

REVIEWS

The News from Atlanta

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Atlanta seemed a different city during my latest trip there, just before the Olympic Games. Owen brought me to the Carlos University library and no sooner had he pointed out that the Czech House had replaced its nation's flag with the Olympic banner than a deafening drone cut our conversation short. Soon a mobile police patrol blocked traffic in order to make way for a convoy of twelve silver-plated tractor-trailers loaded with alcohol-free beer, thus advising us that Atlanta had been taken prisoner by the voracity of publicity. We were dumbfounded to see that the police patrol itself was blocking traffic.

Although Owen mapped out a route in order to avoid the interminable procession, we found ourselves trapped yet a second time. "I'm heading for the hills," Owen announced with conviction.

The unveiling of the first of our sculptures (by Enric Pladevall) was held the next day as part of the inauguration



Joan Gardy Artigas, Enric Pladevall, M^a Luïsa Borràs, Elisa Arimany, Robert Llimós and Xavier Medina-Campeny. 1996.

of Centennial Park. I could hardly believe it. This had been the haughty city's shame, miserable slums of the black ghetto nailed like an opprobrium in to

the very heart of the city. Billy Paine and the organizers had first converted it into open, empty space in order to transform it into a giant meeting place of the Olympics; now it was an inextricable jungle of advertising towers filled with uppercase letters and furious colors. The unusual sculpture "Planeta Andrógino" ("Androgynous Planet") — which in mock-up had frightened the customs officers at the airport when they mistook it for a missile— was surrounded by those insanely loud advertisements; but strangely enough, the austerity of the sculpture's colors was eye-catching and attracted attention. The majorettes preparing for the grand event asked each other — and asked us — what "that thing" was announcing.

After the ceremony of government official and balloons, "Planeta Andrógino" was solemnly applauded. And there we all were, posing for the obligatory photo. Robert Llimós, creator



Robert Llimós. Threshold, 1996. Bronze/Paint.



Manuel Álvarez. *Dance*. 1996.

of “Umbral” (“Threshold”) in what is known as “Metro Plaza” in the center city. Elisa Arimany, whose “Juegos” (“Games”) was on Olympic Avenue, a short walk from the stadium. Joan Gardy Artiga, whose “Tolerancia” (“Tolerance”), is a totem of various materials, each evoking a different culture, and which is located in the access plaza to Life College. Manuel Alvarez, creator of “Danza”, six white marble figures that appear to be engaged in the folkloric Catalan group dance known as

the “Sardana” (the Olympic organizers reduced the number of figures from the original six to an eventual five in keeping with the number of Olympic rings). And Xavier Medina-Campeny, creator of “Homenaje al Dr. King” (“Homage to Dr. King”), an billboard of steel located on Freedom Parkway, the access route to the Carter Center, which offers the best view of the zone with the city’s skyline serving as background. Of this group, only Xavier was honored with an unveiling officiated by the mayor of

Atlanta, Bill Campbell. Thus came to a conclusion the wager of a group of summer friends who had gathered in 1993 in Gallifa to commemorate Joan Miró’s centenary at the Llorens Artigas Foundation — the same foundation that has the appearance of becoming the permanent cultural legacy of one Olympic city to the next. Someone told me that Atlanta has taken up the idea and is preparing to send the legacy of its music, its blues and spirituals, to Sydney. Let’s hope so.



CENTRO ATLANTICO DE ARTE MODERNO



