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## Comite' Noviembre: 3rd Annual Puerto Rican Artisans Fair & Exhibit

Contributed by Olga Ayala - Blacktino.net  
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### November

is nationally recognized as Puerto Rican Heritage Month, and in New York, Comite' Noviembre, a non-profit umbrella group of various Puerto Rican agencies, publically recognizes and honors the contributions of various Puerto Ricans to American history and culture.

In celebration of CN's 20th Anniversary, the first Annual Puerto Rican Artisans Fair & Exhibit was established, and this year held at a much larger location after growing out of the space it occupied at Hunter College the last 2 years.

### On

what was no doubt the coldest day of the year so far, the immense warmth and love of the people, and their descendants of this tropical Island, was felt at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle.

### You

could feel the artisans' excitement building, eager to showcase their artistic expression and political views, through their labor of love in the flurry of activity, as they set up in the church's huge auditorium. Artists and performers embraced and greeted familiar faces, and new brethren from out of town were welcomed with open arms into the creative fold. Before you knew it, everything was in place. The event kicked off with opening remarks from Teresa A. Santiago, Chairperson, Comite' Noviembre, Luis Cordero, Co-Chair, CN Artisan Fair Committee, and a Taino Ceremonial Blessing.

### As

we enjoyed the DJ spinning awesome classic salsa and traditional Puerto Rican tunes, (yes, many of us were dancing behind our tables LOL!) the auditorium started to fill with people. There were many noted poets, visual artists, actors, authors, and filmmakers among the attendees, many from the Nuyoricana Art Movement.

### Although

not present at the event, the artwork of former Puerto Rican political prisoner Dylcia Pagan, a native of El Barrio, was also available. Dylcia, who spent nearly 20 years in prison, was granted clemency by former President Bill Clinton in September, 1999.

### Workshops

on Taino storytelling, Taino petroglyphs, Three Kings, Vejigante mask making

and Boricua music, were held in the surrounding anterooms. A fabulous and very entertaining musical entertainment program, that included Danza Fiesta, and ended with the youth bomba group BomaYo!, really kicked up the event a few notches! I can't begin to tell you, how good it feels watching the next generation embrace the cultural baton! Juepaaaaaaa!

I can't think of any better way to kick off the holiday season, by celebrating and sharing my culture in art, music, dance and savory food. And on behalf of all the following artists and performers, I'd like to thank everyone who put so much work into putting this event together, and everyone who came out and showed their support, cause Lord knows; I enjoyed the hell out of it! LOL!

Hasta  
la proxima!

## THE ARTISANS

### New York

Olga Ayala, Carmen Ayala, Luis Cordero, David Cajigas, Lourdes B. Garcia, Erisbella Garriga, Clarisel Gonzalez, Mia Roman Hernandez, Sylvia Hernandez, Elena Marrero, Tina Lugo, Aguilar Marrero, Reina Miranda, Esperanza Martel, Melissa Mislá, Mercedes Molina, Marilyn Navarro, Carlos Nieves, Elizabeth Ortiz, Felipe Rangel, Angela Rivera, Freebbie Rivera, "Taino Ray" Ramon Rivera, Jenny Santiago, Candy Warixi Soto, Carmelo Soto, Efrain Suarez, Rosario, Juan Carlos Suazo, Tanya Torres, Leslynette Vega, Elizabeth Velazquez, Francisco Vallejo and Monseratte Zabala-Hernandez.

### New Jersey

### Angel Garcia

### Florida

Pedro Brull

Puerto  
Rico

Jose Pelegrina, Deisi Perez

## WORKSHOPS

Taino Storytelling & Bobby Gonzalez

Taino Petroglyph Symbols & Elena Marrero

Story of the Three Kings & Making of Boxes and  
Crowns & Paul Lambermont

Vejigante Masks & Felipe Rangel

Historical Overview of Boricua Music & Jose & Dr.  
Drum & L. Ortiz

Olga Ayala is a polymer clay artisan specializing in original, fully functional home decor items and wearable art (jewelry); she provides art courses for beginners as an introduction to Polymer Clay, and her art pieces are displayed around the world; she is a columnist and a cultural partner of Blacktino.net. For more info: [olgaayala.zoomshare.com](http://olgaayala.zoomshare.com)

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