

Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century

LATIN AMERICAN ARTISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
June 6 - September 7, 1993

The most extensive survey of modern Latin American art ever assembled opens at The Museum of Modern Art on June 6, 1993. On view through September 7, **LATIN AMERICAN ARTISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY** provides a broad historical view, comprising more than 300 works, ranging in date from the early modern period around 1914 through the present. The exhibition reveals the complexities and variety of expression that have characterized the art of Latin America throughout the century and highlights the significant international contribution made by approximately ninety artists from throughout the Americas.

The exhibition was organized by Waldo Rasmussen, director, International Program, The Museum of Modern Art, along with the participation of eminent Latin American art historians, museum professionals, and critics (list of advisors attached).

LATIN AMERICAN ARTISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, which occupies both levels of the Museum's temporary exhibition space as well as the ground-floor Garden Hall galleries, includes painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, and site-specific installations. Among the artists represented in the exhibition are Tarsila do Amoral (Brazil), Fernando Botero (Colombia), Frida Kahlo (Mexico), Guillermo Kuitca (Argentina), Wifredo Lam (Cuba), Matta (Chile), Ana Mendieta (Cuba), Diego Rivera (Mexico), Juan Sanchez (Puerto Rico), Jesús Rafael Soto (Venezuela), Joaquín Torres-García, and Tunga (Brazil). About one third of the selection is contemporary (complete artists list attached).

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The exhibition is loosely divided into eight sections, as follows:

Early Modernism explores the effects of advanced European art on Latin American artists who were attempting to break from the conservatism of their own academies. Included in this section are five of Rivera's Cubist-inspired works of 1914-17, painted in Paris. Among these is *Zapatista Landscape-The Guerilla* (1915), a response to news of the Mexican revolution. Tarsila do Amaral, who strove to create an art that was at once modern and distinctly Brazilian, is represented here by six of her best-known works. Also on view are works by Rafael Barradas (Uruguay) and Xul Solar (Argentina).

Expressionism and Landscape Painting comprises works that evince highly personal interpretations of the European landscape tradition. Included is *Ship of Emigrants* (1939-41), a poignant statement about universal suffering by Lasar Segall, a member of the Dresden Secession group who moved to Brazil in 1923. Landscapes by Armando Reverón (Uruguay), José Cúneo Perinetti (Uruguay), and Pedro Figari (Uruguay) demonstrate the variety of ways in which individual artists have created records of the landscapes in which they lived.

Mexican Painting and Social Realism demonstrates the variety of ways in which politics affected the art of Mexican painters. The three great muralists - Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros -- used realist styles to make clear political statements, as seen in such works as Rivera's *Agrarian Leader Zapata* (1931), Orozco's *Barricade* (1931), and Siqueiros' *Echo of a Scream* (1937). Artists who were inspired by this social and political consciousness are represented by the Argentine Antonio Berni and the Brazilians Cândido Portinari and Emiliano di Cavalcanti. In paintings by Frida Kahlo and Maria Izquierdo, the political is expressed in personal terms. Kahlo is represented by her only large-scale self-portrait, *The Two Fridas* (1938), as well as other works related

to the Mexican votive tradition. Several of Izquierdo's works, such as *The Racquet* (1938), relate to another traditional Mexican genre, *alacenas*, paintings of open cupboards containing everyday objects.

Surrealism and Lyric Abstraction shows the effects of the emigration of artists from Europe to the Americas during the years around World War II. These included Matta and Lam, both of whom were closely associated with the Surrealist movement in Paris and with Abstract Expressionist art in New York. Lam is represented by such paintings as the hallucinatory *The Jungle* (1943) and *The Idol* (1944); among the works by Matta is *The Vertigo of Eros* (1944). Paintings by Rufino Tamayo (Mexico), an active participant in New York's artistic life during the war, include *Girl Attacked by a Strange Bird* (1947).

Geometric Abstraction and Kinetic Art begins with Constructivism, one of the most important currents in Latin American art and one seldom seen in this depth. Featured are nine paintings and eight wood constructions by Torres-García, whose 1934 return to his native Uruguay from Europe marked the beginning of a new epoch in the art of Latin America. Torres-García's system of "Universal Constructivism," which encompassed rational structure along with spirituality, is exemplified in *Pintura Constructiva* (1929). Works from the later *Concreto-Invención* and *Arte Madi* movements include sculptures by Gyula Kosice (Argentina) and Enio Iommi (Argentina), and shaped canvases by Carmelo Arden Quin (Uruguay), Lidy Prati (Argentina), and Tomás Maldonado (Argentina). The Constructivist legacy is further represented by the Neo-Concretism of Brazilian artists Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica as well as the kinetic and optical abstractions of Gego (Venezuela), Soto, and Carlos Cruz-Diez (Venezuela).

New Figuration, Pop Art, and Assemblage examines the variety of means with which artists from the late 1950s onward have created political commentary.

Included are Botero's inflated parodies of Latin American stereotypes, as well as expressionist figure paintings by Venezuelan Jacobo Borges and Argentine Jorge de la Vega. The Argentine artist Alberto Heredia makes a powerful political statement with his assemblage titled *The Gaggings*. *Recent Painting and Sculpture* explores a range of contemporary art. A variety of approaches to figuration is seen in works by such artists as Carlos Almaraz (Mexican-American), Julio Galán (Mexico), Gonzalo Díaz (Chile), Guillermo Kuitca (Argentina), Liliana Porter (Argentina), and Arnaldo Roche Rabell (Puerto Rico). Two young Brazilian artists -- sculptor Frida Baranek and painter Nuno Ramos -- work with abstract, gestural forms, while Luis Camnitzer (Uruguay), Victor Grippo (Argentina), Mendieta, and Waltercio Caldas (Brazil) work in Minimal and Conceptual modes.

LATIN AMERICAN ARTISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY concludes in the Garden Hall galleries with three installations made especially for the exhibition. Cuban artist José Bedia has created a wall drawing, titled *Second Encounter/Segundo Encuentro*; Tunga's sculptural environment, *Palindrome Incest*, utilizes four tons of magnets; *Blow-Up*, by Chilean Alfredo Jaar, recreates a photographer's studio and darkroom, and depends on the viewer as participant.

The exhibition is made possible by grants from Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Cisneros; Banco Mercantil (Venezuela); Mr. and Mrs. Eugenio Mendoza; Agnes Gund; The Rockefeller Foundation; Mrs. Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat; Mr. and Mrs. David Rockefeller; the National Endowment for the Arts; The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art; Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y Galería de Arte Nacional, Venezuela; and WXTV-Channel 41/Univision Television Group, Inc. The exhibition was commissioned by the Comisaría de la Ciudad de Sevilla para 1992 and organized under the auspices of The Museum of Modern Art's International Council.

The exhibition opened at the Plaza de Armas, Seville, in August 1992 and traveled to Paris, where it was shown at both the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the Hôtel des Arts in November 1992. Its final European viewing was at the Josef-Haubrich Kunsthalle in Cologne, where it was shown under the auspices of the Museum Ludwig. The tour concludes with its New York showing.

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PUBLICATIONS

Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century, edited by Waldo Rasmussen, with fourteen essays by scholars and critics. 416 pages. 194 color and 128 black-and-white illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Hardbound edition distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York; both hardbound (\$75.00) and paperbound (\$37.50) available in August in The MoMA Book Store.

Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century, A Selection from the Exhibition. 64 pages; text in English and Spanish and 39 color illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Paperbound (\$14.95) available in The MoMA Book Store.

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