

not enough space / sin suficiente espacio 2006 catalog

ISBN: 978-0-9727422-9-0



NOT ENOUGH SPACE NOT ENOUGH SPACE NOT ENOUGH SPAC

scar lópez rivera • carlos alberto torres • oscar lópez rivera • carlos alberto torres • oscar lópez rivera • carlos alberto tor

an exhibition commemorating the 26th anniversary of their incarceration • an exhibition commemorating the 26th anniversary of their incarceration • an exhibi

www.boricuahumanrights.org • puerto rican political prisoners in us prisons • www.boricuahumanrights.org • puerto rican political prisoners in us prisons • www.boricuahumanrights.o

ISBN: 978-0-9727422-9-0



\$15⁰⁰ USD

NOT ENOUGH SPACE: 25 YEARS BEHIND PRISON BARS



Not Enough Space presents the story of two Puerto Rican fathers, grandfathers, community organizers and self-taught artists. Carlos Alberto Torres and Oscar López Rivera are Puerto Rican political prisoners serving disproportionately long prison terms for their beliefs in favor of Puerto Rican independence. Throughout their over 25 years of incarceration, they have been separated from their families and have grieved the deaths of their parents alone. From 1987 to 1999 (in Marion, Illinois and the “Administrative Maximum (ADX)” unit in Florence, Colorado) Oscar withstood 12 years of psychological torture, locked in his cell in complete isolation for 22.5 hours per day.

Despite the harsh and inhuman conditions endured, they remain men of dignity, hope, and aesthetic sensibility. *Not Enough Space* presents the human side of these two individuals and how their judicial case was distorted by the media. The exhibit also showcases how, both, Oscar and Carlos, have discovered art as means for their self-development and self expression from their conditions of confinement.

Not Enough Space is presented through the efforts of the National Boricua

Human Rights Network (NBRHN) and local organizing committees. The exhibit brings attention to the case of these remarkable men in the hope of changing public opinion and ultimately ending their inhumane treatment and unjust sentences.

Not Enough Space is a community curatorial project of the Puerto Rican community of Chicago that toured nationally and internationally in 2005-2006: Chicago and Champaign-Urbana, Illinois; Philadelphia and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; San Juan, Ponce, and Mayagüez, Puerto Rico; Boston, Massachusetts; Los Angeles and San Francisco, California. The exhibit will tour during the latter part of 2006 and 2007 to Mexico City, and Morelia, Mexico; New York City, Cleveland, Ohio; Vieques, Culebra, Adjuntas, Ciales, Morovis, San Sebastian, and San German, Puerto Rico; and Caracas, Venezuela and Argentina.

For more information about Carlos Alberto Torres, Oscar López and the exhibit visit: <http://www.boricuahumanrights.org>

Artist and Curator Notes can be found on page 46.



The exhibit presents a walk-in installation mimicking a 6' x 9' cell space created by Puerto Rican artist Charles Juhasz Alvarado. This cell reflects the space that Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres have been confined to and obligated to share with strangers for over 25 years. Like it does with Oscar and Carlos, the cell space confines the visitors and provides them with an idea of the prison experience. The cell includes a recorded message from Carlos Alberto Torres. The photograph was taken during its stop at the Mission Cultural Center for the Latino Arts in San Francisco.

“During the early years of my incarceration I recognized that challenging myself with new goals was an essential component of living through this experience. Separated from my family and friends and familiar surroundings, this new social reality would test every part of myself. As a conscious political prisoner, one of the challenges I face is to maintain a balance between the perspectives that correspond to the demands of living in this unnatural setting and my aspirations as a Puerto Rican patriot and political being. Although it is an imperfect process, with time I learned that the best approach was to allow new interests and perspectives to evolve naturally and seek out and cultivate skills that promote creative self-expressions. I have transformed my physical captivity into a time for learning, productive accomplishments and moral victory.”

Carlos Alberto Torres
Letter to Jorge Félix

“I won’t tell you that it’s easy to be a prisoner. I’ve been locked down in the cell for three weeks now. They are giving us 10 minute baths once a week and cold meals. They bring meals in brown paper bags and send items with expiration dates dating a year ago. I don’t know if they buy this old food from companies or if companies donate it for tax deductions. They lock down the prison to save money in food and services and as an excuse for guards to earn overtime and justify hiring more guards.”

“What does it mean to be locked down 24 hours in a cell? I spent more than 12 years under similar conditions. They were locked-down penitentiaries and this one was supposed to be different. Since they opened it they lock us down without telling us why. The idea is to interrupt the prisoner’s routine and maintain us in a state of uncertainty. It’s a game played by people with stupid and twisted minds, but I keep moving forward.”

“I want you to know that it doesn’t matter what the jailers do to me or if they lock me in a hole without light and access to anything. They will never be able to break my spirit. Every day I wake up alive is a blessing. My obligation is to use all the time of that day to do something for our nation’s struggle and for a better just world.”

Oscar López Rivera
Letter to Luis E. Martinez Acosta

ARTISTIC FREEDOM: BEYOND THE PARADOX

Jorge Félix

“Artistic Freedom” can be interpreted as the right of an artist to choose without coercion of media, methods, form and content. This is true in society when an artist and his artwork does not infringe upon rights of choice and expression of others. This contradictory relation between freedom of expression and self regulation applies also to the curatorial and exhibition field.

It is a common misconception that the removal of obstructions would result in freedom and in an indeterminate range of choices available to every individual. However, individuals exist within an established physical and social context of interactions. Freedom, rather than being a natural condition, becomes an achievement which occurs only when people in society are collectively aware of their choices and are able to make selections that ensure the greatest benefit from their choices.

Art-making within societal context has been in large measure responsible for its own ability to exercise freedom. This is because the art world has its own means of regulating itself through a self imposed system that we know as fine art schools, art critics, gallery directors, art philosophers, artists, and even audiences. All of them try in one way or another to advance certain artis-

tic perspectives and either challenge or even proscribe others. This self-regulatory system is nevertheless understood and accepted as artistic freedom within the art world.

Threats to the art world occur when outsiders infringe upon this self-regulatory system. Artistic freedom is at risk when foreign identities and groups impose their regulations and value systems, disrupting the dynamic relationship between art world and society. In order to ensure artistic freedom and coexistence, the art world and society needs to understand the boundaries of each institution while entrusting their complementary roles.

In order to ensure the maximum protection of artistic choices, the art world must negotiate the way it relates with other segments of society without losing its ability to guarantee freedom of expression. Curatorial work within community provides important points of connection between society and the art world, while breaking with isolated curatorial and museum proposals.

Not Enough Space models an example of a successful curatorial project that ensures artistic freedom. The exhibit is conceived with a complementary approach through the curatorial understanding of community roles and the engagement of its assets in the building of the exhibit. Here success is not defined by the quality and amount of the exhibitory elements but instead by the establishment of common goals and objectives and their execution.

Curatorial community projects like *Not Enough Space* are more prevalent than ever. While this curatorial approach needs further considerations from the art world, more and more communities turn to this mode as a way to exert their voices and gain trust. Trusting trends are the first step towards the development of more curatorial approaches that will ensure that the mega establishments respect freedom of artistic and community expression.

Jorge Félix is a visual artist and independent curator. He works as program director at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture in Chicago.

26 years. More than a quarter of a century. Likely a longer period of time than the age of many of the people who will read this catalog. In 2005, Carlos Alberto Torres and in 2006, Oscar López Rivera each realized 25 years in prison. Carlos was arrested, along with 10 other Puerto Rican revolutionaries on April 4, 1980 and Oscar suffered the same indignity almost exactly one year later on May 29, 1981.

They were arrested, indicted, tried and sentenced in an atmosphere replete with judges that implemented the political objectives of the government, a complicit media, and the omnipresent racism of North American society.

26 years. A blink of an eye for a nation. Nearly a lifetime for its incarcerated patriots. Puerto Rico is a militarily intervened nation, since the July 25, 1898 landing and bombardment of Puerto Rico by 16,000 U.S. soldiers led by General Nelson A. Miles. Far from being in the past, this history, more specifically, this trajectory of resistance, is what defines the compañeros' existence. From the first Puerto Rican political prisoners to the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists — Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Oscar Collazo and Andrés Figueroa Cordero — to the Grand Jury Resisters of the 70s and 80s, to the “11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War,” as they were first known, their continued incarceration is a thorn in the side of their jailers and a constant reminder to us all of the larger problematic reality: Puerto Rico remains a colony of the U.S.

26 years in prisons across the U.S. From Cook County Jail to Chicago's Metropolitan Correctional Center to USP Marion to ADX Florence to USP Leavenworth, from

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Alejandro Luis Molina

Menard IL State Prison to USP Talladega to Oxford FCI, Oscar and Carlos Alberto have traveled through the state and federal prison system, joining the more than 2.1 million people under the jurisdiction of the US criminal justice system. Alongside former Black Panthers, framed American Indian Movement activists, Plowshares activists, North American Anti-Imperialists, they were two of more than 100 political prisoners in a country that purports to be the bastion of “democratic” ideals and values, a country where the incarceration rate for Black men in 2005 was higher than for Blacks under Apartheid South Africa.

26 years of organizing. What began as a humble effort within our communities — in Puerto Rico and the US — started to gain momentum as local and nationally reknowned individuals struggling for self-determination, peace organizations, Catholic and Protestant denominations, ecumenical organizations, labor unions, and Puerto Rican and Latino elected officials joined the chorus for their freedom. Internationally, they were complemented by over 10 Nobel Peace Prize winners, revolutionary and fraternal organizations from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe, as well as solidarity organizations from Australia and Aotearoa.

Puerto Rico is one of the last classic colonies the world. Over 25 years have passed, and landmarks of oppression

have fallen, while monuments to freedom are being built. However, there has been no resolution to the status question for the island of Puerto Rico. In one of the most reactionary periods of governance in the U.S. in the last 25 years, the Puerto Rican people and their allies have made it clear — by the successful campaigns of excarceration of the political prisoners and then the driving of the US Navy from Vieques — that we are steadfast in our determination to take our place among the free countries of the world.

***Not Enough Space* is a clarion call** for those of us — activists, family members, and supporters — that are not ready to let this bulwark of injustice write the final chapter to our struggle for self-determination. This exhibition reflects Carlos Alberto's and Oscar's determination to confront -head on- this dehumanizing process, with all the creativity, passion and determination possible. The struggle to win their release from prison will be full of challenges, barriers and obstacles, to be confronted by the single-minded resolve and aspirations of a people.

Let us to it then. As Oscar is fond of saying, “For those who dare to struggle, victory is their reward.”

Alejandro Luis Molina is a member of the National Boricua Human Rights Network Coordinating Committee and is coordinating the international tour of this exhibit.

TRIAL BY MEDIA:

News clippings from the 1980s reflecting the the Puerto Rican Independence movement,

18 Sunday Sun-Times, February 1, 1981

Bomb-sniffing dogs to guard FALN trial here

FBI seeking Alamporn in bombings

By AP Wire Service Staff

The FBI is seeking a man who is believed to be a member of the Puerto Rican National Liberation Front (FALN) and who is suspected of being involved in a series of bombings in New York City.

The FBI is seeking a man who is believed to be a member of the Puerto Rican National Liberation Front (FALN) and who is suspected of being involved in a series of bombings in New York City.

La Borinquena: We've got nothing to hide

By AP Wire Service Staff

The Puerto Rican National Liberation Front (FALN) has issued a statement in which it says it has nothing to hide from the FBI.

Raid P.R. school to head off alleged bomb threats

By AP Wire Service Staff

Federal agents raided a school in Puerto Rico on Monday to head off alleged bomb threats.

Sentencia a 5 independentistas

By AP Wire Service Staff

Five independentistas were sentenced to prison terms for their involvement in the FALN bombings.

William Morales será enjuiciado en México

By AP Wire Service Staff

William Morales will be tried in Mexico for his involvement in the FALN bombings.



Independentistas and grand jurors

Enrique Dalmazo

Photo special on the trail of blood left by the FALN's bombing teams

HANDIWORK OF A TERRORIST

BACK BEHIND BARS

Morales' daring escape from Bellevue

By AP Wire Service Staff

William Morales escaped from Bellevue Hospital in New York City.

Nine years of murder and mayhem

By AP Wire Service Staff

The FALN bombings have resulted in nine years of murder and mayhem.



12-B EL MUNDO - JUEVES 6 DE OCTUBRE DE 1981

Acusan a 4 alegados miembros de FALN por conspiración

30 de junio 81 El Mundo

Juez amonesta a cuatro vinculan con el FALN

CHICAGO (UPI) — Un juez federal de Chicago acusó a cuatro presuntos miembros del grupo terrorista puertorriqueño Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) que están acusados y perseguidos por sus actividades terroristas en Chicago.

Los cuatro acusados son miembros de las FALN, que preparó la independencia de Puerto Rico. El grupo ha reclamado responsabilidad por más de 100 atentados con bombas e intentos de asesinato de bombas en Chicago y Nueva York desde 1971.

Una declaración emitida por el FBI indicó: Desde antes de abril de 1981 hasta junio de 1981.

(Por favor, ver página 8A)

Arrestan cabecilla del FALN

será enjuiciado en México

MEDELLIN, (UPI) — Un juez federal de Chicago acusó a cuatro presuntos miembros del grupo terrorista puertorriqueño Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) que están acusados y perseguidos por sus actividades terroristas en Chicago.

Los cuatro acusados son miembros de las FALN, que preparó la independencia de Puerto Rico. El grupo ha reclamado responsabilidad por más de 100 atentados con bombas e intentos de asesinato de bombas en Chicago y Nueva York desde 1971.

Una declaración emitida por el FBI indicó: Desde antes de abril de 1981 hasta junio de 1981.

(Por favor, ver página 8A)

Dejan libres 5 sospechosos de FALN

NUEVA YORK — (API) — Cinco personas, que en su momento fueron calificadas por la Oficina Federal de Investigaciones (FBI) como "los últimos dirigentes" del grupo separatista puertorriqueño FALN, fueron dejados ayer en libertad tras una breve audiencia por la acusación de desobediencia a la justicia originada en su negativa a responder preguntas de un tribunal federal.

El abogado defensor Michael Dutsch, al presentar una moción para que fueran desestimados los cargos, acusó a las autoridades de actuar con "inconducta y mala fe" al enviar al FBI a detener a los acusados, los que declararon que se entregarían si se los pidieran.

Ricardo Romero, de 46 años, de Alamosa, Colorado; Julio Rosado, de 43, de Nueva York; su hermano Andrés, de 37, también de Nueva York; Steven Guerra, de 28, de San Francisco; y María Cueto, de 38, de Los Angeles;

que investiga atentados dinamiteros en Manhattan.

Unos 50 partidarios del grupo efectuaron una manifestación pacífica frente al Tribunal de Distrito de Brooklyn que entiendo en el caso de desobediencia y luego entraron en el recinto.

El tribunal federal investiga 31 atentados dinamiteros atribuidos a FALN. Los acusados de desobediencia admitieron simpatizar con el grupo; negaron pertenecer al mismo.

Cuando el FBI anunció su detención el 27 de septiembre, dijo que era "los últimos dirigentes del FALN", un calificativo que la Fiscalía no comentó y los acusados negaron.

El juez Charles Sifton se negó a ingresar la moción de desestimar la acusación de desobediencia y fijó una audiencia sobre el caso para el 19 de octubre. Luego ordenó la libertad de los cinco acusados previa identificación.



repression against Carlos Alberto Torres and Oscar López Rivera



Suspected Puerto Rican terrorists gesture defiantly as a police van takes them to jail

Hoping the Bombs Have Stopped

Police believe that the F.A.L.N. has been crushed.

Sun-Times

FALN's plot revealed to kidnap Reagan son

Private school in Chicago target of terror probes



Carlos Alberto Torres

3 FALN members get 35 years

—The culture of a people—that this, spiritual line that gives us an identity—is denied," he said. "I would be less than human if I were to stand here... and not say I would be willing to fight against domination and oppression."

Sunday Sun-Times

FALN plot to kidnap Evanston millionaire



Las Bombas del F. A. L. N.



Chicago Sun-Times, Saturday, July 25, 1981

FALN chief guilty of terrorism

By Kay Rutherford

Puerto Rican activist leader Oscar López Rivera was convicted Friday of all seven charges stemming from 28 bombings and other terrorist activities in the Chicago area.

A federal court jury of six women and six men returned the verdicts after 3 hours and 20 minutes of deliberation. The charges included obstructing justice, only one couple said their child returned for the reading of the verdict.

López Rivera refused to enter the courtroom to hear the verdict and remained in an adjacent locker. The verdict was no surprise, since López-Rivera admitted committing every act of which he was accused. He declared himself to be a political activist and refused to be represented by counsel.

In his closing argument, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeremy Margolis said that if López-Rivera had devoted as much effort to useful activities as he had to executing terrorist plots, he could have been a highly useful citizen.

MARGOLIS described López-Rivera as "an intelligent, articulate man" who turned his talents to bombings and other criminal acts. "If he spent all the energy hours that were used in his plotting to make bombs," Margolis asked, "at least one of them, Oscar planned it. Oscar is."



OSCAR LOPEZ-RIVERA

16 city/suburbs



MICHAEL DEUTSCH, legal counsel, to Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez-Rivera, marks the plea Friday night following the conviction of the FALN leader by a U.S. District Court jury on a series of terrorism charges. (Sun-Times Photo by Phil Volopoy)

4 guilty in FALN prison plot

Chicago Tribune, 7/17/81

By William B. Crivello Jr.

Oscar Lopez-Rivera, a leader of the Puerto Rican independence group FALN, and three FALN sympathizers were found guilty Thursday of plotting to use guns, explosives and a helicopter to free Lopez-Rivera from a federal prison in Kansas.

A jury in the courtroom of U.S. District Judge William Hart reached its verdict after 13 hours of deliberations over three days. Hart was sentencing for Feb. 26.

The FALN, which advocates independence for Puerto Rico, in the past has resorted to setting off bombs in public places in Chicago and other cities to call attention to its goals.

Convicted on conspiracy and other charges resulting from the plot to free Lopez-Rivera and another inmate, Gerald Brown, Garcia and Delgado have remained free pending the trial outcome. After the jury was dismissed, Hart ordered Delgado locked up in the Federal Metropolitan Correctional Center pending sentencing.



Oscar Lopez-Rivera

He scheduled a hearing for Monday to decide whether Delgado should remain in custody until sentencing. Hart acted after prosecutor Daniel Gillig, deputy chief of the U.S. attorney's criminal division, said that the

Four Guilty in Plot to Free Puerto Rican Terrorist

CHICAGO, July 17 (AP)—Four men were found guilty Thursday of plotting to free Oscar Lopez-Rivera, a leader of the Puerto Rican independence group FALN, from a federal prison in Kansas. The men were charged with conspiring to use guns, explosives and a helicopter to free Lopez-Rivera and another inmate, Gerald Brown, from the prison. The men were charged with conspiring to use guns, explosives and a helicopter to free Lopez-Rivera and another inmate, Gerald Brown, from the prison. The men were charged with conspiring to use guns, explosives and a helicopter to free Lopez-Rivera and another inmate, Gerald Brown, from the prison.



Chicago Sun-Times, Thursday, February 19, 1981

FALN terrorists given 55 to 90 years in prison

Continued from Page 3

He and 16 other FALN members are serving sentences in Pontiac Correctional Center. They were convicted on Feb. 11 following their arrest in Evanston while plotting to steal an armored truck.

Lopez-Rivera was arrested by Cleveland police, who stopped his auto for a routine traffic violation. He bragged that "the FBI has been looking for me for five years. They could not catch me."

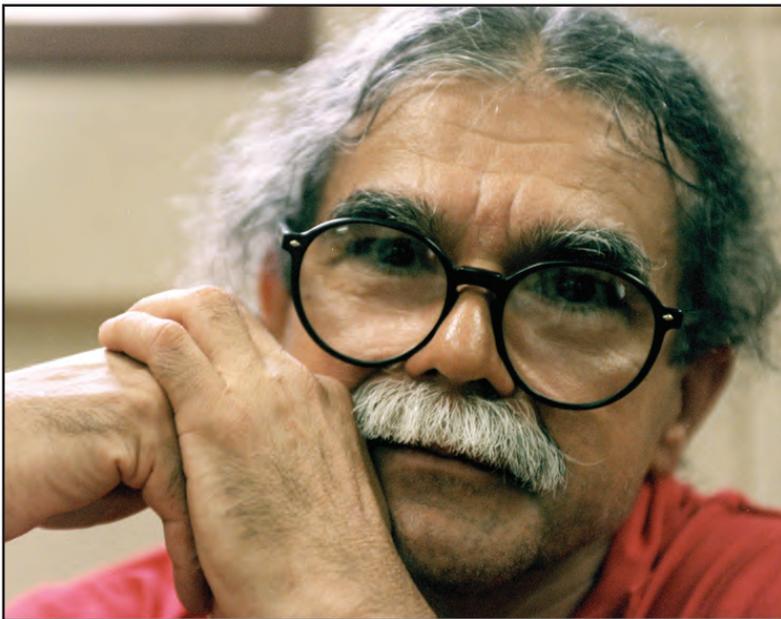
He asked for 15-minute periods on the jury with the words, "Puerto Rico will be a free and socialist country," which prompted 35 people in the audience to stand and applaud, while chanting in Spanish.

THE group members were charged with taking part in 28 bombings, an attempted kidnapping on the Chicago and Evanston (IIT) and 1979.



The news clipping collages are put together from actual newspapers published between 1980 to 1987 and found in the archives of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) in Chicago. They reflect the government's propaganda war and lowest form of journalism against the Puerto Rican independence movement, the Puerto Rican community of Chicago and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

THE SENTENCING



The Court: *You mentioned George Washington, you know if George Washington had been captured by the British during the American Revolution he wouldn't have been put in the penitentiary or jailed; he would have been executed. And that, as a matter a fact, is the penalty which should be imposed on Count 1 in this case. However, Congress has given me a maximum of 20 years on which I can sentence you to the penitentiary on Count 1, which is Seditious Conspiracy, in violation of our statute, which is section 2384 of Title 18. I can sentence you both to 20 years on Count 1.*

The quote above is taken from the Transcript of Proceedings in Carlos Alberto's case, in which Judge Thomas R. McMillan sentenced him and other Puerto Rican Political Prisoners arrested on April 4, 1980 in Evanston, Illinois. Sentencing took place on Wednesday, February 18, 1981.

25 Days for 25 Years:

For the freedom of Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

Many in this world do not know that there are political prisoners in the United States, let alone Puerto Rican ones. In response to such an injustice and in order to foment knowledge of their existence and continue the call for their freedom in Chicago, the Café Teatro Batey Urbano and the National Boricua Human Rights Network built an art installation, a prison cell with a bed, toilet, and sink, so that the men, women, and children in our community could play a part in understanding our living history.

The response was mixed from everyday pedestrians who gazed at the prisoners through the glass window of the storefront cell and read the written statement that explained the project. Some looked on in awe or with a smile, while other disgruntled Humboldt Park residents quickly walked past the exhibit with raised eyebrows. Through the course of their twenty-four hour stay, the volunteer prisoners read about the Puerto Rican independence movement, particularly the political prisoners Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres, and were asked to write a letter to them.

Several elected officials including



State Representative Cynthia Soto and Commissioner Roberto Maldonado visited the “inmates.” The cell exhibit was featured in *La Raza* and the *Chicago Tribune* as part of an article highlighting the efforts of Batey Urbano.



Most importantly, the time that they spent in the mock jail cell provided the opportunity to contemplate their position in history, the struggles of the Puerto Rican people, and their



possible role in preserving a vibrant community. The most interesting aspect of the art installation is that it counters the image of Humboldt Park as blighted, instead presenting a picture of Puerto Rican artistic innovation.

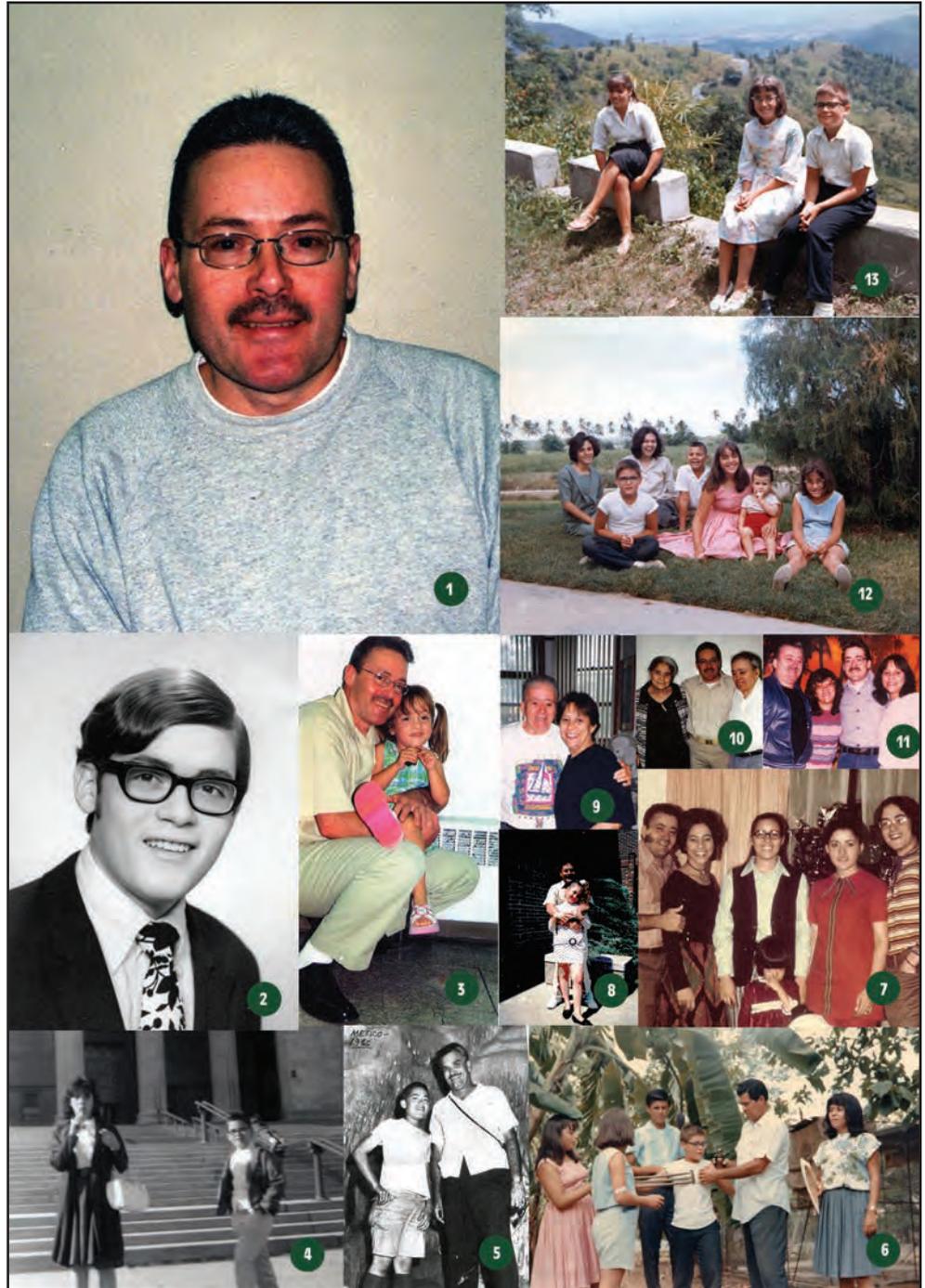
Paseo Boricua is a place where art, community history, and politics can and do intersect, where barrio residents can view history through a glass window.

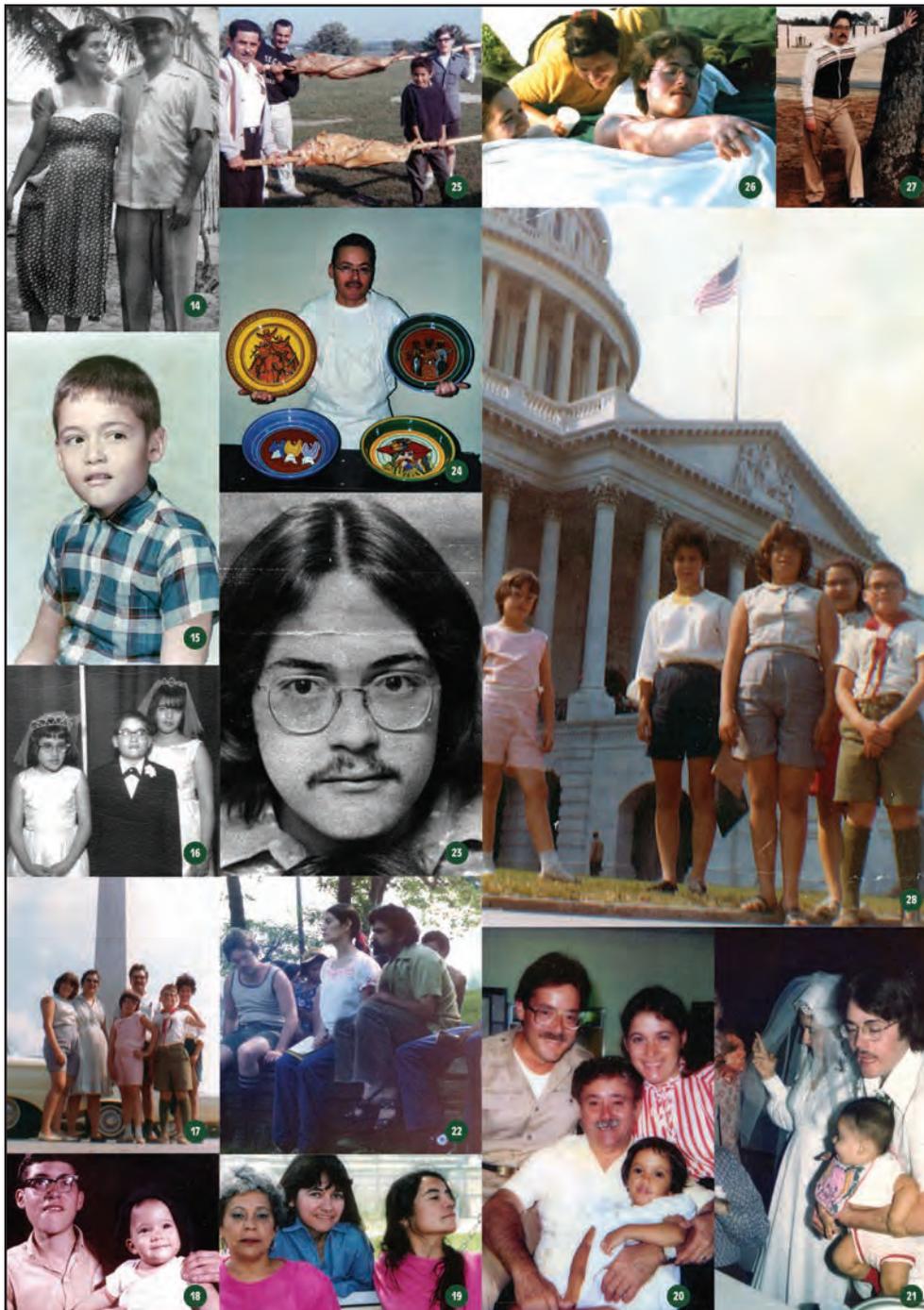
*This article is an adaption of an article that originally appeared in *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*, June 2006.*

Family Album

Carlos Alberto Torres

1. At FCI Oxford, 2005.
2. Oak Park-River Forest High School graduation picture, circa 1970
3. At FCI Oxford with granddaughter Noemi Alexandra.
4. At Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, circa 1960s.
5. In Monterrey, Mexico, with Rev. Angel Luis Jaime, childhood friend of Rev. Torres, 1966
6. In Guayanilla, Puerto Rico with church friends, circa 1964
7. Family portrait in Chicago, from left to right: Rev. José Alberto Torres “El Viejo”, Alejandrina, Norma, Nidza, Carlos Alberto, sitting: Liza Beth, circa 1968
8. With daughter Clarissa at FCI Oxford, circa 1990s
9. Rev. Torres with wife Alejandrina.
10. At FCI Oxford, with Rev. Torres and Carlos Alberto’s aunt, Maria Antonia Fernández, circa 2001
11. At Menard Correctional Center, IL with “El Viejo,” Alejandrina and Liza Beth Torres, circa 1982.
12. In Peñuelas, Puerto Rico, circa 1964.
13. Traveling “La Piquiña” with sisters Norma and Nidza, Puerto Rico, circa 1966.





14. Rev. Torres with his first wife, Norma while pregnant with Carlos Alberto, circa 1952.

15. Carlos Alberto in first grade, circa 1959.

16. Nidza, Carlos Alberto and Norma at Viejo and Alejandrina's wedding, circa 1964.

17. Carlos Alberto in Boy Scout uniform on family trip to Washington DC (Pictured also are Angel Luis Jaime and wife Hilda), circa 1963.

18. Carlos Alberto with sister, Lisa Beth, circa 1967.

19. Puerto Rican political prisoners in Pleasanton FCI: Stepmother Alejandrina Torres, Haydee Beltrán and Ida Luz Rodríguez, circa 1993.

20. With sister Nidza, niece Noemi and Rev. Torres at FCI Oxford, circa 1996.

21. Carlos Alberto and Haydée Beltrán at their wedding, circa 1975.

22. Carlos Alberto, Ida Luz Rodríguez and Oscar López Rivera at church camping trip, circa 1975.

23. At the University of Illinois, circa 1973.

24. At FCI Oxford arts & crafts workshop, circa 2005.

25. BBQ'ing "lechón asado" at a church picnic at Pleasant Valley camp. Circa 1964.

26. Carlos Alberto and Haydée at church picnic (Pleasant Valley Camp), circa 1975.

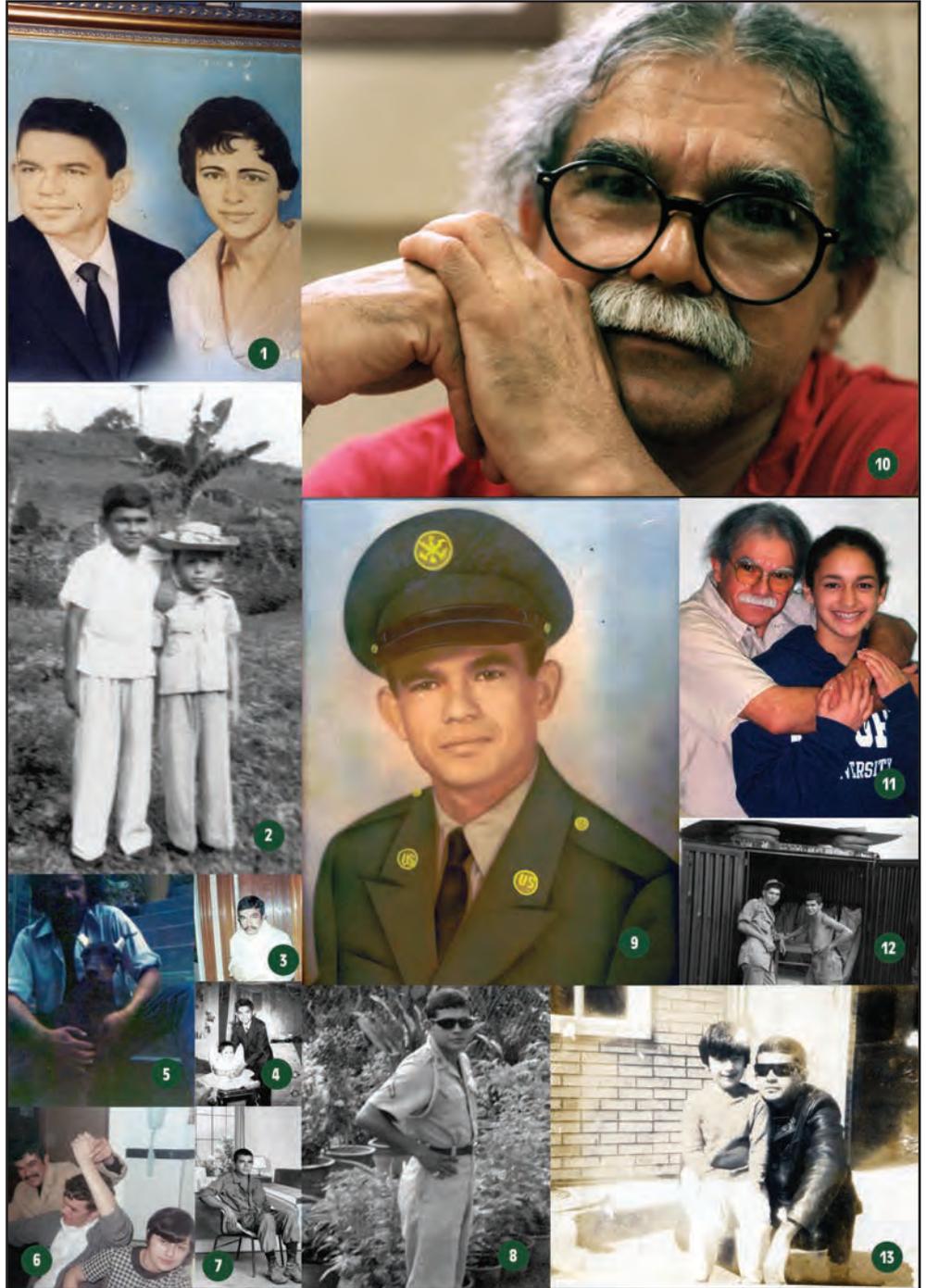
27. At FCI Talladega, circa 1995.

28. Carlos Alberto in Boy Scout uniform on family trip to Washington DC (Pictured also are Angel Luis Jaime and wife Hilda), circa 1963.

Family Album

Oscar López Rivera

1. Graduation picture of Oscar and sister Mercedes, circa 1960.
2. Oscar with younger brother José in Barrio Aibonito, San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, circa 1955.
3. After return from Army, circa 1970.
4. With niece Babbie Lugo in Chicago, circa 1958.
5. In Chicago as community organizer, with beloved doberman "Jibara."
6. With sister Zenaida and her husband, Michael Reyes Sr., circa 1970.
7. In Vietnam, circa 1965.
8. Backyard in Chicago, circa 1966.
9. In dress uniform, almost ready to leave Army, circa 1966.
10. At USP Marion, circa 1995.
11. With granddaughter Karina, USP Terre Haute 2004.
12. With buddy Fernando in Vietnam, circa 1965.
13. On Chicago's Division Street with niece Wanda Colón, circa 1965.





14. Oscar at USP Marion, IL, circa 1988.

15. Oscar with mother Mita (Andrea López) at USP Leavenworth, circa 1983.

16. Left to right: Josefina Rodríguez, Damian Rodríguez (son of former Puerto Rican political prisoner Ida Luz Rodríguez), Oscar, daughter Clarisa López, and attorney Melinda Power at USP Leavenworth, circa 1982.

17. Left to right: Oscar, daughter Clarisa, niece Wanda Colón and granddaughter Karina Valentín at USP Terre Haute, circa 2000.

18. Oscar at ADX Florence, circa 1996.

19. Oscar and Laura Ruth Johnson at USP Terre Haute, circa 1999.

20. Oscar at USP Marion, circa 1997

21. Oscar with nephews Damien Nuñez and Michael Colón at USP Terre Haute, circa 2001.

22. Oscar at ADX Florence, circa 1996.

23. Oscar with sister Mercedes at USP Leavenworth, circa 1983.

24. Ernesto Gómez (son of ex-Puerto Rican political prisoners Guillermo Morales and Dylcia Págan), Clarisa López (daughter of Oscar) and Mercedes López (sister of Oscar) in Cuba for conference on Puerto Rican political prisoners, circa 1996.

My name is Karina Valentín López. I was born on May 1, 1991, and I am the granddaughter of political prisoner Oscar López Rivera and former political prisoner Carmen Valentín. Since I was a month old my parents would take me to visit my respective grandparents in prison. My paternal grandmother, Carmen Valentín, was in the women's prison in Dublin, California. The visits there took place in the afternoons and when I'd get to the visiting room my grandmother Carmen was already waiting for me.

This visiting room was different from my grandfather Oscar's. In Dublin I could visit with my grandmother and go outside to a patio where we could play. The patio was one of my favorite places because I was able to spend time with my grandmother Carmen and play on the swings. Although it was pleasant it wasn't ideal because when the visit was over, I had to leave my grandmother behind; it was very hard for me to walk to the exit door with my father, and let go of my grandmother's hand before the guard scolded us.

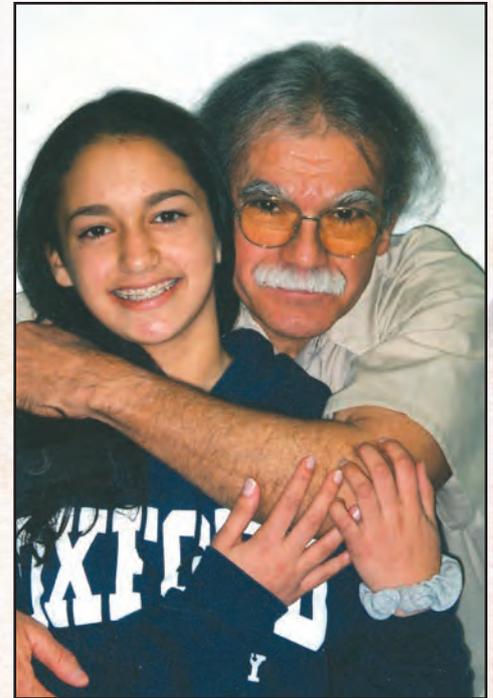
During the first years that I visited my maternal grandfather, it was in the federal prison in Marion, Illinois. Only two adults and three children were permitted there. My mother told me she was allowed to bring in

A WINDOW SEPARATED US...

Karina Valentín López

three pampers and twelve bottles of milk. Marion was a Control Unit, and we could only see *Abuelo* Oscar, we could NOT touch him, nor he us. For many years a window separated us. I used to put my hands on it and try and play with my grandfather in some way. There were no patio or swings in Marion, and the guards were hostile. Four or five guards escorted *Abuelo* Oscar. He was the only prisoner that was always brought out in this way. Then *Abuelo* Oscar was transferred to the prison in Florence, Colorado. The visiting room there was underground. While entering we passed three different checkpoints and we noticed, on the way, that we were going towards the basement.

The room was cream colored and my grandfather's clothes were the same color. I don't have photos of my grandfather from Marion or Florence. Photos weren't permitted. So our first photo was in 1998, when he was transferred to Terre Haute, Indiana, after twelve years in prisons with no contact visits. It was there that we hugged for the first



time. When my grandfather stood in front of us, everyone hugged him but me. I wasn't accustomed, because during the past seven years touching him wasn't permitted, and so I did the only thing I was used to: I put my hands in front of him like I always did in front of the window that separated us. It was my mother who told me that now I could touch him, and I hugged him. Although we could have physical contact with him at this prison, hugging was only

permitted when you arrived and when you left.

To visit Terre Haute you have to pass a drug detector called the ion scan. The problem is that although I am only 14 years old and have never been in contact with drugs or alcohol, The machine said I tested positive two times, and my visits with my grandfather were denied. For them, a drug can be cat hair or a medicine you are taking for an illness. The guards themselves acknowledge that the machine picks up whatever is on clothing, and that there is a high incidence of potential positive results for people who stay in hotels or who rent cars. Unfortunately, I always go in rented cars, and we often stay in hotels. Now, in Puerto Rico, I take my clothes to a dry cleaner and I keep them in plastic until I'm

going to use them. I bring sheets and towels and bills exactly as given at the bank. We don't touch anything until the visit.

*“...I visit him a few times
a year and anxiously
wait for his freedom
so that he can travel
and enjoy
so many things that
we've been denied...”*

At the Terre Haute visits they always seat us in the same area in front of the guards' desk and in direct sight of all the video cameras in the room. My favorite game is UNO, so each time I go, I teach him how to play. We try not to laugh so they won't

punish *Abuelo*, but sometimes we can't resist. While I'm with him I try to make the four hours with me marvelous.

Presently *Abuelo* Oscar calls us every week, and I try to communicate with him frequently by writing. I visit him a few times a year and anxiously wait for his freedom so that he can travel and enjoy so many things that we've been denied.

I feel very special because two of my grandparents have dedicated their lives to my country. Although this is something very special, at the same time, it has caused us a lot of sorrow and suffering. Our family's sacrifices have been enormous, but there are no regrets because they have been for a just cause.

For 26 years, I have been visiting my uncle, Carlos Alberto Torres, in prison, and his strength, dedication, intelligence and creativity continue to inspire me. I admire how he has truly known how to live in spite of his imprisonment and continue to be a strong-spirited human being, one who is caring and constantly busy challenging his mind. His ability to create is exemplified in his artwork.

I was eight years old when my uncle was arrested, along with my aunt Haydée. From that day on my life was changed. I started to see the world very differently as I learned about the United States history of control over Puerto Rico. I knew that Vieques was used as a war games training camp and that bombs were used even though people lived there. I remember the mysterious death of Angel Rodríguez Cristobal during his brief imprisonment for resisting the military actions in Vieques. I knew that my uncle was not the criminal portrayed by the media but was in prison for defending against the injustices done in Puerto Rico.

As a child I remember feeling it was difficult to share my experiences at school and the way I viewed the world. Our family directly experienced what it was like to have a grandmother in prison in sensory deprivation, to have my uncle put in segregation for no reason, and prison visits in which we would be reprimanded for

TWO GENERATIONS: *Memories of a Niece*

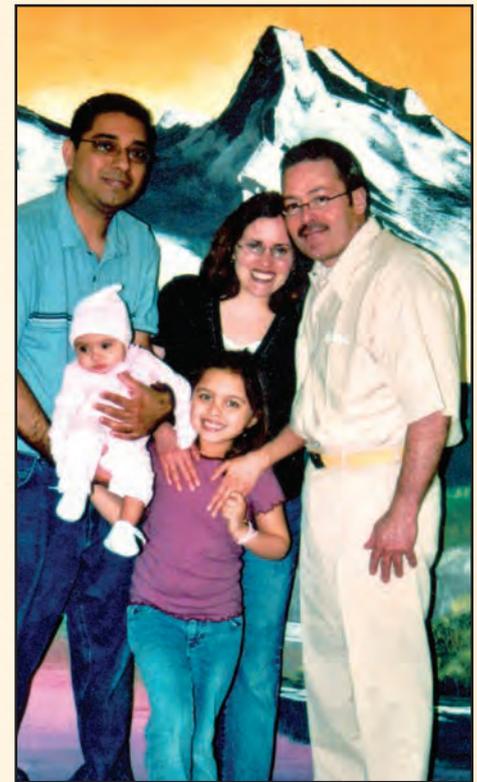
María Rejdukowski Torres

hugging. I learned that the myth that these injustices didn't occur in the US was just that — a myth. These experiences taught me to question and not just assume that things are the way they appear to be because it is the idea that is widely accepted or conveyed by the mainstream media.

Facing constant repression at a young age, I also learned to hold in my feelings, be strong and not shed a tear even though many of our experiences were painful, scary and infuriating. Our family and friends have been persecuted, followed and harassed. I can vividly recall the sadness and tightening of my chest when I saw my grandmother in the courtroom after her arrest. And to this day it still breaks my heart to leave my uncle after a visit. Even at home, it was natural to expect that our telephone conversations were tapped. It wasn't easy to be expressive, as it felt like our thoughts and feelings were held hostage. It wasn't until adulthood that the effects of this repression became easier to manage.

Part of what helped us persevere through all of this was the reminder

that injustice existed and a profound sense of hope to try and change this oppressive situation. Our typical



evenings and weekends consisted of attending meetings, protests, leafleting or visiting family in prison. Over time, we learned to tune out the metal detectors, cameras and guards watching and listening, and automatically tune in with each other

and take advantage of each second we could share together.

Our family unity grew, much of it due to the strength and conviction of my grandfather, José Alberto 'Viejo' Torres. I was fortunate to be part of many of my grandfather's visits in his later years to see my uncle. Any chance he got, he'd be the first one in the front seat ready to see his son. He'd say, "I'll go anytime someone wants to take me." When I'd look at my grandfather, I would see his pain at seeing his son in prison, but I also saw and admired his strength and resolution to hope.

Just after my grandfather passed away, on the other side of a full, noisy, visiting room, my aunts told my uncle that his dad was no longer physically with us.

Now two generations in my family have grown up with my uncle in prison. After many years he got to meet his only daughter again, who he had last seen before his arrest. Recently, he was unable to meet his

When I'd look at my grandfather, I would see his pain at seeing his son in prison, but I also saw and admired his strength and resolution to hope.

second, granddaughter, one-year-old who had traveled more than seven hours with family, due to a sudden lock down at the prison. After two years of being in prison, my uncle met my younger sister Noemi, and sixteen years later had to hear the news of

her death, due to a drunk driver, over the phone. He has met my husband as well as my two daughters while in prison.

My uncle has missed many of the highlights of our life. Only weeks ago my brother was married, and Uncle Berti was unable to attend. Maybe my six year old daughter conveyed it best "I don't like Uncle Berti's house. I wish he'd move to another one closer where more people can visit and we can do more things together." It is obvious that his continued imprisonment is unjust and is due to his political convictions. It's been too long for us — his family and for his community. It's time to bring him home.

Art is a multitude of things truly beautiful. Art is life affirming, celebrative and uplifting. Art reveals the wonder, the revelation, and the joy. Art is a blessing and praise. It is spiritual and concrete; an awakening, strength of character and peace. Art seeks truth. Art is a necessity. Art is perception and vision. Art is about social and political reality. Art responds to life. Art and life are inseparable. Art is always progressively reaching out for life. Art is life.

Yet it is relatively difficult, if not impossible, for someone to feel the extent of another's pleasure or anguish. To make a visual statement or presentation and provoke a reaction or an experience in a profound way is the challenge. To envision an effective degree of spiritual certitude from material into visual forms ends up dwelling in reach of its own purpose, universe and contradictions. As much as the artist tries, there are times when art cannot get there.

But the persistence to reach both the external and internal luminous vision to give shape and certitude to meaning, knowledge, reason, justice and free will is the struggle that goes beyond art — it is also life. With clay, paint, crayons, paper, brushes, canvas and other means, the creative minds, vision and feelings of two individuals, without the pretense of being "Artists," are reaching out ... for life's luminosity. Both are In-

OUR PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS OF WAR AND THEIR ART

Juan Sánchez

dependentistas. Both have declared themselves Puerto Rican Prisoners of War. Both are embraced as our Puerto Rican freedom fighters. Even though many of our past captured warriors had their sentence commuted and were released under strict and limiting conditions by the imperial colonial government some years ago, Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres remain incarcerated for twenty-five years in maximum security federal penitentiaries with no liberty in sight. But it is their creative expressions that are reaching out for that luminosity from their prison cells.

Oscar López Rivera's and Carlos Alberto Torres' plight in resistance evolves around serving time with pride, integrity and dignity while distilling history, culture, feelings, yearnings and points of view with their creative imagination. They now concentrate in giving shape to materials and images with paint to instill a human determination and Puerto Rican consciousness to create visually serious and engaging



forms of cultural, social and political emancipation. Their multitude of aesthetic, formal and process concerns emanate from a personal as well as a communal state of consciousness. Their art became their own symbolic, aesthetic and metaphorical resistance. From their maximum security cells, in solitude

Juan Sánchez is a professor at the Art Department at Hunter College of the City University of New York. He has been active in the community and the movement to free Puerto Rican political prisoners since the early 1970s.

as well as under the weather, Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres continue to assert that Puerto Ricans should never exist under the

world. You see portraits of Albizu Campos, Lolita Lebrón, Pancho Villa, Frida Kahlo and a delightful little girl named Lali. There is this scary

wholes, bringing the force of facts to bear against the demoralizing injustice from everyday colonialism. Art is a self-determined act of empow-

“This is the art that collects and reorganizes fragments of reality into meaningful wholes, bringing the force of facts to bear against the demoralizing injustice from everyday colonialism.”



AfroRican, Juan Sánchez

obscure and foreign subjugation and control of colonialism.

The paintings, collages and ceramics by Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres are part of a sum in the cultural, social and political expression that goes beyond the criteria of craft, aesthetic, and creative accomplishments. They want to stimulate you to think, feel, believe and perceive in the way we should relate to our surroundings and the

but funny Vejigante and a beautiful hilly landscape occupied by children playing around shanty homes among other works. You can see in these splendid but humble pieces that Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres repeatedly bring to bear our lives, our culture, memories, stories...and our struggles. This is the art that came out of necessity. This is art we need to see and feel. This is the art that collects and reorganizes fragments of reality into meaningful

erment. Self-empowerment is what determines freedom. Art can be extremely lucid when in communion with a people and is most powerful when it illuminates.

With that intensive luminosity we must demand the unconditional release of Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres if our Puerto Rican integrity is to be free.

Prison reconfirms the great importance of art in our lives, not only to move the struggle for social and political change forward, but because the profound reflection and intensification that art requires helps us to better understand the real necessities and the true sense of individual and collective freedom. Thus, art becomes a weapon of symbolic exchange.

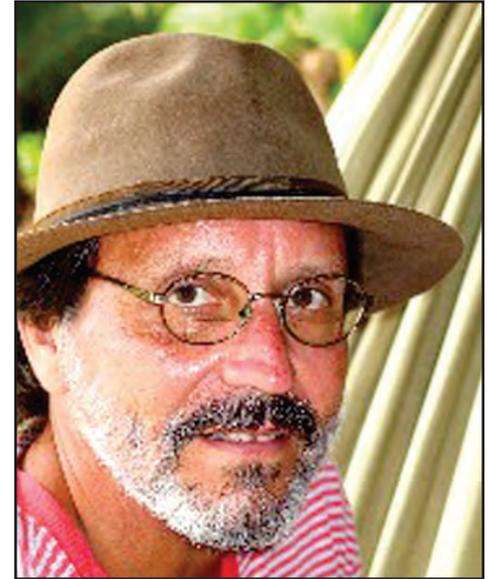
There is a brutal difference between “freedom” as a slogan or, at most, a psychologically attractive product of the modern-contemporary psyche, and the real practice of freedom which is as necessary as it is terrible in its consequences. There is also a dialectical relationship between the conscience of what is necessary and the capacity of sacrifice, courage and the decisions required by a practice of freedom. Thus, when repressive forces take those who have mobilized to demand civil, political and human rights to places of concentrated detention to isolate them from their communities to be punished there, often the practice of freedom transforms into art practice: inventive capacity and visionary sensibility, but also the ancestral, psychological and ontological basic necessity to make sense of our existence

POWER/ART/PRISON

Elizam Escobar

and the struggle for survival, but with the highest values of human culture. Something that begins to rescue us from censorship and self-censorship, desolation and incomprehension, at all levels of thought and emotion. Something that maybe was perceived more as an instrument or capricious activity than a power of expression and source of representations that nourish collective life.

Thus, art, in places of privation, has the power to liberate us and free the experience to share it with others far away. Images which, according to our political, religious or cultural beliefs, we may or may not agree with, are not only freed, but are freed in spite of these beliefs, because the catharsis of the artistic process is not merely a therapy. What the work shows can move us, perturb, surprise, reaffirm, confuse us, etc. But it will always be significant that thoughts and emotions travel materialized from a space as inhospitable as prison and from the experience, in this case, of two tireless fighters for the independence and the free-



doms of their nation and Puerto Rican communities in the diaspora.

From this perspective, art is a power. The efforts to silence and defeat our fighters, is an equivocation that repeats itself into absurdity and the power of art will show its face in spite of the bars and in spite of instrumentalist visions of art.

Elizam Escobar is a professor in the Painting Department of the School of Fine Arts (Escuela de Artes Plásticas) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. An internationally recognized art theorist and artist, he served 19.5 years in prison from 1980-1999 for his participation in the Puerto Rican independence movement.

From the silent cult of beauty, the artist also passes in silence to the reflective love of beauty, and develops no less subjective and even more powerful forces in the development of practical life: physical sensitivity, intimacy, and aesthetic sensitivity, that particular form of sensitivity in which much valued originality is enjoyed together with community and individuality.
Eugenio María de Hostos

To María Haydée Beltrán
with respect and gratitude...

Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres have served 25 years in prison. Throughout this long and unjust seclusion, the patriots made the decision to use their time, consciousness, and will to dedicate themselves to some manifestation of art with the purpose of leaping the wall of daily routine and taking part in life with a creative attitude. Many of the former political prisoners did exactly the same thing. Dylcia Pagán, Carmen Valentín, Alicia and Ida Luz Rodríguez, Edwin Cortés, Alejandrina Torres, Ricardo Jiménez, Adolfo Matos and Luis Rosa followed the route of free creation as a declaration of combat. Artistic tasks made them sprout wings to fly above the prison walls and, in that way, living a free Puerto Rico and demonstrating that prison is a form of struggle.

Art has no country, but the artist does. In our people's history, resistance in all its faculties and functions, and our persistence in being ourselves have always been interwoven. In 1797, José Campeche, our first great painter, was one of the defenders of the City during the siege by the English. Campeche understood that volunteering to defend his own was also a necessary art.

In the 19th century (1854), Daniel Rivera wrote an epic poem to Agüeybana el Bravo which was regarded as subversive for

ART AS A DECLARATION OF COMBAT

Brunilda E. García

its sharp criticism of the Spanish government. The writer from Ponce was judicially persecuted and imprisoned for this poetic crime. In 1833, Francisco Oller left pictorial statements of our social and class reality. It suffices to list the names of his paintings about historical themes, landscapes and customs: *A Beggar, Unemployed, Lunch for the Rich, Lunch for the Poor, Colón in Chains, The Wake*, and others.

At the beginning of the decade of the turbulent 70's, one Fourth of July, Carlos Raquel Rivera, our creative genius for communicating images and a benchmark for the generations that followed, was clubbed by the police. On this occasion, they fractured one of his arms. Carlos Raquel, afflicted and immobile from the torturous pain that trapped him, told us one day that just as the painter searches for his expression through daring to break his own creative patterns; thought (referring to consciousness) worked its way toward discovering the essence of freedom.

In 1978, another Fourth of July, Pablo Marcano García and Nydia Cuevas took over the Chilean Consulate in San Juan, to demand the release of the imprisoned Nationalists and denounce the absurdity of celebrating in Puerto Rico the independence of the United States. In prison, Marcano García learned to paint from Carlos Irizarry, a renowned Puerto Rican plastic artist, who had been imprisoned for carrying out a work of conceptual art. Is art so threatening that those who produce it must be censored and imprisoned?

In 1980, another painter, Elizam Escobar, was captured as part of a clandestine movement that struggled for the independence of Puerto Rico. His work created in prison coincided with the process he had undergone as a person, artist, and Puerto Rican.

History persists in emphasizing signs. This exhibit, *Not Enough Space*, is an emblematic display of the wisdom and commitment of Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres. Aesthetics that is useful to dignity. Both artists used the appropriation of tropical colors, red, orange, yellow, the Island's foliage green, as a talisman to maintain their profoundly Caribbean identity.

Some images are deeply moving: Oscar's mother, our beloved and remembered Mita, seated at the sewing machine in her home in San Sebastián; one of Carlos' pieces that seems to be autobiographical, where he sees himself crucified.

In these times, "*when the agony of men fills our destiny with terror,*" let us celebrate this impressive victory of our indomitable people, represented by our imprisoned patriots, Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres. They are warriors of the love of art and freedom, irrefutable testimony that our political star or destiny is a future toward the indispensable social justice and independence of our country.

Brunilda E. García is a member of the Human Rights Committee in Puerto Rico, a renowned playwright, dramatist, producer, and radio personality.

ALIVE and KICKING

Jan Susler

Throughout their long years in prison, Carlos Alberto and Oscar, like their compañeros released in 1999, in the thirst for the need to express themselves uncensored, found such expression through art. Never having painted, drawn or worked with ceramics before prison, they taught themselves the skills, and patiently worked to hone them.

in the public eye. This creative way to reach out through the bars speaks volumes as to who Carlos and Oscar are, as does their art. Their love of Puerto Rican culture and history, their appreciation for nature, their painstaking work, are tangible evidence of their commitment. Their humility and love of family and “pueblo” is seen in the list of who



San Juan, Puerto Rico opening of Not Enough Space at Casablanca

In anticipation of the 25th anniversaries of their arrest and imprisonment, Carlos conceived a traveling exhibit of his ceramics and paintings, and Oscar’s paintings and drawings, as a way to place the case of the Puerto Rican political prisoners

owns their work: sisters, daughters, and nieces, as well as community institutions, particularly Chicago’s Puerto Rican Cultural Center, which they helped to found in the mid-1970’s. The “whole” says to us, unequivocally, “We are alive and

kicking,” that even 25 years of prison cannot rob us of our culture, cannot extinguish our commitment to our people and the right of the people determine our own destiny, cannot deny us our Puerto Rican identity.

Jan Susler, an attorney with the People’s Law Office in Chicago, has worked with the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and the Independence Movement since 1980. She was lead counsel in efforts leading to the 1999 Presidential commutation, and continues to be legal counsel for Carlos Alberto Torres and Oscar López Rivera.



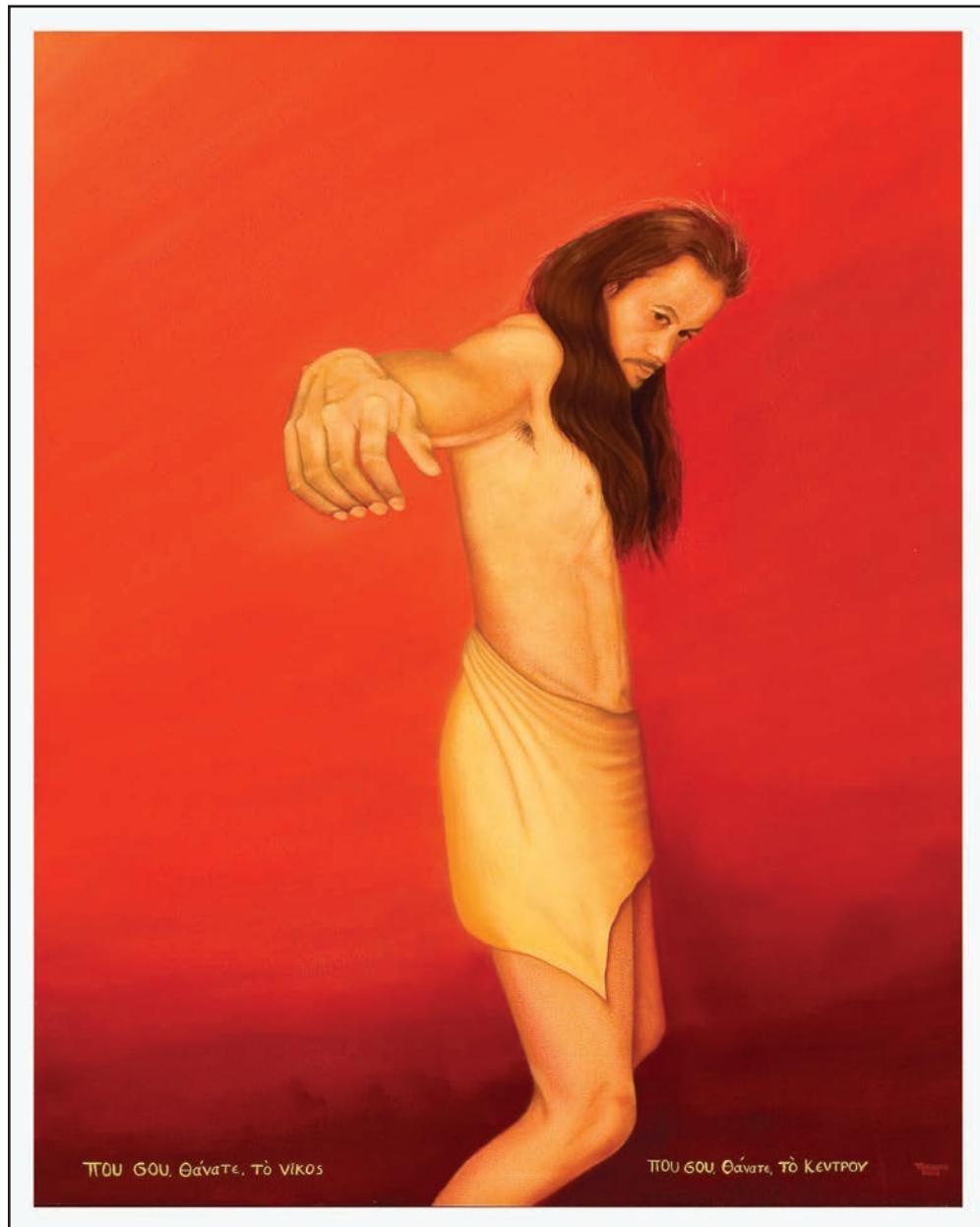
“When I paint I feel alive; and when I finish a painting it's as if I've reached a mountain top. When I give it to who it was intended for, it's like giving flowers to one's mother. When I began to work with ceramics, it was love at first sight.”

*Carlos Alberto Torres
January 2004*

BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS

Carlos Alberto Torres

Carlos Alberto Torres was born in Puerto Rico on September 19th, 1952. His family relocated to New York and later to Chicago. He studied at Southern Illinois University and at the University of Illinois in Chicago. During that time he became actively involved in community struggles for better education, improved housing and jobs. Carlos Alberto also supported the movement for Puerto Rican independence and participated in the campaign to free the Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners. In 1976



TITLE: THE RESURRECTION

Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres

Year: 2001

Media: oil on canvas

Dimensions: 53" x 42"

Collection: United Church of Christ Archives

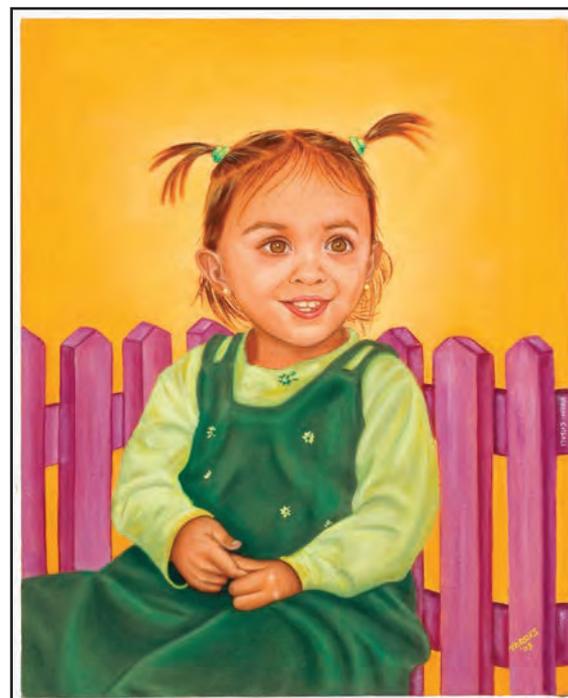
Note 1

he was accused of being a member of the FALN (Armed Forces for National Liberation) which caused him to go into clandestinity. In 1980, Carlos Alberto was arrested and charged with seditious conspiracy and sentenced to 78 years in state and federal prisons. While in jail he completed a bachelor's degree and became interested in the visual arts. In 1999, inexplicably, Carlos Alberto did not receive President Clinton's offer of sentence commutation, which was offered to 11 other Puerto Rican political prisoners. Throughout the years, Carlos Alberto has learned to express himself through writing, painting and ceramics. He is a father and grandfather and will complete the maximum of his sentence in the year 2024.

In his 25 years of imprisonment, Carlos Alberto has confirmed the significance of art as a process for the liberation of the human spirit when confronted with the most adverse situations. All of this is evidenced in his art production, which reveals his profound human sensibility. The creative work of Carlos Alberto is a proposal of love and solidarity for his community and country. The color, happiness and optimism reflected in his creative work are undeniable proof of Carlos Alberto's freedom of mind and spirit, despite his physical incarceration.



TITLE: VEJIGANTE LIDDED JAR #3
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 7.5" x 7.5" x 7.5"
Collection: Nidza Torres
Note 2



TITLE: LALI
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: oil on canvas
Dimensions: 16" x 20"
Collection: Maria Rejdkowski Torres
Note 3

ARTIST STATEMENT

Carlos Alberto Torres

During the early years of my incarceration I recognized that challenging myself with new goals was an essential component of living through this experience. Separated from my family and friends, from familiar surroundings, this new social reality would test every part of my make up. As a political prisoner and person of conscience, one of the challenges I would face would be to maintain a balance between the perspective that corresponds to the demands of living in this unnatural setting and an outlook that would preserve and best reflect the ideas, goals and hopes that I aspire to as a Puerto Rican patriot and political being. Although it is an imperfect process, with time I learned that the best approach for me was to allow new interests and perspectives to evolve naturally and seek out and cultivate skills that would permit creative self-expression. I would transform my physical captivity into a time for learning, productive accomplishments and moral victory.

The reality of incarceration most often includes the transfer from one prison to another. No two prisons are identical. The pace and conditions of life, the availability of resources and services, vary from place to place. On arriving here [FCI Oxford] I discovered that there was a well organized art program, and that under the rubric "hobbycraft," facilities existed for painting, pottery/ceramics and leatherwork. The program was supervised by an elderly artist



**TITLE: SELF-PORTRAIT WITH HIBISCUS
AND CANARY FLOWERS**
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2001
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 15" x 15" x 2"
Collection: Nidza Torres

couple. However, because the program was mostly treated as a recreational activity, teaching by either of the couple was very limited. In most cases, another prisoner in the program would help a beginner get started. One could either sink or swim based on one's personal ingenuity and creative will. My first choice was painting.

It does not require much experience to recognize the narrative potential of painting. It can be storytelling by different means. The symbolic potency of visual images is no less powerful than the spoken work or written word. These essential characteristics I found compelling.

For several years I painted with acrylic paints. Acrylics dry very fast and generally provide a wide range of bright colors. As a novice this served me well. I wanted to paint fast and often, choosing themes from Puerto Rican life and history. As I moved towards portraits and more refined portrayals of human form, using acrylic paints remained a great challenge. Eventually, I moved into oil paints, and although this was like starting all over again, its unique qualities were very appealing.

There is a physicality to working with clay that I liked very much and that was absent in painting. When I began to work in clay, as with painting, the process was mostly autodidactic. A spirit of cooperation is generally an alien notion in prison; the nature of the experience leads many towards self-centeredness, suspicion and drastic individualism. Although the art program was no exception, this would



TITLE: KINDRED SOULS
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 9" x 8" x 9"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: THE MUSE'S DREAM
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2002
Media: glazed red earthenware
Dimensions: 7" x 8" x 7"
Collection: Museo de la Masacre de Ponce
Note 4

change somewhat with time. In order to get started, I viewed several pottery videos, read books on the subject, and subscribed to a ceramics magazine. When possible I was assisted by another prisoner and local artist who took over the supervision of the program when the elderly couple retired. When he in turn left, the pottery program's teaching responsibility fell mostly to another prisoner.

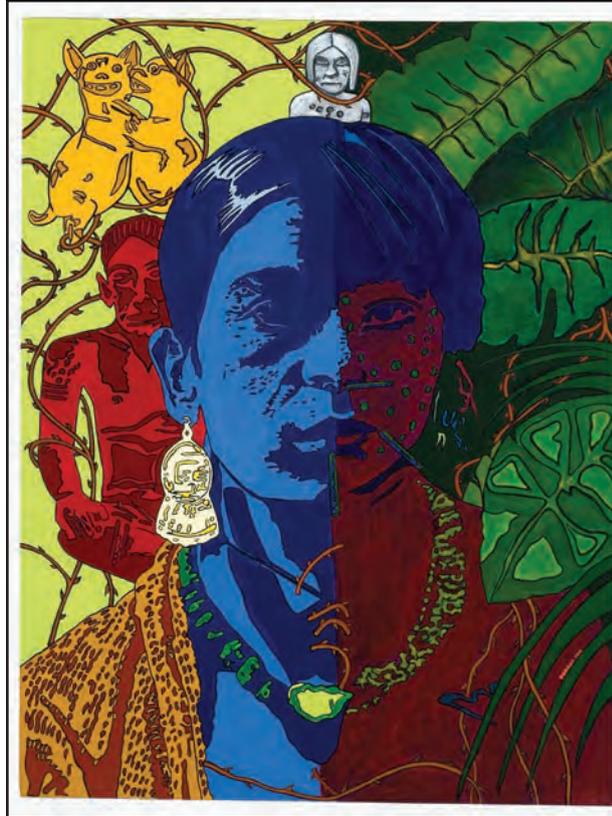
I initially treated pottery decoration as if it was an extension of painting, as though the fired clay was simply another surface to paint on. I abandoned this mechanistic approach as I developed and acquired experience. Nevertheless, my experience with paints left a mark and continues to influence my approach to a piece. My strong interest in natural history, archeology, and the history and life of Puerto Rico also influences the subjects I choose when developing a piece. I employ recognizable symbols for some of the pieces and in particular when making the vejigante mask.

No man is an island; I am no exception. I would like to thank my family and everyone who has contributed so much to organizing this art exhibition. Without their effort, it would have remained only an idea. Thank you.

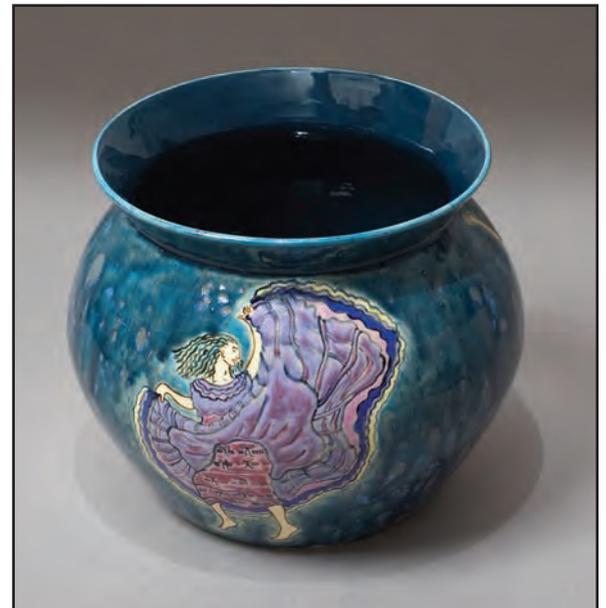
WRITE TO

CARLOS ALBERTO TORRES

Carlos Alberto Torres, 88976-024
FCI Oxford, P.O. Box 1000,
Oxford, WI 53952



TITLE: FRIDA
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 1998
Media: acrylic over canvas
Dimensions: 31" x 41"
Collection: Maria Rejdkowski Torres
Note 5



TITLE: THE BOMBA DANCERS
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2002
Media: glazed stoneware
Dimensions: 8" x 8" x 9"
Collection: Noemilda Vélez Mass
Note 6



TITLE: VEJIGANTE LIDDED JAR #3
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 6" x 7" x 6"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: RUSTIC FLOWERPOT
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2002
Media: leather, wicker and sodium bicarbonate on stoneware
Dimensions: 13" x 10" x 13"
Collection: José A. Torres (El Viejo)

TITLE: LILLIES OF THE VALLEY
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2004
Media: glazed stoneware
Dimensions: 13" x 5" x 13"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: BOMBA DANCER
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: glazed stoneware
Dimensions: 13" x 13" x 2"
Collection: Nidza Torres





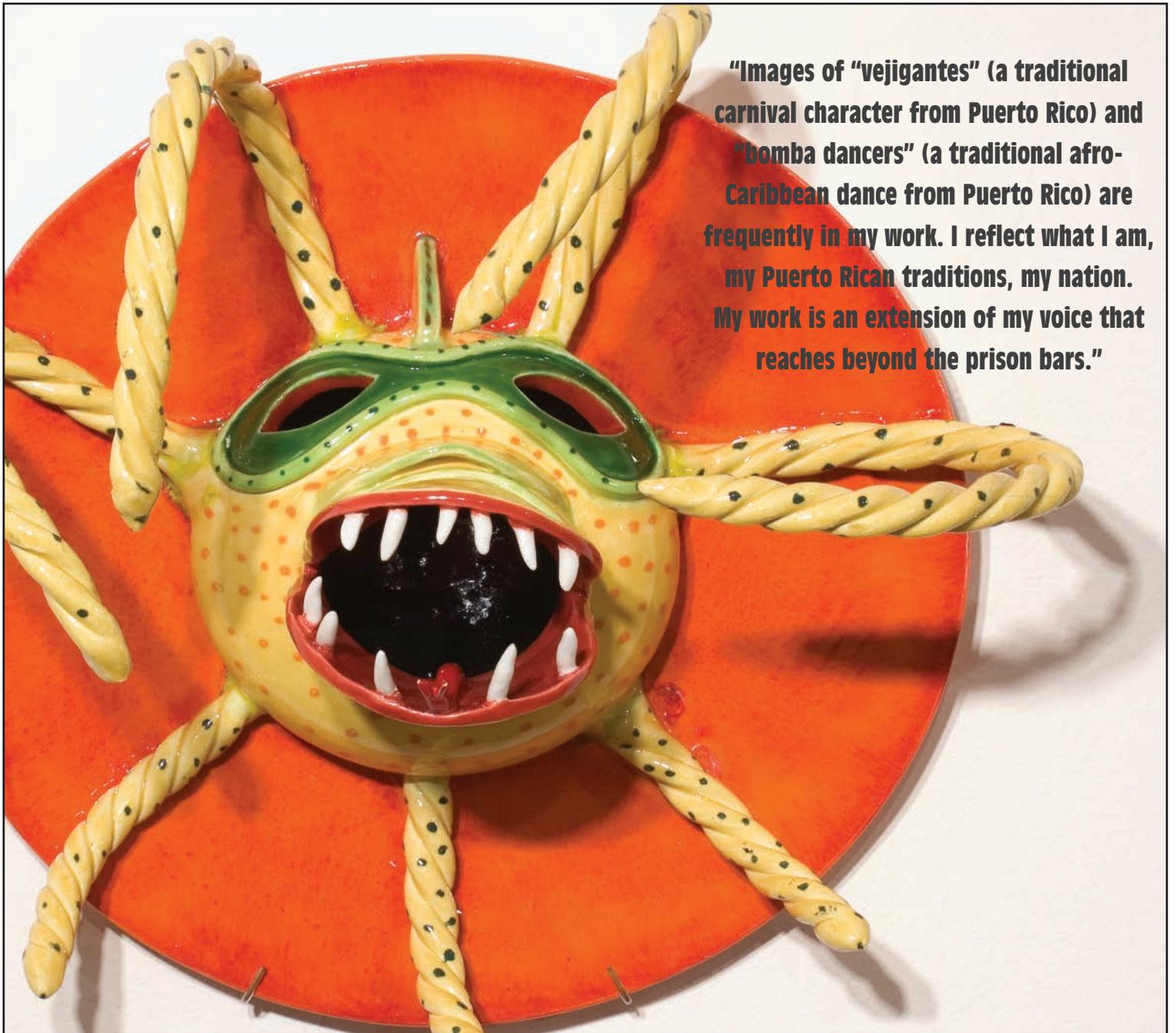
TITLE: VEJIGANTE LIDDED JAR #2
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 7" x 7" x 7"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: IRISES
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2002
Media: wicker and glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 10" x 6" x 10"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: FUNERARY URN FOR MY FATHER'S ASHES
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2005
Media: glazed earthenware
Dimensions: 8" x 7"
Collection: Alejandrina Torres



"Images of "vejigantes" (a traditional carnival character from Puerto Rico) and "bomba dancers" (a traditional afro-Caribbean dance from Puerto Rico) are frequently in my work. I reflect what I am, my Puerto Rican traditions, my nation. My work is an extension of my voice that reaches beyond the prison bars."

TITLE: VEJIGANTE MASK #1
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2004
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 16" x 16" x 8"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: VEJIGANTE LIDDED JAR #1
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2003
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 6" x 7" x 6"
Collection: Nidza Torres



TITLE: COCKFIGHT
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2006
Media: glazed earthenware
Dimensions: 14" x 14" x 2"
Collection: Torres Family

TITLE: PLAINTAIN AND LEAF SERVING TRAY
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2006
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 21" x 8" x 4"
Collection: Torres Family

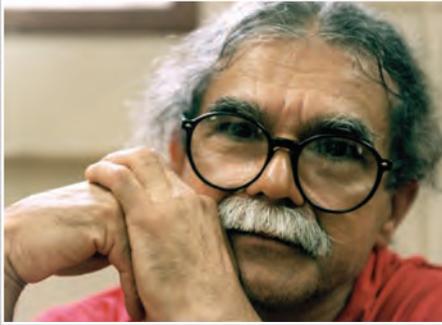




TITLE: VEJIGANTE MASK #2
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2004
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 16" x 16" x 8"
Collection: Nidza Torres

TITLE: "VEJIGANTE A LA BOLLA"
Artist: Carlos Alberto Torres
Year: 2006
Media: glazed white earthenware
Dimensions: 23" x 32" x 14"
Collection: Nidza Torres

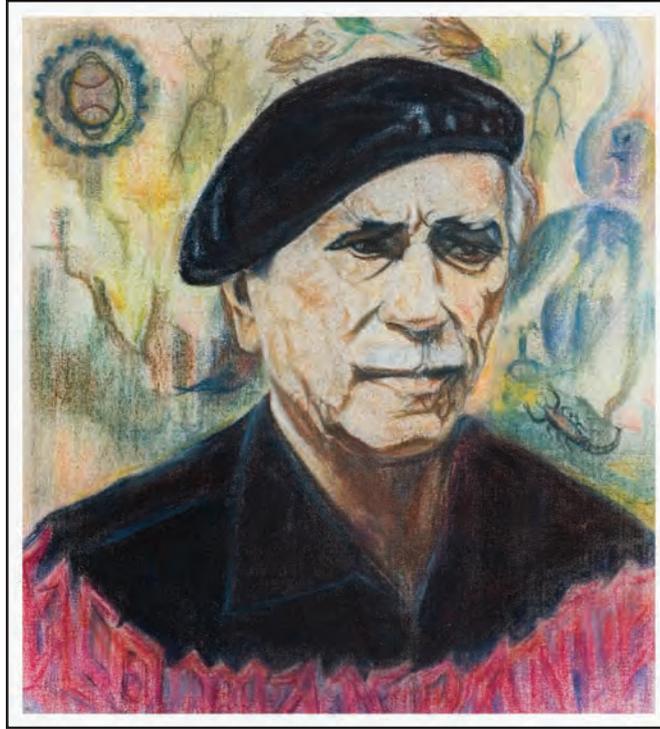




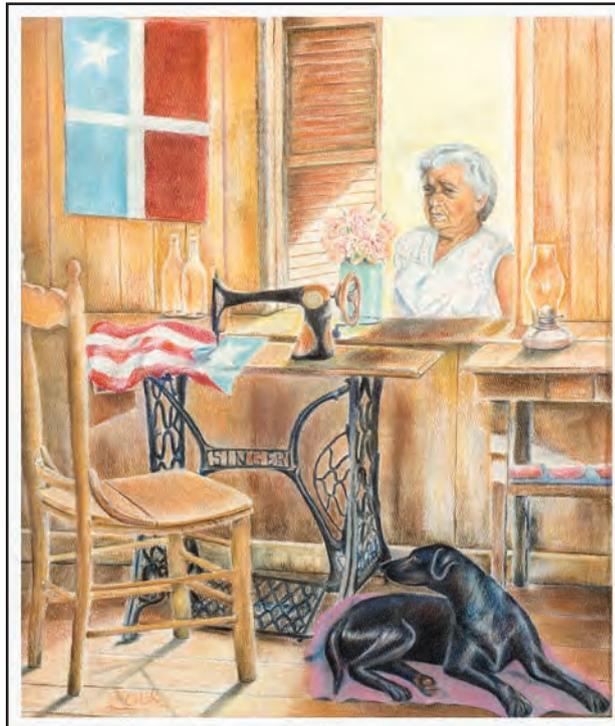
BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS Oscar López Rivera

Oscar was born January 6, 1943 in San Sebastián, Puerto Rico and moved to Chicago at age 14. Drafted into the U.S. army to fight in Vietnam, he received the Bronze Star. Returning to Chicago, he began to internalize the problems of racism and discrimination confronted by minorities and joined in struggles to improve the quality of life in our communities, including organizing and founding educational and cultural institutions. He soon understood that self-determination and independence were the road to freedom, and his commitment led him to clandestinity in 1976.

In 1981 he was arrested and accused of seditious conspiracy and membership in the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN). Serving a sentence of 70 years, he spent 12 years in total isolation. Through his writings and his art work, Oscar has strengthened his ties to the community and the independence movement. He has maintained his dignity and integrity in the face of difficult conditions



**TITLE: "EL COMANDANTE"
CORRETIJER**
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
**Media: color pencil and
pastels on canvas**
Dimensions: 12" x 12"
Collection: Evelyn Rodríguez
Note 7



**TITLE: MITA'S SEWING MACHINE
AND MY BELOVED JIBARA**
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: unknown
Media: color pencil and pastel on paper
Dimensions: 17" x 21"
Collection: Wanda Colón
Note 8

which were calculated to break his spirit.

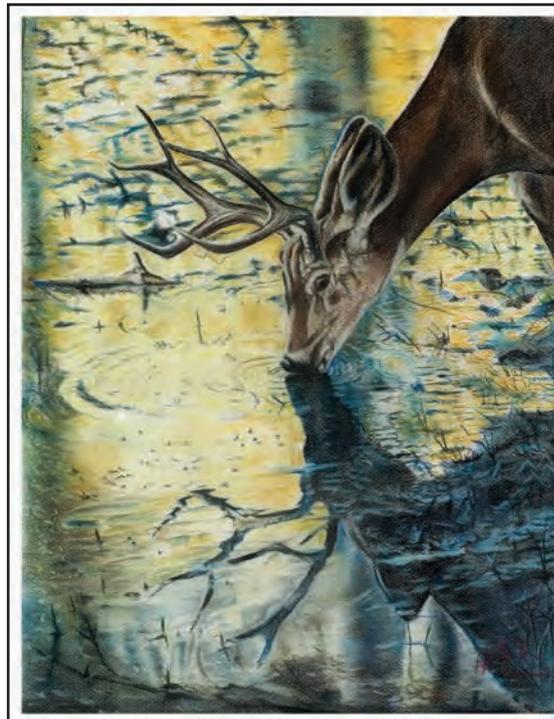
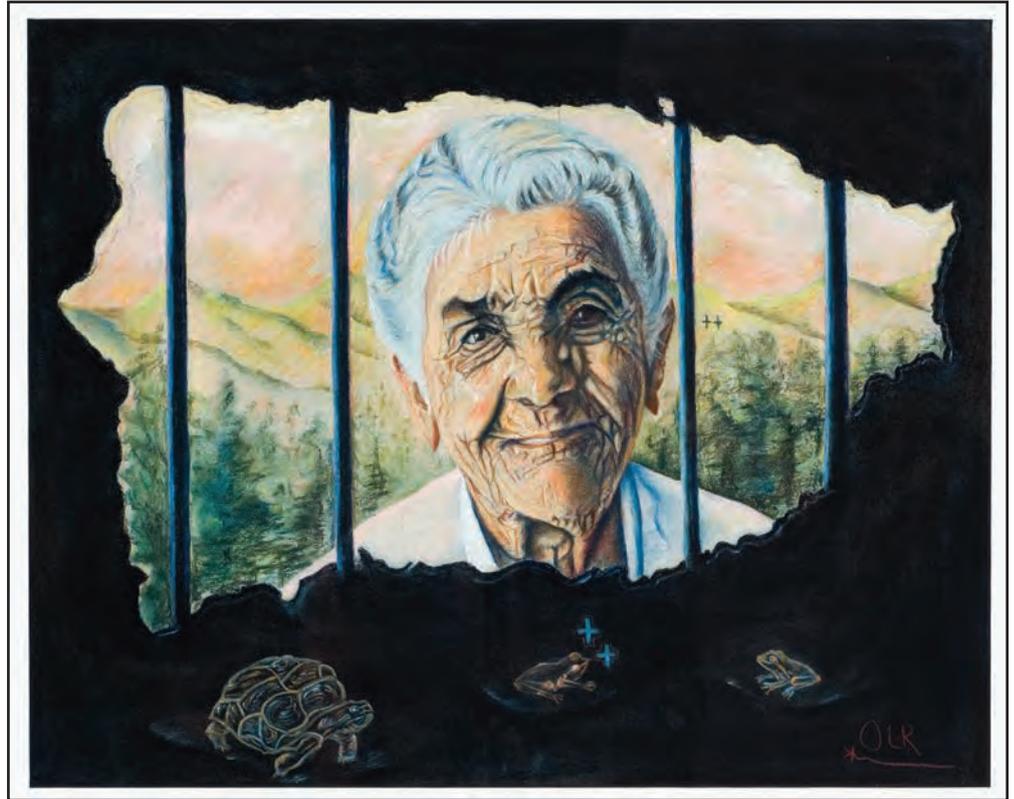
In 1999, president Bill Clinton offered to commute his sentence if he agreed to serve an additional ten years of prison. He refused, and will not be released until 2027. He has already served 26 long years. He is the father of Clarisa López and grandfather of Karina.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Oscar López Rivera

When I decided to start painting I was not thinking of art as much as I was thinking of the effects sensory deprivation would have on me after a prolonged stay at USP Marion. I realized I needed to use colors in order to counter the effects of being locked down in a 6' by 9' cell, 23 hours per day, without access to fresh air, natural light and the colors found in nature. Only once a week was I allowed to go to the yard for a period of two hours, and see a bit of nature's wonders.

In the summer of 1990, after I realized the jailers had no intention of transferring me out of Marion, I talked with a prisoner who had previously offered to teach me how to paint. He responded very positively to my request, and helped me make out the order to purchase the basic materials I needed to start painting. The very first day I was given the materials and after the prisoner had given the first lesson, the jailers transferred him to another unit. The move was a surprise to us both.



**TITLE: "DOÑA ISABEL:
THE UNREDEEMED HOMELAND"**
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: unknown
Media: color pencil and pastel on paper
Dimensions: 23" x 17"
Collection: Wanda Colón
Note 9

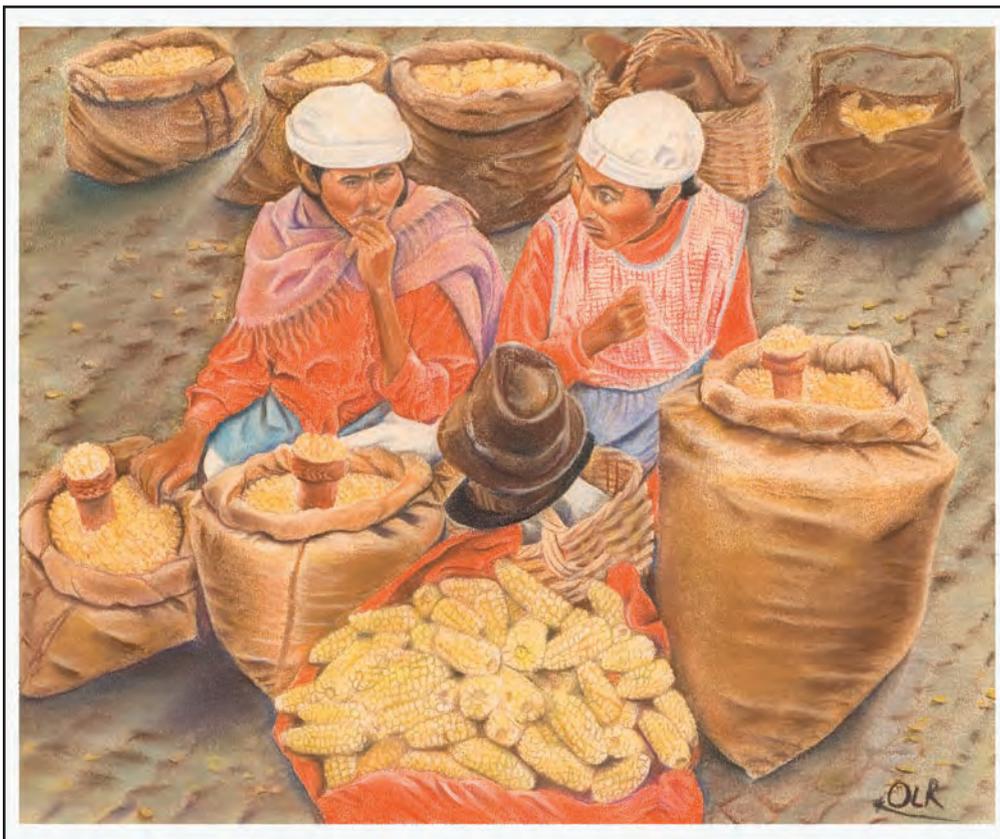
TITLE: THE DEER
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: Pastel on paper
Dimensions: 12.5" x 17.5"
Collection: Lourdes Lugo
Note 10

I had the painting materials, but did not know what to do with it. I took it as a challenge and started practicing on a daily basis, reading all the art material I could get my hands on and watching any how-to-paint program offered on TV.

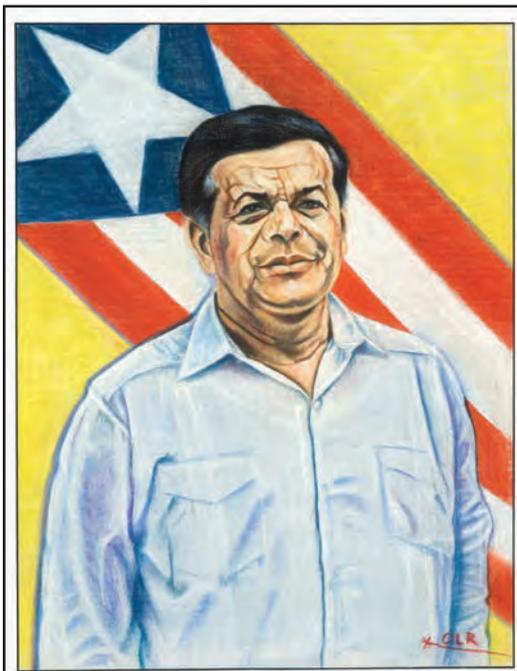
Eleven months after I had started this routine, the jailers declared the use of paints to be contraband and I was forced to send the materials I had home. From that moment on, we could only use coloring pencils and pastels. I began to use pastels, and for the next eight years it was the only medium I used.

In 1998, I was transferred to USP Terre Haute. I was excited thinking I was going to be able to experiment with oil paints, and that I was going to be allowed to paint without any hassles. But when I tried to buy oil paints, I was told I could not have access to any medium needed for oil painting. Later on I found out that at least six prisoners were being allowed to paint with oils.

I started painting with acrylics. The only place I could paint was in the cell – a 6' by 9' space I had to share with another prisoner. No sooner had I started painting when the harassment by some jailers began. During the six years I have been here, I am the only prisoner whose painting materials have been confiscated twice. The last time the paints were placed in an unheated area and when they were given back to me mostly all had been damaged. So besides experiencing the harassment and not being able to paint for months, I also had to deal with the extra expense. Paints are not very cheap.



TITLE: VENDORS
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: unknown
Media: color pencil and pastel on paper
Dimensions: 19" x 15"
Collection: Evelyn Rodríguez



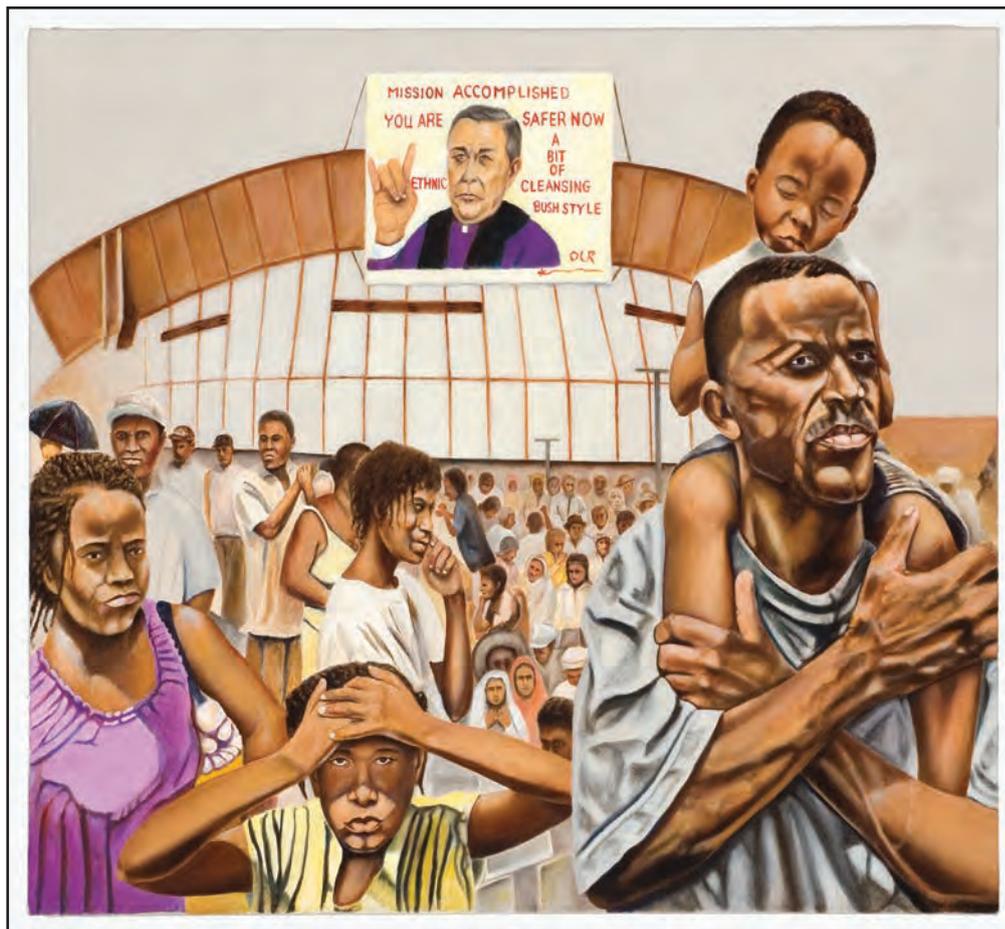
TITLE: COMRADE AND BROTHER
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: unknown
Media: mixed media on canvas
Dimensions: 17" x 23"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Note 11

During the fourteen years I have been painting I have learned to appreciate and respect art. During the years I spent in Marion and ADX, painting helped me to relax and transcend the hostile and dehumanizing environment of the walls and the razor wire. It also helped me to look at the world differently and to pay attention to things I took for granted before, for example, finding a green blade of grass in the winter or spotting butterflies, grasshoppers or a deer in the spring or summer. And for the short moment I could spend watching them, trying to figure out their forms, colors and tones. The challenge was to make those things part of whatever I was painting.

I do not consider myself an artist. The only art class I have taken was in high school. The art teacher required the students paint with watercolors. But I did not have the money to buy the paints. I did the work with charcoal and some of the students liked what I did. But the teacher was not satisfied, and suggested I not take the class the next semester. At the moment I thought art was something only people who could afford it did. It was like tennis — a game that only the privileged played. Prison has taught me different. Unfortunately, when I was 14 years old I did not have the experience I had when I came to prison.

**WRITE TO
OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA**

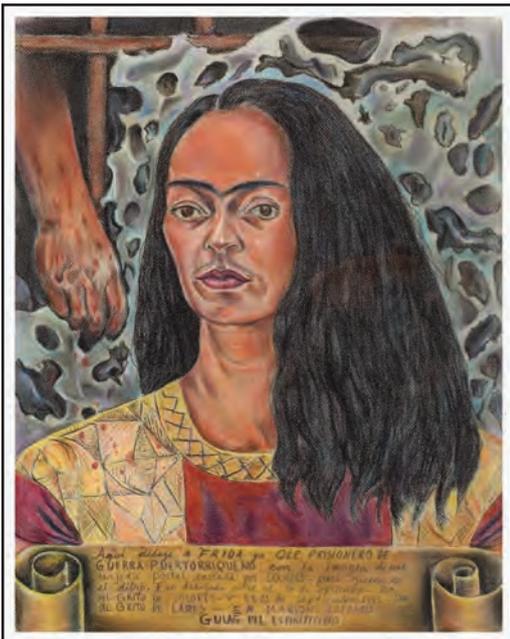
Oscar López Rivera, 87651-024
P.O. Box 12015, Terre Haute, IN
47801



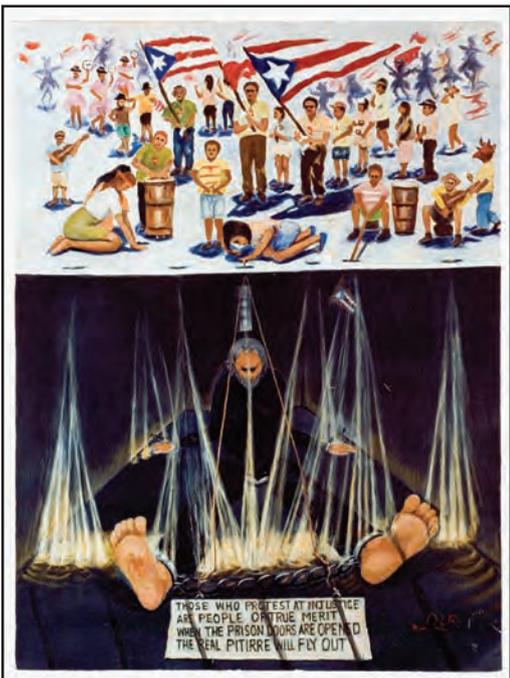
TITLE: KATRINA'S DOME
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2006
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 30" x 24"
Collection: PRCC Collection



TITLE: CLARISA
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2004
Media: graphite on paper
Dimensions: 18" x 14"
Collection: Clarisa López
Note 12



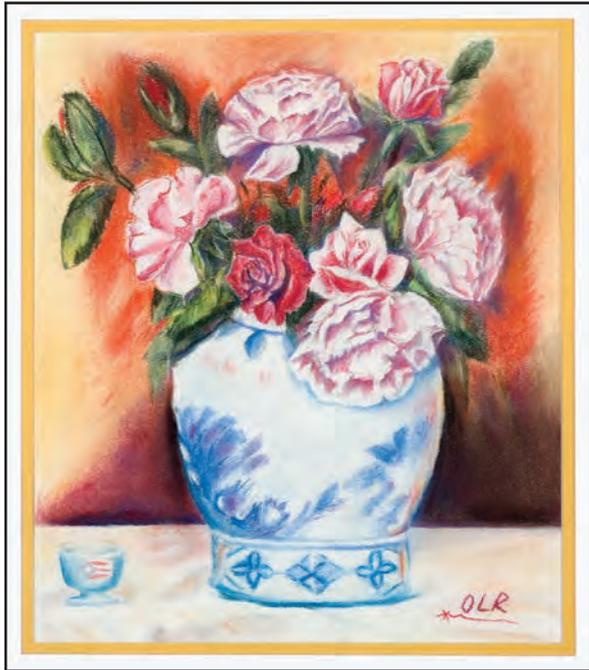
TITLE: FRIDA CON LOURDES
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: Pastel, color pencil on canson paper
Dimensions: 18" x 23"
Collection: Lourdes Lugo



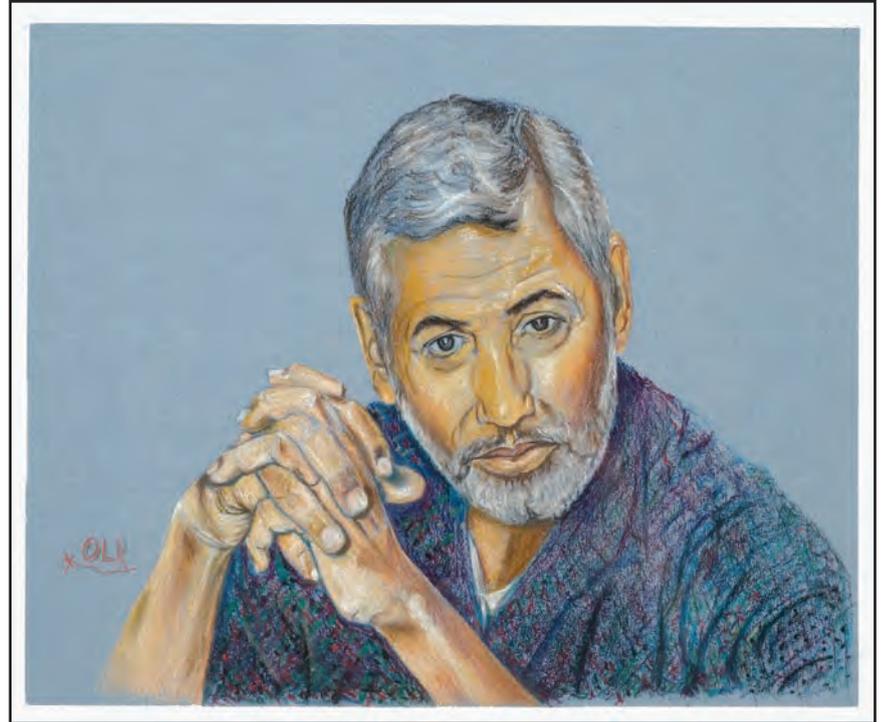
TITLE: THE REAL PITIRRE
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 17" x 23"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center



TITLE: GRINGO'S NEMESIS
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2001
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 18" x 24"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center



TITLE: STILL LIFE: FLOWERS
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: Pastel on paper
Dimensions: 12" x 15"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center

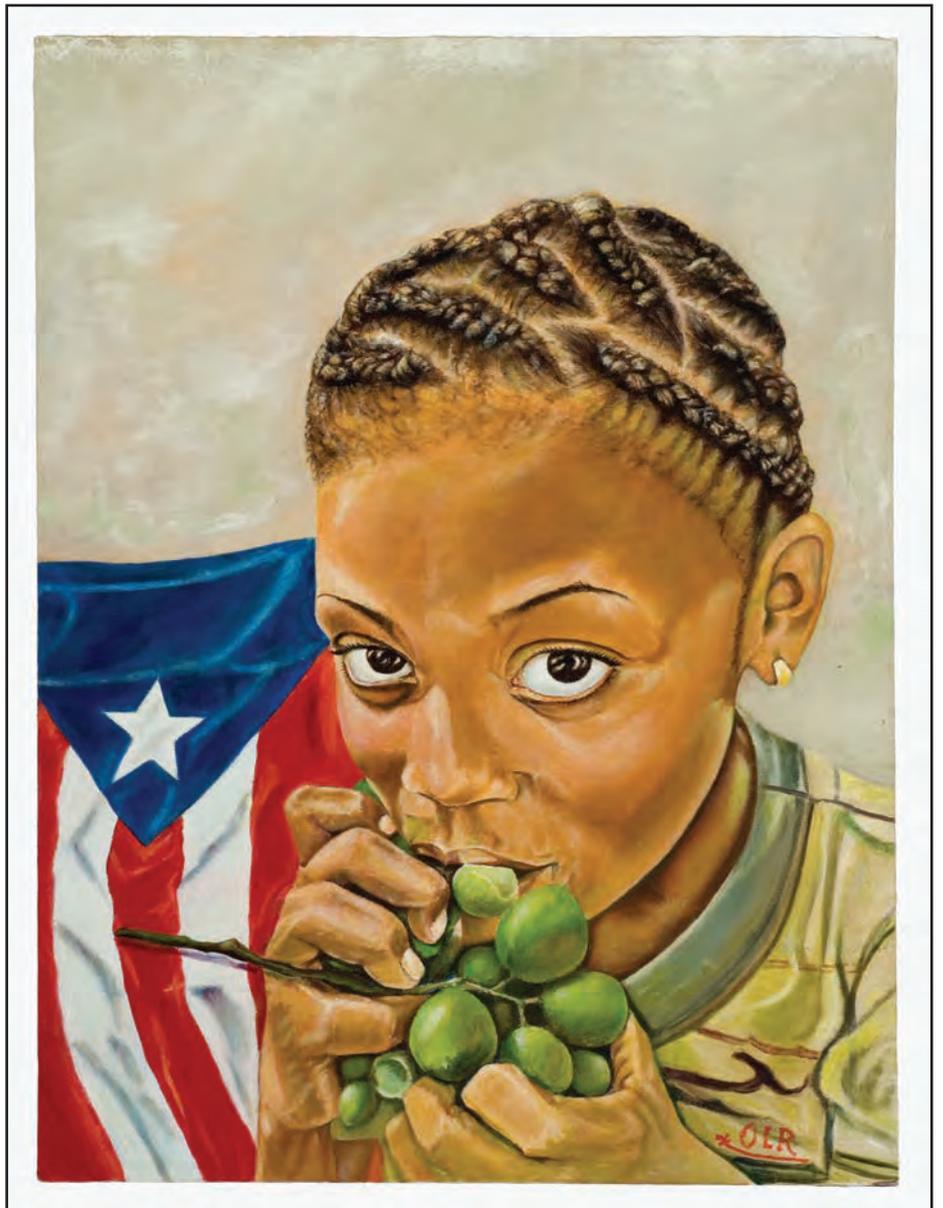
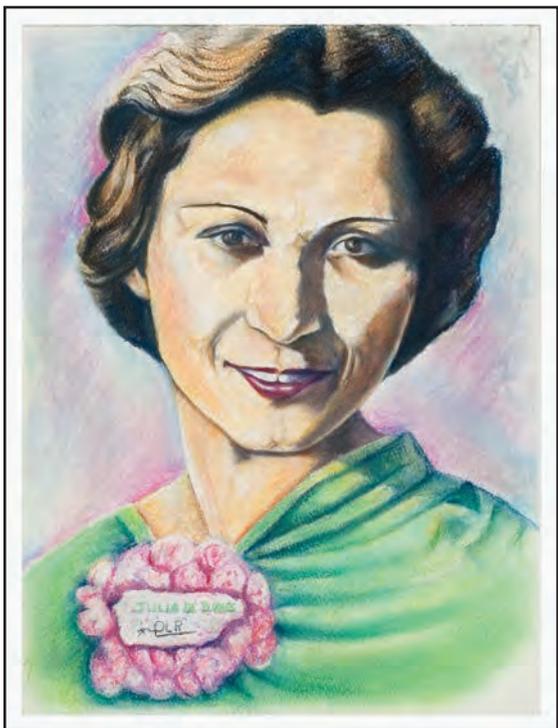


TITLE: COMMANDER FILIBERTO
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2005
Media: Pastel on paper
Dimensions: 19" x 16"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Note 13



TITLE: TRIBUTE TO SAFIYAH
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2004
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 18" x 18"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Note 14

TITLE: JULIA DE BURGOS
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: color pencil and pastel on paper
Dimensions: 14" x 18"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Note 16



TITLE: KENEPÁ (sic) GIRL
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2005
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 18" x 24"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Note 15



TITLE: STILL LIFE WITH MANGOES

Artist: Oscar López Rivera

Year: 2005

Media: acrylic on canvas board

Dimensions: 24" x 18"

Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center



TITLE: CLARY
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2005
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 24" x 18"
Collection: Clarisa Lugo
Note 17

TITLE: YESTERDAY'S PUERTO RICO
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: acrylic on canvas board
Dimensions: 24" x 18"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Note 18



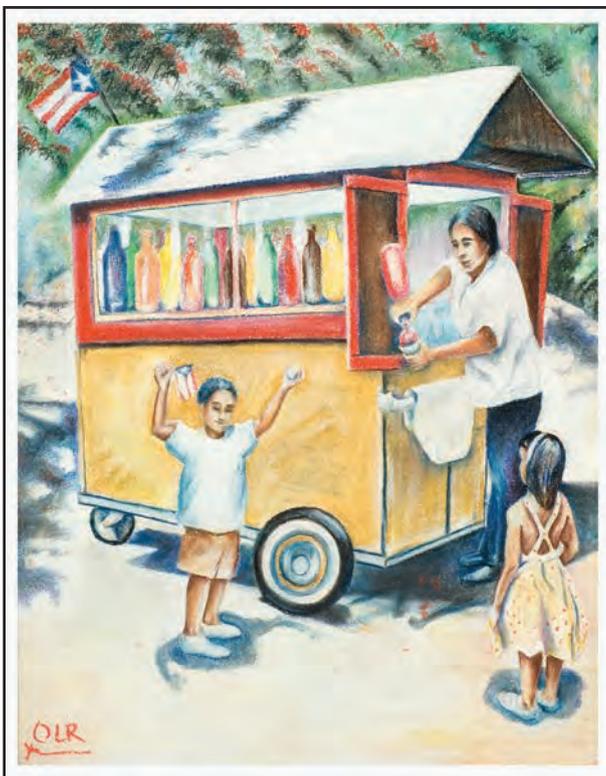
TITLE: KARINA
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2005
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 18" x 24"
Collection: Clarisa López
Note 19



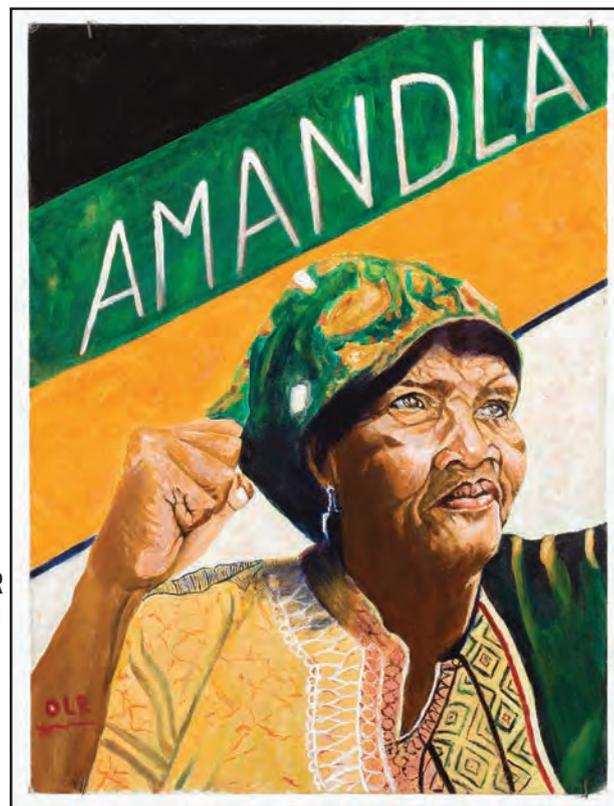


TITLE: ZENAIDA & GRANDSONS
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2006
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 24" x 18"
Collection: Zenaida López
Note 20

TITLE: WINNIE MANDELA: NOMZANSI NYEMBE
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2006
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 12" x 16"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center



TITLE: SNOWCONE VENDOR
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: Unknown
Media: pastel on paper
Dimensions: 24" x 18"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center





TITLE: CHE GUEVARA
Artist: Oscar López Rivera
Year: 2006
Media: acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 18" x 24"
Collection: Puerto Rican Cultural Center

NOT ENOUGH SPACE

Calendar of Exhibition

(as of September 2006)

- April 2005: Chicago, Illinois
La Galeria Que No Era
Special Guests: Rafael Cancel Miranda
& Elizam Escobar
- May 2005: Champaign, Illinois
Library at University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign
- September 2005: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Taller Puertorriqueño
Special Guest: Alicia Rodríguez,
- October 2005: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Northampton Community College
- November 2005: Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico
Casablanca-Institute of Puerto Rican Culture
- December 2005: Ponce, Puerto Rico
Centro Cultural Carmen Solá de Pereira-
Institute of Puerto Rican Culture
- January 2006: Mayagüez, Puerto Rico
Casa Grande
- February 2005: Boston, Massachusetts
Casa de la Cultura
- March 2006: Los Angeles, California
Self-Help Graphics & Art
Special Guest: Elizam Escobar,
- May 2006: San Francisco, California
Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts
Special Guest: José E. López
- July 2006: Morelia, Michoacan, México
Palacio Clavijero
Special Guest: Elizam Escobar
- September 2006: New York City, New York
Taller Boricua at the
Julia de Burgos Cultural Center
- November 2006: Cleveland, Ohio
Cleveland Community College
- December 22 to January 13, 2007
Vieques, Puerto Rico
Museo Conde de Mirasol
- January 19 to February 3, 2007
Culebra, Puerto Rico
Hostal Casa Culebra
- February 9 to 24, 2007
Adjuntas, Puerto Rico
Casa Pueblo
- March 3 to 24, 2007
Ciales, Puerto Rico
Casa Corretjer
- March 30 to April 21, 2007
Morovis, Puerto Rico
Centro Cultural
- April 27 to May 19, 2007
Aibonito, Puerto Rico
Casa Cultural
- May 25 to June 16, 2007
Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico
Casa Cultura
- June 22 to July 14, 2007
San Sebastian, Puerto Rico
Centro Cultural
- July 20 to August 4, 2007
San German, Puerto Rico
Museo Ramírez Arellano
- September of 2007: México D.F., México
- November of 2007: Caracas, Venezuela
- 2008:
Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina
Santa Barbara, California
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Orlando, Florida

For more information:
www.boricuahumanrights.org
www.presospoliticospuertorriquenos.org

Credits

Not Enough Space is a traveling exhibit project presented by the National Boricua Human Rights Network (NBHRN) with the financial support of hundreds of community organizations and individuals, in partnership with the Cable Access Network TV of Chicago.

Curator and exhibit design:
Jorge Félix (felixjorge@msn.com)

Exhibition tour coordinator:
Alejandro Luis Molina
(alejandrom@boricuahumanrights.org)

Translations and Proofreading:
Júan Segarra Palmer, Gloria Alonzo,
Madeline Troche-Rodríguez, Norma Torres.

Photography:
All artwork photography by Scott Braley
(scottb@igc.org) except "Karina" on page 42
by John Colón (johncolon2000@yahoo.com).

Graphic design:
Jorge Félix and Alejandro Luis Molina.

Research and archive material:
Puerto Rican Cultural Center Archives,
Roberto López, David Thibault Muñoz, Jan
Susler, Alejandrina Torres, Nidza Torres,
Norma Torres.

2006 Catalogue Editorial Board:
Jorge Félix, José E. López, Alejandro Luis
Molina, Jan Susler, Norma Torres.

Coordinator of exhibition in Puerto Rico
Edwin Cortés (libertad44@choicecable.net)

This exhibit is made possible thanks to the loan of artwork by:
United Church of Christ, Wanda Colón,
Clarisa López, José E. López, Zenaida López,
Clarisa Lugo, Lourdes Lugo, Evelyn and Jo-
sefina (Fifo) Rodríguez, Noemilda Vélez
Mass, Alejandrina Torres, Clarissa Enid Tor-
res, Maria Rejdukowski Torres, Nidza Tor-
res, Museo de la Masacre de Ponce, Puerto
Rican Cultural Center.

Artists' and Curators' Notes to the Catalogue:

1. Carlos expresses: "While in prison at FCI Oxford, the United Church of Christ commissioned a painting of the crucifixion of Christ. I chose not to paint an execution. I think physical death is certainly every person's ultimate fate. Death is a fact of life common to us all—yet always tragic. The sacrifice and struggle for justice, redeems our valor, suffering and death. It resurrects and gives new life to possibility for justice, which is our hope and dream."

2. "Images of "vejigantes" (a traditional carnival character from Puerto Rico) are frequent in my work. I reflect what I am, my Puerto Rican traditions, and my nation. My work is an extension of my voice that reaches beyond the prison bars."

3. "Lali, my grandniece who is six years old now (2006), only knows me from visits to the prison. I painted her using bright colors. I've often thought that is a compensation for the dark grays, black and white that we are obligated to live with in prison."

4. "This piece was dedicated to the poet, patriot and dancer of bomba and plena Angela María Dávila shortly before her death. Her long loose tight curly hair and her brightly colored skirt often characterized Angela when she danced."

5. "Frida Kahlo's suffering never defeated her artistic will or her political perseverance. I am reminded that similar thorns of suffering bind our past to our present in Latin American's entire long struggle for political and economic independence, and social justice."

6. "Images of "bomba" dancers (an Afro-Puerto Rican music and dance) are frequent in my work. I reflect what I am, my Puerto Rican traditions, and my nation. My work is an extension of my voice that reaches beyond the prison bars."

7. Juan Antonio Corretjer, National Poet of Puerto Rico and founder of the Puerto Rican Socialist League, grand jury resister and Puerto Rican political prisoner. One of the major political theorists of Puerto Rico in the 20th century.

8. Oscar López Rivera expresses: "When I was a kid I took everything literally. Sometimes my parents

didn't want children to be present or to talk when visitors came during adult conversations. They would tell us a traditional Puerto Rican saying, "los niños hablan cuando las gallinas mean" (children speak when chickens pee). So I started chasing chickens until I saw one peeing. I ran to "Mita" my mother, and told her what I had seen and forced her to accompany me to the spot. I showed it to her. She laughed and told my father the story and he also laughed. But they didn't change the rules. One thing I was certain of was that I had seen a chicken peeing."

9. Dona Isabel Rosado is a Nationalist leader, who served more than a decade in prison for her defense of Pedro Albizu Campos when his home was attacked in 1954. Teacher and life-long activist. Participated actively in the struggle against the US Navy in Vieques.

10. "Isolation from nature and human contact can break a man's spirit. After a long period in complete isolation I remember being transferred from that prison. There was a brief moment when I was able to step outside to the vehicle and remember catching a glimpse of something moving at the distance, a deer. That image stayed with me for the longest time."

11. Portrait of Oscar's brother José E. López, community activist, spokesperson for the Puerto Rican independence movement, professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University and DePaul University. He is also Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago. In the 70s, he was also a grand jury resister.

12. Portrait of Clarisa López, Oscar López Rivera's daughter.

13. Portrait of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, commander of the "Ejército Popular Boricua-Macheteros", a clandestine group that fights for Puerto Rican independence. Filiberto was arrested in 1985, and soon returned to clandestinity, until Sept 23, 2005 when he was assassinated by the FBI in his home in Hormigueros, Puerto Rico.

14. Portrait of Safiyah Bukhari, a former Black Panther and political prisoner, and the founding

Co-Chair of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition. Safiyah passed away unexpectedly in 2003.

15. Kenepa (sic) Quenepa: a tropical fruit that grows abundantly in the south of Puerto Rico and Vieques.

16. Julia de Burgos, internationally renowned poet, recognized as the most important female poetic voice in modern Puerto Rican literature.

17. "I was five years old when I started school. By the time I started school my sister Clary had taught me how to write my name and the numbers from one to ten. She had also forced me to learn to write with my right hand although I was left handed. I was the youngest and the smartest kid when I started school but I had the habit of sneaking out of the classroom to go with my second cousin to the river. That's how I learned to swim when I was five. I always stayed ahead of my classmates because my sister treated me as her student. In school I was full of mischief, fights, and pranks. During all the years I was in school in Puerto Rico I never stopped being me—an honor student with a bad boy attitude."

18. "I was born at home, in the countryside of San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, with the assistance of a "comadrona" (I like this word better than midwife). Her name was Pabla. But I had to call her "madrina Pabla" (godmother Pabla) and ask for her blessings whenever I would meet her. Because I was born on Three Kings Day, which is a holiday in Puerto Rico I wasn't registered until 1-8-43. That's why this is the date that appears as the date of my birth."

19. Portrait of my granddaughter Karina Valentín López.

20. "Around age 9 or 10 my health began to change. The situation at home had changed. My mother had given birth to José and Zenaida, after not having children for 8 years. My father decided to try his luck by migrating to Chicago. This was the time that the Puerto Rican government was encouraging people to migrate using false propaganda that said in the U.S. there were plenty of economic opportunities. By the time I was fourteen years old I was really sick. My mother thought I would be better off if I moved to Chicago with my sister Clary and her husband. During Christmas of 1957 I was sent to Chicago."