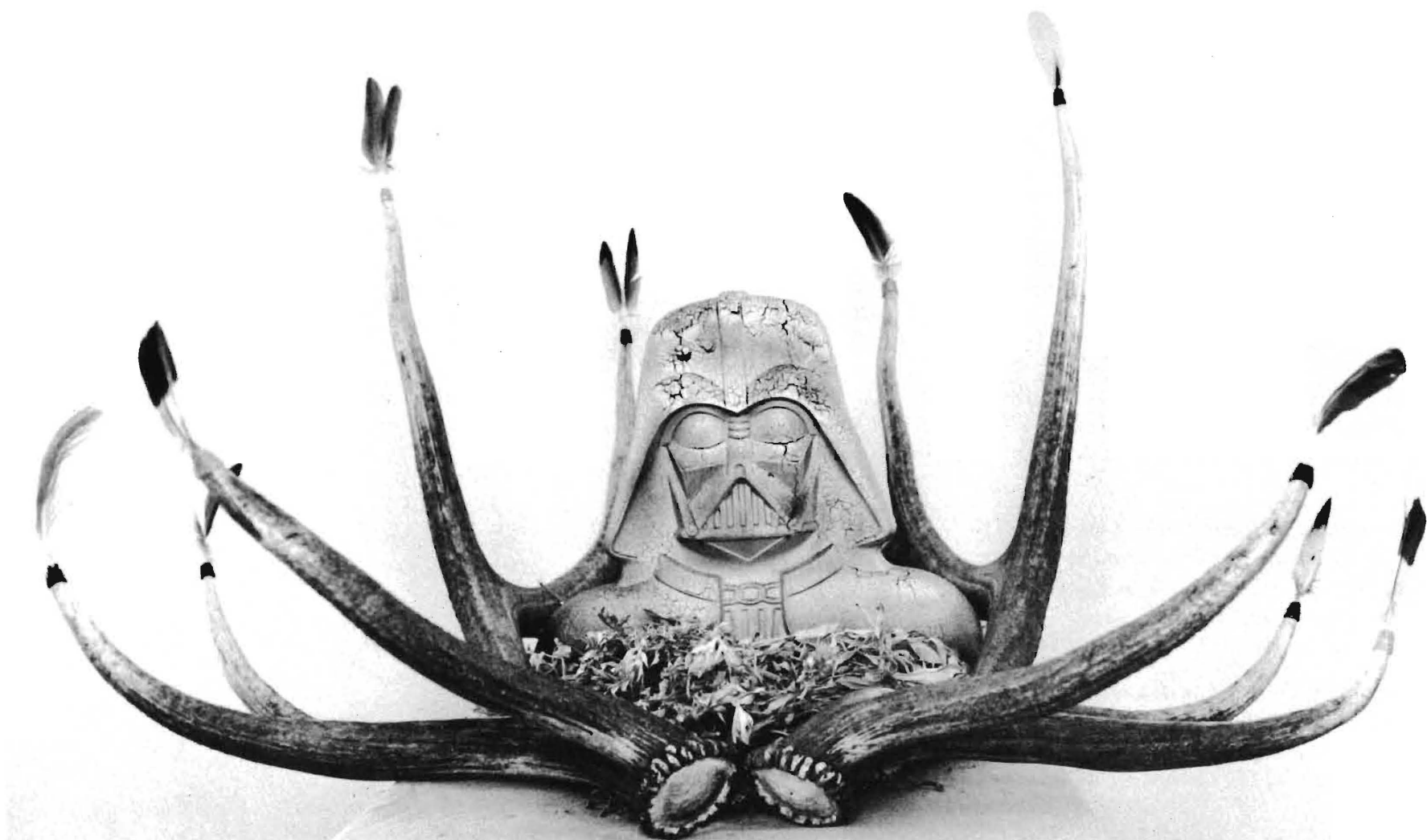
Through art, a raw living material, we can embrace the mystical and mundane forces of inexhaustible possibilities. Due to its clairvoyant fluidity every tiny detail must be considered important, yet non-essentials, such as measure, are bypassed. Human perception is then able to carry personal destiny into a timeless and multidimensional field where both the art and the observer mix into the sacredness that allows humor to flow. In this way new meanings are created and relationships are changed.

Kay Miller

KAY MILLER

The Trap, 1992.

Construction: Elk antlers,
sage, feathers, glass beads,
plastic figure, paint.



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