

**Pepón Osorio**

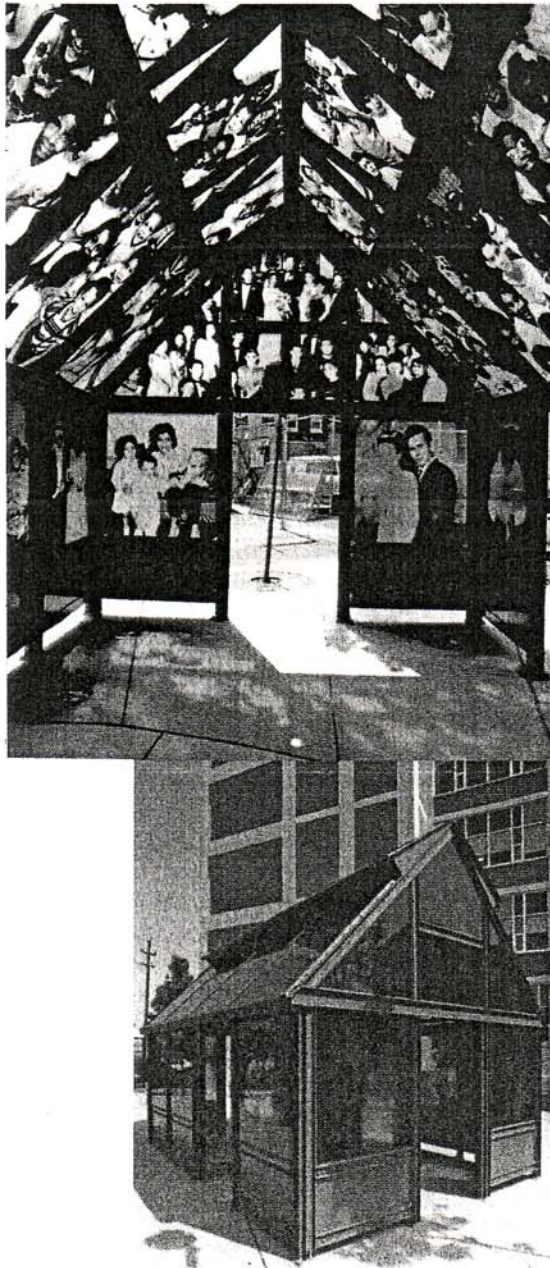
*I have a story to tell you...*  
Philadelphia, PA

"What better way to get to know a community than with art?" says Pepón Osorio about his first permanent public artwork, *I have a story to tell you...* This statement reflects the approach he took to his project for the Fairmount Park Art Association's program "New•Land•Marks: public art, community,

and the meaning of place." Initiated in 1997, the program pairs artists with local community organizations. Working together, artists and community members plan and create public artworks that strive, in the FPAA's words, to "celebrate community identity, commemorate 'untold' histories, inspire civic pride, respond to the local environment, and invigorate public spaces."

Osorio worked with the Congreso de Latinos Unidos, the city's largest provider of health and social services to the Latino community. The agency's move to a larger facility in north Philadelphia offered the outdoor space necessary to create a large-scale public art project. After talking with members of the community, Osorio determined that what the area needed was a permanent sculpture reflecting the desires and lives of the city's Latinos. *I have a story to tell you...* is a monument in the form of a house paneled with old photographs taken from local Latino families. The photographs depict weddings, school field trips, and other life events. The steel-framed *casita* (small house) uses 13 of these images double screened-printed in vitreous enamels on 36 laminated and tempered glass panels. The house may be viewed from the outside or by entering the interior. At night, the images are illuminated.

Since its inception, the project has become "both a landmark and a philosophical point of reference," according to Osorio. By using imagery taken directly from the community, the piece contributes not only to the physical space of the area, but to the psychic environment: "In a way, the piece acts as a giant mirror, and the neighbors are faced with the challenges of remembering and acknowledging the past and tying it to the present and future."



Left and detail: Pepón Osorio, *I have a story to tell you...*, 2003. Glass, enamel, steel, neoprene pads, photographic images, and illumination, 14.9 x 14.2 x 18.8 ft.