“Facing Fascism” Opens in Spain

By James Fernández

Alcalá de Henares, birthplace of the great Miguel de Cervantes, is 20 kilometers northeast of Madrid, on the road to Zaragoza. The Instituto Cervantes has its headquarters here, in a beautiful 16th century building that was once part of the University of Alcalá, one of the oldest in Europe.

On December 13, in the patio of this lovely renaissance building, the Spanish language version of the museum exhibition “Nueva York y la Guerra Civil Española” was inaugurated. Speaking at the opening were the leaders of the show’s sponsoring organizations—Carmen Caffarell of the Instituto Cervantes, Susan Henshaw Jones of the Museum of the City of New York, Salvador Clotias of the Fundación Pablo Iglesias, Peter Carroll of ALBA, and Carlota Álvarez Basso of the Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales. Judge-Magistrate Baltasar Garzón, by now an old friend of ALBA, was also on hand for the inauguration. The show occupies the interior and exterior walls of the glass-enclosed patio and features some 40 full color panels and six interactive video kiosks.

The Spanish press responded favorably to the new exhibition. El País (December 23, 2007) published a lengthy illustrated article. El Público ran an even longer piece on January 3, 2008, praising the exhibition’s innovative point of view. Meanwhile, Cadena Ser, one of the country’s most important radio stations, broadcast a report about the exhibition in mid-January.

The Instituto Cervantes reports that the exhibition is being visited by large numbers of individuals and school groups. The run in Alcalá de Henares has been extended through March, and plans are being made to travel the show to other Spanish cities.

and published in full color, has also received considerable attention.

The catalog, translated into Spanish and published in full color, has also received considerable attention.

The Instituto Cervantes reports that the exhibition is being visited by large numbers of individuals and school groups. The run in Alcalá de Henares has been extended through March, and plans are being made to travel the show to other Spanish cities.

Continued next page

After Spain, “Beyond Abstract Art”

By Robert W. Snyder

The wide-ranging art of a Lincoln Battalion veteran recently received its first full exhibition at La Roche College in Pittsburgh, Pa.: “Beyond Abstract Art—Reflections of Life on Shell, Rock, Bark and Flat Surfaces: The Amazing World of George Brodsky.”

The show was organized by Brodsky’s grandnephew, Paul Le Blanc, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at La Roche, with Lauren Lempe, director of the college’s Cantellops Gallery, where the exhibit ran from January 14 to 31, 2008.

Brodsky, born in Russia in 1901, immigrated to the United States with his family in 1903. His father was a garment worker and active in the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union.

During the 1920s, Brodsky took classes at the American Academy of Art and at the Art Students League, where he studied with John Sloan, Reginald Marsh and Boardman Robinson. In the 1930s he was active in the Artist’s Union and the artists’ section of the John Reed Club. Brodsky worked with Axel Horn for the WPA to produce a mural for the lobby of Bellevue Hospital in New York City. His work was in uenced by artists of the period, including Moses Sawyer, Raphael Sawyer, Ben Shahn, Jose Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera.

He was brie¯ married to another art student, Rika Angel.

During the Spanish Civil War, Brodsky joined the Lincolns. He was at the battle of Jarama. After he returned from Spain, he expressed his experiences there in his art, which by the 1940s included landscapes.

From 1939 to 1965 Brodsky worked as a proofreader at the Daily News. He was also active in political causes. He married Rose Margolis Brodsky, a social worker.

In the 1940s, Brodsky found his artistic impulses blocked, but they returned as he approached retirement. He began to paint faces on unconventional surfaces. In 1977 he wrote, “Continuing to work on unconventional surfaces, I was irresistibly drawn to painting and drawing on sea shells picked up along the Atlantic shore not far from my home. Then in the quarries and rivers

Continued on page 6

Robert W. Snyder is an associate professor of journalism and American Studies at Rutgers-Newark.