



### Mission

The Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños/Center for Puerto Rican Studies is a university-based research institute whose mission consists of two components. One is to collect, preserve and provide access to archival and library resources documenting the history and culture of Puerto Ricans. The other is to produce, facilitate, and disseminate interdisciplinary research about the diasporic experiences of Puerto Ricans and to link this scholarly inquiry to social action and policy debates.

Anthony De Jesús  
*Interim Director*

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# CENTRO NEWS NOTICIAS DEL CENTRO



NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS PUERTORRIQUEÑOS

## Centro's Director takes leave of absence to work with PR Governor

### *Education Researcher Takes Helm as Interim Director*



*Félix V. Matos Rodríguez*



*Anthony De Jesús*

On March 1, 2005 Centro's Director Félix Matos-Rodríguez began a leave of absence to work as a special advisor on health and social welfare for Puerto Rico's Gov. Aníbal Acevedo Vilá. Education Policy Researcher Anthony (Tony) De Jesús was named interim director and is forging ahead by focusing on developing Centro's research unit and building Centro's capacity in the area of the arts.

"Centro could not be in better hands," Felo said. "I have no doubt that Tony will use his remarkable intellectual and organizational skills to continue being successful in the areas we are currently working on and to create new and exciting opportunities for Centro."

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## Centro participates in NYLARNet Latino Research Consortium



*Edna Acosta-Belen, Carlos Vargas Ramos, Anthony DeJesus, Francisco Rivera Batiz, Jose E. Cruz and Christine Bose.*

NYLARNet stands for The New York Latino Research and Resources Network, a consortium of three New York State Research Centers focused on producing and disseminating research on Latino health, education, immigration, and politics/public policy in New York State and the U.S. NYLARNet was made possible by a grant from the New York State Legislature and sponsored there by Assemblyman Peter Rivera (76th District), chair of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Legislative Task Force.

Comprised of Centro, the University of Albany's Center for Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean Studies (CELAC), and the Institute for Urban and Minority Education (IUME) at Columbia University's Teachers College, NYLARNet seeks to produce important research into the critical thinking, dialogue, and dissemination of information regarding U.S. Latino issues.

"NYLARNet is an opportunity for Centro and our partner institutions to have our research directly impact the policymaking process and improve outcomes for all Latinos in New York

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SPRING/FALL 2005  
Volume X • Number 1

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## STAFF CLOSE UP: *The Névida Story*

Névida Pérez's 30 years of tireless work and devotion to build Centro's Library and Archives to the largest of its kind in the country was celebrated during a breakfast at the Museum of the City of New York in June.

Névida thought she was attending the closing ceremony of the exhibit, *El Barrio: Puerto Rican New York* at the museum when her Centro colleagues caught her by surprise and paid tribute to her and her enormous contributions.



Névida Pérez

"I was totally surprised by the celebration," said Névida, the associate director of Centro's Library and Archives.

"I was also deeply moved and touched by the testimony given by many of my colleagues and friends that day."

Centro Director Felix Matos-Rodriguez, who is on leave working with the governor of Puerto Rico, said all New Yorkers owe a great debt of gratitude for the work that Névida has done in documenting and making accessible a fundamental part of the city's history.

"It would be virtually impossible to write any kind of Puerto Rican or Latino history of New York without the resources that Névida has helped to bring together, organize and make accessible throughout the last 30 years," Felo said.

Névida began at Centro in 1975 after graduating with a master's of library science from Columbia University. "When I graduated I needed a job and wanted to get something in the public library system, but the city was going through a financial crisis at the time and hiring was frozen," she said.

Lillian Lopez, who was Névida's mentor in library school and a pionera in the New York Public Library system among Latino librarians, was volunteering her time at Centro to get their library started. When Centro decided to hire a full-time librarian Névida applied and was given the

position. There was a fledging library in place when Névida started and a great commitment in the Centro to continue its development.

In the mid-1980s, driven by an oral history project to reconstruct the history of the Puerto Rican community in New York, an archival component was added with the mission to identify, collect, and make available the history and culture of Puerto Ricans in the Diaspora. Since handling primary sources required knowledge and skills that were different from library practice, Névida went back to school while continuing to work full-time at Centro and received a master's degree in history and archival management from New York University.

From the start Centro was committed to public access to the library. "We did not want to imitate institutions that limited access to special collections to scholars and researchers with advanced degrees or other acceptable credentials...we insisted on an open access policy to make our resources available equally to all communities," Névida said.

In the fall of 1983, on its 10th anniversary, the Centro moved from John Jay College to Hunter College, where it has been housed ever since. At first located on the 7th floor of the Hunter Library, we moved to the main floor in 1992. "It didn't take very long to outgrow that space so that the Library and Archives operation is currently spread out among different sites on the Hunter Campus as well as off-site," Névida said. "A solution to the space problem has to be a top priority for the immediate future."

The Centro Library and Archives has impacted on the lives of generations of students, many of whom have made important self-discoveries in the reading area, coming in touch for the first time with identity-affirming sources and getting some nurturance in a sometimes indifferent university environment Névida said.

She added that a number of these students have maintained a long association with the Library through undergraduate school, graduate studies and professional careers. The Library and Archives staff have mentored and encouraged students to pursue careers in librarianship and archives, areas where there is a dearth of Latinos.

The award-winning Library and Archives are recognized as a major resource in Puerto Rican Studies. "Sometimes when you're in the day to day of it, you don't realize how amazing and important the collection is," Névida said. "It's such a resource. I feel a lot of it was due to my leadership. I worked very hard to grow it and protect it. But a great deal of it was truly collective work."

Interim Director Tony De Jesús said Névida has been an indispensable member of Centro's staff for three decades. "She is wonderfully skilled in overseeing the acquisition and processing of our collections," Tony said. "Her high professional standards and tremendous dedication to preserving our heritage have made the library and archives the most important fountain of knowledge on the Puerto Rican diaspora." ■

## Library and Archives News

The Centro Library and Archives exploded with activity during the 2004–2005 academic year with its seminal work with the Museum of the City of New York by mounting the *El Barrio Puerto Rican New York* exhibit, hosting numerous artists in the Centro gallery and acquiring many new collections from the diaspora community.

The exhibit also featured the photography of Hiram S. Maristany, one of the most important chroniclers of Puerto Rican life in El Barrio. The exhibit, which was on display from Jan. 21 through June 12, 2005, documented the history of the Puerto Rican people in the city from their arrival in the late 19th century to the present. Special thanks to Centro Archivist **Pedro Juan Hernández** for his hard work on this project and to the many college assistants (Andy Garcia, Maribell Gonzalez, Rene Bosolet, Diego Valencia, Michael Eng, Christopher Medina, Orlando Torres, Matthew Torres) who helped set up the exhibit at the museum.

With volunteer **Jose Vidal as the driving force**, the Centro Gallery, a space within the library, featured a diverse array of exhibits, which were vivid, historical and thought provoking. Diógenes Ballester kicked off the year with “The Keeper of History Holder of Dreams,” exhibit, which was on display from September 9–October 8, 2004. Miguel Luciano: “Louisiana Porto Ricans”, followed and was on display from October to November 2004. The spring and summer of 2005 featured the photography of Tony Velez from February 22–March 18; Maria Dominguez: The Chauncey Station Project, from March 21–April 22, the photography of Maximo R. Colón from April 25–May 20; the work of Rashid from May 23–June 24, 2005; Tanya Torres from April 2004–August 2005. “Puerto Ricans in California,” prepared by Aurora Levins Morales was on view in January. We are grateful to all the artists and to Jose Vidal for making the Gallery a success. For more information about exhibits at the Gallery, please visit [centropr.org/gallery](http://centropr.org/gallery).

All of the Records of the Offices of the Government of Puerto Rico in the United States (OGPRUS) — largest collection of migration records on the Puerto Rican experience

— are now open to the public along with a comprehensive guide. Also newly available are The Papers of Blase Camacho Souza, a Boricua-Hawaina, which documents the Puerto Rican community of Hawaii.

Among the collections soon to be opened this fall 2005 are the records of the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, which document 30 years of Centro’s history and the Papers of Petra Allende, an important East Harlem activist.

There are also many new and exciting collections being processed which we expect to make available during Spring 2006 to Fall 2006, they include the papers of Antonia Pantoja, founder of ASPIRA and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996.

Margarita Pietri, the wife of Pedro Pietri, has placed Pedro’s papers on loan to the Centro archives. Pedro, the famed Nuyorican poet, died in March 2004 at the age of 59. In the 1970s, he helped start the Nuyorican Poets Café on the Lower East Side. He published more than 20 books of poetry and plays. His best-known work was the epic poem, “Puerto Rican Obituary.”

Among the new collections accessioned are:

- The papers of former Bronx Congressman Robert García
- The papers of Elba Cabrera, cultural activist and sister of Evelina Antonetty and Lillian Lopez
- A selection of materials from Ernest Acosta documenting the 65th Infantry Regiment
- The Papers of William Díaz who was a program officer for the Ford Foundation and helped start the Inter University Program for Latino Research.
- Selected materials from artist Gloria Rodríguez Calero and the Papers of her grandfather, Augusto Rodríguez, renowned Director of the University of Puerto Rico Chorus.
- The papers of Sonia Nieto, a bilingual education specialist and author.

Thanks for their generous donations to: Martha Lahn, Diego Echevarria, Christopher Colón, Manual Díaz, Isaura

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Maximo R. Colón



Tony De Jesús, Nérida Pérez, Maria Dominguez, and Jose Vidal.

## Centro Exchange Programs

Centro Exchange Programs (formerly CUNY Caribbean & CUNY-UPR/Intercambio) continues to celebrate its success in our exchange programs and grant competitions. We are also proud to have coordinated and presented unique events which have provided different members of the community an opportunity to share, dialogue, and learn, e.g. Art Conference.

### *Undergraduate Exchange*

Centro Exchange continues to collaborate with the Education Abroad/National Student Exchange Office in providing opportunities for Hunter undergraduate students to spend a semester or academic year in various universities throughout Puerto Rico and vice versa. This year four students coming to Hunter for exchange were awarded an *Intercambio Award*, which covered the cost of the National Student Exchange Arts Events Program for incoming students.

### *Grants*

In the fall of 2004, Centro Exchange Programs reviewed proposals for three separate competitions held this year: The Puerto Rican Diaspora Grant, focusing on topics related to the Puerto Rican Diaspora (with eleven applicants), the Visiting Scholars Grant, aimed towards high school teachers who wished to develop a curriculum, and graduate and post graduates for research projects using the Centro archives over the summer (also with eleven applicants) and the General Grant, encompassing broader topics related to the Caribbean (nine applicants). El Centro supported research grants for the following faculty and graduate students:

#### *The Puerto Rican Diaspora Grant*

- Jillian M. Báez, doctoral student in the Institute of Communications Research-College of Communications, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, "Responses to Latinidad: Puerto Rican Young Women and the Latina Body in U.S. 'Hispanic' Advertising."
- Elizabeth Garcia, assistant professor in the Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies-Hunter College, CUNY, "Puerto Rican Feminist Thought and Practice."
- Myrna Garcia-Calderón, visiting assistant professor in the Romance Studies department-Cornell University, "The Construction of Memory in Contemporary Caribbean Literatures and Cultures."
- Sonia Lee, graduate student in the American History Dept.-Harvard University, "Between Boricua and Black: How the Civil Rights Movement Changed Black and Puerto Rican Racial Identities in New York City, 1950s-70s."

#### *The Visiting Scholars Grant*

- José E. Cruz, associate professor in the department of Political Science, SUNY Albany, "Out of Margins: Puerto Rican Politics in New York City, 1960-1990."
- Alexa S. Dietrich, doctoral student in the department of Anthropology, and department of Epidemiology, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, "Activism among Puerto Ricans in New York: Health and Health Policy."
- Imani K. Johnson, doctoral student in the department of American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California, "Race, Space, and Hip Hop."
- Rachel McKeen, English teacher in Bushwick Community High School, "Nuyorican Poetry."
- Yasmin Ramirez, Ph.D. in Art History, "Taller New York: Recovering and Revisioning the Nuyorican Art Movement."
- Elizabeth Taveras Rivera, doctoral student in the International and Transcultural Studies Department at Teachers College, Columbia University, "Puerto Rican contributions to mainstream American culture."

#### *The General CUNY-Caribbean Grant*

- Theodore A. Henken, Ph.D., Department of Black and Hispanic Studies-Baruch College, CUNY, "Financing Micro-Enterprise Development in Today's Cuba: Past Strategies and Future Potential."

#### *Events and Other Supported Projects*

- On April 19, 2005, The Center for Puerto Rican Studies, along with its co-sponsors, International Hip Hop Xchange and the Latino Community Organizing Network, hosted a screening and panel discussion of, *Inventos: Hip Hop Cubano*. The film and discussion focused on Cuban Hip Hop in particular, but also discussed the social and political implications of Hip Hop in Cuba and the United States.
- On May 20 and 21, 2005 El Centro, along with the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, University of Notre Dame and the Appraisers Association of America, Inc. hosted, "Assessment and Valuation of Puerto Rican, Chicano, Latino, and Hispanic-Caribbean Art," a historic two-day conference focused on appraising, valuation and history of Puerto Rican, Chicano, Cuban, Dominican, and other Latino Fine Art.
- The Centro has supported Mr. Israel Rivera a Puerto Rican descendant who now lives in Cuba and Sandra Mustelier Ayala, a Ph. D. Student in Sociology at the Universidad de Oriente, in research involving the Puerto Rican migration into Cuba.
- Mario César Romero, Independent Art Historian, visited San Juan, Puerto Rico on the behalf of El Centro to research and set up the foundation for an educational trip, targeting individuals interested in learning more about the contemporary Puerto Rican Arts. ■

## Centro Events Fall 2005

A group of dynamic members of the Centro staff met during the summer months and developed the Centro Events Committee with the purpose of efficiently making decisions for future events at Centro. The members of the Centro Events Committee are Odalys Diaz, Kimberlly Irizarry, Jorge Matos, Catrize Ortiz, Jose Vidal, and Ivelisse Rosario-Natal. The vision of this committee is to develop events that are relevant to our community while following the mandates of Centro's mission.

Centro Events generally sponsors and co-sponsors events during the academic year such as panel discussions, book presentations and gallery events (see library). The Centro Brown Bags provide an opportunity to junior scholars and graduate students to present their work in progress to a small gathering and obtain feedback on their work. We recently had in our Brown Bags the participation of Esperanza Martell from Hunter College sharing her experiences with the **Caravana to Cuba-Pastores por La Paz** and also Samuel Cruz from the Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies at Rutgers University with his work: **Dinga y Mandinga in Puerto Rican Pentecostalism**.

Events for the Fall 2005 semester began with the visit from Puerto Rico's novelist Tina Casanova who presented her most recent and recorded version of the book **Sambirón**. This recorded version is narrated by Malin Falu (De Costa A Costa-HITN TV) who joined us to read excerpts from the book during the evening. This event was possible by the

co-sponsorship and collaboration of El Instituto Hispano/Puertorriqueño para Personas Mayores; HITN-TV; Fundación Falu de Puerto Rico and the Jackson Heights-Queens Library. We thank Tina Casanova for her book donations to our collection at the Centro Library.

**Puerto Rican Chicago: Latino Ethnographies and Perspectives** panel was presented by former Centro researcher Gina Perez now at Oberlin College and scholar Ana Yolanda Ramos Zayas from Rutgers University. Both scholars presented their recent books followed by a comprehensive discussion moderated by Centro researcher in Public Policy, Carlos Vargas Ramos. Centro was a proud co-sponsor of the **NYLARNET Conference** and the **Alternative and Healing Systems Symposium** organized by the Immigration and Health Initiative from Hunter College as well as a performance/poetry night with Tato Laviera in his work **Mixtura Review** at St. Mark's Church in the Lower East Side.

We look forward to having you join us at our Centro and Gallery Events during the Spring 2006 semester. We are currently working on a Centro Open House at Hunter College, a celebration of Women History Month and discussions ranging in topics from Film, Architecture, Las Carpetas and Regaetton among many others. We invite you to join the Centro Events Listserv by visiting the Centro website at [www.centrop.org](http://www.centrop.org). You may also contact us at [centroevents@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:centroevents@hunter.cuny.edu) or 212-772-5714 for calendar updates and information. ■

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Tony is a Bronx native and has been affiliated with Centro since March 2000 when he began working on a research project at El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice in Williamsburg. He became a researcher at Centro two years ago.

Tony, who lives in El Barrio, has a bachelor's degree in social work from Dominican College, a master's degree in social work from Boston University and a master's degree in education and doctoral degree in administration, planning and social policy from Harvard University.

"I plan to move Centro *pa'lante* (forward) by maintaining and building on Centro's many accomplishments under Felo's leadership," he said. "I believe that Felo has laid the foundation for the next 30 years and that we are well positioned to continue our work with the support and collaboration of our colleagues at

Hunter, the City University of New York and beyond."

Strengthening the research unit is a priority for Tony during this transition. As a result, Centro has hired Andres Torres, as a senior researcher in applied social sciences. Andy, an economist, was a researcher at Centro during the 1980s and has been the director of the Mauricio Gaston Institute at UMass Boston for seven years. He will begin in the spring 2006.

In addition, Centro has hired three substitute researchers: Victoria Santia go (health policy), Ismael Garcia Colón (applied social sciences) and Odalys Diaz (education policy). The research unit will participate in a retreat during the fall 2005 semester with the goal of reviewing Centro's historical research agenda and developing a more streamlined plan for future research.

Tony also hopes to continue to

build an infrastructure in the arts. The success of Centro's El Barrio: Puerto Rican New York exhibition featuring the work of photographer Hiram Maristany and the rich archival material from Centro's Archives as well as Assessment and Valuation of Puerto Rican, Chicano and Hispanic Caribbean Art Conference during spring 2005 have generated tremendous momentum in the area of the arts.

Building on this momentum, visiting scholar Yasmin Ramirez completed her dissertation on the Nuyorican arts movement and received her Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center.

In a collaborative project with the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA, Yasmin will be developing an image bank of Nuyorican artists, a much needed resource for Latino art history programs and will be working on a book for UCLA's *A Ver, Revisioning Latino Art* initiative. ■

## Staff Notes

**Dr. Ismael Garcia Colon** rejoined Centro in the research capacity in the Spring of 2005. Dr. Garcia Colon obtained his B.A., Magna Cum Laude, in Anthropology from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Connecticut in 2002. From 1999 to 2003, García-Colón worked as an archivist at the Library and Archives Unit at Centro. He had the opportunity to conduct a project documenting the history of Latinos in the New York City labor movement. He also processed part of the Records of the Offices of the Government of Puerto Rico in the United States and coordinated the arrangement and description of 15 different collections documenting the history of Puerto Ricans in New York City.

Garcia-Colon is author of "Buscando Ambiente: Hegemony in Puerto Rico's Land Reform and Subaltern Tactics of Survival, 1930s-1960s" (forthcoming, *Latin American Perspectives*). His dissertation, entitled *Hegemony, Land Reform, and Social Space in Puerto Rico: Parcelas, a Land Distribution Program for Landless Workers, 1940s-1960s*, explores how residents shaped state's policies of land reform and community formation through economic practices, migration, political involvement, resistance, and accommodation in the municipality of Cidra. Ismael's present research at Centro is focused on Upstate New York farm workers in the late 1960's.

**Odalys Diaz** is currently a doctoral candidate at New York University's Steinhardt School of Education. Through her dissertation entitled *Ordinary Alchemy: A Study of School and Community Development*, Diaz integrates community development theory and action with local, school development and renewal practices. Ms. Diaz earned her Masters of Arts, in Educational Administration, in 1997 from the Steinhardt School of Education. Her undergraduate studies were undertaken at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to joining Centro, Odalys served as a consultant to various New York City school governance councils through New Visions for Public Schools.

For three years, her work at the Centro has been directing a CUNY-wide Latino/a education program called ENLACE

(Engaging Latino/a Communities in Education). This Kellogg funded initiative has enabled CUNY School of Education faculty from Brooklyn, City, Hunter, Lehman and Queens colleges to reach out to their geographic communities through school enrichment programs and community partnerships targeted specifically toward the success of Latino/a public school students. As of July, 2005 Odalys joined the Centro Research Unit where she will dedicate herself to studying and publishing in both the community and school development fields.

**Dr. Victoria Santiago** joined Centro's research Unit in July of 2005. She holds a PhD in Urban Planning from UCLA's School of Public Affairs (2003). Dr. Santiago obtained her Master's Degree in Urban Planning from Hunter College in 1992. She completed her undergraduate work in Yale University. Her areas of specialty include Urban Planning and Policy, Gender and Ethnic Identity, Social Movements, Latino Studies/ African American Studies, and Environmental Politics/History.

Her past research has been centered on environmental justice in the South Bronx focusing on the Puerto Rican and inter-ethnic leadership. Dr. Santiago was born in East Harlem and lived there for twenty years before going to study at UCLA. Victoria also has experience in working in the area of child welfare focusing on preventive services, drug prevention for teens and academic advisement for untraditional students. Her work at Centro is centered around the current health status of Puerto Ricans in the Diaspora. She is presently working on an Asthma Policy Brief.

**New project and support staff:** In 2005 Centro welcomed these new staff members: Library and Archives: *Mariana Goycochea, Diana Saenz Ariza, Melisa Panchano, Cynthia Sanchez* and *Carmen L. Tavarez*; Administration: *Kimberly Robinson*; Events: *Sabrina Prudencio*; Director's Office: *Francisca Cruz*. As the Centro began to develop work in the Nuyorican/Puerto Rican arts movement, Centro hired *Dr. Yasmin Ramirez* and *Mario Cesar Romero* to work on projects that will further this agenda.

**Off to New Ventures:** 2005 witnessed the departure from our ranks of part-timers *Rene Bosolet, Michael Ng* and *Noelia Urbano*. We wish them well in their new careers and/or programs of study. ■



Dr. Ismael García Colón



Odalys Diaz



Dr. Victoria Santiago

## EL BARRIO: Puerto Rican New York *Centro/MCNY – Groundbreaking Collaboration*



*Centro staff pose with Commissioner Novello and guests.*

State Health Commissioner and former Surgeon General Antonia Novello honored Centro and the 10th anniversary of the National Puerto Rican Parade during a special ceremony at the Museum of the City of New York on May 12th.

Dr. Novello was representing Gov. George Pataki at the event that kicked off a month of events leading to the parade. The ceremony also highlighted the exhibit *El Barrio: Puerto Rican New York*, which was on display at the Museum of the City of New York from Jan. 21 to June 12, 2005.

Organized in conjunction with Centro, the exhibition featured the rarely seen photographs of Hiram S. Maristany, one of the most important chroniclers of Puerto Rican life in El Barrio — the neighborhood (officially East Harlem) in which resided the largest concentration of Puerto Rican people living in the United States from the 1950s through the 1980s. The exhibit also featured materials from Centro's Archives that document the history of the Puerto Ricans in the city from their arrival in the late 19th century to the present.

Photographs of La Marqueta were abundant at the exhibit. It was built as the Park Avenue Market in 1936, when East Harlem's population was predominantly Italians and Jews.

Reflecting the changing demographics of the surrounding neighborhood through the 1970s, Park Avenue Market became known as La Marqueta as more and more Puerto Ricans became its customer base.

The exhibition also captured, through Hiram's photography, the emergence of a new generation of Puerto Ricans who began to challenge poor living conditions in El Barrio and throughout the city. They demanded increased municipal services, expanded social services, bilingual education, representation, acknowledgement, and equality.

One such group, the Young Lords reached its highest New York City membership in its first year.

Hiram who still lives in East Harlem was a founding member of the Young Lords (and the group's official photographer) and he served as director of El Museo del Barrio. Deeply involved in the Puerto Rican arts movement, he has documented everyday life in El Barrio, its vibrant personality and personalities for the past forty years.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful partner in this exhibition, the Museum of the City of New York and Kathy Benson who curated the exhibit with Centro's Associate Director Nélica Pérez, Archivist Pedro Juan Hernández and our director on leave, Dr. Félix Matos Rodríguez," said Interim Director Tony DeJesús, during the ceremony at the museum.

"Also, thanks to Hiram Maristany for sharing these important images documenting more than 40 years of Puerto Rican life in El Barrio," Tony said. "This exhibit has particular relevance for me, because my parents each lived in El Barrio

when they first arrived in New York as young migrants before moving to the Bronx and Lower East Side."

Tony added that celebrated artist Juan Sanchez also recently reminded him, that while East Harlem is an especially important community for Puerto Ricans, El Barrio exists in many communities throughout New York City including Loisaida, Williamsburg, and the Bronx where he was born and raised.

"Fittingly for our recognition of the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, our community is truly a national community with a presence in all 50 states and important barrios in cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Newark, Hartford, Boston, Orlando and many more," Tony said.

However, Tony said despite our many accomplishments as a community, much of the work of our Centro research unit does reveal the sobering reality that we still have much to do, particularly in the areas of education, housing and health.

"Even as we celebrate we must redouble our efforts to move our comunidad P'alante!" he said.

### **El Barrio Then and Now Through Literature.**

On April 16, as part of the El Barrio exhibit Centro and the Museum of the City of New York sponsored a very special panel discussion. The evening featured the screening of the film, *Every Child is Born A Poet: The Life and Work of Piri Tomás* by Jonathan Robinson.

After the film, Piri Thomas, author of *Down These Mean Streets*, and Ernesto Quiñonez author of *Bodega Dreams* and *Chango's Fire* read from their works. The standing room only crowd honored Piri with a standing ovation before he recited the late Pedro Pietri's famous poem, Puerto Rican Obituary.

Piri and Ernesto then had a discussion about the changes in El Barrio literature, which was moderated by NYU Professor Arlene Davila, author of *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos and the Neoliberal City*. Panelists and audience members debated the changes, which have occurred in El Barrio including the more recent arrival of a large Mexican community and the pressures of gentrification upon long term, low-income residents of El Barrio. ■

## Major Grants Fall 2005

1. Centro awarded \$488,000 in second year funding from the Council of the City of New York thanks to the able assistance of council members Margarita Lopez, Philip Reed, and Joel Rivera. In the previous fiscal year the Centro was awarded \$469,000 through the auspices of the same Council members.
2. Centro awarded 2nd grant of federal IMLS Project funds – \$248,000, thanks to the support and interest of Congressman Jose E. Serrano. The 1st \$500,000 grant was awarded in 2002. “Digitizing, Preserving and Disseminating the Archival Materials from the Center for Puerto Rican Studies” The three components to be funded are: (a) Completing the arrangement and description and organizing of the records from the papers of judge and legislator Felipe N. Torres, activist and educator Dr. Antonia Pantoja, renowned Nuyorican poet writer Pedro Pietri and the Records of ASPIRA Inc. of NY, a youth education institution. Over a two-year period the Centro will arrange and describe the records according to current national archival standards. A comprehensive Finding Aid in EAD format will be prepared and made available at the Centro and on the Internet. A MARC record will also be created and entered into OCLC, CUNY+ (the City University of New York’s online catalog) and the New York State Historical Documents Inventory. and creating finding aids for these collections; (b) Advancing the processing of the records released by the FBI pertaining to the persecution of Puerto Ricans due to their political affiliations; (c) Continue Enhancing and expanding and improving the FBI records’ website with new digitized and indexed materials, and new informational features and for the website. Also, to explore the feasibility of producing CD-ROMs in order to disseminate copies of the papers.
3. Centro awarded \$85,000 in capital funds for the acquisition and installation of a high density book filing system for Centro’s library, space efficient cabinets and shelving units, and computer hardware. We thank the members of the Bronx Delegation of the Council of the City of New York, especially its chairperson, Maria Baez.
4. “Politics Con Sabor” (working title): Centro will receive the 3rd \$50,000 installment to complete the video documentary on the history of Puerto Rican & Latino politicians in New York state commissioned by Assemblyman Peter M. Rivera, chair of the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Legislative Task Force.
5. CUNY Central Office: \$55,000 was re-allocated to the Centro through the auspices of Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance, Ernesto Malave toward continuing improvements in our library and website operations.

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State. It also provides an important forum for researchers to engage policy makers in an important dialogue regarding the role of research in shaping public policy,” said Anthony DeJesus, Centro interim director.

The network held a conference at Hunter College on October 14th

featuring presentations of policy briefs by Centro researcher Carlos Vargas Ramos (The State of Hispanic Housing in the U.S.) and Tony De Jesús (Exploring the Latino Education Pipeline in New York State - co-authored with Daniel Vasquez, president of Multicultural

## IUPLR Summer Institute



Maria Saldarriaga

In July of 2005, Research Assistant Casandra Tolentino and Hunter College student Maria Saldarriaga represented CENTRO at the Inter University Program for Latino Research’s (IUPLR) Latino/a Public Policy Institute (LPPI) as coordinator and student presenter respectively.

LPPI is an intensive program lasting several days during the summer that engages university students from around the country. The central purpose of the LPPI is to produce an annual stream of young scholars and leaders who will contribute to the development of the Latino community.

The students participated in events ranging from a Latino identity workshop, visiting The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and The National Council of the Raza, as well as meeting with various Latino Representatives of Congress. A highlight of the Institute was the students’ research presentations. Ms. Saldarriaga gave an insightful presentation titled, “A Comparison between traditional Southwestern Mexican Migration and the Growing Mexican Community in New York” which received a standing ovation.

“Programs such as the Latino/a Public Policy Institute are instrumental in giving students that have the potential to be our future researchers and leaders a foundation on which to further develop themselves and create lasting networks of support among their peers,” said Ms. Tolentino. ■

Economics in New York City).

Other presentations were made by colleagues from SUNY Albany’s Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CELAC) and the Institute for Urban and Minority Education (IUME) at Columbia University’s Teachers College. ■

## Puerto Rican Day Parade

For the second consecutive year, Centro Staff enthusiastically marched up 5th avenue with their props, sunglasses, and Centro logo-t-shirts on Sunday, June 10th 2005 in an attempt to reach out reach out to the community.

This year Interim Director, Dr. Anthony De Jesús, Project Archivist Kimberly Irizarry, and Research Assistant Casandra Tolentino organized Centro's participation in the parade. Centro staff marched along the CUNY float with their t-shirts, which read *Luchar es Aprender, Aprender a Luchar* and the Centro logo on the back of the shirts. Other staff members who attended the parade included Researcher, Yasmin Ramirez, Nadya Rodriguez, Diana Saenz, and Sierra Freeman, College Assistant of the Library and Archives. Centro Director Felix Matos Rodriguez served as an NBC commentator for the second year in a row."

For Centro staff members who attended the event, it was more than just celebrating Puerto Rican heritage. Kimberly Irizarry, who has helped organize Centro's participation in the parade from the first year, felt that it was a great way for staff members to connect with each other, while also reaching out to the public. "When you see a contingent of people bonding, you can't help but notice them and wonder who they are. My hope is that people will notice us as an organization that serves the Puerto Rican community and utilize our services."

In the near future, staff members who attended the parade would like to see more participation. Despite some of the negative stereotypes that are associated with the parade, many like Casandra Tolentino felt that partaking was a great way to contribute something positive, "I believe that the parade participants and spectators need to know that there are organizations like us that house the history and culture of Puerto Ricans in the diaspora." ■

## Puerto Rican Writers

Puerto Rican Writers & Migration: Folklore, Autobiography & History New Website [www.centrop.org/prwriters](http://www.centrop.org/prwriters)

This website offers access to information developed by scholars associated with the City University of New York (CUNY) and archival resources held at the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños on three Puerto Rican writers who migrated to the United States in the early twentieth century.

These writers were chosen from a small group of writers who have donated their papers to the Centro. Our goal is to present information on Puerto Rican writers together with access to some of the archival sources that they left behind. The use of archival sources gives students access to new insights into the lives of these writers and to the historical reality they lived through.

### About the authors highlighted in this project

We chose the three authors who are the focus of this project, Jesus Colón (1901–1974), Pura Belpré (circa 1901–1982) and Antonia Pantoja (1922–2002) because they are integral to the history of Puerto Ricans living stateside, they were all writers and they all collected significant archives that are held by the Centro. Collectively, this group of writers addresses the theme of Puerto Rican arrival and incorporation into U.S. society, a process that was inflected in the twentieth century by their new status as citizens. All three authors were Afro-Puerto Ricans and their writing and reflections also provide first-person insight into the dynamics of race from a U.S. Latino perspective.

Using different genres of writing, each of these authors is credited with chronicling the culture of Puerto Rico and of Puerto Ricans in the United States.

There are many Puerto Rican authors who have published books stateside as well as in Puerto Rico. We have included links on this site if you want more information on Puerto Rican writers. ■



*Centro staff at the parade.*

## Conference Highlights: Assessment and Valuation of Puerto Rican, Chicano, Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Art

### FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2005

**Keynote Speaker** – Susana Torruella Leval, Director Emeritus, El Museo del Barrio, NY – “The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same”

**Historical Roots:** *Art historians from around the country will provide a brief history in order to contextualize the art of the region in preparation for examining valuation issues.* Taína Caragol, Survey of Archives of Latino Art, MoMA – “Puerto Rican and Nuyorican Art”; Edward J. Sullivan, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, “Cuban/Latino Art in the US”; Tere Romo, The Mexican Museum, San Francisco, CA – “Chicano Art”; Shifra Goldman, UCLA, – “Dominican Contemporary Art”; Moderator: Gilberto Cárdenas, Director, Institute for Latino Studies, Notre Dame, IN

**The Market Place:** *Art experts will discuss their experiences with how Latino/Latina art, although considered to be outside the mainstream in the past, is now coming into its own, and entering into the marketplace.* Mary-Anne Martin, Founder, Latin American Department, Sotheby’s, NY – “Creating a Market for Latino Artists in the US”; Taína Caragol, Survey of Archives of Latino Art, MoMA – “The Archives of Latino Art at MoMA”; Gary D. Keller, Arizona State University– “Creating a Market”; Moderator: Carmen Melián, VP, Director of Latin American Art, Sotheby’s, NY

**Introduction to Appraising & Appraisal Methodology** – Jane H. Willis, Immediate Past President, Appraisers Association of America, NY

### SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2005

**Keynote Speaker** – Chon A. Noriega, Director, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center  
**Museums and Collectors:** *Curators, private collectors and artists debate and discuss the impact and influence that museums and collectors have in establishing an artist’s career and his/her market.* Gilberto Cárdenas, Director, Institute for Latino Studies, Notre Dame, IN – “Collecting Chicano and Latino Art”; Mercedes Trelles Hernández, Universidad de Puerto Rico; former curator at Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan – “The Development of the Collection of Contemporary Puerto Rican Art at the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico”; Cheech Marin, Collector, CA – “Collecting Chicano Art”; Julio Valdez, Dominican artist, NY – “From the Artist’s Perspective”; Moderator: Deborah Cullen, El Museo del Barrio, NY

**The Art of the Silkscreen Poster:** *A case study will be presented by specialists in the history of the Puerto Rican, Cuban and Chicano hand silk-screened poster who will review how difficult it is to establish a fair market value in this popular and widely collected genre.* Mercedes Trelles Hernández, Universidad de Puerto Rico; former curator at Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan - “The Development of the Puerto Rican Silkscreen Poster”; Alex J. Rosenberg, AAA, ASA, American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba - “Cuban Revolutionary Posters Since 1959”; Victor Sorell, Chicago State University, IL – “The Art of the Chicano Poster”; Moderator: Mario César Romero, Independent Art Historian; former Curator, Bransom Collection, NY

**The Passion for Collecting:** *Whether collecting for an institution or collecting for themselves, these collectors display an unparalleled passion for fine art, ephemera, and photography. Their discussion will provide a preview for a proposed follow-up symposium on collectibles, photography, folk art and more.* Roberto Trujillo, Stanford University– “Collecting Artists’ Books and Personal Archives”; Andrew Connors, National Hispanic Cultural Center, New Mexico – “Graffiti Art: Nuyorican and Chicano”; Angel Franco, The New York Times, NY – “Collecting Photographs”; Jose Rafael Mendez, NY - “Collecting Ephemera from Cuba and Puerto Rico: Postcards, Stamps, and Posters”; Moderator: Helaine W. Fendelman, AAA, Past President, Appraisers Association of America ■

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Santiago, Pedro Aponte Vazquez, Edwin “Chungo” Molina and Robert Rodriguez.

Gilberto Gerena Valentín, community activist and former city councilman, Dennis Rivera, President 1199, Assemblyman Peter Rivera, Dylcia Pagán, political activist and political prisoner, Jose Manuel Torres, poet, educator and political activist have also agreed to donate their papers in the near future.

The EAD Project: 25 Bilingual Guides (Spanish and English) of all our organized collections will be available on the Centro website in Fall 2005 using encoded **archival description** standards which makes guides/finding aids searchable on the Internet with greater detail and effectiveness.

### Volunteer News

**Alma Torres-Warner**, a retired teacher and school administrator, has rich and varied experiences in the field of education.

As a volunteer, Alma has helped us identify faces and names in the papers of her father Judge Felipe N. Torres. Currently, she is revising an inventory of The Offices of Information for Puerto Rico Photographic Collection. Many thanks to Alma for generously donating her time to the Centro Library. ■

## CENTRO Journal Subscriptions

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE:

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Institutional \$60 / year

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## CENTRO Journal

*CENTRO Journal's* Spring 2006 issue (vol. 18, no. 1) will focus on Vieques. The special section on Vieques, guest edited by Katherine McCaffrey (Montclair State University), will include essays by César Ayala and José Bolívar ("The Cold War and the Second Expropriations of the Navy in Vieques"), Sherie Bayer ("Environmental Justice and the Cleanup of Vieques"), Deborah Berman Santana ("*La lucha continúa: Challenges for a post-Navy Vieques*"), Juan Cartagena ("Time to Walk the Walk: Vieques, Civil Disobedience in New York with Vicente 'Panama' Alba"), Katherine McCaffrey ("The Battle for Vieques' Future"), Ramón L. López ("*Las camisetas de Vieques: etnografía de una visible conversación*"), and a photo essay on Vieques. In addition, the number will contain essays on racial politics and the work of Esmeralda Santiago, the nationalism of the Young Lords, the Taíno DNA controversy, Puerto Rican students at the Carlisle Indian School, an interview with author Edgardo Vega Yunque, review essay and more.

FALL 2005



# CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE EDUCATION OF THE PUERTO RICAN DIASPORA:  
**Challenges, Dilemmas, and Possibilities**

**Guest editors:** Anthony De Jesús (Centro) and Rosalie Rolon-Dow (University of Delaware)

Schools have served as central sites where political, economic and social-cultural predicaments and tensions inherent in the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States have often been played out. Consequently, the themes of oppression, struggle, resistance and hope have been prevalent in the Puerto Rican experience with education. The aim of this special issue of the Centro Journal is to present the work of scholars documenting and investigating these themes as they pertain to education within Puerto Rican communities. This issue invites submissions from multiple disciplines that contribute to a productive dialogue about the struggle for educational justice for Puerto Rican students. In particular, we invite authors to submit original research manuscripts that address the following questions:

- What new educational opportunities and challenges are created for Puerto Rican students by changing demographic and migratory patterns in the U.S. (both across racial/ethnic groups and within the Puerto Rican population)?
- How are individual and community identities (re)defined, contested, and appropriated both in and out of schools?
- How does the new emphasis on standards and accountability exemplified in policies such as No Child Left Behind, impact the educational experiences and opportunities offered to Puerto Rican children?
- How do reform efforts such as standards, scripted instruction, vouchers, and charter schools impact the type and quality of education that Puerto Rican youth receive?
- What educational practices, policies, and institutional structures move us beyond the limits of the Puerto Rico – United States relationship to imagine new possibilities both for Puerto Rican communities and for the education of Puerto Rican youth?

**Voices/Images from the field:** We also invite the submission of essays, reflections, interviews, or photo essays that focus on the themes of oppression, struggle, resistance and hope as they relate to the education of Puerto Ricans inside and outside of schools. We especially seek to capture the perspective of adults, youth and children with first hand experience of teaching and learning in Puerto Rican communities.

Guidelines can be obtained from [www.centropr.org](http://www.centropr.org). For more information, or to send manuscripts contact: Xavier Totti, Editor, at *CENTRO Journal*, Hunter College, 695 Park Avenue, Rm. E-1429, New York, NY 10021, or at [centro-journal@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:centro-journal@hunter.cuny.edu).

**Deadline for Submissions: October 15, 2006**

For submission guidelines please visit [www.centropr.org](http://www.centropr.org)  
Para las pautas para la presentación de manuscritos favor de ir a [www.centropr.org](http://www.centropr.org)