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A newsletter documenting multicultural theatre and art in Southern Calif.

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HAPPY HANUKKAH, y FELIZ NAVIDAD!

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EDITOR'S NOTES

SEASON 5 GREETINGS: Another busy year is quickly coming to a close. Some highpoints for the year included:

- The Spanish-language world premiere of Octavio Solis' "Man of the Flesh/El ladrón de corazones" by the San Diego Repertory Theatre, directed by Sam Woodhouse and Jorge Huerta. Lively and energetic cast.
- "Face 2 Face," South Coast Repertory's 1991 educational touring program, which promoted respect for cultural and racial differences and stressed that violence cannot resolve conflict.
- "Our Lady of the Tortilla/ Nuestra señora de la tortilla" with Carmen Zapata at the Latino Performing Arts Festival in Fullerton.
- Culture Clash in "A Bowl of Beings" at the now defunct Los Angeles Theatre Center.
- The five-day "On the Border/ Between Bridges" International Theatre Festival at UC Riverside which was organized by Carlos Morton and Eduardo Rodriguez Solis. Performances by Teatro Máscara Mágica, Chicano Secret Service, Alternatives, Ruby Nelda Perez, Punto y Coma, and two teatros from Mexico City.
- Kate Bornstein, a transsexual performance artist, at Bushi in her provocative and witty one-woman show "The Opposite Sex... Is Neither!" The central character Maggie, a "goddess-in-training," aids six souls in their transition to their next life. Through Bornstein the audience is challenged to examine its limited notions of gender.

If you're involved in any creative projects at the moment, drop me a line and let me know. Much that I have seen this year comes through actor friends. And if I didn't see your production this year I'm sorry because I know I must have missed something wonderful.

Finally got my long-awaited catalog of the CARA exhibition, "Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985," which I saw last December at the UCLA Wight Art Gallery. I ordered the beautifully put-together catalog through the gallery. I'm not sure that copies are still available, but you might try writing to the gallery at 405 Milgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024-1620.

HISPANIC PLAYWRIGHTS PROJECT

The Hispanic Playwrights Project is in its seventh year. This past summer three plays were selected for two weeks of development and rehearsals for public readings--Edit Villarreal's "R & J" (a Latin "Romeo and Juliet"), Guillermo Reyes' "September II" (set in Chile under Pinochet's repressive government), and Octavio Solis' "La iluminada" (a scientist brings back his lover from the dead).

The Hispanic Playwrights Project is still accepting new and unproduced scripts for consideration. The deadline is April 12, 1992. Plays should be accompanied by a synopsis and playwright biography. Send your script to Jose Cruz Gonzalez, South Coast Repertory, P.O. Box 2197, Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197.

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Cold as it was,
We felt secure
Sleeping together
In the same room.

--Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694),
THE RECORDS OF A TRAVEL-WORN SATCHEL

"PASTORELA '91: A SHEPHERD'S PLAY"
Presented by the Old Globe Theatre
with Teatro Máscara Mágica

PLACE: Old Naval Hospital Chapel
at Park Blvd. & Presidents
Way, Balboa Park
DATE: Through Dec. 22, 7:30 p.m.
COST: \$5 for adults, \$2 for kids,
students, and seniors

RELIGION AND PERSONAL ART

Luis Stand's "Historical Ceremonies" and John Bermudes' "Confessions of the Flesh" are showing at the Centro Cultural de la Raza until Jan. 19. Both works incorporate personal perspectives about religion.

Stand in his biography indicates he is currently a UCSD graduate student in Visual Arts. Look for his wall-size map which shows Latin America, Europe, and Africa. Attached across the surface of the map are coffee and tomato cans filled with live plants and soil--a living and growing three-dimensional work of art.

The first thing one notices about Bermudes' installation is the black-and-white blowup of an open hand, palm facing forward. The palm asks to be read and entered, just like the space and next wall behind it with the catechism & exam strips and confessional strips in English and Spanish. Spirals of Christmas lights blink on and off--pleasure/negoción, indulgence/guilt. A metallic-red cross hangs parallel to the ceiling; red ribbons twisting down from it threaten to entangle the viewer who cannot help but be pulled into a dialogue with Bermudes' art.



TO BE A '90s CHICANO/CHICANA

Poet Marisela Norte, performance artist Luis Alfaro, and comedy troupe Chicano Secret Service were at UCSD on Nov. 15 to share their artistic visions of what it means to be a Chicano and Chicana in the 1990s.

Norte and Alfaro in a repeated collaboration alternated readings of their works. Alfaro's sensuous presentational style was a nice counterpoint to Norte's rhythmic but subdued delivery.

Norte has been writing for over 10 years and now has a CD and cassette of her poetry out. Writing on womanhood and relationships, she gathers many of images while riding the bus to and from East L.A. where she lives. One poem she read centered around the "secretos de mujeres" that could be had for a phone call to 976-LOCA. At the end she admitted, "You don't really want to know what two girls talk about."

In the past three years, Alfaro has consciously integrated questions about gender and sexuality into his material. "The 'Virgin Mary doll' shared the podium with the gay Latino and the son who witnessed his abused mother 'rewriting years of Chicana history' when she punched back. Alfaro works in Social Services with AIDS patients and teaches writing for self-empowerment at UCLA and in the surrounding community.

Chicano Secret Service was at their mischievous best. Frida Kahlua [sic] played by a towering Thomas Carrasco in a black lace wraparound is a sight not to be missed. In another act, a law enforcement officer (Eduardo Lopez) menaced the now eerily quiet crowd and proceeded to beat up on a bystander. He was joined by an I.N.S. officer (Thomas Carrasco). The punch line? "San Diego law enforcement working together." Ending the show was President George Bush (Elias Serna) who patronized the audience. Bush's "Hispanic" grandson (Eduardo Lopez) provided a biting subtext in Spanish.

SEBASTIÃO SALGADO PHOTOS

"An Uncertain Grace: The Photographs of Sebastião Salgado" exhibit ended its run on Dec. 15 the Museum of Photographic Arts in Balboa Park. Salgado, a Brazilian-born photojournalist who now resides in Paris with his wife and two children, has documented famine in Africa, hardship in Laotian refugee camps, the dignity of Latino rural peasants, and manual labor practices throughout the world. The latter images are part of a work-in-progress that he calls "The Archaeology of Industrialism." Many people are probably acquainted with his photographs of oil workers cleaning up in Kuwait after the end of the Persian Gulf war.

Though Salgado does shoot in color, the photos in the show were in calligraphic black and white. The "Famine in the Sahel 1984-85" series was compelling. Salgado had traveled to Africa with Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders volunteers. The photos all circled toward the nothingness of death; if you stood too close you could almost smell the stench of death from a young boy and feel the roughness and depth of wrinkles in a tired old woman's face and hands.

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The way to fight racism is with non-racism.
The way to fight violence is with non-violence.

--Luis Valdez, "Pensamiento Serpentino," (c) 1972.

ED.'S NOTE: Since I contribute to VOZ FRONTERIZA, some of this material may be duplicated there, and they have permission to use anything printed here.

