



ANNE CUSACK Los Angeles Times

PREPARATIONS: Christina Ochoa, left, Peter Tovar and Alex Alferov hang works for the tribute to Boccacero. "She gave every artist, no matter their proficiency, the same opportunity," Alferov said.

[Culture, from Page E12] consider their calcified perceptions. Judging from the artwork on display today, the only standard seems to be the variety of styles and themes. Artist Omar Ramirez was one of those young artists who felt Self Help was "not for us." Ideologies aside, he was trained as a painter and muralist, not a silk screener.

But there he was this week, bent over a table at Self Help, signing a fresh set of prints depicting a forbidding urban landscape titled "Luci in the Sky," a piece that suggested its pro-immigrant protest not with slogans but with troubling shadows in a people-less cityscape.

"There's a resurgence in printmaking as an accessible way of getting your work out," said Ramirez, 36. "Not a lot of universities teach that."

Oh, by the way, Ramirez is now one of the newer members of the Self Help board of directors.

The place wasn't so forbidding after all. "It took time to get here," he said.

Upstairs in a second-story office, we talked about budgets and the plan to save the organization. Attorney and art collector Armando Durón serves as board president, taking charge in October 2005 as the agency was falling apart.

That summer, Self Help suddenly closed its doors because it couldn't pay its insurance bill. It quickly reopened under community protest, then most of the old board members resigned.

Today, the new board keeps the doors open with a \$200,000 annual budget and a volunteer ethos. They have no artistic director, no executive director and a skeleton staff. Board members also mop the floors, open the mail, answer phones and spend their own money on maintenance, said Durón, 52, who started coming to Self Help as a col-

lege student in the mid-'70s.

Why do they do it? It's the spirit of the organization, and what it means to the community.

Asked what Boccacero means to him, the silver-haired lawyer, wearing a white dress suit and dignified tie held straight with a tie clasp, took a long pause and stared up to the ceiling to regain his composure.

"I'm sorry," said Durón. "I didn't know I was going to get emotional. I think it's going to take a long time for people to figure out the importance she had. But eventually she's not going to be looked on as just a local East L.A. heroine anymore, but as a truly national treasure."

"Flowers From Carmen's Garden: Homenaje a Sister Karen Boccacero (1933-1997)," Self Help Graphics & Art, 3802 Cesar E. Chavez Ave., L.A. Opens today and ends Aug. 12. Annual Print Fair, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. (323) 881-6444.

They are devoted to 'St. Death'

There's a bit of buzz surrounding next week's world premiere of "La Santa Muerte," a documentary about the Mexican cult to a skeletal statue known as "St. Death."

The film is written, produced and directed by Eva Aridjis, who visits shrines to the holy Grim Reaper in poor homes and barrios, interviewing folks who believe in her powers.

Although some consider the cult satanic, followers behave in the most wholesome tradition of Mexican Catholicism. In the film, they pray to St. Death for a longer life, for better grades, for a cure to depression, for miraculous recoveries of afflicted loved ones and for release from prison. In a practice akin to the Day of the Dead, they bring her offerings and dress her in robes, crowns and wigs.

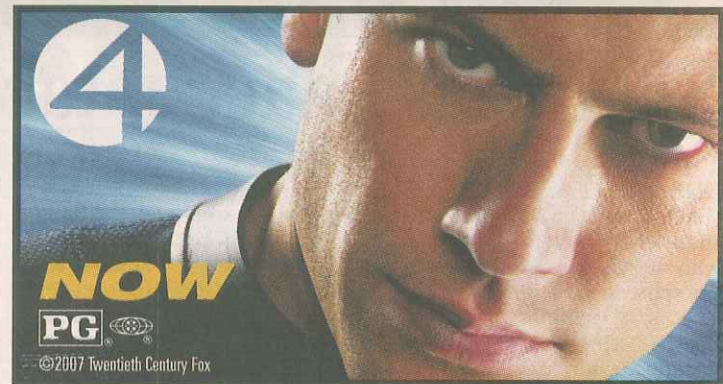
"In reality, she's not bad," says a convicted prisoner with St. Death tattooed on his torso. "Actually, she's good and we are the bad ones who try to use her to hurt others. But she is kind and generous."

The thing that hurts watching this movie is seeing so many of Mexico's dispossessed and desperate people having nobody to turn to but a miraculous saint. It doesn't get more Catholic than that.

Narrated by actor Gael García Bernal, the documentary is being screened as part of the Los Angeles Film Festival.

"La Santa Muerte" screens at 7:45 p.m. Monday at Landmark's Regent Theatre, 1045 Brixton Ave., Westwood, and at 9:45 p.m. Friday at the Italian Cultural Institute, 1023 Hilgard Ave., Westwood.

Gurza covers Latino music, arts and culture. E-mail agustin.gurza@latimes.com with comments, events and ideas for this weekly feature.



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HOLLY HOBBIE AND FRIENDS: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER (G)
10:00

EVAN ALMIGHTY (PG)
10:35, 11:15, 11:45, 1:00, 1:40, 2:10, 3:20, 4:05, 4:35, 5:40, 6:30, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 9:30, 11:30, 12:00

EVAN ALMIGHTY (PG) IN CENTER STAGE (With live pre-show entertainment)
7:00, 9:30

EVAN ALMIGHTY (PG) (RWC/DVS) (RWC)
10:35, 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00

1408 (PG-13)
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:10, 12:40

A MIGHTY HEART (R)
11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40, 12:10

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER (PG)
10:00, 10:30, 11:45, 12:15, 12:45, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 4:15, 4:45, 5:15, 6:45, 7:15, 7:45, 9:10, 9:40, 10:10, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30

NANCY DREW (PG)
10:00, 12:25, 2:50, 5:15, 7:40, 10:05, 12:20

OCEAN'S THIRTEEN (PG-13)
12:20, 3:25, 6:30, 9:35, 12:15

HOSTEL PART II (R)
10:25, 12:35

SURF'S UP (PG)
12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10

KNOCKED UP (R)
10:20, 1:25, 4:35, 7:45, 10:40

MR. BROOKS (R)
11:20

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END (PG-13)
11:45, 3:15, 6:45, 10:15

SHREK THE THIRD (PG)
10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45, 12:00

:: IN-SEAT DINING ::

In our Director's Halls
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EVAN ALMIGHTY (PG) In Director's Hall
12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00

'Ocean's 13'
With In-Seat Food and Liquor Service
21 and Over Only with ID
Daily at 10:05PM

OCEAN'S THIRTEEN (PG-13) In Director's Hall
12:50, 3:55, 7:00

KNOCKED UP (R) In Director's Hall
12:55, 4:05, 7:15, 10:15

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX
in IMAX 3D
Advance Tickets on Sale NOW!

SPIDER-MAN 3: THE IMAX EXPERIENCE (PG-13)
12:00, 3:15, 6:45, 10:00

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