

Myth and Materiality: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930-1990
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McCormick Gallery

Labels—DRAFT

Luis Cruz Azaceta

Cuban, born 1942

Double Self-Portrait: Aggressor/Victim (Doble autorretrato: agresor / víctima), 1987

Acrylic on canvas

Museum Purchase, with funds provided by the Twentieth-Century Art Acquisition Fund and, in part, by Dr. and Mrs. Aaron Nisenson

1994.9

Double Self-Portrait: Aggressor/Victim belongs to a body of work by Luis Cruz Azaceta from the late 1980s that addresses personal and universal themes of fear, death, and the human condition. As a teenager, the artist witnessed the violence of the Cuban Revolution. At the age of eighteen, Azaceta came to the United States, living with relatives in New Jersey and working in a factory. In 1966, he enrolled in the School of Visual Arts in New York. For Azaceta, the city was a place of intense hostility and isolation, having a profound impact on his expressionistic works.



Feliciano Béjar

Mexican, 1920-2007

My Beloved Has Gone Down to His Orchard (A su huerto hubo de bajar mi amado), 1964

Oil on canvas

Gift of Ruth Watkins Ackerman from the Collection of Harold and Fannie Watkins

2009.44

Feliciano Béjar was a self-taught artist born to a working-class family in Jiquilpan, Michoacán, whose career spanned painting, sculpting, printmaking, and set design. In 1943, the artist moved to New York City where he spent his days studying works of art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art while supporting himself as a window dresser at night.



The untimely death of Béjar's adopted daughter in 1961 had a

profound effect on the artist, who went into temporary mystic seclusion at a monastery in Cuernavaca. When he returned to painting, Béjar revisited Christian imagery and stories that were ever-present in his youth. The title of this work is adapted from a nineteenth-century Spanish translation of the “Song of Songs” from the Old Testament, which traces the courtship between husband and wife. The ghostly figure is perhaps a reference to his departed daughter. Capturing light—viewed by the artist as a life-giving force—was central to many of the works produced throughout his long career.

The lush and verdant landscape depicted here points to Béjar’s lifelong commitment to combating deforestation. In 1964, the artist attempted to form an environmental protection society in Mexico City but was met with deaf ears.

Marcelo Bonevardi

Argentine, 1929-1994

Trap for the Moon (Trampa para la luna), 1967

Acrylic and crayon on textured substrate on canvas with cutouts on wood stretcher; painted wood carving

Collection of Robert and Mercedes Eichholz

Born in Buenos Aires and raised in Córdoba, Argentina, Marcelo Bonevardi found himself at the center of the New York art world in 1958 as a Guggenheim Fellow. It was here that he saw Joseph Cornell’s boxes (at the 1961 Whitney Annual), which served as a major catalyst to the development of Bonevardi’s style. However, while Cornell filled his boxes with found objects, Bonevardi painstakingly hand-carved his small wooden figurines and geometric shapes in a prolonged, ritual-like process. In New York, Bonevardi also befriended Julio Alpuy and Gonzalo Fonseca, Uruguayan artists who introduced him to the theories of Constructive Universalism conceived by their master, Joaquín Torres-García.

Trained as an architect, Bonevardi’s enigmatic painting-constructions feature carved totemic figures wedged into niches formed in the canvas. As the title of this work suggests, the artist sought to trap the transitory elements of the celestial world in structured, geometric forms. Unlike his contemporaries, Bonevardi’s take on Constructivism is not strictly formalist, but marked by the artist’s interest in African and pre-Columbian cultures. The artist stated in 1970, “There is a small crack through which magic makes itself manifest. To



try to seize this with the concrete reality of plasticity is the finality of painting.”

Fernando Botero
Colombian, born 1932
Self-Portrait with Still Life (Autorretrato con naturaleza muerta), 1979
Graphite and chalk on paper
Gift of Mary and Leigh Block
1987.58.15



Fernando Botero was among the first Colombian artists to adopt neofiguration in the 1950s, breaking with the Mexican-derived social realism that had dominated the nation’s contemporary art since the 1940s. He developed a distinctive figurative style of volumetric exaggeration and distortion. Blending realism and caricature, Botero brings a new approach to social satire with his plump figures and objects.

Botero’s discrepancies in scale have been compared to fellow countryman Gabriel García Márquez’s literary style of Magical Realism, which expands reality to encompass myth, magic, and other extraordinary natural phenomena. In *Self-Portrait with Still Life*, Botero combines the genres of still life and portraiture, and challenges the conventions of each. The artist’s self-portrait is relegated to the background and blends seamlessly with the rounded fruits and bottle arranged in front.

Federico Cantú
Mexican, 1908-1990

Self-Portrait (Autorretrato), 1937

Portrait of Gloria (Retrato de Gloria), 1937

Oil on canvas mounted on wood panel
Gift of Mrs. MacKinley Helm
1969.35.10, 1969.35.9

One label for both



In *Self-Portrait* and *Portrait of Gloria*, Federico Cantú renders the human form in an elongated, haunting style reminiscent of Spanish Renaissance master El Greco. The paintings depict the artist and his second wife, Gloria Calero, during their first year of marriage. Both are in contemplative poses with their wedding rings prominently displayed to the viewer. The strong

emphasis on line in these works foreshadows Cantú's turn to engraving in the 1940s.



Pedro Coronel
Mexican, 1923-1985
Personajes inéditos (Unknown Personages), 1963
Acrylic on canvas
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.7



Born in Jerez de García Salinas, Zacatecas, Rafael Coronel was part of a generation of Mexican artists known as *La ruptura* who broke away from the dogmatic tenets of muralism in the 1950s. Coronel was influenced by Rufino Tamayo's style of abstract figuration, use of vivid colors, and ability to connect the past with the present. Coronel's figures broadly suggest the forms and motifs of ancient cultures—perhaps drawn from the artist's own collection of pre-Columbian, Asian, Greco-Roman, and medieval art. His use of thickly layered, vibrant paint and abstract forms provides a dramatic contrast to the somber, figurative works of his younger brother, artist Rafael Coronel.

Rafael Coronel
Mexican, born 1931
Two Figures (Dos figuras), 1967
Pastel and graphite on paper
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.8



Younger brother of the artist Pedro Coronel, student of Carlos Orozco Romero, and son-in-law of Diego Rivera, Rafael Coronel has taken a decisively figurative approach to his work. His subjects frequently include solitary figures in spare, empty spaces, suggesting a return to the Old Master tradition—in particular, the stark contrasts of light and dark found in Dutch and Spanish Baroque painting.

Rafael Coronel

Mexican, born 1931

Rosa en el pasillo (Rosa in the Corridor), 1967

Oil on canvas

Gift of an Anonymous Donor

1997.74.1

Rosa en el pasillo portrays Rafael Coronel's grandmother and suggests the passage of time. Rosa's chiseled and weathered face evokes a lifetime of experience and wisdom. The stillness of the sparse setting is matched by the old woman's stoic, mask-like expression. Her relaxed pose imparts a sense of quiet solitude as she awaits death.

A concern with the transience of life has preoccupied Coronel throughout his career, and is apparent in the way he represents people as inheritors of the past. Most strikingly, Rosa's black cloak and towering hat imbues the humble woman with a sense of mystery and mysticism. Her costume and stark profile may make reference to Nefertiti, the Pope in regalia, and the bas-relief carvings of priests at the Maya ruins of Palenque.



Olga Costa

Mexican, 1913-1993

Recuerdo de Silao (Memory of Silao), 1954

Oil on burlap

Collection of Anne and Houston Harte

Born in Germany to Russian émigrés, Olga Costa's family fled political persecution and immigrated to Mexico City when the artist was twelve years old—changing their last name from Kostakowsky to Costa. Like many immigrants in Latin America, Costa embraced the local culture and history as her own.

In 1933, Costa entered the Academia de San Carlos (Academy of San Carlos) where she studied with Carlos Mérida and met her future husband, artist José Chávez Morado. She became active in Mexico's cultural and intellectual scenes, where she befriended Inés Amor, owner of the influential Galería de Arte Mexicano, the first gallery of Mexican art. Amor invited Costa to exhibit her work for the first time in 1945.

Costa became known for her vibrant portraits of local women and children as well as her still-life paintings of Mexican fruits and traditional objects. In *Recuerdo de Silao*, the artist has filled



her canvas with items commonly found on a Dia de los Muertos altar to remember the dead. The title also pays homage to her husband's hometown of Silao in the state of Guanajuato.

José Luis Cuevas
Mexican, born 1933
Desnudo y manuscrito (Nude and Manuscript), 1962
Ink on paper
Museum purchase, Donald Bear Memorial Collection
1963.14



For José Luis Cuevas, a bout with rheumatic fever at the age of eleven sparked what would become a lifelong dedication to drawing and reading. He preferred the intimacy and directness that ink and watercolor offered over oil painting, and it was in his grandfather's paper mill where he first became attached to working on paper. As a convalescent child, Cuevas observed from his bedroom window prostitutes, local beggars, the maimed and disfigured—social outcasts with whom he felt a kinship—and incorporated these figures in his work.

His deeply personal and introspective works on paper contrasted sharply with the grandiose, politically charged murals of *Los tres grandes*. Cuevas was a vocal leader of *La ruptura* generation of the 1950s and '60s, which sought to break from the dominant legacy of Mexican muralism.

José Luis Cuevas
Mexican, born 1933
Worm Pit (Pozo de gusanos), “Cuevas-Charenton” series, 1965
Lithograph
Gift of Bernard and Sheila Warner in Memory of their son,
Daniel Warner
1987.39.1.4



José Luis Cuevas produced the “Cuevas-Charenton” series as a fellow at the renowned Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles between December 1965 and January 1966. Insanity has been a prevalent theme in Cuevas's work. The series of twelve lithographs is titled after the Charenton asylum outside of Paris where the French aristocrat and writer Marquis de Sade spent the final thirteen years of his life.

Worm Pit may reference the skull of the marquis, which was later removed from his grave for phrenological examination. Critic William Wilson stated in a 1966 *Los Angeles Times*

review, “The Mexican artist and the French noble stand on common ground. Cuevas, too, has been saddled with the fame of an evil genius.”

Carlos Cruz-Diez

Venezuelan, born 1923

Physichromie No. 352 (Fisicromía No. 352), 1967

Cardboard, casein, cellulose acetate inserts mounted on wood

Gift of the ARCO Collection

1995.53.5

A pioneer of Kinetic and Op art, Carlos Cruz-Diez worked as a commercial graphic designer after graduating from the Escuela de Bellas Artes de Caracas (Caracas School of Fine Arts). In 1960, he moved to Paris where he continues to live and work.

Cruz-Diez has approached his art as an ongoing series of optical experiments, manipulating color and light to produce sensory experiences. In the late 1950s he read articles by Edwin Land, inventor of the Polaroid camera, on creating the entire color spectrum from a combination of red and green monochromes. This literature was instrumental in the development of Cruz-Diez’s “Physichromie” series, which he began in Caracas in 1959 and continued to produce into 2011. The artist invented the term by combining words “physical” and “chromatism,” which he used to describe the effect produced when he placed colors in parallel strips and also at right angles to each other. The combination of colors, angles of refraction, and the movement of the spectator would produce what the artist described as “physical sensations of chromatic changes.” For Cruz-Diez, color is a constantly evolving situation rather than an objective fact.



Leonor Fini

French (born Argentina), 1908-1996

Two Dancers (Dos bailadores), ca. 1930s

Ink on paper

Gift of Margaret P. Mallory

1991.154.11

Leonor Fini was born in Argentina to an Italian mother and an Argentine father of Italian descent. She and her mother fled to Italy after a tumultuous split between her parents. Fini spent much of her childhood dressing as a boy in public to avoid being kidnapped by her father—perhaps spurring a life-long interest in costume and masquerade.



Fini began her studies in Milan, but relocated to Paris in 1931 where she lived a flamboyant, bohemian lifestyle. She became closely acquainted with Surrealists André Breton, Giorgio de Chirico, and Max Ernst (a future love interest), and was included in many of their exhibitions. Yet Fini never declared herself a Surrealist because she refused to merely serve as Breton's muse—viewing herself as an artist in her own right.

Inspired by the elaborate construction of gowns and the deception behind masks, Fini not only attended masquerades, but also worked as a costume and set designer. Costumes and performance also made their way into the artist's paintings and drawings. In *Two Dancers*, the figures' whimsical bodies are a combination of endo- and exoskeleton, juxtaposing life and death, the visible and the invisible.

Lucio Fontana

Italian (born Argentina), 1899-1968

Concetto spaziale (Spatial Concept) (Concepto espacial), 1968

Etching, relief printed, with embossing and punctures

Gift of Arthur and Yolanda Steinman

1985.50.23-24

Born in Rosario de Santa Fe, Argentina to Italian parents, Lucio Fontana spent much of his early years living in Milan. In 1922, he followed his father back to Buenos Aires to help with a commercial sculpture business. After spending much of the 1930s in Europe, the artist returned to Argentina in 1940 to escape World War II. Here, he began formulating his theories of *Spazialismo* (Spatialism) in the *Manifesto blanco* (White Manifesto), published in 1946. Keeping with the spirit of the new post-war age, Fontana proposed a "spatial" art that would challenge the illusory space of traditional easel painting by synthesizing color, sound, space, movement, and time. Upon returning to Milan in 1947, he further articulated these ideas in five manifestos published between 1947 and 1952.

In 1949, Fontana initiated his "*Concetto spaziale*" (Spatial Concept) series, puncturing or slashing the surface of paper or canvas. Punctures and slashes became his signature gesture—negating the flatness of the picture plane and opening up its sculptural possibilities. The artist preemptively wrote in 1948 "Art dies but is saved by gesture."



Gunther Gerzso
Mexican, 1915-2000
Mal de ojo (Evil Eye), 1957
Oil on canvas
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.14

Gunther Gerzso has been hailed as one of Mexico's premier abstract painters. Creating a style of abstraction rooted in nature, architecture, and the human figure, the artist articulated a new direction in modern Latin American art. Looking beyond the socially committed and dramatically expressive mural painting of *Los tres grandes*, he embraced a new spirit of internationalism and a firm commitment to the possibilities of formalism and abstraction.

In 1941, Gerzso and his wife moved permanently to Mexico City where he soon joined a group of European Surrealists that had taken refuge from World War II, including Benjamin Péret, Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, Alice Rahon, and Wolfgang Paalen. *Mal de ojo*, or the evil eye, is a concept prevalent in many cultures throughout time, and was of particular interest to the Surrealists. The constellation of dark, densely layered geometric shapes has the magnetic pull of a deep gaze.



Gunther Gerzso
Mexican, 1915-2000
Le Temps mange la vie/El tiempo se come a la vida (Time Eats Life to the Core), 1961
Oil on Masonite
Museum purchase with funds provided by Jon B. and Lillian Lovelace, Eli and Leatrice Luria, The Grace Jones Richardson Trust, an Anonymous Donor, Lord and Lady Ridley-Tree, SBMA Modern and Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund, the Ala Story Fund, and the SBMA Visionaries
2002.50

The work of Gunther Gerzso explores the facets of human existence, often engaging abstractly with concepts of eternity and the unknown. No work better epitomizes this philosophical preoccupation better than *Le Temps mange la vie/El tiempo se come a la vida*. The title of this work comes from a poem by Charles Baudelaire entitled "L'Enemmi" (The Enemy) from his most famous work, *Les Fleurs du mal* (The Flowers of Evil), in which time is the enemy that slowly eats away at life.





Scan to read Baudelaire's entire poem.

Mathias Goeritz

German, 1915-1990 (active Mexico)

Message (Mensaje), ca. 1960

Wood, plaster, nails, paint, and iron

Partial and promised gift of Robert and Mercedes Eichholz

1995.50.1

With the outbreak of World War II, Mathias Goeritz fled Nazi Germany by way of Spain and North Africa, eventually settling in Mexico in 1949. Counted among the exiles and *émigrés* who enriched the artistic and intellectual environment of Mexico City beginning in the early 1940s, he contributed greatly to the development of abstraction in Latin America as an architect, painter, sculptor, poet, and philosopher.

In 1958, after his wife Marianne's death, Goeritz became shrouded in a haze of grief and increasingly disillusioned with the direction modern art was taking at the time. His answer to what he viewed as superficial, nihilistic art was a metaphysical, spiritual one, evidenced by his "Messages," a series of metal panels punctured with nails produced during the late 1950s and '60s. Striving for an emotional and spiritual abstraction, these works were inspired by verses from the Old Testament. The luminosity and visceral perforations of *Message* encourage contemplation much like Byzantine icons.



Ignacio Iturría

Uruguayan, born 1949

Untitled (seven scenes) (Sin título [siete escenas]), ca. 1990

Etching

Gift of Arthur B. Steinman

2003.112.18

Ignacio Iturría was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, and grew up along the waterfront of the Rio de la Plata. The river's muddy waters and dry plains inspired the artist's characteristic brown tonalities. In his paintings and works on paper, he creates an intimate world of tiny human and animal characters perched in windows and doorways. Drawn from childhood memories, these works capture a childlike sense of shrunken scale coupled with a mature feeling of isolation. The unadorned, grid-like



structures that these figures inhabit recall the compositions of fellow Uruguayan, Joaquín Torres-García. Yet unlike the older artist's rational and universal approach, Iturria presents a fantastical, personal vision.

Gyula Kosice
Argentine, born 1924

Recepción-emisión (Reception-Emission), 1967

Black plastic and light construction
Gift of Robert and Mercedes Eichholz
2006.77.2

Red (Rojo), 1968

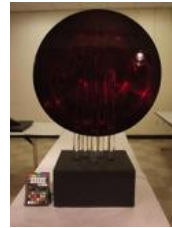
Plexiglas, lightbox, wood, and electrical cord
Gift of the ARCO Collection
1995.53.7

Gyula Kosice is as much an artist as he is an inventor. Combining aesthetics, science, and technology, Kosice has constantly sought to produce art concerned with the future. Always experimenting with new materials, he was the first artist known to make a work entirely out of neon gas and glass tubing and invented what he termed "hydraulic sculpture," the use of moving water as a sculptural medium. His impulse has always been to dematerialize the static or solid.

Hungarian by birth, Kosice left the political instability of Europe at the age of four to live with relatives in Argentina. He became a leading figure of the Argentine avant garde as a founding member of the *Madi* group in the mid-1940s, which called for an abstract art free from expression, representational forms, and discrete meaning.

From 1946 to 1972, Kosice developed *La ciudad hidrospecial* (The Hydrospecial City), a vast, evolving group of sculptures and maquettes expressing the artist's preoccupation with utopian living and space exploration. In response to the exponential growth of the world's population and the immanent depletion of its natural resources, Kosice conceived of this supra-terrestrial city suspended in space. Although *Recepción-emisión* and *Red* are not part of *La ciudad hidrospecial*, they share similar hemispherical and teardrop forms as well as the artist's ongoing use of light as a medium.

One label for both



Wifredo Lam

Cuban, 1902-1982

The Casting of the Spell (El rompimiento del hechizo), 1947

Oil on burlap

Gift of Wright S. Ludington

1956.2.4

Wifredo Lam was born and raised in Sagua la Grande, a village in the sugar farming province of Villa Clara, Cuba. His father was a Chinese immigrant and his mother was of African descent. His godmother, a Santería priestess, exposed Lam to rites of the *orishas*, or deities, as a child. Santería, the Afro-Cuban religion blending aspects of Catholicism and traditional West African beliefs, was a powerful force manifest in much of his work.

Lam left Spain for Paris in 1938 after fighting in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side, defending Madrid. In Paris, he met Picasso, who became a friend and an enthusiastic supporter of his work, introducing the artist to Joan Miró, Fernand Léger, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, and others. The following year, Lam became associated with the Surrealists after meeting André Breton in 1939.

Upon returning to Cuba in 1941, after such a long absence, Lam was struck by the plight of the black population and the degradation of Afro-Cuban culture for the tourist market. He set out to express their spirit and religious beliefs in a style influenced by Cubism and Surrealism. *The Casting of the Spell* is characteristic of the artist's hybrid style applied to equally inventive figures composed of human, animal, and vegetal elements inspired by the attributes of Santería *orishas*.



Joy Laville

British (active Mexico), born 1923

Untitled (Sin título), ca. 1970

Pastel on paper

Gift of Charles A. Storke

1994.57.58

Joy Laville was born in England, near the English Channel, miles away from her present-day home near Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. Often drawing upon early childhood memories of the foggy sea, she creates soft yet dynamic works that explore color and its interaction with light.



In *Untitled*, Laville portrays two nude figures with their backs turned, both divided by shades of yellow and blue. The dreamlike landscape that they inhabit is not of the natural world, but rather one drawn from memory and nostalgia. Her work was the focus of a major retrospective exhibition at Mexico City's Museo de Arte Moderno in 2004.

Ricardo Martínez de Hoyos
Mexican, born 1918
Desnudo (Nude), 1959
Oil on canvas
Promised Gift of Henry and Gloria Rubin

The massive rounded volumes that characterize Ricardo Martínez de Hoyos's painting are based on pre-Columbian prototypes. The artist adapts this elemental style to create simple, evocative nudes, in which the human form resembles an imposing landscape. Martínez de Hoyos was also influenced by British sculptor Henry Moore and his modernist appropriation of the volumetric forms found in ancient Maya sculpture.

Roberto Matta
Chilean, 1911-2002
Surprise at You (Sorpresa para ti), 1951
Crayon and graphite on paper
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. James L. Sheehy
2001.55.1-3

Roberto Matta was born in Santiago, Chile, as Roberto Sebastián Antonio Matta Echaurren, but became known simply as Matta. He spent much of his life in Paris where he was a primary member of the Surrealist movement that centered around André Breton. From 1939 to 1948, he lived in New York City, where he produced his celebrated series of paintings known as *Psychological Morphologies* or *Inscapes*—landscapes of the inner self filled with translucent biomorphic forms. As one of the few Surrealists fluent in English, he explained its philosophies to the next generation artists, thus becoming a pivotal figure in the development of Abstract Expressionists.

It was in the aura of uncertainty and destruction during World War II that Matta produced a series of cosmically oriented works like *Surprise at You*, populated with robotic, alien-like creatures. His figurative depictions drew criticism in the United



States, where abstraction increasingly became the trend, yet the artist insisted that figures were necessary to express man's inhumanity to man. William Rubin, curator of Matta's 1957 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York stated, "The imagery of these pictures, as, indeed, of most of Matta's work, reflects his interest in science and his belief that the artist must interpret in subjective human terms the technological and spiritual impact of its discoveries."

Carlos Mérida
Guatemalan, 1891-1984

Fuga (Escape/Fugue), 1940
Oil on canvas

Sky No. 1 (Cielo No. 1), 1943
Watercolor, gouache, ink on rice paper

Gift of Mrs. MacKinley Helm
1969.35.25-26

At the age of seventeen, Carlos Mérida traveled to Paris for four years of study, befriending Pablo Picasso and Amedeo Modigliani. Upon his return to Guatemala, the artist, of Maya-Quiché descent, joined artist Rafael Yela Günther to promote a pro-Indian movement in the arts, informing modern art with pre-Columbian concepts. Unable to rouse interest in Guatemala, Mérida moved to Mexico, where he found a public more receptive to his folkloric yet modern imagery.

During World War II, Mexico City became a haven for an international group of Surrealist artists and writers seeking to escape the ravages of war. Their creative and intellectual activity culminated in the journal *Dyn* and in the landmark *International Exhibition of Surrealism* held at the Galería de Arte Mexicano in Mexico City in 1940, both of which featured work by Mérida.

In their small scale, inflated volumes, and simplified features, the three figures in *Fuga* and those in *Sky No. 1* are modeled after Tlatilco figurines. Artist and ethnographer Miguel Covarrubias led the first controlled excavation of the Tlatilco site in the Valley of Mexico, publishing photographs and archaeological illustrations in *Dyn* in 1943. However, the figures also resemble the biomorphic forms of Surrealists Joan



Miró and Roberto Matta.

Guillermo Meza
Mexican, 1917-1977
Danza II, (Dance II), 1941
Ink on paper
Gift of Mrs. MacKinley Helm
1969.35.29

The groundbreaking *International Exhibition of Surrealism* held at the Galería de Arte Mexicano in Mexico City in 1940 included a self-portrait by Guillermo Meza in which a section of his head is removed to reveal a hairy growth. A similar exploration of inner and outer self is seen in *Danza II*, which belongs to a series of ink drawings featuring lyrical figures of ambiguous sex. Meza's knowledge of human anatomy is highlighted by his fine draftsmanship.



Guillermo Meza
Mexican, 1917-1977
Abstract of Trees (Abstracto de árboles), 1964
Oil on Masonite
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.21

In this work, Guillermo Meza presents a strange landscape that appears almost extraterrestrial with its trees of red and green, shrouded in a foggy haze. Void of any figures, human or otherwise, the trees nevertheless possess a certain anthropomorphic quality in the way their wiry limbs reach and bend like dancers.



Edgar Negret
Colombian, 1920-2012
Tower No. 3 (Torre No. 3), 1969
Painted aluminum
Gift of Robert and Mercedes Eichholz
1995.50.3

In January 1949, following the death of his mother, Edgar Negret settled in New York, a city he described as “magic,” where he met Ellsworth Kelly and Louise Nevelson, and was moved by the work of Alexander Calder. Although periodically traveling in the Southwestern United States and Europe, he remained in New York for almost fifteen years. He was particularly impressed with the city's sense of modernity—the



automated nature of subways and vending machines, and the way in which skyscrapers soared above, seemingly without limits.

After his return to Colombia in 1963, Negret began producing works that reflected these interests, reducing his colors to just one of three: black, white, or red. The paint he began using was commonly used to coat industrial products, and its matte finish negated any seductive potential of a shiny surface that would pull attention away from the form itself. His works from the 1960s ranged thematically from the sacred (temples, stairs) to urban construction (towers, bridges, edifices), to outer space (navigators, dockings)—all sharing similar formal qualities. Unlike the Minimalists with whom he is often associated, Negret did not use prefabricated materials, but rather hand cut strips of aluminum, carefully bending and bolting them into place. As such, his forms hover between the industrial and organic.

Rodolfo Nieto
Mexican, 1936-1988
Man and Parrot (El hombre y el loro), ca. 1965
Oil on canvas
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.30

Rodolfo Nieto was born in Oaxaca, and lived there until his family moved to Mexico City in 1949. His artistic vocation led him to enter the Escuela de Pintura y Escultura (School of Painting and Sculpture) known as “La Esmeralda” in 1953, studying with Carlos Orozco Romero and Juan Soriano. Spending the 1960s in Paris and achieving much success in Europe, Nieto returned to Oaxaca in 1972. At home and abroad, he became known for his expressionistic, vibrantly hued depictions of humans and animals, both real and mythological.



José Clemente Orozco
Mexican, 1883-1949
The Masses (*Las masas, Demonstration Note 1*), 1935
Lithograph
Gift of Mr. Robert M. Light
1994.15.1

Distinguished as one of *Los tres grandes* (The Three Greats) of Mexican muralism, José Clemente Orozco dedicated his career to public art forms that portrayed the collective social and



political power of the working class. The theme of *The Masses* first appeared in Orozco's oeuvre when he produced satirical comics for Dr. Atl's political magazine *La vanguardia* in 1915. It wasn't until 1940 that these faceless assemblies became a presence in Orozco's murals, specifically in his program for the Gabino Ortiz Public Library in Jiquilpan, Michoacán. During the twenty-five year interim period, Orozco produced many variations on this theme.

In these graphic versions, individuals surrender their unique identities to the aggregate body of the crowd which takes on a life of its own, animated by a seemingly infinite number of watchful eyes, restless legs, and clamorous mouths. The dense compositions and agitated lines convey the intensity and energy of the masses and characterize the visual potency of Orozco's influential style.

José Clemente Orozco
 Mexican, 1883-1949
Meditating Woman (Mujer meditando), ca. 1943
 Tempera on paper
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Tremain
 1973.54.1



Carlos Orozco Romero
 Mexican, 1898-1984

Formas tarascas (Tarascan Forms), 1939
 Watercolor on paper

Mujer y niña (Mother and Child), 1940
 Oil on board

One label for both



Gift of Mrs. MacKinley Helm
 1969.35.33-34

Born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Carlos Orozco Romero began his career as a newspaper caricaturist during the social and political upheaval following the Mexican Revolution. Although he associated with the well-known muralists Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco and shared their political views, he did not view art as a tool for propaganda. While he was commissioned in 1923 to create a mural for the public library in Guadalajara, his talents truly shined in small-scale easel



painting.

In 1940, Orozco Romero spent a year in New York as a Guggenheim Fellow. Stylistically influenced by Cubism and Surrealism, paintings from this period feature abstracted figures dominating the composition. In *Formas tarascas*, mother and floating infant are enclosed by architecture, a sharp contrast with the figures in *Mujer y niña* who exist in a boundless landscape. David Alfaro Siqueiros had said of Orozco Romero, “He feels the harmonious contradiction of opposing textures; mixes the smooth with the rough...In this lies his value; the objective with the subjective, the drama of intangible creation with the matter of the craft.”

Rogelio Polesello
Argentine, born 1939
Multiplier (Multiplicador), 1971
Plexiglas
Gift of Robert and Mercedes Eichholz
1995.50.4

Influenced by the Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García, Rogelio Polesello further expanded upon the Constructivist tradition in Latin America. In the early 1960s, he abandoned his expressionistic style and began making optical paintings and Plexiglas works. *Multiplier* belongs to a series of Plexiglas panels embedded with concave and convex lenses. In these works, the artist seeks to challenge the notion of the unique art object. Although the lenses are fixed, the work is constantly in flux depending on the position of the viewer and the placement of objects around it.



Alfredo Ramos Martínez
Mexican, 1871-1946
La escuela (The School), 1937
Gouache, charcoal, and watercolor on newsprint
Gift of P. D. McMillan Land Company
1963.30

Alfredo Ramos Martínez was a visionary of Mexican modernism, often eclipsed in history by younger *Los tres grandes* of the mural tradition. After achieving great success in Paris—winning a medal at the 1904 salon—he returned to Mexico in 1910 on the eve of revolution. Hailed by students as



an innovator, he was appointed Assistant Director of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (National School of Fine Arts) in Mexico City.

It was always Ramos Martínez's dream to introduce Mexican artists to *plein-air* painting as a fresh alternative to traditional art academies and their insistence on European art as a model. Beginning in 1913, he established twenty-seven campuses of the Escuela de Pintura al Aire Libre (Open-Air School of Painting) throughout his native country, educating eager young students such as David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo.

In 1929, Ramos Martínez moved to Los Angeles, where he began to focus on indigenous themes as a form of cultural nationalism in the post-revolutionary period. He returned to the practice of working on newsprint, which he had done earlier in Paris out of economic necessity. In *La escuela*, Ramos Martínez depicts young rural students learning outdoors on a copy of the *Los Angeles Times* classified page, listing employment for men and women. The juxtaposition poses questions of class, gender, and cross-cultural exchange.

Alfredo Ramos Martínez

Mexican, 1871-1946

La Virgen de San Juan (Virgin of San Juan), ca. 1940

Oil on pressed board

Gift of Mrs. Allen M. Reed in memory of her sister Julia Belle Faurot Tolson

1979.8.2

In 1938, Alfredo Ramos Martínez welcomed the birth of daughter Maria, but not without adversity. Born with a congenital bone disease, doctors recommended a warm, dry climate for the ailing infant. The following year, the artist moved the family to Los Angeles. Deeply grieved by her condition, Ramos Martínez began depicting religious subjects while also painting portraits of his daughter as a means of healing.



Scan to see Ramos Martínez's murals in the chapel of the Santa Barbara Cemetery.



Diego Rivera

Mexican, 1886-1957

Man Loading Donkey with Firewood (El hombre carga un burro con leña), 1938

Graphite and watercolor on paper

Gift of Barbara J. and Robert K. Straus

1991.47



Recognized as one of *Los tres grandes* (The Three Greats) of Mexican muralism along with José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera was not only famous and controversial in his own country but also in the United States. Commenting on the legacy of the trio, Rivera said that “for the first time in the history of art, Mexican mural painting made the masses the hero of monumental art.” He arrived at this new vision of art by fusing the innovations of modernism learned during his fourteen-year sojourn abroad in Europe with an ever-expanding appreciation for the indigenous traditions of Mexico. After returning home in 1921, he made many trips within Mexico to draw and paint its people and landscape.

Although Rivera often created easel paintings and works on paper to satisfy the taste of affluent collectors during the late 1930s and '40s, he continued to make works such as *Man Loading Donkey with Firewood* that emphasize the pride and dignity of the laboring class. Here, Rivera opts to keep the worker anonymous with his back turned, broadly representing the struggle of all workers.

Diego Rivera

Mexican, 1886-1957

Flower Vendor on the Road to Cuernavaca (La vendedora de flores en el camino a Cuernavaca), 1955

Oil on canvas

Private Collection



In the 1920s, a wave of *indigenismo* (indigenism) swept across various Latin American nations, beginning first in Mexico, to glorify native peasant life as a powerful symbol of cultural identity. The flower vendor was a central subject that Diego Rivera explored and reworked throughout his career. The theme allowed the artist to simultaneously represent beauty and labor, as seen in the vivid blossoms, the refined local dress, and the rugged terrain.

José Salazar
Mexican, 1926-2006
The Island (La isla), 1973
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. and Mr. Bernard Lewin
1973.13.2



The refined paintings José Salazar evoke a sense of dynamic movement. Using a palette knife, Salazar has created a lattice of colors and forms out of paint. His work has been described as spiritual rather than physical. Critic Anne Phillips stated, “Looking at a Salazar painting is like watching the creation of life from inanimate matter; figures emerge mysteriously from a network of flashing electrical impulses and are lent form by converging patterns of light and color.”

David Alfaro Siqueiros
Mexican, 1898-1974
The Aesthete in Drama (El esteta en el drama), 1944
Duco (pyroxilin) on board
Gift of Gordon and Suzanne Johnston
2000.63



In *The Aesthete in Drama*, Siqueiros manipulates color, form, volume, and texture to express human suffering. Equally as modern as his technique are the dramatic close-up views that Siqueiros adapted from avant-garde film and photography. While addressing political concerns ranging from revolutionary turmoil to the conditions of the working class, the painting is also an ironic statement about the role of the artist in society.

At first glance, the title of the work suggests that the robed woman with her emotive expression and gesture is the aesthete in drama. However, the diminutive figure depicted on the edge of the woman’s sleeve can also be read as this title character. Identified by his easel and by the landscape he is painting, the artist is oblivious to the drama unfolding around him.

The 1922 manifesto, *A Declaration of Social, Political and Aesthetic Principles*, which Siqueiros co-authored with fellow muralists Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco and others, boldly states, “We repudiate so-called easel painting and every kind of art favored by the ultra-intellectual circles, because it is aristocratic and we praise monumental art in all its forms, because it is public property.” However, by the 1930s Siqueiros and his compatriots incorporated easel painting into their

repertoire to support themselves financially.



See an original Siqueiros mural right outside the Museum!

David Alfaro Siqueiros

Mexican, 1898-1974

The Hill of the Dead (La colina de los muertos), 1944

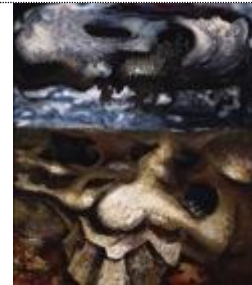
Duco (pyroxilin) on board

Gift of Mrs. MacKinley Helm

1969.35.51

In the mid-1930s, David Alfaro Siqueiros underwent a reevaluation of his methods, if not his aims for art. Seeking to find a revolutionary technique for a revolutionary art, he founded the Siqueiros Experimental Workshop in New York in 1936. A member of the workshop later recalled how they began using commercial automotive paint, “We poured it, dripped it, splattered it, and hurled it at the picture surface.” The artist’s radical experiments proved influential for Abstract Expressionist artist Jackson Pollock, in particular, who was a member of the Workshop.

Upon his return to Mexico in 1944, the year he painted *The Hill of the Dead*, Siqueiros continued his search for technical innovations in the portrayal of the horrors of war. To depict a violent storm swirling over a parched, tumultuous landscape, he used Duco (pyroxilin), an automotive lacquer produced by DuPont that he began working with in 1933. The medium allowed for a variety of surface textures, which, combined with dramatic angles and distorted views, evoke an ominous turbulence.



Juan Soriano

Mexican, 1920-2006

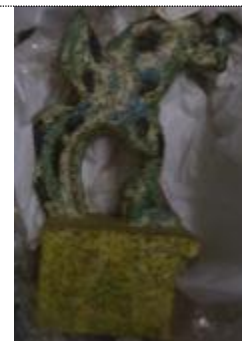
El gallo (Rooster), ca. 1964

Glazed ceramic

Gift of Charles A. Storke

1994.57.34

Juan Soriano, a child prodigy exhibiting by the age of fourteen, became a leading figure in Mexico’s post-revolutionary cultural



boom. His early work, primarily figurative paintings with Surrealist leanings, provides a link between the nationalist imagery of the Mexican muralists (which Soriano found too dogmatic) and the experimental vanguard of the 1950s and '60s known as *La ruptura*. After moving from his native Guadalajara to Mexico City in 1935, he soon became acquainted with Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Rufino Tamayo, and writer Octavio Paz who would become a lifelong friend.

While in Rome during the early 1950s, Soriano began experimenting with sculpture and abstraction—working in the studio of Pietro and Andrea Cascella. His sculptures often took the form of semi-abstract birds and celestial shapes in variety of materials including ceramic, terracotta, and bronze. *El gallo* and other early works would later grow into monumental sculptures of fantastical and everyday creatures that can be seen throughout Mexico.

Jesús Rafael Soto

Venezuelan, 1923-2005

Homenaje al humano, “An American Portrait, 1776-1976” series (Homage to the Human Being, “Un retrato americano, 1776-1976” serie), 1975

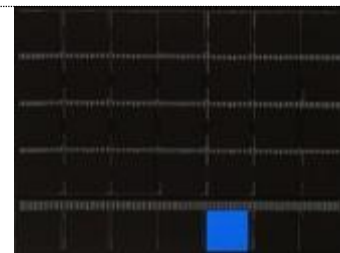
Wood and aluminum

Gift of Transworld Art

1976.49.7

Beginning in the 1950s, Jesús Rafael Soto carried out experiments in geometric abstraction and Kinetic art that established him as one of Venezuela’s leading modern artists. The artist’s fascination with actual and perceived movement is apparent in this work in which black squares are placed a few inches in front of a ground of parallel black and white lines to create a flickering effect as the viewer’s eyes move across the work. Despite their hard surfaces, the visual effect produced seems to dematerialize the forms—transforming them into a complex patchwork of light, color, and space. The artist believed that “The immaterial is the sensitive reality of the universe. Art is the sensitive knowledge of the immaterial. To be aware of the immaterial in the state of pure structure is to cover the last stretch of the road towards the absolute.”

One year after his first retrospective exhibition at the Guggenheim in New York in 1974, Soto produced *Homenaje al humano* for a three-part portfolio titled “An American Portrait, 1776-1976,” organized to celebrate the United States



Bicentennial. Soto's work, and others included in the portfolio titled "Your Huddled Masses," dwells on the role of the foreigner and his struggle for freedom, dignity, happiness, and identity. This sense of adversity is manifest in the single bright blue square in a homogenous sea of black.

Fernando de Szyszlo
Peruvian, born 1925
Mar de Lurín (Lurín Sea), 1989
Acrylic on canvas
Gift of Jerry and Mary Kay Gardner
1997.73

Peru's land, sky, and sea are the primary sources for Fernando de Szyszlo's lyrical abstractions. In particular, pre-Columbian art, of which he is an avid collector, provides the artist with a rich source of abstract forms. Szyszlo's massive, interlocking shapes echo ancient Andean architecture; his colors pay homage to Paracas textiles; and his patterns allude to Moche painting.

Mar de Lurín depicts abstract forms inspired by the Lurín Valley nestled on the coast of Peru, 25 miles south of present-day Lima. Szyszlo has maintained a small house and workshop in Lurín, a place he has described as "a desolate and mysterious desert" meeting dramatically with the Pacific Ocean. Inhabited for over 3,000 years, the Lurín Valley region has been an enduring subject in Szyszlo's paintings and works on paper beginning in the late 1980s into the '90s.



Rufino Tamayo
Mexican, 1899-1991
El fumador (The Smoker), 1947
Crayon on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Wilson
1991.44

Born to parents of Zapotec descent in Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, Rufino Tamayo became a model for many younger figurative and abstract artists of *La ruptura* generation of the 1950s and '60s. He was known for his break from the "Mexican School" of muralism and his openness to a range of influences and styles, which he amalgamated in his own personal style of abstract figuration.



Tamayo became involved with the international avant-garde through visits and extended stays in the United States. Of particular significance to him was a 1939 Pablo Picasso exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which inspired a series of human and animal figures. From this period, *El fumador* represents his interpretation of Cubism's exaggerated forms, dramatizing gestures through extreme foreshortening.

Rufino Tamayo
Mexican, 1899-1991
Noche y día (Night and Day), 1953
Oil on canvas
Gift of Glen Larson
1998.76



Rufino Tamayo is recognized for the manner in which he blended the lessons of international modernism with his personal interpretations of Mexico's folk traditions and pre-Columbian history. *Noche y día* belongs to the artist's "Constelaciones" (Constellations) series begun in 1946, in which the celestial sphere becomes a means to investigate natural and metaphysical concerns. For the artist, the cosmos represented a vast, formidable field of the unknown—extending from ancient Maya sky watchers to modern space exploration. In 1960, the artist declared, "All the old molds of art and science have been broken. A new era has been opened with interplanetary space travel. And if everyone is now looking for a new language, the painter cannot remain behind."

Rufino Tamayo
Mexican, 1899-1991
Monument to the Unknown Hero (Monumento al héroe desconocido), 1989
Steel with epoxy resin and crushed marble
Gift of Marshall and Helen Hatch
1997.21



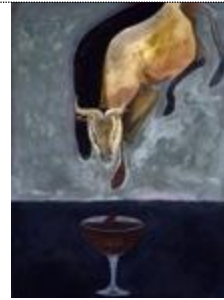
Beginning in 1989, during the last two years of the artist's life, Tamayo began producing steel sculptures with a hand-applied patina, bestowing a sense of age and wear. As in some of his paintings, Tamayo used crushed marble to create a rich surface texture. These colossal sculptures reveal the artist's longstanding interest in pre-Columbian art and culture, in

particular stone sculpture. In 1922, Tamayo was appointed director of the Department of Ethnographic Drawing of the National Museum of Archeology, History, and Ethnography, tasked with examining and reproducing thousands of pre-Columbian objects as drawings for others to study.

Monument to the Unknown Hero mimics the form of a funerary bust atop a pedestal composed of geometric shapes, highlighting the interplay between positive and negative space. The “unknown hero” of this monument offers a universal alternative to the specific political and mythological figures represented by artists during and immediately following the Mexican Revolution.

Francisco Toledo
Mexican, born 1940
La vaca de Ixtaltepec (The Cow of Ixtaltepec), 1971
Gouache on paper
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.42

After an extended stay in Paris during the 1960s, Francisco Toledo returned to his hometown of Juchitán de Zaragoza, Oaxaca, in 1970. There he began to expand his poetic approach to art by re-interpreting ancient Mesoamerican mythology and lore he learned as a child. The cows, deer, iguanas, frogs, snakes, monkeys, and other creatures that inhabit his works are part of the artist’s fantastical menagerie, but also are quotidian references to life in Juchitán. Several of these animals are Maya astrological signs commonly found in the region—linking the cosmos with the material world.



Francisco Toledo
Mexican, born 1940
Venados (Deer), 1975
Gouache on paper
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.44



Joaquín Torres-García
Uruguayan, 1879-1949
Composición (Composition), 1932

Oil on canvas

Museum purchase with funds provided by the 20th-Century Art Acquisition and Endowment Funds, the Grace Jones Richardson Trust, Jon B. and Lillian Lovelace, and Les and Zora Charles
1997.69

Joaquín Torres-García played an instrumental role in formulating and promoting a new geometric abstract art in Latin America. Synthesizing ancient and modern art, the artist developed a complex visual language based on what he believed were universal signs—forming the basis of his theory of Constructive Universalism. He perceived these symbols as the “materializations of the universal spirit,” and as a way of returning to our common human origins.

Torres-García returned to his native Montevideo in 1934, more than forty years after embarking on a trans-Atlantic journey that stretched from Barcelona to Paris and New York. *Composición* belongs to the artist’s late Paris period and features a five-pointed star, a fish, a Grecian temple, a clock, Inca masonry, and an anchor, among other simplified images. The reclamation and use of pre-Columbian symbols placed the cultural contributions of these civilizations on par with those of Europe’s classical antiquity, causing them to no longer be seen as regional, personal, or primitive, but universal.



Cordelia Urueta
Mexican, 1908-1995
Niña (Child), 1966
Oil on canvas
Gift of Charles A. Storke
1994.57.49

As a young child, Cordelia Urueta became acquainted with Italian Renaissance artists Raphael and Michelangelo through reproductions and plaster copies belonging to her father, art critic and Mexican ambassador to Argentina and Uruguay, Jesús Urueta Siqueiros. Her father’s untimely death caused Urueta to withdraw from reality, falling ill and finding comfort in books and long walks in the countryside. Pioneering Mexican painter and writer, Dr. Atl, encouraged Urueta to pursue art more seriously after examining her drawings. She studied with



Alfredo Ramos Martínez at the Escuela de Pintura al Aire Libre (Open Air School of Painting) in Churubusco. Urueta formed her own distinctive style that fluctuated between figuration and abstraction throughout her career.

After several years in Paris and New York, Urueta returned with husband, artist Gustavo Montoya, to permanently settle in Mexico in 1950. *Niña* is an expressive work that experiments with various light sources and the dimensionality of neutral colors. The subtle palette of this painting creates the soft outline of a figure in motion—perhaps a recollection of childhood.

Francisco Zúñiga
Mexican (born Costa Rica), 1912-1998
Desnudo agachado (Bent Nude), 1969
Onyx
Gift of Mrs. Barbara Storke
1975.32.1

Francisco Zúñiga was born in San Jose, Costa Rica, but he has always been considered a Mexican artist. At the age of thirteen, he helped carve wooden religious figures known as *santos* in his father's workshop in Costa Rica. Ten years later he moved to Mexico, drawn by its flourishing post-Revolutionary art scene and its rich pre-Columbian sculptural tradition. Through visits to museums in Mexico City, Zúñiga gained an admiration for the sculpture of Southeast Mexico and Costa Rica, particularly that of the Maya and Chorotega cultures, which provided a basis for his sculptural explorations.

In 1959, Zúñiga began to incorporate influences from British sculptor Henry Moore, who himself was interested in pre-Columbian sculpture. He shared Moore's preoccupation with the solid, monumental stone sculptures of reclining human figures found in Maya temples. *Desnudo agachado* highlights the artist's interest in volume and space, with its translucent onyx polished to convey a sense of continuity.



Photography

Lola Alvarez Bravo
Mexican, 1905-1993
Raíces (Roots), n.d.
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Rush Lennon
1994.42

Born Dolores Martínez in Jalisco, Mexico, Lola Alvarez Bravo was one of Mexico's most significant photographers. Like other female artists linked with famous male partners, her work has often been overshadowed by that of her husband, renowned photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo. They married in Mexico City in 1925 just as Manuel's photographic career photography began to take off. In 1934, Lola and Manuel separated. It was during this time when Lola turned to photography, which she had learned from Manuel, as a means of supporting herself and their son.

Raices is rare for its lack of human presence so common in Alvarez Bravo's work. This work nonetheless highlights the anthropomorphic qualities of the ceiba tree found in Mexico as well as throughout Central and South America. In the Maya world view, the concept of a sacred central tree linking the underworld, earth, and heavens was often represented by the sturdy trunk of a ceiba tree, similar to the one depicted here.



Manuel Alvarez Bravo
Mexican, 1902-2002
Lucretia (Lucrecia), 1940
Gelatin silver print
Museum purchase, Photography Acquisition Fund
2003.17

Born and raised in Mexico City, Manuel Alvarez Bravo came of age during the Mexican Revolution. Having studied painting at the Academia de San Carlos (Academy of San Carlos), his interests soon shifted to photography, which he taught himself. In 1927, he met photographers Tina Modotti and Edward Weston, who encouraged Alvarez Bravo's vision. He would soon become a core member of Mexico's modernist circle of artists and intellectuals.

In order to make *Lucretia*, Alvarez Bravo used a photogram technique wherein objects are placed upon sensitized



photographic paper, which is then exposed to light. This process darkens the uncovered areas of the paper and leaves the areas underneath the objects unexposed, thus creating a negative image. Surrealist artists such as Man Ray, whom Alvarez Bravo admired, used the technique most prominently in their automatic or randomized object associations. For this work, the artist used an x-ray of his second wife, Doris Heyden, layered with various objects.

The dagger and the title of the work reference the Roman legend of Lucretia, an ancient Roman woman whose rape by the king's son and subsequent suicide was said to have brought on the popular uprising that established the Roman Republic. Roman revolutionaries retrieved the dagger from Lucretia's chest and took an oath to overthrow the tyrant king. The work echoes Alvarez Bravo's sympathetic stance towards the ideals of the Mexican Revolution.

Raúl Corrales
Cuban, 1925-2006
The Fishing Net (La atarraya), ca. 1950
Gelatin silver print
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Cheeryble Foundation
2002.22.2

An everyday activity for the inhabitants of the small fishing village of Cojimar, casting a net becomes an elegant dance in Raúl Corrales' poetic image. In the late 1940s and early '50s, Corrales spent much of his time photographing rural life in Cuba, inspired by the photographers of the Farm Security Administration in the United States, such as Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange. In 1959, he joined a photographic team working for *Revolución*, the new government newspaper, and eventually became Fidel Castro's official photographer. His photographs were more than mere documentation; they became icons of the Cuban Revolution (1953-59). Corrales famously photographed Castro at a fishing tournament with Ernest Hemingway in 1960. The author spent much of his time in Cojimar, which inspired him to write *The Old Man and the Sea*.



Flor Garduño

Mexican, born 1957

Agua, Valle Nacional, México, 1983

Gelatin silver print

Museum purchase with funds provided by Friends of
Photographic Art

1994.18



Born in Mexico City, Flor Garduño worked as a printing assistant for photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo. She later trained in photography and began working with Mexico's Office of the Secretary of Public Education, a position that allowed her to travel extensively through rural areas throughout the country. In her travels, Garduño cultivated an interest in the natural landscape and the indigenous people she met, themes that would appear in her work throughout her career.

In this photograph, Garduño portrays her vision of an indigenous woman. She has stated that much of her work is inspired by her dreams, which may account for the surreal quality of this photograph, where the woman's figure seems to drift above a pool of water. The nude female form has been a continuous source of inspiration for Garduño's experimentations with light and shadow and carefully staged compositions.

Graciela Iturbide

Mexican, born 1942

Cemetery (Cementerio) Juchitán, Oaxaca, 1988

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Arthur B. Steinman

2000.50.44



Graciela Iturbide was born in Mexico City to a middle-class family, married and had three children. She only entered into her career as a photographer after the tragic death of her six-year-old daughter. She would eventually study and work with the so-called "father" of Mexican photography, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, but she would also make her mark as one of the preeminent Mexican photographers of her generation.

Iturbide is perhaps best known for her series of photographs depicting indigenous Zapotec life in Juchitán de Zaragoza, a matriarchal society in which women continue to assert their independence. At the request of artist Francisco Toledo, a native to Juchitán, Iturbide captured the everyday routines of the

women, from religious festivities to funerary rituals, while she lived among them from 1979 to 1988. With her use of stark contrast, the haunting figure in this photograph is set against the white walls of cemetery tombs. The swarming movement of the swallows stilled by the photographic frame casts an eerie sense of suspended time over this elegiac scene.

Luis González Palma
Guatemalan, born 1957
Lottery #1 (Lotería #1), 1989-91
Hand painted silver gelatin prints
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Wallis Foundation
1995.10

Lottery #1 explores themes prevalent in Luis González Palma's work: Catholicism, mysticism, and colonialism. The work is composed of nine separate photographs arranged in the format of a playing board for the popular Latin American game *lotería*, which was used by colonial missionaries to teach Spanish to the Maya. Palma has reworked selected cards from the game including The Moon, The Crown, The Rose, and The Devil.

In composing this work, Palma photographed indigenous Guatemalans of Maya descent, with props in his studio. He painted over his black-and-white prints with a dark sepia wash to confer a sense of age and history, rubbing off the dark stain in some areas to reveal the striking white of the paper below. In these haunting images, Palma has created his own mythic world that transcends space and time, filled with beauty and violence, life and death.



Sebastião Salgado
Brazilian, born 1944
Wood Delivery Men, Eastern Sierra Madre, Mexico (Hombres transportando madera, Sierra Madre Oriental, México), 1980
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Arthur B. Steinman
2000.50.82

Considered one of the most important social documentary photographers working today, Sebastião Salgado has traveled the world photographing images of the dispossessed. His interests in labor, migration, and the trials of war have established his reputation as both photographer and activist. Despite the documentary nature of his photography, Salgado



has a profound ability to aestheticize his subject matter, elevating the mundane to the majestic.

In this image, men carry wood through the hills of the Eastern Sierra Madre in Mexico. The misty mountains serve as an ethereal backdrop for the men, who gracefully carry bundles of wood that resemble coffins from distance. With heavy loads upon their backs, the figures appear both cruciform in their shape and Christ-like in their burden.