

LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

Bedford Park Boulevard West • Bronx, New York 10468 (718) 960-8731

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susan Hoeltzel

718-960-8731

Reception: Thurs., Nov. 9, 2000 from 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Monika Bravo

Symphysis • simultaneous appearances

October 12- December 15

Colombian artist Monika Bravo creates a virtual aquarium in the gallery as part of her video and sound installation *Symphysis*. It is a simulated space which is at once contained yet appears to be as infinite as the ocean. The illusion of limitless freedom plays off against notions of boundaries and containment in this work which Robert Blake has described as operating on "the level of dream time."

Taped in aquariums throughout the world, projected images fill the room with swimming sharks and drifting jelly fish. In non-linear sequences, schools of tiny fish appear in endless replication—across the walls, ceilings, mirrored surfaces, and monitor—and are gone. Turquoise water segues into the dark, primordial depths as images merge, overlap, and appear simultaneously. Movement is choreographed to synthesized sounds and the music of string instruments—Bravo worked with composer Raul Rothblatt to develop the soundtrack. Viewers' shadows and silhouettes create a human presence and also become a part of this prescribed, displaced environment. It is an abstract composition created from light, sound, and time.

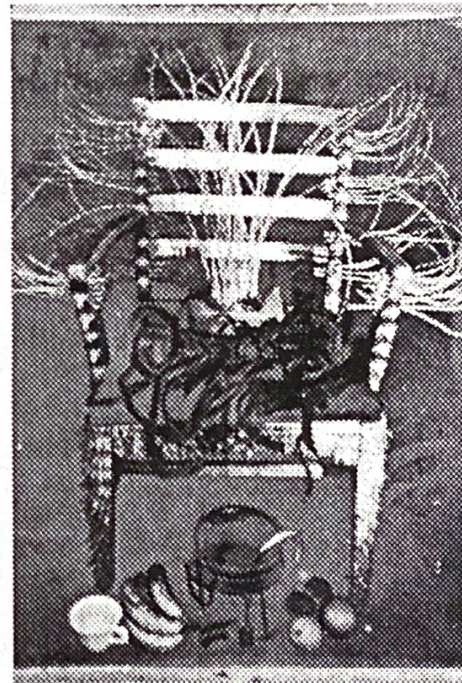


Monika Bravo, *Symphysis • simultaneous appearances*

Syncretism: Marta María Pérez Bravo, Albert Chong, and Mario Cravo Neto

Syncretism examines the work of three contemporary artists whose photography incorporates imagery relating to the spirituality, beliefs or ritual objects associated with Santería and with Condomblé, as the religion is known in Brazil. This African-based religion in which Yoruba deities are paired with Catholic saints, evolved in New World communities where large numbers of Yoruba people were transported as part of the slave trade. The practice provided a means to continue traditional Yoruba religious observances within the context of Catholicism and today is found throughout the Caribbean, in parts of South America, as well as major American cities. Each of the artists in this exhibition works within a studio context and is firmly rooted in postmodern practice, incorporating the strategies of installation and performance art as a means of making connections to ritual and symbols.

Cuban artist Marta María Pérez Bravo uses her body as a living altar, including objects associated with the orishas to concretize their symbols. Jamaican-born Albert Chong incorporates Santería imagery as part of a larger exploration of spiritual traditions—including Rastafarian as well as personal symbolism—and as a means of investigating issues of identity. Brazilian artist Mario Cravo Neto's photographs are inspired by the drama and mystery of Condomblé and its contribution to the rich cultural history of Bahia.



Albert Chong, *For Ogun*



Aixa Requena, *Ophelia/Ophelia*

Aixa Requena: Antilles Textures

October 31 - January 5

Aixa Requena's *Antilles Textures*, captures glimpses of the rich tapestry of life on the island of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Window-like frames in her paintings reveal photo-based images of domestic scenes which are viewed as vignettes. It is as if they have been encountered by chance—placing the viewer in the role of voyeur. Painted surfaces suggest the simple wooden houses found in the countryside or the stuccoed facades of Old San Juan. Drawn from a "theater of memory," Requena recreates a sense of place and time. She draws from a history which she describes as weaving together the threads of Spanish, African, American, and indigenous cultures. These are the textures of the Antilles. Mixing sources—personal, historic, popular culture, and the mythic—Requena creates multiple layers of meaning in her paintings. She is a storyteller who weaves tales and allows the viewer to complete the narrative.