



Longwood Arts Project

The BCA Art Gallery @ Hostos

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BCA's Longwood Art Gallery and Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture presents**

***HOMENAJE: Jorge Soto Sánchez***

**First Major Exhibition of the late Nuyorican Artist since 1979**

**Opening Reception: Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 5:00pm**

(September 24, 2015 – Bronx, NY) [Bronx Council on the Arts' Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos](#) and [Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture](#) presents **HOMENAJE** ("Homage"): **Jorge Soto Sánchez**, the first major exhibition of the late Nuyorican artist and Taller Boricua member since his passing in 1987. The opening reception will be held on Wednesday, October 7th, from 5:00-9:00pm, in conjunction with the Bronx Trolley: First Wednesday Arts & Culture Tour, at the Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos on the campus of Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse at 149th Street in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. Admission is FREE and all are welcome. The exhibition, curated by Gladys Peña-Acosta, will be on view through December 2nd.



The exhibit will feature two versions of Soto's best-known work, *El velorio de Oller en Nueva York*, after the iconic work of the Puerto Rican impressionist Francisco Oller (1833-1917). Other major works of the exhibition include *Todo bien en America* (1960s) and *El Señor Gobernador* (1977). Peña-Acosta stated that the exhibition was made possible by the good will of many private collectors. Two primary contributors to the exhibition are members of his family and El Museo del Barrio, both having graciously provided important pieces that have not been on public view since his untimely death.

According to Peña-Acosta, Soto "was a product of the times of the late 60s, often quoting popular concepts from Franz Fenon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, which spoke to the dehumanizing effects of colonization and making connection to the Puerto Rican experience. Soto was immersed in researching and learning about his own origin, often visiting the Museum of Natural History where he observed and drew Taino objects and symbols which he later combined with Afro-Caribbean Yoruba religious images."

"We are thrilled to be presenting this important exhibit of a very talented artist whose legacy in the community and the New York art world is worth preserving and sharing with the wider public," said Hostos Center Director John MacElwee. "Locating and acquiring these works for exhibition has not been easy; we are grateful to the work of Gladys Peña-Acosta and the Bronx Council on the Arts, and to the generosity of Betty Soto, El Museo de Barrio, El Taller Boricua, Elba Cabrera and others who provided pieces for this tribute."

**Jorge Soto Sánchez** was born in East Harlem (El Barrio) in 1947 to Puerto Rican parents. His family moved to the South Bronx when he was five years old. His artistic talent was evident as early as his elementary school years, later receiving a scholarship from Saks Fifth Avenue Department Stores to take drawing classes in composition and human anatomy. In 1961 he attended two years of high school before dropping out to enlist in the Army. He was discharged in 1965 and determined to become an artist, he worked menial jobs while devoting himself to art.

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

**Public Events:**

- **Wed, Oct 7, 5:00-9:00pm:** Opening Reception & Bronx Trolley: First Wednesday Arts & Culture Tour;
- **Wed, Nov 4, 5:00-9:00pm:** Reception & Bronx Trolley: First Wednesday Arts & Culture Tour;
- **Thurs, Nov 5, 6:00pm:** Panel Discussion: "Remembering Jorge Soto Sánchez: Collaborators and Friends"
- **Wed, Dec 2, 5:00-9:00pm:** Closing Reception & Bronx Trolley: First Wednesday Arts & Culture Tour.

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

**Directions:** Train: 2, 4 or 5; Bus: BX1, BX2 or BX19; All destinations to 149th & Grand Concourse.

Learn more about Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos and its exhibitions, as well as other programs and activities of the Bronx Council on the Arts at [www.bronxarts.org](http://www.bronxarts.org).

This exhibition is sponsored by the Hostos Community College Foundation, with public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. Bronx Council on the Arts' Longwood Art Gallery receives support from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, NYS Council on the Arts, the Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc., NY City Council Members Fernando Cabrera, Andrew Cohen, Melissa Mark-Viverito, James Vacca and BCA members.

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**Bronx Writers Center • BCA @ 2700 • Longwood Art Gallery**

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