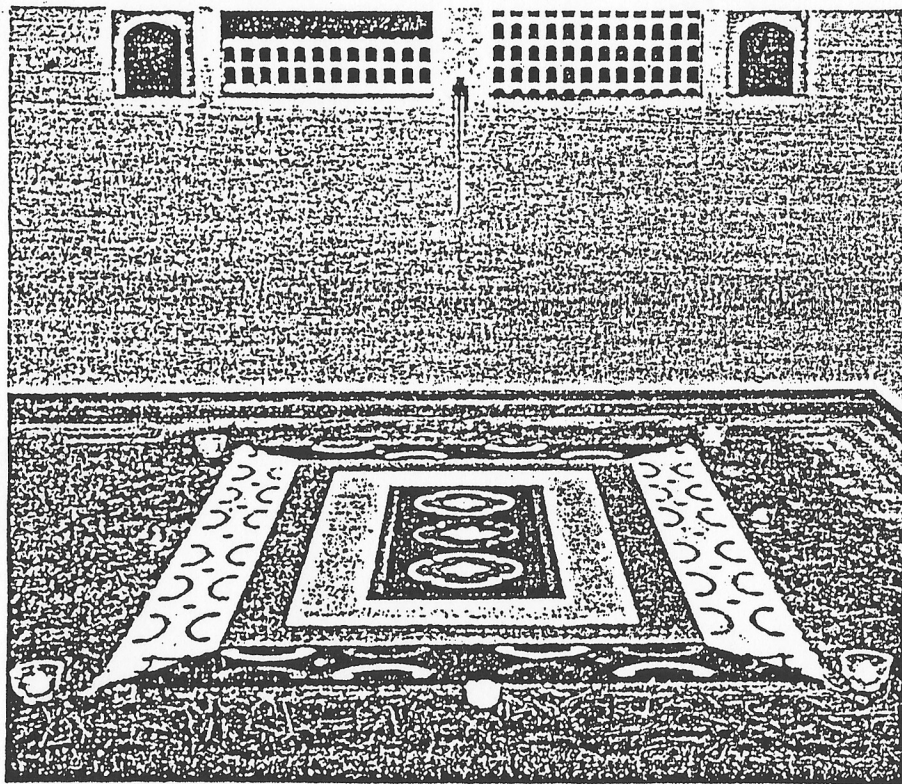


EXHIBITIONS



ALVARO ASTURIAS: UNTITLED WITH RED CANDLE AND SAWDUST RUG, 1988, acrylic on wood and dyed sawdust, at Hippodrome Gallery, Long Beach.

The current exhibition at Hippodrome Gallery features seven artists whose shrine- and altar-related works are rooted in Hispanic Catholicism. Shrines manages to avoid a simplistic and patronizing stance toward this art by giving each work an elegant installation and by presenting pieces that range from devout to ironic. The slight dislocation of meaning in the exhibition seems to mirror both jaded contemporary attitudes about Christianity and the postmodern position that something can be used without being believed. In addition to works by Alvaro Asturias, Rafael Cauduro, Pat Cox, Eleanor Diehl, Gary Eisey, Lisa Ferrante and Linda Vallejo, a few antique religious icons are exhibited, accentuating the differences between the art and the tradition it derives from. Asturias's installation seems to be almost a burial scene. The traditionally dyed and patterned rug is from his native Guatemala, and there is the implication of homage to a culture threatened with annihilation. The piece suggests prayer but, also, defiance. Among the works in this striking exhibition, Asturias's embody the function of a shrine, as well as its form, with particular strength.

—Ted Twine