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HOMENAJE: Jorge Soto Sánchez

First Major Exhibit of the late Nuyorican Artist Since 1979

Wednesday, October 7, through Wednesday, December 2, 2015

Opening Reception, October 7, 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM

(Bronx, NY) – The Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture (HCAC), in partnership with the Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA), presents *Homenaje* (“Homage”): *Jorge Soto Sánchez*, the first major exhibit of the late Nuyorican artist and Taller Boricua member since his passing in 1987, at the Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos on the campus of Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse, in The Bronx.

The exhibit, curated by Gladys Peña- Acosta, opens October 7 and closes December 2 and features nearly 40 works, including paintings, pen and ink drawings, and mixed media. The opening reception is Wednesday, October 7, from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM, as part of the First Wednesday Bronx Trolley. A panel discussion “Remembering Jorge Soto Sánchez: Collaborators and Friends,” will be presented Thursday, November 5, at 6 PM. Gallery hours are Monday to Friday (except Wednesday) from noon to 5:00 PM. Admission is free.

The exhibit will feature two versions of Soto’s best-known work: *El velorio de Oller en Nueva York*, after the iconic work of the Puerto Rican impressionist Francisco Oller (1833-1917). Another version of Soto’s *velorio* is in the Smithsonian. Other major works of the exhibit of Soto’s include *Todo bien en America* (1960s) and *El Señor Gobernador* (1977).

According to Peña-Acosta, Soto “was a product of the times of (the late 60s) which included the Young Lords, *Realidades* (the Latino television series), El Taller Boricua, the Puerto Rican Independence movement in New York, and the Anti-War Movement. He often quoted popular concepts from Franz Fenon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, which spoke to the dehumanizing effects of colonization, and making connection to the Puerto Rican experience. He (Soto) was immersed in researching and learning about his own origin, visiting the Museum of Natural History often to observe and draw Taino objects and symbols which he later combined with Afro-Caribbean Yoruba religious images.”

Peña-Acosta added that although the exhibit is made possible by the goodwill of many private collectors, there are two primary contributors to the exhibit, members of his family and El Museo del Barrio, who both have graciously provided important pieces that have not been on public view since his untimely death.

“We are thrilled to be presenting this important exhibit of a very talented artist whose legacy in the community and the New York art world is worth preserving and sharing with the wider public,” said Hostos Center Director

John MacElwee. "Locating and acquiring these works for exhibition has not been easy; we are grateful to the work of Gladys Peña-Acosta and the Bronx Council on the Arts, and the generosity of Betty Soto, El Museo de Barrio, El Taller Boricua, Elba Cabrera, and others who provided pieces for this tribute."

Jorge Soto Sánchez was born in East Harlem (El Barrio) to Puerto Rican parents in 1947 and at the age of five moved with his family to the South Bronx. In elementary school, his teachers recognized his artistic talent and he received a scholarship from Saks Fifth Avenue Department Stores to take drawing classes in composition and human anatomy. In 1960, his parents sent him to Puerto Rico for an extended stay. Returning to New York in 1961, he attended two years of high school before dropping out and enlisting in the Army. Released from the Army in 1965, he was determined to become an artist and worked menial jobs but devoted himself to art.

In 1971, he became involved with Taller Boricua, the Puerto Rican artists' collective, based in El Barrio, whose mission is using art as a tool for education and community building through the sponsoring of a wide range of exhibitions, literary readings, dances, festivals and free art classes. He served as director of Taller Boricua in the mid-70s. Soto's quest to uncover his ancestral routes took him to Puerto Rico in 1972, where he made initial studies of Taino artifacts and the canonical works of Puerto Rican artists Jose Campeche and Francisco Oller. He had his first major solo exhibit in Puerto Rico at Galería Tanama in Arecibo in 1973. In 1977, he had a solo exhibit at the Association of Hispanic Arts in New York. His last major exhibition was at El Museo de Barrio in 1979, which featured 60 of his pen and ink drawings. In the mid-1980s, Soto became ill and moved to Vermont to convalesce. He remained there until his death on December 13, 1987. He left behind a large body of uncatalogued work, and his passing was seen as creating a great void among the Nuyorican artists and poets.

Gladys Peña-Acosta was born in Puerto Rico and now resides in Brooklyn. A graduate of Hunter College and New York University, Peña-Acosta served as Chief Curator of El Museo de Barrio, Executive Director of the New York City Public Art Commission, and producer/director of Spanish cultural programs for the Hispanic Information Telecommunication Network. She currently works as a guest curator and public art consultant.

This exhibit is made possible by the Hostos Community College Foundation, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

The Bronx Council on the Arts / Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos receives support from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, NYS Council on the Arts, the Lambert Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation,, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc., the Bronx Delegation of the City Council, Bronx Tourism Council, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and BCA members.

[Jose Soto Sanchez Images](#)

What: "HOMENAJE: Jorge Soto Sánchez

When: Exhibit runs from Wednesday, October 7 to Wednesday, December 2

Public Events

Opening Reception & Trolley, Wednesday, October 7 -- 5pm to 9pm

Reception & Trolley: Wednesday, November 4 -- 5pm to 9pm

Panel "Remembering Jorge Soto Sánchez: Collaborators and Friends" – Thursday, Nov. 5, 6pm

Closing Reception & Trolley: Wednesday, December 2 -- 5pm to 9pm

Where: The Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos

Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture, C - 190

450 Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York 10451

Gallery Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 12noon to 5:00pm

How much? : Free

Phone Number: 718-518-6728

Website: www.hostoscenter.org

Subway/Bus: IRT Trains 2,4,5 and Buses BX1, BX2, BX19 to 149th Street and Grand Concourse.

About the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture

The Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture consists of a museum-grade art gallery, a 367-seat Repertory Theater, and a 900-seat Main Theater, presenting artists of national and international renown. It is easily accessible from Manhattan, Queens and New Jersey and is a mere 15 minutes by subway from midtown Manhattan.

About Hostos Community College

Hostos Community College is an educational agent for change, transforming and improving the quality of life in the South Bronx and neighboring communities since 1968. Hostos serves as a gateway to intellectual growth and socioeconomic mobility, and a point of departure for lifelong learning, success in professional careers, and transfer to advanced higher education programs. The College's unique "student success coach" program, which partners students with individualized guidance, is emblematic of the premier emphasis on student support and services.

Hostos offers 29 associate degree programs and 5 certificate programs that facilitate easy transfer to The City University of New York (CUNY) four-year colleges or baccalaureate studies at other institutions. The College has an award-winning Division of Continuing Education & Workforce Development that offers professional development courses and certificate-bearing workforce training programs. Hostos Community College is part of CUNY, the nation's leading urban public university serving more than 480,000 students at 24 colleges.