

JUAN GONZALEZ

All my portraits are of close friends. "Letter to Veronica" is a self-portrait and the "Baptist" is of an American poet with whom I shared a loft. The two works are companion pieces. They reflect my interest in Art History, especially Roman portrait busts and the psychological quality of Nineteenth Century German art. The idea for the "Baptist" came after seeing a Sixteenth Century Spanish painting in Sevilla.

In both works the backgrounds are meticulously worked but ambiguous — there could be landscape or just marks. "Letter to Veronica" refers to Veronica's Veil — the imprint of Christ, it has been represented in the past by El Greco among others. In New York, I have looked at much Minimal work by people like Mangold and Ryman, and the grids allude to this. In "Letter to Veronica" the grids go through the head in places to link the image to the background. The birds represent our different muses.

The frames are integral to the works. The one on the "Baptist" heightens the Nineteenth Century feeling, but in "Letter to Veronica," which is on a gesso ground, there is a feeling of dryness so I gave it a concrete frame.

After Philadelphia is an autobiographical disaster picture. It is taken from a newspaper photo of a flood in the South. I worked on it for two years after a terrible stay in Philadelphia. I wanted to evoke the night so the scene is bathed in moonlight and the dark matt and frame highlight this effect. Into this scene I put a series of vignettes. The boat on the left is my homage to Seurat for his drawing technique. The palm-trees are symbols of Cuba and my childhood, and the running boy pursued by the dog from the left is myself. Also, the birds fly to the left symbolizing vanitas and death but also liberation from mortality. The horse and rider are from a Muybridge photo.

This is an image of masculinity and represents my father. The woman is very close to me, she has been the mirror of my conscience, and the girls in the

~~Juan Gonzalez~~

boat are my daughters.

I use the scratches to create a barrier for the viewer, and to counteract the three-dimensionality of the drawing, but sometimes they create psychological linkages as between the eyes of the rider to the boy or the protective triangle around my daughters.

- From a conversation in New York, July, 1984.

JUAN GONZALEZ

Born in Cuba, 1945.

Lives in New York.

Education

M.F.A. University of Miami, Florida

Awards

1980 National Endowment for the Arts

Selected One-person Exhibitions

1982, 1978 Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York

1980-81 Frances Wolfson Art Gallery, Miami-Dade Community College,
Miami, Florida. Travelling to : Gibbes Art Gallery,
Charleston, South Carolina.

1972 Allan Stone Gallery, New York

Selected Public Collections

Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana

Juan Gonzalez

Selected Bibliography

Baro, Gene. "The Art Of Juan Gonzalez" Catalog, Frances Wolfson Gallery,
Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, 1980.

Cohen, Ronny. "The Art of Juan Gonzalez," Arts Magazine, May, 1983.

Gonzalez, Juan. Interview in Catalog "Drawings," Nancy Hoffman Gallery,
New York, 1976.

Works in the Exhibition

"A La Cabeza del Bautista en Sevilla," charcoal, gouache, pastel and
conte pencil on handmade paper. 29 X 23 in. 1981.
Private collection, New York.

"Letter to Veronica," pencil and paint on gessoed board with cast
cement frame. 14 X 10-3/4 in. (image size), 1983.

* Courtesy University of Oklahoma Art Museum. *Norman Oklahoma*

"After Philadelphia," water-color and lead on paper, 18 X 52 in., 1984.
Courtesy Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York.