

Fuentes, a Man for All Seasons

By Isaac H. Cubillos

There are very few people alive that have the intellectual prowess and political acumen to weave a lattice work of art and history of the Baroque period to today's furor over immigration issues. Carlos Fuentes is one of those people.

"Without art you can not understand Mexico or its people," said Fuentes. "The Baroque period belongs to both the Old World as it does to the New."

Speaking to a packed Copley Hall, Fuentes used slides depicting pre-Colombian and Baroque art. He described how each culture added and strengthened the Europe and the Americas for the benefit of both peoples. "The Baroque pushes against the status quo. It is dynamic and displaces the world as we see it. Baroque art is art that fills the horror of a vacuum. With Baroque nothing is impossible, nothing is incredible," he said.

"In the Baroque period we are given King Lear, MacBeth and Don Quixote, two fools and a young, mad assassin. But in the Spaniard Cervantes, Quixote ventures out, stretches his world, loses his faith and

gains imagination." Fuentes added, because Baroque is impatient, the Spaniards, with the Indians, were able to create a necklace of cities from San Francisco to Santiago, Chile, before Anglo-Europeans even settled in the Americas."

"Today, the Baroque of Mexico is seen in both countries, the contrasts of modern society, first world meeting third world, skyscrapers next to shanty towns, the supermarkets next to dumps. We have gone from the Baroque to the broken world."

"This neo-Baroque turbulence uncovers rotting infrastructure. And when we exclude we lose. When we include we win."

"The long and dramatic frontier the most active, the most different, first world to third world. Each dependent on each other. Ninety percent of the agricultural in the U.S. is harvested by Mexicans. And we must recognize we are dependent on each other."

"If we don't recognize our humanity in ourselves and don't recognize our humanity in others, we are lost."