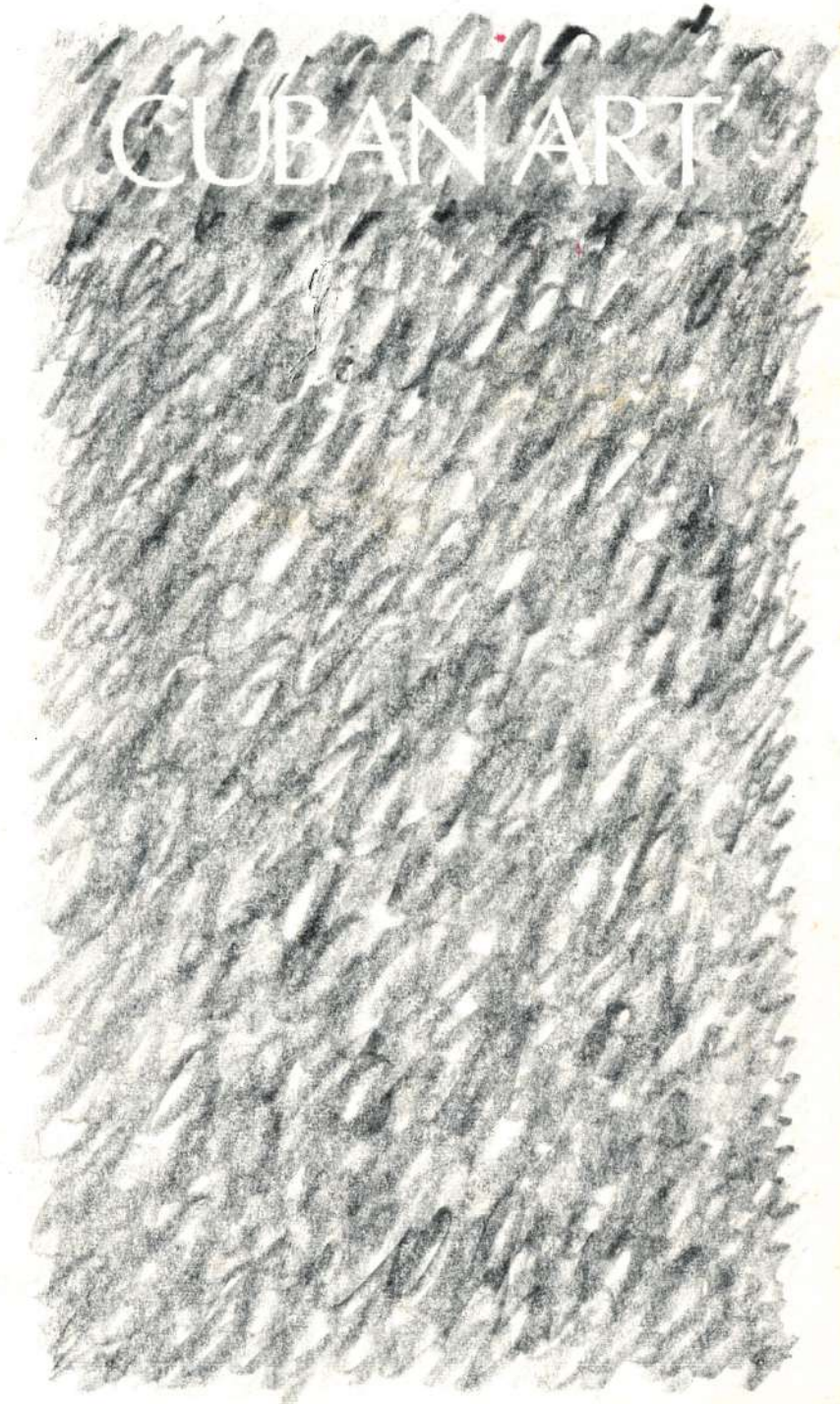
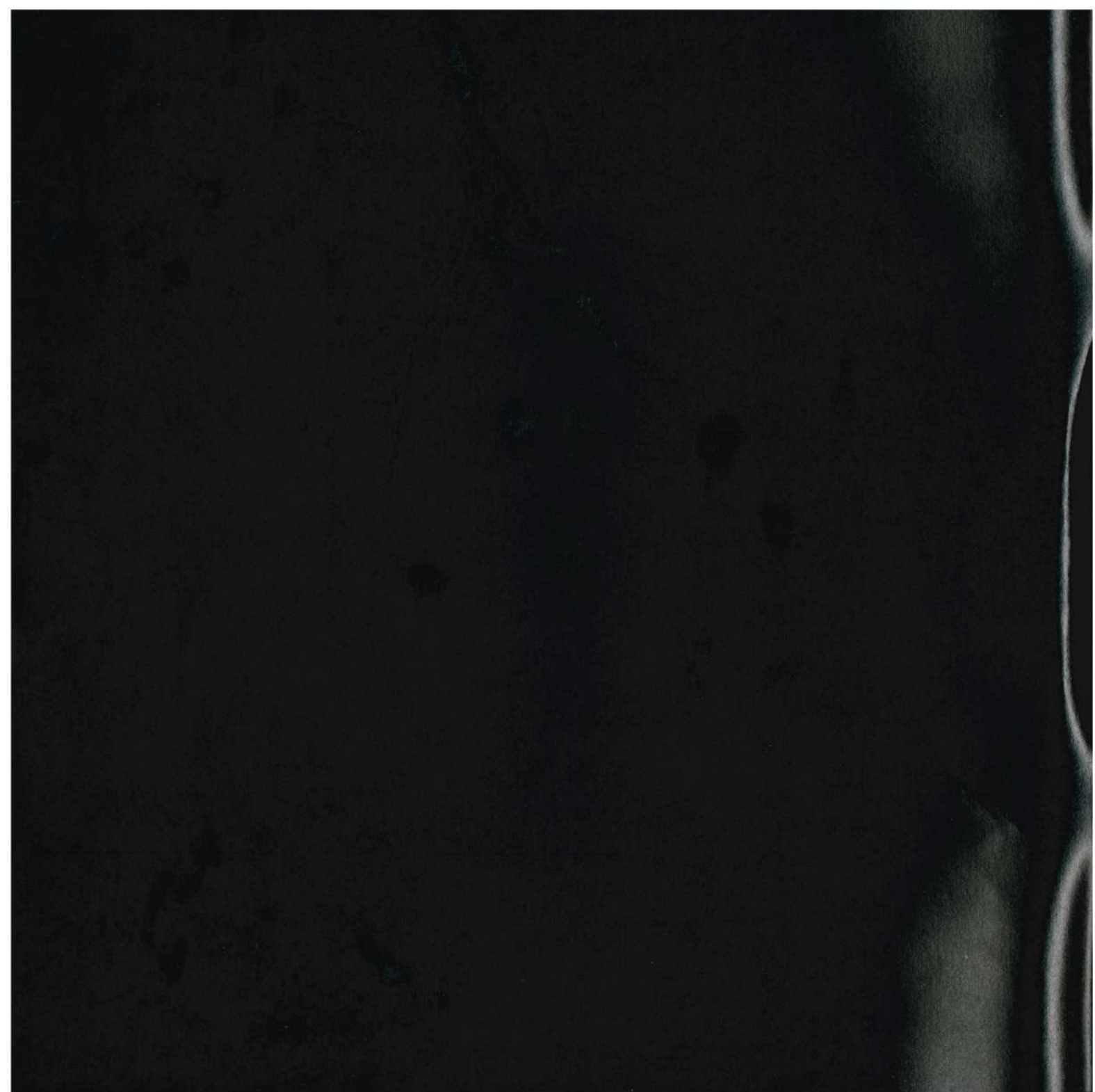


# CUBAN ART





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**CUBAN ART: A RETROSPECTIVE, 1930-1980**

**RENE PORTOCARRERO: A RETROSPECTIVE, 1940-1980**

**LOS NOVISIMOS CUBANOS, GRUPO VOLUMEN I**

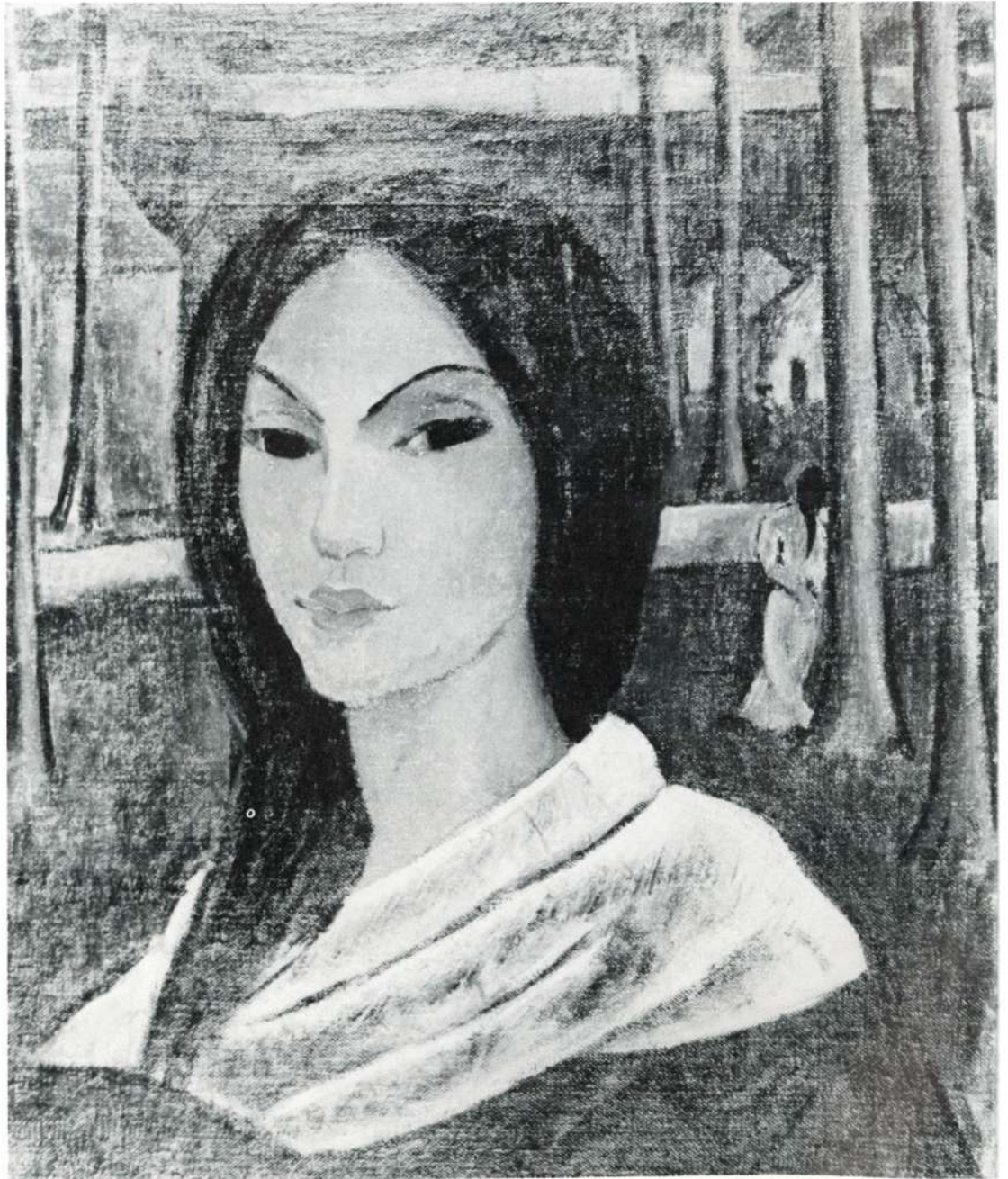
THE SIGNS GALLERY, New York

January – May-1982

Contemporary Art Museum, Panamá, Inac, Panamá

Sala Arteconsult, Panamá

May-June 1982



Victor Manuel García

With these three exhibitions, Cuban Art: A Retrospective (1930–1980), René Portocarrero, A Retrospective (1935–1968), The Newest Cubans (Group Volume I), we are starting the last cycle of exhibitions dedicated to the plastic arts of the Caribbean. The three shows are in homage to Cuba for being a place where a movement starts that, although still looking at the various European schools, is perhaps the beginning and root of contemporary plastic Latin American events. The collaboration of the Ministry of Culture of the city of Havana has been of extremely valuable help, furnishing incredible literary and critical documents, and, of course, a body of plastic works that, it alone, represents a whole history.

And I am talking in particular of sweet Nisia Agüero de Benítez, Director of the Fund of Cultural Goods, of her assistants Mirta and Alquimia, of Marta Arjona, Director of the Cultural Patrimony, of Marcia Leisaca, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture for the faith they had in me, and Manuel López Oliva who was the curator of the first exhibit. I wish to thank all the artists, dead or alive, for having produced such an important work for our Occidental culture; the Group Rincón del Regalo and other anonymous Caracas sponsors that through their generosity have made possible these three projects. My thanks to Conga Francisca for her esoteric

knowledge and lastly, my father Ogum, warrior god, oricha of the metals, who succumbed only to the charms covered with honey of Ochum. Axé. 3

#### **William de Michele**

*la realización de los tres proyectos. Mis reconocimientos para Conga Francisca por sus conocimientos esotéricos, y al fin mi padre Ogum, diós guerrero, orichá de los metales, que sucumbió solamente delante a los encantos cubiertos de miel de Ochum. Axé.*

*Con las tres exposiciones, Arte Cubano: una retrospectiva (1930–1980), René Portocarrero, una retrospectiva (1935–1968), Los Novísimos Cubanos (Grupo Volumen I), empezamos el último ciclo de exhibiciones dedicado a la plástica del Caribe. Las tres muestras son en homenaje a Cuba, en cuanto lugar donde se empieza un movimiento moderno que, aunque mirando todavía a las varias escuelas europeas, es tal vez el inicio y raíz de los acontecimientos plásticos latinoamericanos contemporáneos. La colaboración del Ministerio de Cultura de la ciudad de la Habana ha sido de una asistencia sumamente valiosa proporcionando increíbles documentos literarios y críticos, y, por supuesto, un material plástico que, por si mismo, representa toda una historia.*

*Y hablo en particular de la dulce Nisia Agüero de Benítez, directora del Fondo de Bienes Culturales, de sus colaboradoras Mirta Y Alquimia, de Marta Arjona, directora del Patrimonio Cultural, de Marcia Leisaca, Viceministro del Ministerio de Cultura, por la confianza que me otorgaron, y Manuel López Oliva que curó la primera exposición. Quiero agradecer los artistas todos, muertos y vivos, por haber producido una obra tan importante para nuestra cultura occidental; el Grupo Rincón del Regalo de Caracas y otros anónimos patrocinadores que generosamente han permitido*

#### 4 The Cuban in Painting

When Cuban painting is being discussed there are some that regard as such all works of painting done in Cuba from the turn of the XVIII century to the present. For some, its local authenticity is determined by the mirrored reproduction, passive and almost always resolved by naturalistic academic means, of the motives that define the tropical circumstance of the island, its people and urban or rural "typical" environment. Others affirm that existence is confined to the styles of the painters that since the 20's were able to discard "academical" formulas and initiated a search on the road that took them to the thematic and optical works marked by the true spirit that defines **Cubanism**. And there are others yet that enlarging even more their views, qualify as "Cuban" any painting done by Cubans in any part of the world.

But rather than lose ourselves among so many points of view, it is necessary to try to understand **the Cuban in painting** as a pictorial materialization of multiple styles of the aesthetic relation woven by the national conscience of each artist with the natural, historical and cultural reality of Cuba, of the world and time he has lived. This makes it possible to accept, within the limits of the development of Cuban painting, innumerable visions, technical solutions and forms of representation, peculiar symbology and non-representative plastic language,

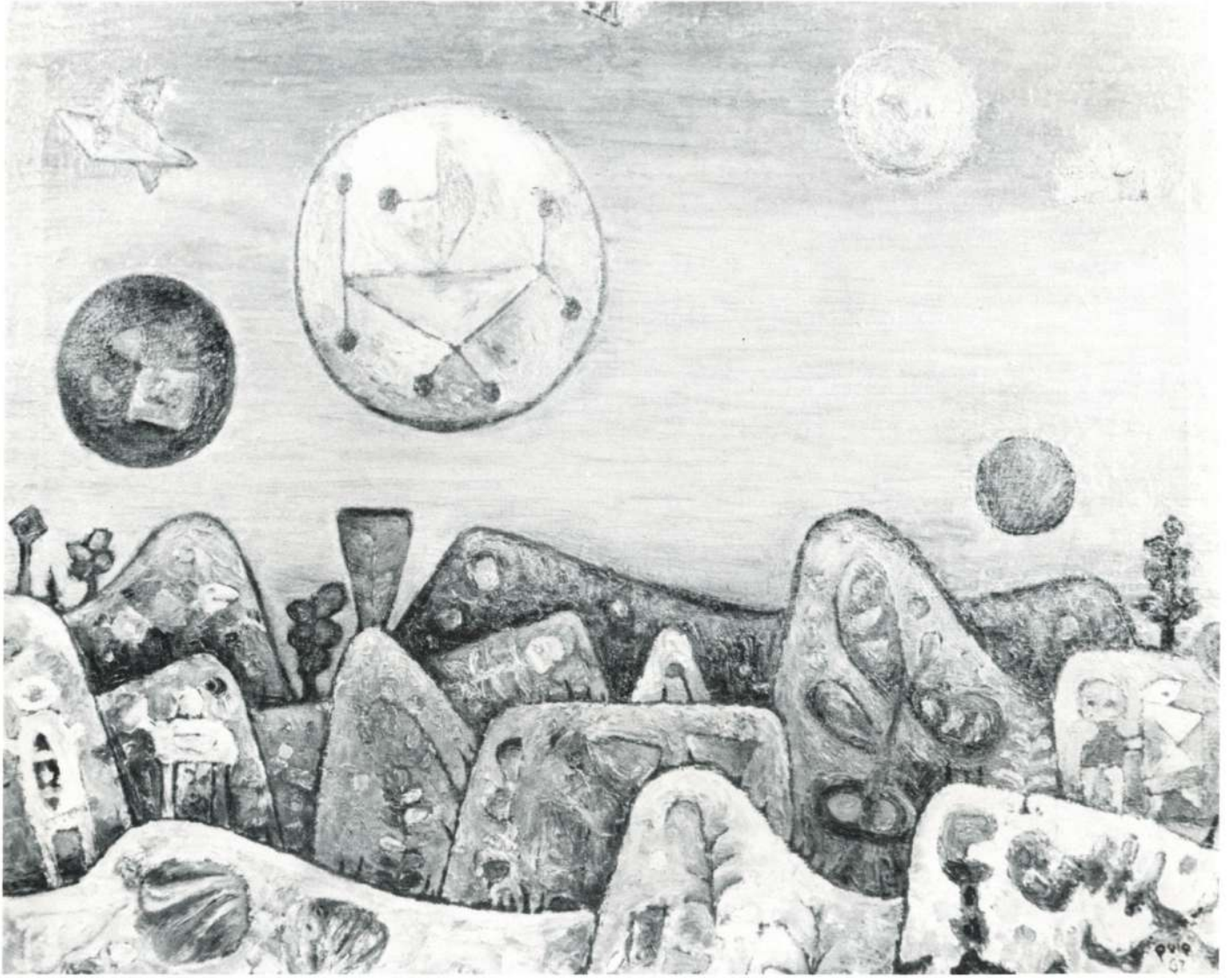
#### *Lo Cubano en la Pintura*

*Quando se comenta sobre la pintura cubana, hay quienes consideran como tal a toda obra pictórica realizada en Cuba desde finales del siglo XVIII hasta la actualidad. Para algunos, su autenticidad local está determinada por la reproducción especular, pasiva y casi siempre resuelta con los procedimientos del naturalismo académico, de los motivos que definen el medio tropical de la isla, sus gentes y ambientes urbanos o rurales "típicos". Otros afirman que su existencia se limita a los estilos de los pintores que desde los años veinte consiguieron liberarse de las fórmulas "academicistas" decimonónicas, e iniciaron un camino de búsquedas que condujeron a una óptica y una temática marcadas por el verdadero espíritu de lo que constituye **la cubanía**. Y están aquellos que ampliándose mucho más en sus criterios, califican de "cubana" a la pintura realizada por cubanos en cualquier sitio de la tierra.*

*Pero en vez de perdernos entre tantos puntos de vista, importa intentar comprender a **lo cubano en la pintura** como la materialización pictórica en múltiples estilos, de la relación estética que teje la conciencia nacional de cada artista cubano con la realidad natural, histórica y cultural de Cuba, del mundo y de la época donde ha vivido. Ello permite aceptar dentro del desarrollo de la **pintura cubana** a innumerables*



Eduardo Abela



Eduardo González Puig



through which can be perceived, in a straightforward or a subtle way, the coincidence of nature and the social idiosyncrasy of our island and an artistic subjectivism marked by feelings of identity capable of acquiring universal range. Since "Cubanism" in life or art, and therefore in painting, constitutes an endless and always fertile process, to which history and creative imagination add new truths and enriching progress, we could talk of formative antecedents, stages, generations, influences, problems, personalities, poetry, development findings, but never of only one linear flow or aesthetic timeless concept as its ultimate expression. It is not the taste, transformed all at once in criterion, nor a rigid tendency to despise those styles that embrace or reject the effect of social turmoil on art, that could give us the right measure of the unitary diversity of Cuban painting; but rather the correct understanding of its differences, crises, ruptures, dependencies, philosophical and aesthetic focusing of the creators, typical character, universality, contributions and concurrences. Nevertheless, what is of primary importance in appointing its legitimacy, is the condition that makes it possible for the painting to transcend as artistic value of a culture, of a segment of history, of a facet of the creative action of work and human consciousness.

*visiones, soluciones técnicas y formales de representación, peculiares simbologías y lenguajes plásticos no representativos, mediante los cuales se transparenta de modo directo o sutil la coincidencia de la naturaleza y la idiosincracia social de nuestra isla, y una subjetividad artística signada por sentimientos de identidad capaces de adquirir rango universal.*

*Puesto que la cubanía en la vida o en el arte, y por consiguiente en la pintura, constituye un proceso inacabado y siempre fértil, al cual la historia y la imaginación creadora suman nuevas verdades y progresos enriquecedores, se podría hablar de antecedentes formativos, etapas, generaciones, influencias, problemas, personalidades, poéticas, y hallazgos de su desarrollo, pero nunca de una única vertiente lineal o concepción estética intemporal como su expresión definitoria.*

*No es el gusto, convertido de repente en criterio axiológico, ni tampoco una cerrada tendencia a menospreciar aquellos estilos que incluyan o rechacen el efecto de la lucha social sobre lo artístico, quienes pueden ofrecernos la medida exacta de la diversidad unitaria de la pintura cubana; sino el correcto entendimiento de sus diferencias, crisis, rupturas, dependencias, enfoques filosóficos y estéticos de los*

Four elements have left their imprint on the most significant images of Cuban painting: 1) our condition of inhabitants of an island, with a geographical and economic environment consisting basically of agricultural and marine means, which somehow get fixed on the painters' retina, and evolve later in food for forms, color, themes; 2) the position of the country in the Caribbean area and equidistant from the continental lands of North and South America; 3) the constant wave of international influences brought by foreign artists settled on the island or by Cubans that had travelled to Europe, United States and Mexico which originated in a Cuban pictorial school characterized simultaneously by a vocation for "Cubanism" and universalism; 4) the occasional cultural integrating movements that provoke changes of essence and expression, creating an interflowing between painting and the rest of the plastic elements, of art in general, of literature and other fields of life and culture.

These are the antecedents of **the painting of the Cuban nation:** The paintings done by *mestizos* in workshops at the service of the clergy and the richer sector in the second half of the XVIII century; the works of painters, printmakers, and draftsmen that in the first half of the XIX century painted in our country and captured the tropical landscape and colonial life in Cuba; the

*creadores, carácter típico, universalidad, aportes y concurrencias. No obstante, lo que ha de primar al designar sus legitimidades, es la condición que posibilita al cuadro trascender como valor artístico de una cultura, de un segmento de la historia y de una faceta de la acción creativa del trabajo y la conciencia humanas.*

*Cuatro factores han dejado su impronta en las imágenes más significativas de la pintura cubana: 1) nuestra condición de habitantes de una isla, con un medio geográfico y económico provisto fundamentalmente de recursos agrícolas y marítimos, los que de alguna manera se fijan en la retina de los pintores, y devienen luego alimento para las formas, el color y los temas; 2) la disposición del país en el área caribeña y equidistante de las tierras continentales de América Latina y de Norteamérica; 3) la ininterrumpida oleada de influencias internacionales traídas desde el pasado siglo por artistas foráneos que se establecieron en la isla, o llegadas a través de los cubanos que viajaron a Europa, Estados Unidos y México, lo cual ha originado una escuela pictórica cubana caracterizada por la vocación simultánea de cubanía y universalidad; 4) los ocasionales movimientos culturales integrales que provocan cambios de esencia y de lenguaje, creando a la vez interrelaciones temáticas y préstamos*

8 tasks of some Creole painters formed at the Academy of Fine Arts “San Alejandro” whose themes started germinating copies of nature and people of the land; the tradition of popular decoration of outside walls of homes; and, above all, the personal realization of painters — among them Sanz-Cartas, Collazo, Peoli, Tejada, Monocal and Romanach — that coincided with the spirit of the Cuban nation formed in the independence wars of 1868 and 1895.

The Latin American and Caribbean dimension of the Cuban Painting is demonstrated in the 20's. It is then when movements marked by the feeling and the symbolization of culture and life in Antillean areas as Mexico, Colombia and Cuba flourish. And that later will go South, to Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. Víctor Manuel, Amelia Peláez, Carlos Enríquez, Eduardo Abela, Marcelo Pogolotti, Antonio Gattorno, Fidelio Ponce de León and a little later Aristides Fernández, Jorge Arche and Wifredo Lam were the fundamental personalities of that first generation of modern Cuban painters.

The desire to express in painting “Cubanism” and “Latin Americanism” and the parallel between the aesthetic concepts vivid in Mexico and among the new Cuban creators of the generation of the 20's explains why in the 30's the influence of

*simbólicos entre la pintura y el resto de los géneros plásticos, del arte, de la literatura y otros campos de la vida y la cultura. Son antecedentes de la pintura de la nación cubana: Los cuadros realizados por mestizos en talleres al servicio de los sectores adinerados y eclesiásticos de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII; la obra de los pintores, grabadores y dibujantes que en la primera mitad del siglo XIX trabajaron en nuestro país, y captaron el tropical paisaje y la vida colonial de Cuba; el quehacer de unos cuantos pintores criollos formados primero por la Academia de Bellas Artes de “San Alejandro” cuyos temas empezó a germinar la copia de la naturaleza y la gente de su tierra; la tradición de pintura y decoración popular practicada sobre las paredes de las casas; y sobre todo, las realizaciones personales de pintores—entre ellos Sanz-Cartas, Collazo, Peoli, Tejada, Menocal y Romanach— que coincidieron con el espíritu de la nación cubana formada en las guerras independentistas de 1868 y 1895.*

*La dimensión latinoamericana y caribeña de la Pintura Cubana queda demostrada en los años veinte. Es ahí cuando suceden movimientos artísticos marcados por el sentimiento y la simbolización de la cultura y la vida en países del área antillana como México, Colombia y Cuba. Y que algo después se ampliarán al sur, en Argentina, Uruguay y Brazil. Víctor*

the Aztec nation fed the color, figuration and composition of our creators. At the same time clarifies the reason that took some of the representatives of our second generation of modern painters (1936–40) to the Mexican land to receive the teaching of artists as Rivera, Orozco, Rodríguez Lozano and Soriano. In this group of searchers for the “one thousand faces of the nation and its history”, we count René Portocarrero, Mariano Rodríguez, Ernesto Gonzales Puig, Mirta Cerra, Roberto Diago and Manuel Coceiro.

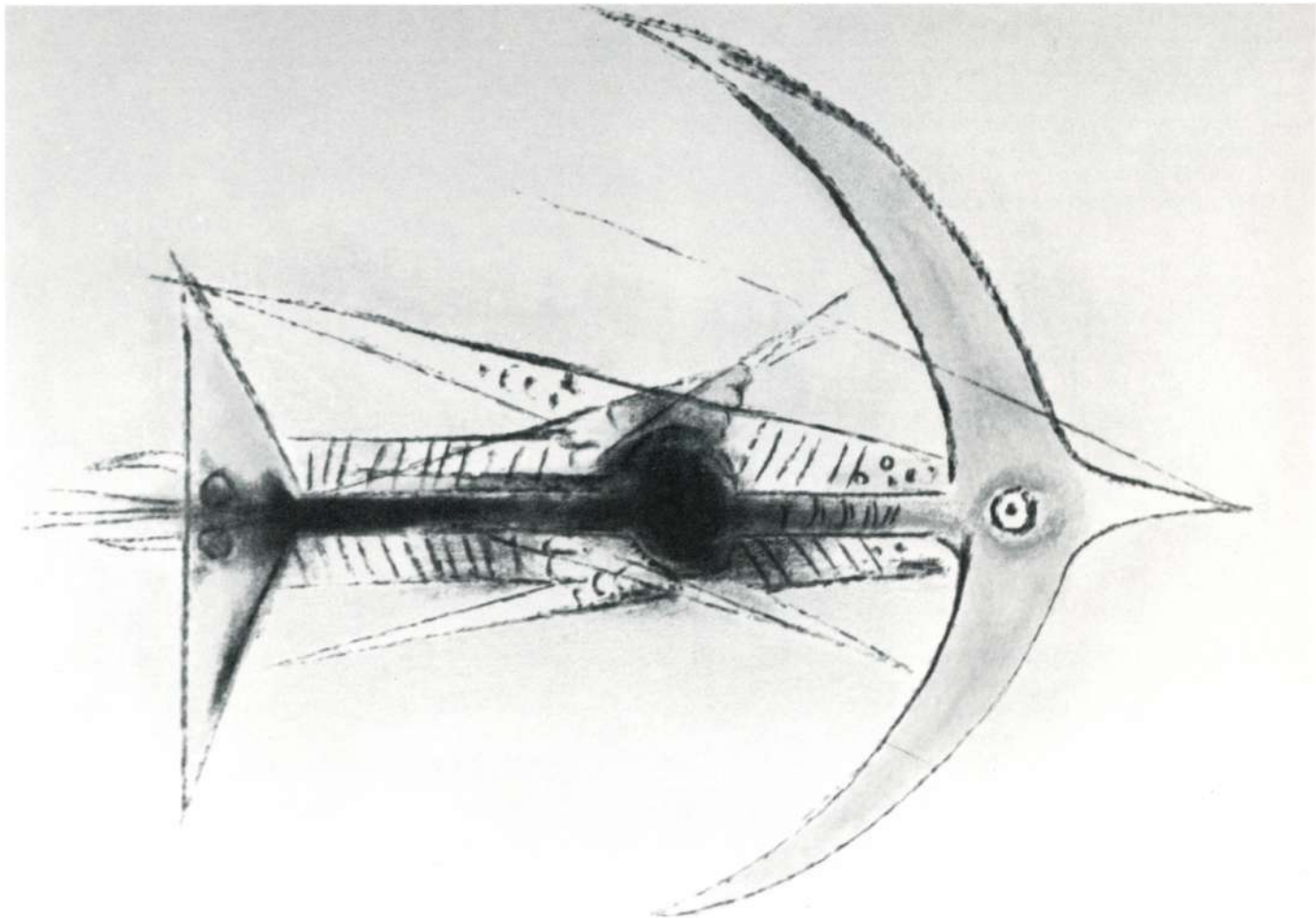
In the 40's, on one side, was evident the tendency to recreate the “mysteries” and morphology proposed by the liturgical figures of the Black Caribbean myth (which took some artists to Haiti in search of voodoo) and on the other, the dedication to drawing and an inclination to rhythmic structures that brought the images near a geometric abstraction.

As all artists of strong personality, the most representative Cuban painters of the three generations already mentioned, made their own the arsenal of procedures and formal criteria derived from the complexity of contemporary artistic production. This is the key to the fact that, if some adhered to abstraction in the 50's, they later were converted to a new kind of figurativism once in the 60's.

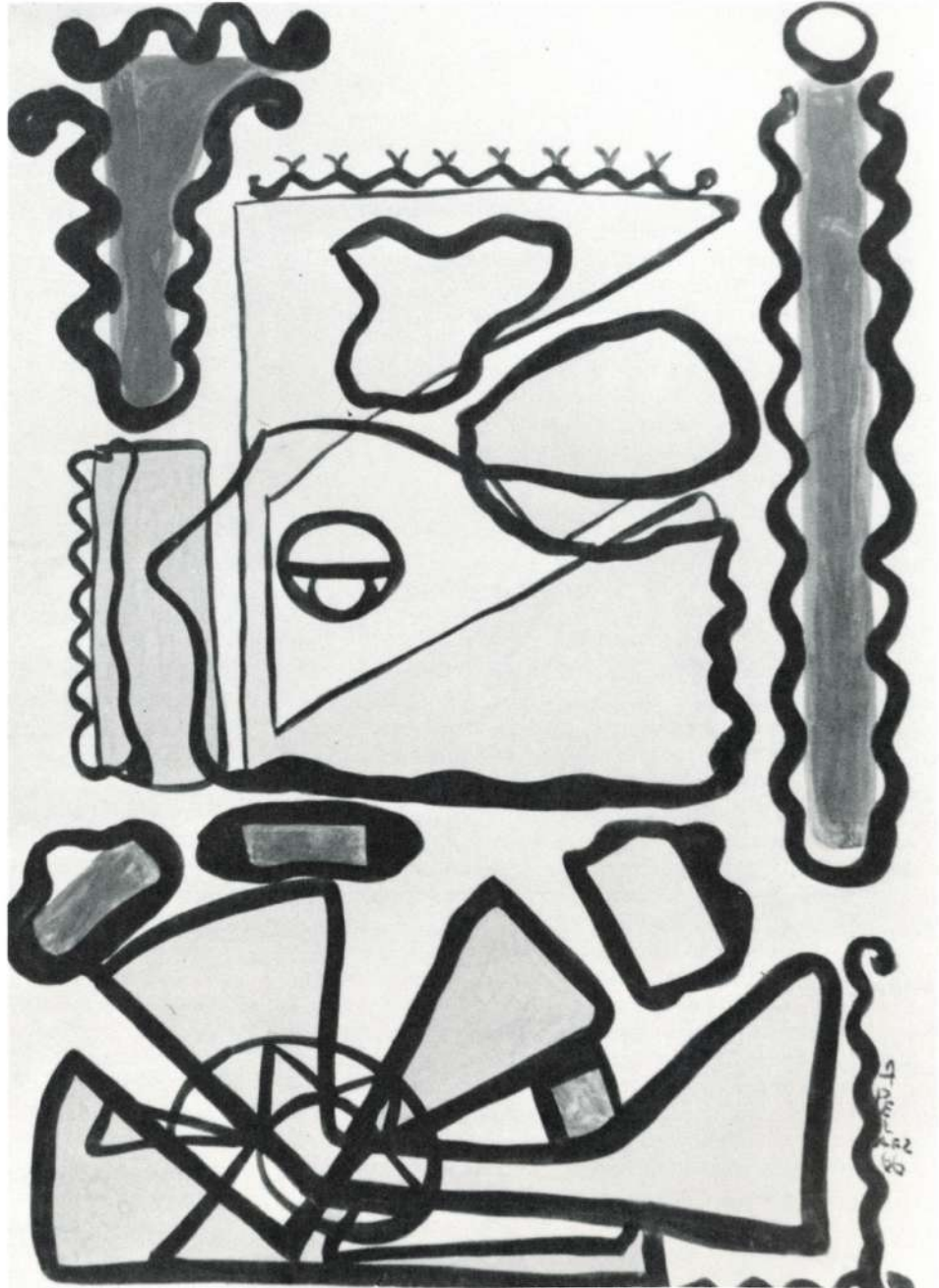
*Manuel, Amelia Peláez, Carlos Enríquez, Eduardo Abela Marcelo Pogolotti, Antonio Gattorno, Fidelio Ponce de León, y algo después Aristides Fernández, Jorge Arche y Wifredo Lam fueron personalidades fundamentales de esa **primera generación de pintores cubanos modernos.***

*Los deseos de encarnar en pintura **la cubanía y lo latinoamericano**, y el paralelismo entre las concepciones estéticas que primaban entonces en México y en los noveles creadores cubanos de la generación de los años veinte, explican por qué en la década del treinta la influencia pictórica de la nación azteca nutrió el color, las figuraciones y determinadas composiciones de nuestros creadores. Y al mismo tiempo aclara la razón que llevó a que algunos representantes de la **segunda generación de los pintores modernos nuestros** (surgidos entre 1936 y 1940) viajaran en la tierra mexicana y recibieran la enseñanza de artistas como Rivera, Orozco, Rodríguez Lozano, y Soriano. En este grupo de continuadores de la búsqueda de los “mil rostros plásticos de la nación y de su historia,” se cuentan René Portocarrero, Mariano Rodríguez, Ernesto González Puig, Mirta Cerra, Roberto Diago, y Manuel Coceiro.*

*Llegados los años cuarenta, por un lado, se evidenció la tendencia a recrear los “misterios” y la morfología propuesta*



Wifredo Lam



Amelia Peláez del Casal

In 1959 took place the taking of power of the revolutionaries that had fought in the mountains and cities of Cuba. The process of structural changes, popular participation, transformation of social institutions resounded on the meaning of life and imagination of each artist, resulting also in the exodus of those painters that were not in condition of adaptation to a new context. Those who were more rooted to land and culture and those who understood that all contradiction was part of the fecund transformation in social reality and consciousness, integrated themselves to the new life and the hard work this brought along.

Cuban painting of the 60's and 70's is the product of multiple generation concurrence, formed by mature creators proceeding from moments before the advent of the revolution, by some that were known at the beginning of the 60's (Servando Cabrera Moreno, Adigio Benítez, Carmelo González, Fayad Jamis, Antonio Vidal, Raul Martínez, Antonia Eiriz, Raul Milián, Julio Girona, Angel Acosta León, Lesvia Vent Dumois, Umberto Peña and Benjamín Duarte) and several groups of painters grown in the artistic teaching of recent historical stages.

The interior and the exterior, the strictly technical-formal and the social, poetry and the ability to create what is imagined,

*por las figuras litúrgicas del mito negro caribeño (lo cual llevó a que algunos de esos artistas viajaran a Haití en busca del "voodoo"); y del otro, se intensificó la dedicación al dibujo y la inclinación hacia estructuras rítmicas que acercaban las imágenes a la abstracción geométrica.*

*Como casi todos los artistas de vigorosa personalidad, los más representativos pintores cubanos de las tres generaciones anotadas, hicieron suyos el arsenal de procedimientos y criterios formales de la plástica derivada de la dinámica complejidad de los medios de producción artística contemporánea. Esta es la clave de por qué algunos que se incorporaron a la abstracción de los años 50, se convirtieron en figurativos de nuevo tipo, ya entrada la década del 60.*

*En 1959 tuvo lugar la toma del poder por los revolucionarios que habían combatido en las montañas y ciudades de Cuba. El proceso de cambios estructurales, participación popular, y transformaciones en las instituciones sociales, repercutió sobre el sentido de la vida y la imaginación de cada artista, desembocando también en el éxodo de algunos pintores que no estaban en condiciones de adaptarse y de modificarse en el nuevo contexto. Quienes se sentían más enraizados a la tierra y a la cultura y aquellos que comprendieron que toda contradicción era parte de las fecundas transformaciones en la*

*contemporaneidad y tradición, amor por la isla y la apertura a unbroken adventures in plastic language, the Cuban-Caribbean-Latin-American and universality intermingle and change appearance one thousand and one times in the whole of our best painting. When we talk of Cuban painting we must think of a puzzle, the total vision of which has been shaped by the contribution of each important artist of the past and of the present, and that is not yet completed.*

**Manuel López Oliva**

November of 1981

*realidad social y en la conciencia, decidieron integrarse a la vida nueva y a las tareas que ésta traía consigo.*

*La pintura cubana de la década de los sesenta y setenta es el producto de un concurrencia generacional múltiple, compuesta por creadores maduros procedentes de momentos anteriores al acontecimiento de la Revolución, por algunos que se dieron a conocer durante los inicios de los años 60 (Servando Cabrera Moreno, Adigio Benítez, Carmelo González, Fayad Jamis, Antonio Vidal, Raul Martínez, Antonia Eiriz, Raúl Milián, Julio Girona, Angel Acosta León, Lesvia Vent Dumois, Umberto Peña and Benjamín Duarte) y unas promociones de pintores surgidos de la enseñanza artística de una etapa histórica reciente.*

*Lo íntimo y lo público, lo estrictamente técnico-formal y lo social, la poesía y la capacidad de diseñar lo que se imagina, la contemporaneidad y la tradición, el amor a la isla y la apertura hacia las aventuras ininterrumpidas del lenguaje plástico, lo cubano-caribeño-latinoamericano y la universalidad se entremezclan y cambian de presencia una y mil veces en la totalidad de nuestra mejor pintura. Cuando se hable de pintura cubana habrá que pensar en un rompecabezas, cuya visión total se ha ido formando de los aportes de cada artista significativo del pasado y del presente, y que aún no se ha terminado.*

**ABELA**

*Aquí aparece Abela,  
provincial y redondo;  
tabaqueros, guajiros,  
sirviéndole de fondo.*

*Mujer de verde mano  
(¿será que no lo sabe?)  
espera que el pintor  
la otra mano le acabe.*

*La vaca arquitectónica  
a decorar se atreve  
en Kargamis tal vez  
algún bajorrelieve.*

*Los novios ¿no se casan?  
La ninfa ¿a quién espera?  
¡Los pobres! Desde el lienzo  
no ven la primavera.*

*El Rey Arcaico es  
¿hitita, jonio, huno?  
Yo escribiría debajo:  
Don Miguel de Unamuno.*

*Me voy. Y ya en la puerta  
mi salida coincide  
con el Bobo. Me nombra,  
me saluda y despide.*

*¡Adios, Abela!, digo.  
Y el Bobo: ¡Soy el Bobo!  
(Al sonreír mostraba  
sus colmillos de lobo.)*

**VICTOR MANUEL**

*Un sinsonte de papel  
y un angelón amarillo  
Víctor Manuel,  
te envuelven en suave brillo.  
Víctor Manuel,  
con un ángel amarillo  
y un sinsonte de papel  
pinta envuelto en suave brillo.  
Un sinsonte de papel  
y un angelón amarillo:  
Yace envuelto en suave brillo  
Víctor Manuel.*

*Víctor Manuel  
pinta envuelto en suave brillo,  
entre un ángel amarillo  
y un sinsonte de papel.  
Con un ángel amarillo  
y un sinsonte de papel,  
pasa envuelto en suave brillo  
Víctor Manuel.*

**ENTRE UN ÁNGEL AMARILLO  
Y UN SINSONTE DE PAPEL  
YACE ENVUELTO EN SUAVE BRILLO  
VÍCTOR MANUEL.**

**AMELIA PELÁEZ**

*Amelia es como un mundo submarino.  
Amelia es como un mundo subterráneo.  
Amelia pasa en un gran soplo, y queda.  
Queda en un soplo vasto,  
la pintura girando.  
¡Ahí viene Amelia! Llega una manada  
de bruscos búfalos, de montes fragmentados. Flores  
terribles que se deshacen para hacerse de nuevo.  
¡Vamos al mar! Prepara tu escafandra más útil.  
Amelia es como un mundo de algas y de sal,  
la pintura girando.  
¡Vamos al bosque! Pide tus zapatos más gruesos.  
Hay capas de hojas muertas cubiertas por capas de  
hojas vivas.  
Amelia es como un mundo subpradera,  
Amelia es como un mundo subtormenta  
de árboles que se alcanzan y se embisten,  
la pintura girando.*

**PONCE**

*Grande como un gran pimienta,  
Fidelio Ponce tiene una gran nariz  
llena de punticos negros.  
Fidelio Ponce tiene un sombrero,  
grande como un gran paraguas,  
para engañar al sol.  
Fidelio Ponce es amigo de un gran pintor  
que se llama Fidelio Ponce  
desde que nació.  
Ponce tiene razón.  
Fidelio Ponce es un gran pintor.  
A veces:  
  ¿Qué será de Ponce,  
  qué será?*

*Y otras:  
Ha venido Ponce,  
volvió ya . . .  
Ausencias y regresos con música de son  
y todo bajo el techo de su sombrero.  
Como el Ariguanabo,  
Fidelio se sumerge y luego sale  
por donde menos se le espera.  
(Un sábado del siglo XVI,  
mientras lo buscaban en Camagüey,  
pasóse todo el día en Toledo  
viendo pintar al Greco, su maestro.  
Hizo bien.)*

Víctor Manuel García (Havana, 1897) attends San Alejandro in 1913 and is later nominated assistant professor of basic drawing. In 1924 exhibits for the first time at the Galería San Rafael. In 1925 travels for the first time to Europe where he studies classical painting, especially the Renaissance and Italian primitives, and gets in contact with modern painting starting with the post-impressionists. His style starts changing, leaving behind the academic teaching. In 1927 returns to Cuba where he participates in two important exhibits: in February, a one-man show; in May, New Art, which marks the beginning of modern art in Cuba. Since then he is considered as one of the most important regenerators of Cuban art, not only for his work, but also for his tireless excellence among the youths. In 1929 returns to Europe, travels in Spain and Belgium, resides in France. In Paris he paints the Tropical Gypsy which has become symbol of all painting. On his return to Cuba he is already master of an unmistakable style of his own expressed in two themes never abandoned since: feminine heads and Cuban landscapes. In 1935 he is awarded a prize in the National Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture; in 1937 collaborates in the Experimental Workshop of Free Study of Painting and Sculpture directed by Abela. In 1938 Tropical Gypsy obtains the prize of the II National Exhibit of Painting and Sculpture. In the Annual Salon of 1959 a retrospective show of his work is included as a homage. In 1964 he starts expressing himself in a new medium: lithography which he practices in the Experimental Workshop of Graphics of the 1st Plaza of the Cathedral.

Víctor Manuel died at Havana, the 1st of February of 1969.

**Eduardo Abela Villarreal**

Eduardo Abela Villarreal (San Antonio de los Baños, July 3, 1911) works as a tobacconist in the first years of his youth. In 1912 the Municipal Council of his home town grants him a scholarship to study at "San Alejandro." From those years date his contributions of local drawings to Havana magazines. In 1921 travels to Spain where he has several exhibits of great success and obtains the Gran Premio of the Magazine "Blanco Y Negro" (Black and White). In 1924 returns to Havana and the following year creates "El Bobo," (The Fool), a very popular satirical character. In 1927 forms part of the group of painters of the Avance Review and participates in the exhibit Arte Nuevo (New Art) which marks the beginning of modern art in Cuba. That same year travels to Paris and holds an important individual show at the Zak Gallery. Returns to Cuba in 1929 and, with his character "El Bobo" is part of the growing opposition to the dictatorship of Machado. A trip to Milan in 1934 puts him in contact with Italian primitives and Renaissance painters whom he studies. Again in Cuba in





Mirta Serra

1937 he creates the Experimental Workshop of Free Study of Painting and Sculpture. His painting "Guajiros" (Peasants) obtains first prize at the II National Exhibit of Painting and Sculpture, 1938. From 1942 to 1952 he is engaged in diplomatic charges in Mexico and Central America. His wife dies in 1949 and in 1950 he paints "El Caos" (Chaos), which breaks with his former work and gives way to his last expression, in constant ascension until his death. In 1952 returns to Paris on a diplomatic mission; paints and studies feverishly; knows the works of Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian and Picasso. Returns to Cuba in 1954. In the following years holds many shows including a retrospective at the Galería de La Habana in 1964. Dies at Havana on November 9 of 1965.

Eduardo González Puig (Cabañas, Pinar del Río, November 7, 1913) self-taught by training, starting painting and drawing in 1930. Doctor in psychology, has been working in this field since 1938, the year in which he participates in the execution of a mural at the Santa Clara School along with other painters as Abela, Portocarrero y Ravenet. Besides participating in many group shows in Cuba and abroad he has had more than 15 individual shows. González Puig has dissimilar painting periods and thematic cycles which reveal a vast wealth of creative labor in which predominates an insular landscape invaded by baroque flora and fauna. His series of suns, trees, islands, butterflies, cities, etc. are the visionary presence of our circumstance, over and above its physical reality.

### **Wifredo Lam**

Wifredo Lam (Sagua la Grande, December 8, 1902) is self-taught, although he started studies at the San Alejandro Academy and later in Spain with Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor, curator of the Prado Museum. In Spain he participates in the Civil War and, after living there for 14 years, moves to Paris, where he meets Picasso who perceives his great talent and introduces him to his friends and exhibits with him. In 1941, faced with the threat of war, he paints "La Jungla" (The Jungle) (1942-43), now in the Museum of Modern Art of New York, a painting that, at that moment, creates a scandal and that is considered by Lam as "the first plastic manifesto of the Third World." In 1952, at 50 years of age, after having lived 10 years in Cuba, decides to live in Paris. The retrospective shows and prizes continue to grow. Lam travels continuously between Europe and America and makes a home in Albisola Mare, Italy.

The symbiosis of Lam's work goes back to African fetishes, incorporating certain memories of his native Cuba. His work evolves from the strange baroque of overlaid elements to the gradual simplification of light and color, enriched by the



Servando Cabrera Moreno

### **Amelia Peláez del Casal**

practice of printmaking and ceramic, where he has kept his well known style which differentiates him from the most important creators of this century. His work has embodied, translated in shapes and colors, AfroCuban myths and landscapes, in a powerful synthesis of technical knowledge and creative imagination.

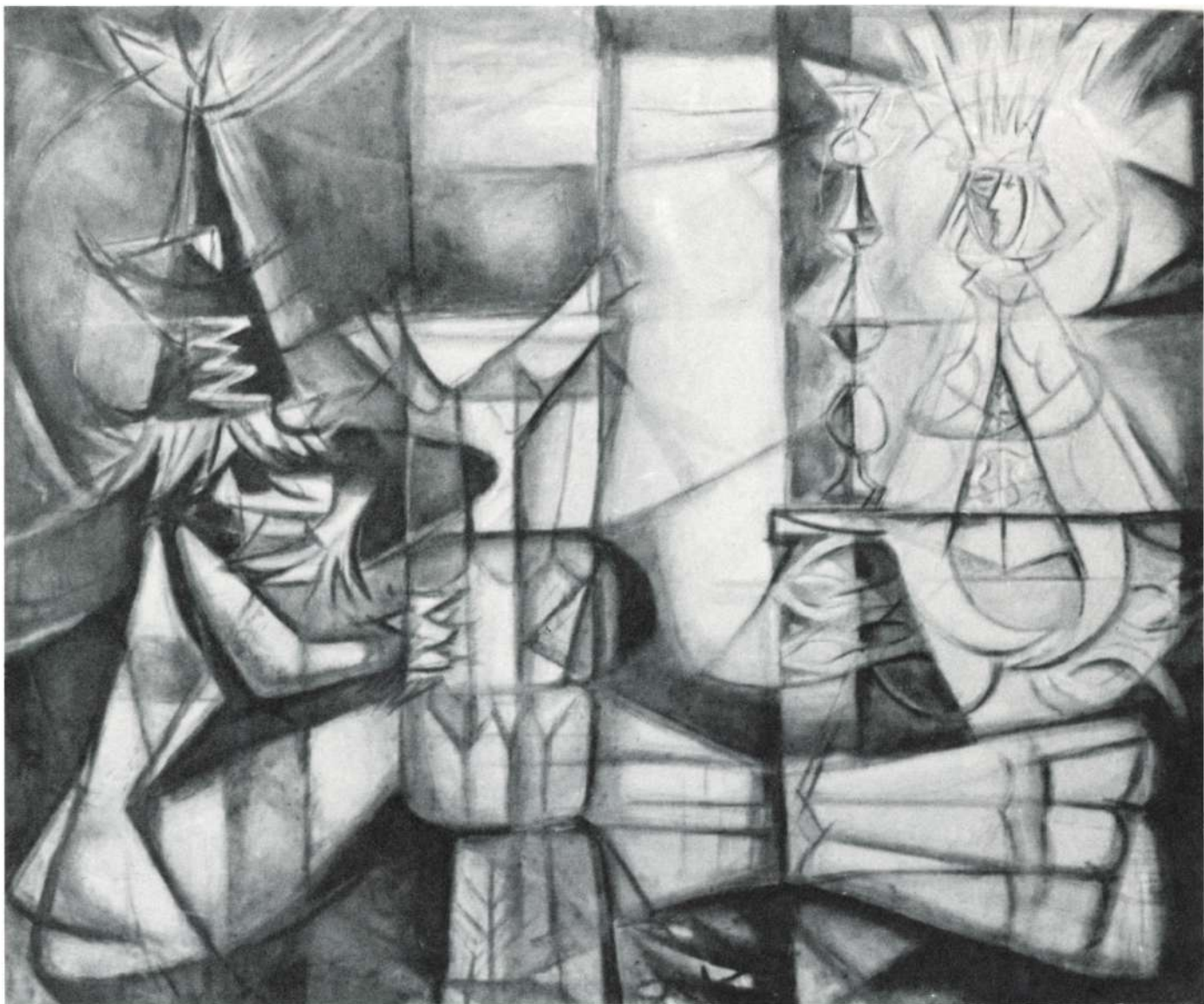
Amelia Peláez del Casal (Yaguajay, Las Villas, January 5, 1886—Havana, April 8, 1968) studies painting at the San Alejandro Academy and has her first individual show in 1924, the same year she enrolls in the Art Students' League of New York. Travels to Europe in 1927, visits several countries and settles in Paris, taking courses at the Grande Chaumiere, the National School of Fine Arts and the Louvre School. Also studies with the Russian painter Alexandra Ester. A show in the Zak Gallery, Paris, reveals her to the French critics that make praising comments of her work. There is already a predilection for what will be her constant theme: still life. Returns to Havana in 1935, resides at La Víbora and dedicates herself completely, until her death, to art. Besides her creative work she teaches drawing and painting. Illustrates books. Works in ceramics and executes several murals among which the ones, in ceramics, for the Ministry of Interior, Revolution Plaza, Hotel Habana Libre, "José Miguel Gómez" school and Normal de Santa Clara as well as a movable one for Caney Oriente. In 1968 Amelia Peláez received the Order "30 Years of Art Dedication."

### **Mirta Serra Herrera**

Mirta Serra Herrera (Bejucal, April 23, 1903) starts studies in 1928 at the San Alejandro School of Fine Arts, graduating in 1934. During this period she worked under the direction of Leopoldo Romañach. That same year she gets a scholarship and attends the Art Students' League of New York. She paints the streets of New York, strongly attracted since then by the architecture and takes an etching course with Professor Henry Stembert. On her return to Cuba she works in sculpture for several years and finally dedicates herself completely to painting.

Mirta Serra has always had a very particular imprint and a polished technical finish. Her oils are marked by a solid and well thought out composition of strong lines and precise areas. Her themes: campesinos and work, preferably, although, in general, it can be said that the most direct motivation of the artist is the social issue.

Mirta Serra has had about ten individual exhibits, two of which in New York, and one in Washington and has received quite a few awards among which a Gold Medal in 1941 for the sculpture "Plain Life" in the XXIII Salon; Gold Medal for the



Luis Martínez Pedro

### **Servando Cabrera Moreno**

painting "Collegians" in the XXXII Salon (1950) and the 1st National Prize for "Habana" in the VII National Salon of the Ministry of Education (1954).

Servando Cabrera Moreno (Havana, May 23, 1923) graduates from the San Alejandro Academy in 1942, exhibiting since then in the annual Salons and receiving several prizes. In 1946 takes a course in the Art Students' League of New York and later, in Paris, attends the Grande Chaumiere. At the advent of the Revolution he already has a vast formal experience and his style fits perfectly with the new reality. Servando Cabrera, tireless worker, exhibits many times, not only in Cuba but also internationally, receiving several prizes and awards as the First Mention, VIII International Prize in Drawing "Joan Miro" Barcelona, 1969). As a teacher of a new generation he has influenced, more than any other painter, the youth since the revolutionary advent.

His work has gone through different periods, although always marked by an exuberant and sensual language. His particular realism is based on scenes of traditional Creole flavor. Has had a period of abstraction, of floating shapes, a more baroque period and a more figurative stage, of revolutionary exaltation, as well as a clearly expressionistic painting.

Servando Cabrera, possibly the most travelled Cuban painter, owns a priceless collection of popular art.

### **Luis Martínez Pedro**

Luis Martínez Pedro (Havana, December 19, 1910) Self-taught. He left architectural studies to enroll in the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans, USA. Works as a commercial artist and at the same time produces a splendid series of mythological drawings which are exhibited in his first show at the Havana Lyceum (1943), but it isn't until 1951 that he will start painting regularly. In 1959 he starts developing the sea theme and the following year forms part of the group "10 Concrete Cuban Painters"; at the same time studies industrial design. Beside his important work as a painter, Martínez Pedro has approached ceramic, stage design, book illustrations. He has also done the drafting for the swimming pool of the Protocol Palace of Havana, two murals in the vocational School "Lenin," Havana, the pond of the Cuban embassy in Mexico, the mural for the "José Luis Tasende" club, etc.

After expressing himself in surrealism with a delicate and infinitely resourceful drawing, Martínez Pedro shows himself as a concrete painter with absolute mastery of his craft, which makes him one of the important painters of America. He has approached his great passion: the sea and recently has again taken up drawing to mold fluvial women to express fertility, love, the origin.



Fidelio Ponce de León

Fidelio Ponce de León (Alfredo Fuente y Lons, Camagüey, January 24, 1895) enters San Alejandro Academy, but his attendance is anarchic and he only takes exams on one occasion (basic drawing), abandoning definitively his studies in 1918. He was called "Murillo, the madman." He went as far as to say that he couldn't stand the discomfort produced by the imposition of reducing to normal proportion his figures that, unconsciously were demanding a tall and prolonged rhythm. To make a living he works as a commercial painter, school teacher, poor children drawing instructor. Resumes his artistic life and in 1935 his painting "Beatas" (The Holy Ones) is awarded a prize in the National Salon. His first show at the Lyceum is a great artistic event. The year 1937 is an active one in his life. Receives a prize in the Modern Art Salón of the Municipal Council of Havana. Executes a mural in the School "José Miguel Gómez," which he resolves with extreme plastic emotion, but which is later destroyed when the building is renovated. Exhibits in the Delphis Studio of New York and in 1936 is given a prize in the National Salon for his painting "Los Niños" (The Children). The Museum of Modern Art of New York then acquires his painting "Mujeres" (Women). Keeps on working until his last days, dying in Havana on the 19 of February of 1949.

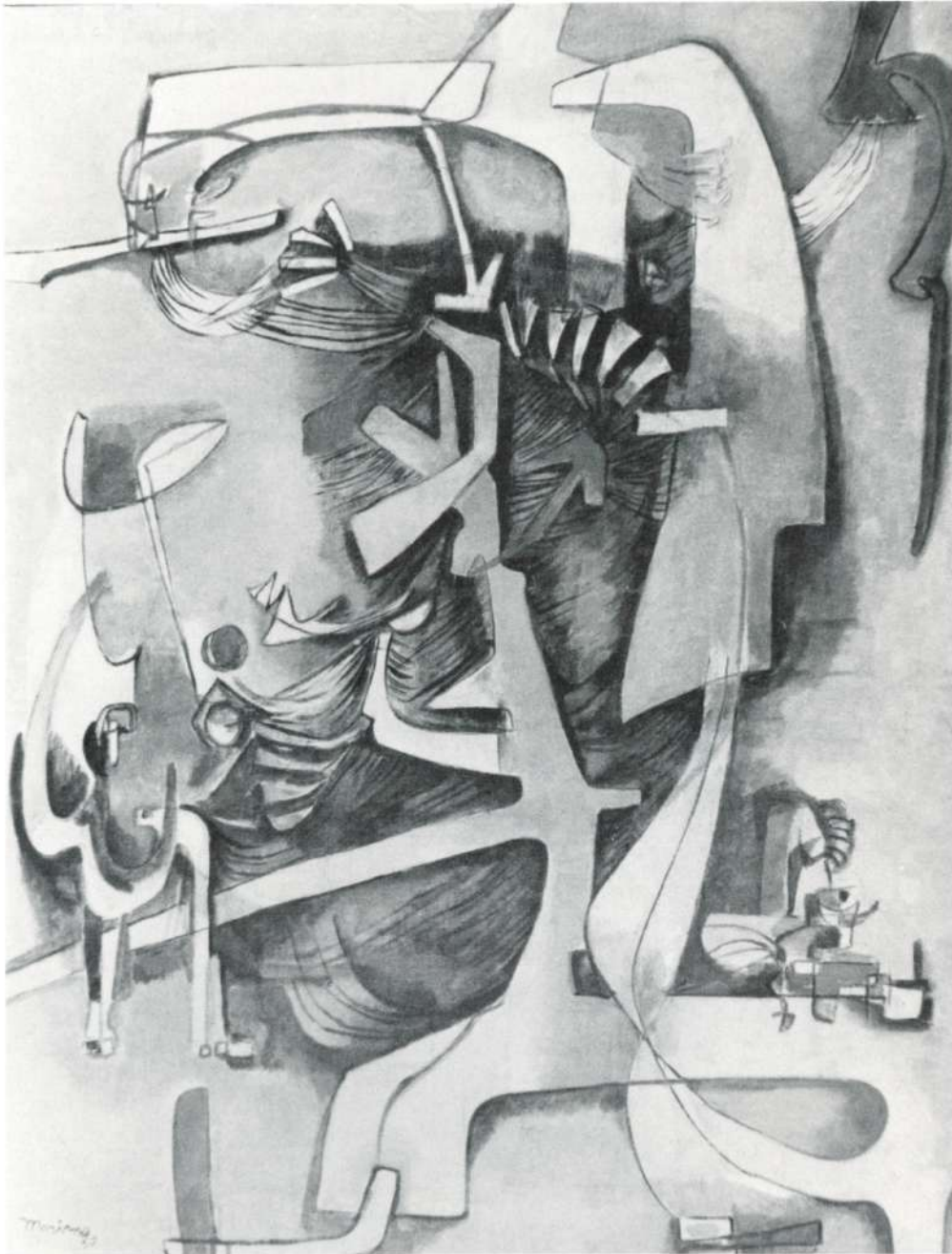
Fidelio Ponce, although sharing the rebelliousness of Abela, Víctor Manuel and Carlos Enríquez, possesses a strong personal trend in his themes and his use of color, specially white, at times blinding in his strokes.

### **Mariano Rodríguez Álvarez**

Mariano Rodríguez Álvarez (Havana, 1912) is self-taught by training, although, on a trip to Mexico, he assimilated the fundamental Mexican artistic contributions at Lozano's side. He starts painting and showing extensively from 1943. Has shown his work in more than 30 personal exhibits and innumerable group shows in Cuba as well as abroad; the most important of which being perhaps the retrospective at the National Museum of Havana as well as the show that groups the series of "Masas" (Masses) in the same Museum. He has done glass windows and murals—two of them in Mexico—and also ceramics and book illustrations.

His work is represented at the National Museum of Havana, at the Museum of Modern Art of New York, Museum of Modern Art of Mexico, Museum of Modern Art "La Tertulia" of Cali, Colombia as well as several galleries and private collections. At present Mariano Rodríguez is president P.S.R. of Casa de las Americas.





Mariano Rodríguez

24 **Carmelo González**

Carmelo González Iglesias (Havana, 1920) attends the Free Study for Painting and Sculpture and later the National School of Fine Arts of San Alejandro obtaining a scholarship which permits him to travel to the United States to study at the Art Students' League of New York. Has worked mainly as teacher of drawing and etching and has done murals, illustrations for books, posters, scenography and the dress design for the Ballet "Elegy to Jesús Menéndez."

Carmelo González is founder and president, for several terms, of the Printers Association of Cuba. For more than a decade has been president of the Department of Plastic Arts of UNEAC. Has been founding member of UNEAC and its National Committee and member of the board of directors of the Plastic Arts Department of the same institution. Has been awarded the National Order "Raúl Gómez García" as well as the Bulgarian Order "Cirilo and Metodio" second grade, and has also been nominated Corresponding Member of the Academy of Arts of the Democratic Republic of Germany.

Carmelo has had, besides many national and international shows, about 40 personal exhibits in Cuba and the exterior as well as some 50 prizes and awards.

His works are represented in several galleries and museums of many capitals of the world.

**Fayad Jamís**

Fayad Jamís (Palma Soriano, October 27, 1930) painter and poet, of Arab father and Mexican mother. Started his studies at "San Alejandro," but his economical situation of extreme poverty forced him to interrupt them. In 1954 travels to Paris where he leads a bohemian and hard life, making a living as a house painter while painting and writing. His first one-man show is sponsored (1956) by Andre Breton. With the advent of the Revolution he returns to Cuba and participates actively in the cultural movement as painter, poet, director of periodical literary publications and as professor of plastic arts. In 1968 he obtained the Painting Prize of the UNEAC Salón. Has had individual shows in Cuba, Poland, Algeria, and Mexico and has participated in innumerable collective shows in Cuba and in the exterior. His work is represented in the National Museum of Cuba and in many other collections. At the moment he holds the charge of Cultural Advisor in the Cuban Embassy of Mexico.

Jamís' first works reflect his search for an expression in the tradition of modern Cuban art, characterized by figurativism. He also tended to abstractionism, being part of the group Los Once. In the Paris years there is an evident graffiti expression in his abstract works. In more recent years he has introduced the theme of the Revolution in his painting through a treatment



Carmelo González

**Raul Milián**

of symbols and a repeated use of letters and text as elements of deeper meaning than the purely plastic.

Raul Milián (Havana, 1914) is a painter, draftsman, poet and philosopher. Discovered by Portocarrero, who is astonished to see his powerful usage of space, he dedicates himself to painting, especially to drawing, in a self-taught way. In 1955 he receives the Medal of Honor for the best group of works presented at the III Bienal de Sao Paulo, arduous reward, since to the merit of each individual work has to be added the impact of the work as a whole. In 1960 a stamp is printed with a reproduction of his painting "Flowers" from the collection of the National Museum. Milián has had about 20 individual shows and has participated in innumerable group shows in Cuba as well as in important institutions as the Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro, Museum of Modern Art of Sao Paulo and others.

Milián has also done book illustrations; to be noted the Cuban edition of "Kafka."

His work has always tended to abstraction and a light figurative expressionism. He works with inks, achieving mysterious calligraphic qualities. We can contemplate flowers, figures and horizons as thematic objects.

**José Angel Acosta León**

José Angel Acosta León, (Havana, August 2, 1932) studies and graduates from the San Alejandro School in painting and sculpture. Is awarded two prizes in shows at the Círculo de Bellas Artes (1958-59). One of his works wins a prize in the National Salon of 1959 and is acquired by the National Museum. Later, in 1960 the National Institute of Tourism awards him a prize in a poster contest. That same year his painting "Carriage" wins a prize in the II InterAmerican Biennial of Mexico.

Acosta León, of strong and complex personality, chooses, as means of expression, surrealism which, in his painting, adopts new and original shapes.

On December 5, 1964 this talented artist perishes tragically aboard the ship "Aracelio Iglesias" as he was returning to Cuba.

**Manuel Coucerio Prado**

Manuel Coucerio Prado (Havana, July 29, 1923-November 8, 1981) studied for a short time at the San Alejandro School so that it would be correct to say he was self-taught. Participated in shows since 1944 and had his first individual show in 1946 at the Sociedad Lyceum. In the 40's and 50's he participated in many cultural activities organized by the FEU. He also showed in those years at the Havana University and in the United



Raúl Milián

States. Founding member of the Havana Gallery and the show organized in protest of the Spanish American (Francoist) Biennial also known as the "One-sided front." In 1964 he had a personal show at the Havana Gallery; later worked as instructor in the workshop of plastic arts of the MINFAR. His last individual show was held at the Hotel Habana Libre Gallery in 1975. He was also, for several years, executive member in the Plastic Arts Section of the UNEAC (Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba).

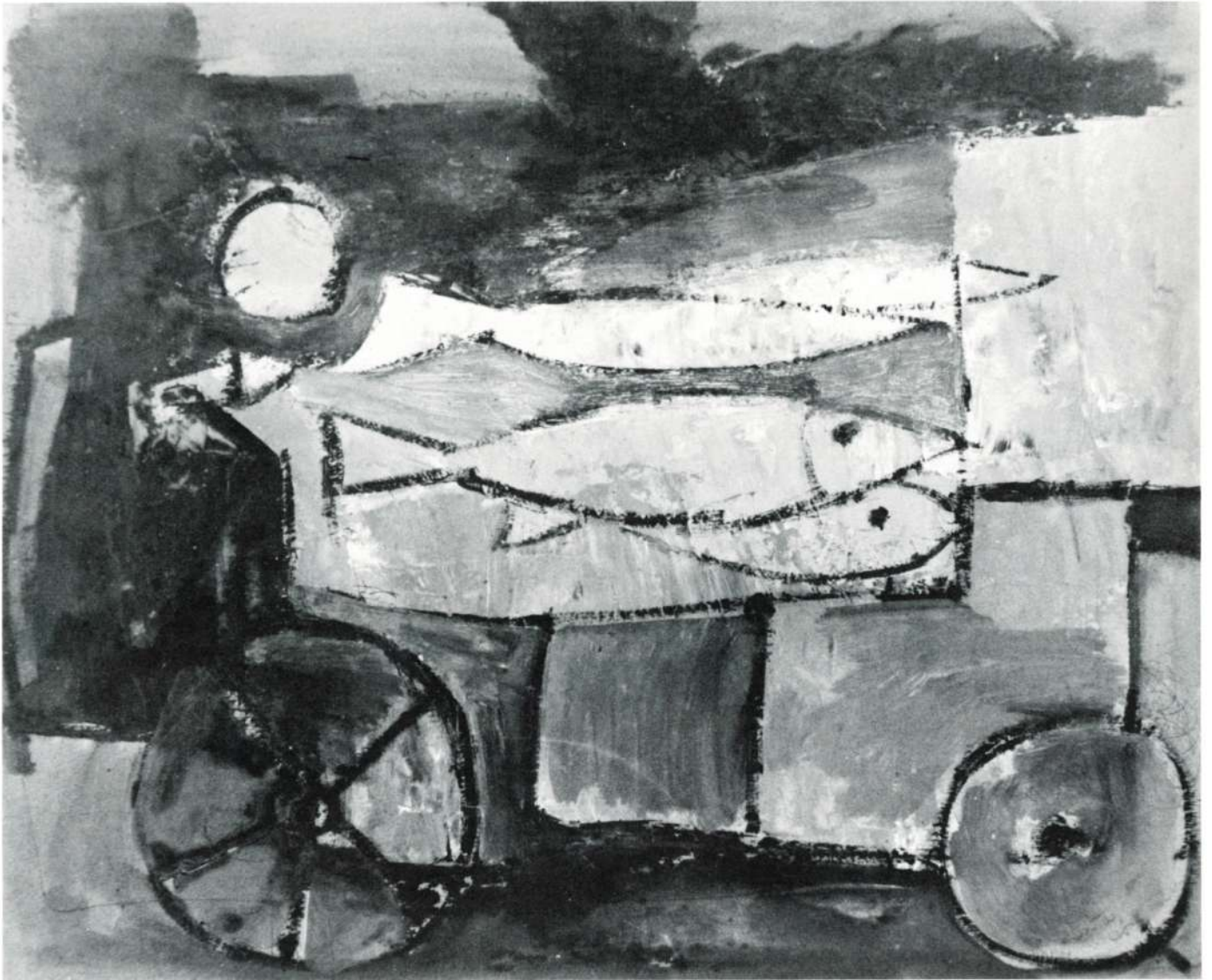
### **Antonia Eiríz**

Antonia Eiríz (Juanelo Dept., Havana, April 1, 1929) started her studies in the Fine Arts School "San Alejandro", graduating in drawing and painting in 1957. From 1959 starts participating in important group shows in Cuba and abroad. Received an Honorable Mention in the IV Sao Paulo Biennial (1961). In 1963 is awarded a prize in xilography by the Casa de las Américas. In 1964 holds her first individual show at the Havana Gallery and that same year starts teaching crafts at the School of Art Instructors. Has also been professor at the National School of Art of Cubanacán. Her paintings are represented in the Cuban Hall of the National Museum of Cuba.

Antonia Eiríz has accomplished outstanding endeavors in the department "Juanelo" where she was born and lives, teaching and directing her neighbors in handicraft works, especially those of papier mache.

### **Adelaida Herrera**

Adelaida Herrera Valdés (Havana, July 29, 1941) started painting in childhood, later enrolled in the San Alejandro Academy from which she graduated in 1960; later attended the National School of Art studying stage design and finishing her studies in 1969. A History graduate at the Havana University she starts working as a History professor, as well as Plastic Arts, at the "Carlos Marx" college. In 1965 holds her first individual show (painting, sculpture) at the National Direction of Scholarships. This show travels to several socialist countries. Since then she has several other individual shows and participates in many group shows as the "Antillean Group." In the School of Plastic Arts of Prague, Czechoslovakia, studied with professor Kadernowska perfecting her knowledge of scenography. Worked as scenographer with the Theater Group Escambray in the setting of "Escambray Mambi" and "3 Period Comedies." Also notable her scenography work for the tv program "Meanwhile" that has had favorable reviews. As a graphic designer Adelaida has been awarded prizes in the International Fair of Leipzig of 1970 and 1973.

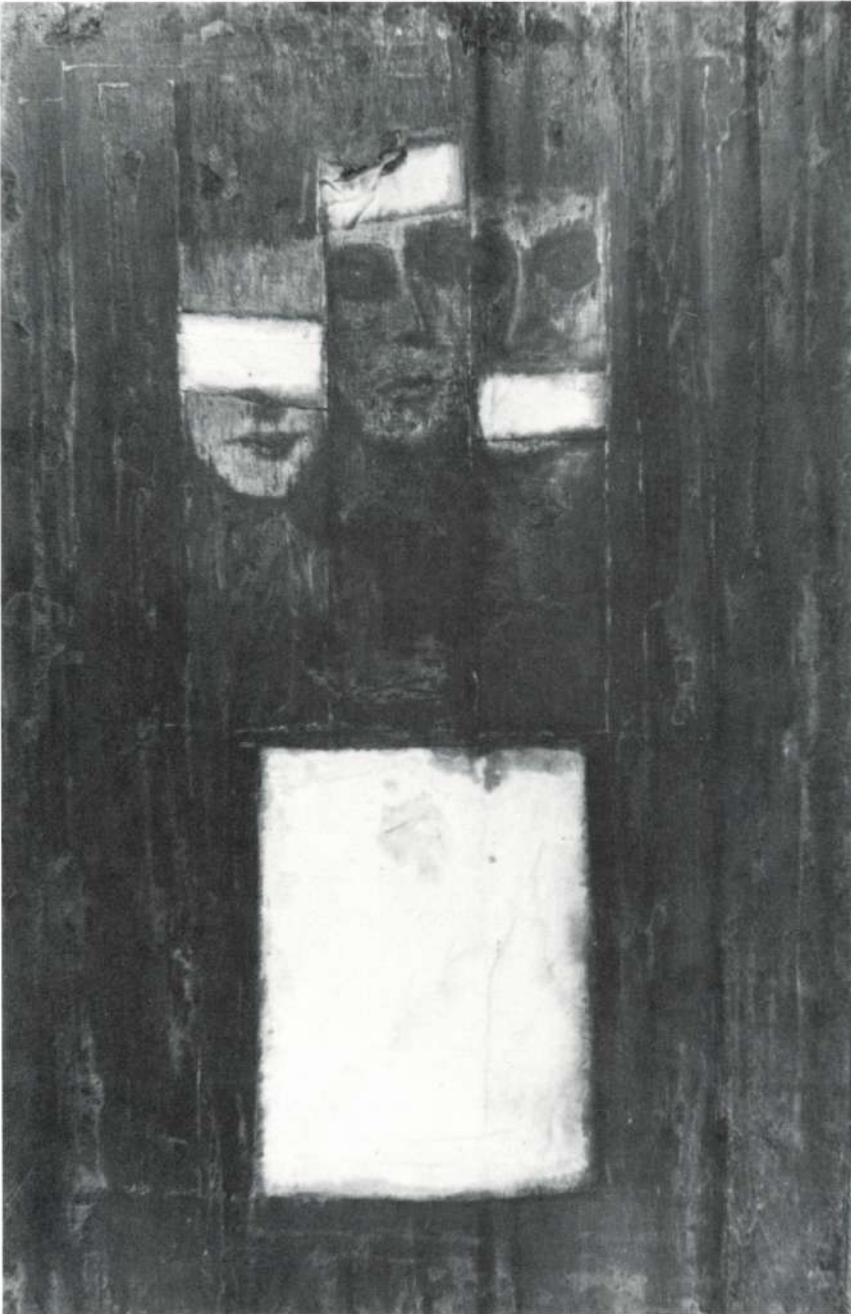


José A. Acosta León



Antonia Eiriz





Adelaide Herrera

René Portocarrero y Villiers (Havana, February 24, 1912) is self-taught, although he registered at the Villate y San Alejandro Academy. At 12 he participates, incognito, in the Fine Arts Salon of the APEC and innumerable are the exhibits in which he has participated. Obtains the "Sambra" prize in the VII Bienal de Sao Paulo (1963) for the best group of works shown in that event. His works are represented in museums and galleries of several countries as well as in private collections of great importance. Portocarrero, besides being a painter, is draftsman, printmaker, muralist poster maker, book illustrator, stage designer and ceramist. In his work we can observe that in a first stage he explores the possibilities of form expression with a brilliant and undulate color. Later there are other evolutionary stages and thematic series, among which the notable Color de Cuba (Cuba Color), Carnavales (Carnivals), and Floras as well as a very important period dedicated to abstract art. Among his most important works is the mural "Color de Cuba," at the Palace as well as the series "Mitología Imaginaria" (Imaginary Mythology), the pastels of the 40's, "Ciudades" (Cities) and Floras.

Portocarrero has filmed several documentaries, among them the one that carries his name (Portocarrero) and "Color de Cuba."



34 Excerpts From José Lezama Lima's "Homage to René Portocarrero"

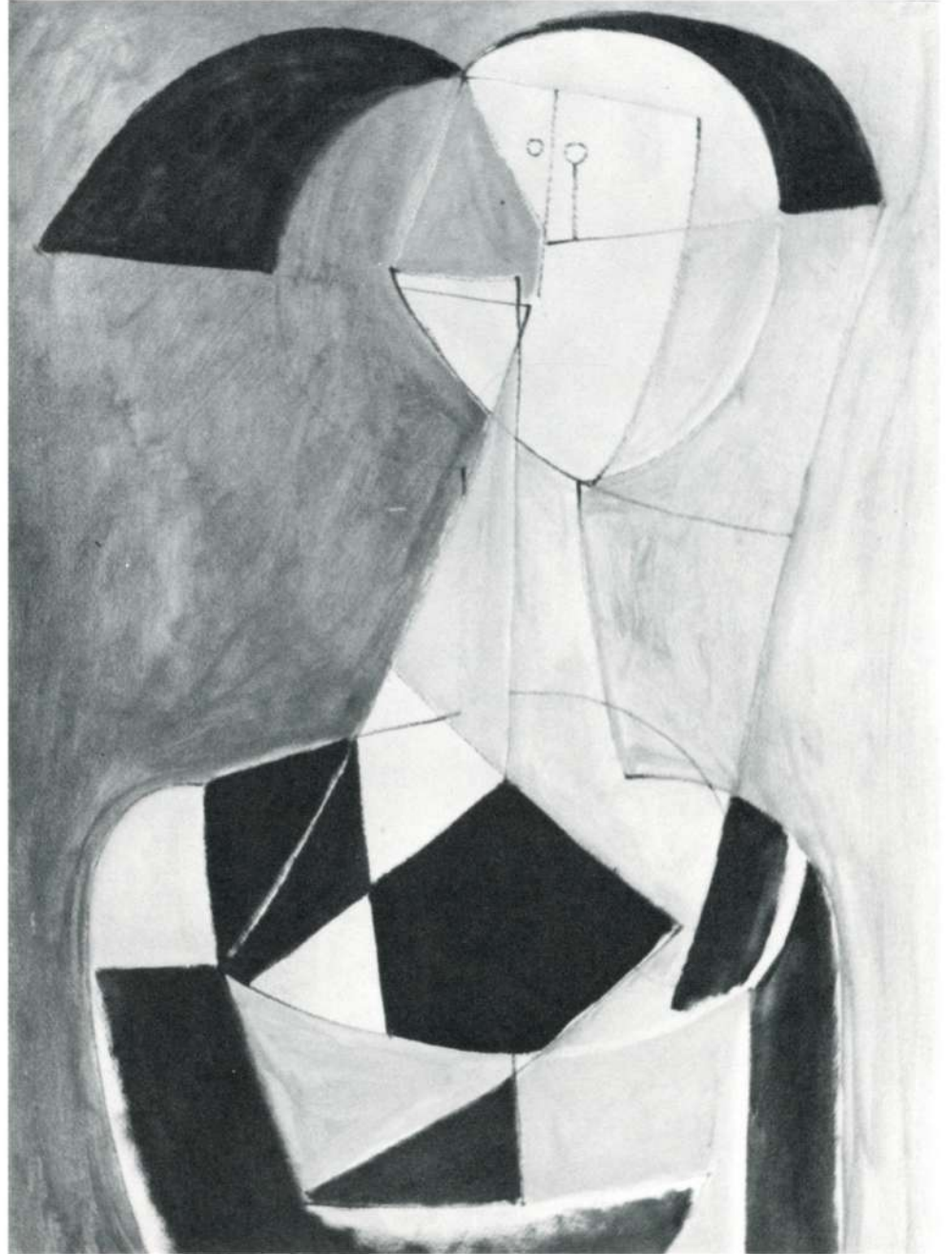
In the making of a work the dangers and the turns in movement exercise their disruptive action. The pausing and the quick start of an artist are surrounded by these adverse factors, these dark turmoils that are to be crossed and rejected at the same time. Any abruptness, without removing the adverse consignment, retards the encounters that a work propitiates and clarifies. Not the abruptness but the delicacy of the wait is the only instrument that marches parallel to the development of a figuration, of a destiny accomplished. We see now Portocarrero's body of work in which already exists the possibility of new adventures. And all has been said and done without pretensions of commodity nor presumptions of cosmopolitanism. Has been done and said with delicate and superb trembling. Trembling, as the old Chinese song goes, as if he were at the edge of a deep abyss, as if venturing on a thin layer of ice.

The lapse of time in Portocarrero makes use to a maximum of the time in which his body is forced to contemplate the temptation that perhaps will disappear forever. His trees and his flowers are based on these substitutions that create a continuity between the breath and the cosmological energy. The waiting has made possible the integration of the breathing of a person with the terrene emanation. For many seasons

*En el devenir de una obra los peligros y las devanadoras en acecho ejercitan su acción disociativa. La lentitud y el súbito puestos en marcha por un artista, están rodeados de esas vicisitudes adversas, de esos oscuros remolinos, que hay que penetrar y rechazar por igual. Cualquier brusquedad, sin alejar el adverso designio, demora los reencuentros que una obra propicia y aclara. No la brusquedad, sino la delicadeza de la espera es el único instrumento que marcha paralelo al devenir de una configuración, de un destino cumplido. Ahora vemos la obra de Portocarrero, en lo que ya está realizado y en la posibilidad de nuevas aventuras. Y todo ha sido dicho y hecho sin presunciones de comodidad ni cosmopolita vanagloria. Ha sido dicho y hecho con delicado y recio temblor. Temblorosamente, como dice la vieja canción china, como si estuviese ante un profundo abismo, como si se aventurase sobre una delgada capa de hielo.*

*El tiempo de espera en Portocarrero aprovecha al máximo el tiempo en que su cuerpo se obliga a mirar la incitación que tal vez desaparecerá para siempre. Tanto sus árboles como sus flores, están apoyadas en esas sustituciones, que forman un continuo entre el hálito y la energía cosmológica. La espera ha permitido esa integración, no su rescate, de la respiración de la persona con la emanación terrenal. Durante muchas*











Portocarrero painted trees of hyperbolic foundations. He was possessed by the spirit of delicacy of his angels of light but was feeling the shock of his descent at the break of the air column, swan of mercury.

The bursting of that trunk in the time of waiting would fix that same image as a perfected act, which, occupying the center of the composition would later extend itself all over the city. Since Portocarrero painted those trunks his painting acquired its natural tone, his living revelation. In the true road of the painter, the matter itself will give him the differentiation and growth. His pigments, his blue, his green were born from the roots, from the cortex, from the dimension given by the tree. In that botany of his own, with a clarity passed on by his ancestry, with a growing wave that would penetrate him to give him beforehand the measure of his possibilities, Portocarrero began gathering the shapes offered in the distance the gravitation of the visions holding the center of encounters between the vision and the look. The natural, result of a phenomenistic world, and the supernatural, world of symbols in process, were beginning to affect him with the veracity of an Eros of plastic knowledge. In that dimension we find his angel.

*estaciones, Portocarrero pintaba árboles de hiperbólica fundamentación. Había estado poseído por el espíritu de la delicadeza al deleitarse con sus ángeles en la luz, pero sentía el sobresalto de sus descensos al romperse la columna de aire, el cisne de mercurio.*

*La irrupción de ese tronco en el tiempo de espera fijaba la misma imagen como un hecho rendido, que ocupando el centro de la composición le serviría después para extenderse por toda la ciudad. Desde que Portocarrero pintó aquellos troncos su pintura adquirió su natural cauce, su revelación habitable. Era un verídico camino de pintor, la materia misma le entrega la diferenciación y el crecimiento. Sus tierras, su azul y su verde nacían del arraigo, de la corteza y de las dimensiones entregadas por el árbol.*

*Entre aquella botánica de propio arraigo, con un esclarecimiento comunicado por sus ancestros, con una crecedora marea que lo penetraba para darle por anticipado la medida de sus posibilidades, Portocarrero comenzó a recoger las formas ofrecidas en sus distancias, la gravitación de las figuraciones aparecidas al regir el centro del reencuentro de la visión con la mirada. La naturaleza, reto del mundo fenoménico, y la sobrenaturaleza, mundo de símbolos en devenir, empezaban a tocarlo con la voracidad de un Eros de*

The pictorial angel of Portocarrero is dictated by noon. Seems to point out that beauty is the best: the best, noon. In his drawing Primavera the angel is noted by its absence, but in the distance, in the spirit that sharpens the figures since the angel is a hidden divinity. His angel seems to hide, sit on trunks of hidden objects, or point with his index at the occult tenebrae. 39

*conocimiento plástico. En esa dimensión encontramos ya su ángel.*

*El ángel pictórico de Portocarrero está dictado por el mediodía. Parece recordar que lo bello es lo más justo, y lo más justo, el mediodía. En su dibujo Primavera, el ángel sólo repercute por su ausencia, pero en la lejanía, en el espíritu que agudiza las figuras, ya el ángel era una divinidad escondida. Su ángel parece esconder, sentarse sobre los baúles donde están los escondidos, o señalar con su índice el oculto tenebrario.*

**Excerpts from Gerardo Mosquera's "Young Artists"**

The introduction to the public of six new artists is a fact that should be celebrated as a feast. But when these youths are only in the twenties and present us with a work where research, imagination and sensitivity go hand in hand with a mastery of craft, we must then think of the exhibit that groups them as a preview of an extraordinary and surprising feat in the already powerful lines of the younger Cuban art.

Informalism and POP, two opposite tendencies of contemporary art, have completely "shook up," to use an expression that would have been to Juan Marinello's taste, these youths. There is in them an astonishment in front of the resources that such dissimilar currents, put in their hands. Because their interest is mainly in the language, and in the breach into new means of expression to such an extent that almost all of them have made use, shamelessly, of the gains of these and other recent movements.

Nevertheless, beyond the variety of means of expression, a general unifying theme for the whole show can be detected: the elaboration of daily and popular motifs. Since the early lithographs of tobacco, the first working tools of the Cuban Indians, references to a popular singer or the baroque lines of a

**Gerardo Mosquera "Artistas Jóvenes"**

*El nacimiento público de nueve artistas es un hecho que debía celebrarse como una fiesta. Pero cuando éstos están en los veinte años de edad promedio, y nos presentan una obra donde se unen la inquietud de búsqueda, la imaginación y la sensibilidad con el dominio del oficio, hay que pensar también en esta exposición que los reúne como el anuncio de un refuerzo extraordinario y sorprendente en las ya poderosas filas de la joven plástica cubana.*

*El informalismo y el pop, dos tendencias opuestas del arte contemporáneo, han jamaqueado—para usar una expresión del gusto de Juan Marinello—de lo lindo a estos jóvenes. Hay en ellos como un deslumbramiento ante los recursos que ambas corrientes, tan disímiles entre sí, ponen en sus manos. Porque su interés es sobre todo en cuanto al lenguaje, a la apertura en los agentes expresivos, al extremo que casi todos han venido aprovechándose indistintamente, y con la mayor "desfachatez," de las ganancias de éstos y otros movimientos recientes.*

*Sin embargo, por encima de la variedad de medios y expresiones, puede verse un tema general que da unidad a la muestra: la elaboración de motivos cotidianos y populares. A partir de litografías de tabaco, de los primeros instrumentos de*



Flávio Garciandía

42 corner of old Havana, each artist has emitted his vision of a fragment of reality. And in it and beyond its multiplicity another cohesive element can be discovered: a feeling of cheerfulness and affirmation of humanity that characterizes the painting done by our youth.

The works of RICARDO RODRIGUES BREY are situated in the near range of the later production of some European pop artist and also of Rauschenberg, one of our contemporaries that has awakened a more direct interest in our younger artists. Both this artist, in his role of creative bridge between information and POP, and the majority of Europeans are subjective, try to assemble a message, remove themselves from the impersonality of a formal North American POP art. But Brey, through his formal exquisiteness and his sharp compulsion of spaces goes further.

In his CARTAS, the tension between a supposedly aloof language and the charge of a delicate and nostalgic lyricism that he infuses, perhaps unwillingly, to all he touches, is resolved very much in favor of this last instance. The same happens in the series that seems to want to save the mystery of antique maps, of those unsure and chancy geographical papers, full of strange signs and of calligraphy of unknown and foretelling names.

*trabajo de los indios cubanos, la referencia a un cantante popular o las líneas barrocas de un guardacantón de La Habana Vieja, cada artista ha reflejado su visión de un fragmento de la realidad. Y en ellas, también por encima de su multiplicidad, se descubre otro elemento cohesivo: ese sentido de alegría y afirmación humana característico de la pintura que hacen nuestros jóvenes.*

*Las obras de RICARDO RODRÍGUEZ BREY están en una órbita cercana a la producción tardía de algunos pop europeos, y también de Rauschenberg, uno de los contemporáneos que mayor interés directo ha despertado en nuestros pintores más jóvenes. Tanto este artista, en su carácter de creador puente entre el informalismo y el pop, como la generalidad de los europeos, son subjetivos, procuran organizar un mensaje, se alejan de la impersonalidad propia del POP clásico norteamericano. Pero Brey, a través de su exquisitez formal y su aguda compulsión de espacios, va más allá.*

*En sus CARTAS, la tensión entre el lenguaje supuestamente distanciador y la carga de lirismo delicado y añorante que, quizás a su pesar, él traslada a todo lo que toca, se resuelve muy en favor de esta segunda instancia. Así ocurre también en esa serie donde parece querer salvar el misterio de los mapas antiguos, de aquellas cartas geográficas inseguras y azarosas,*

Just the opposite is RUBEN TORRES LLORCA, who, especially in his ticket—paintings, has wanted to remain presentational. He, as Indiana, makes use of letters and signs—in this case prints of records and tobacco—to build open pictures of immediate and stark proportion. Only that these works emit a youthful optimism and are crossed by a playful humor as if Ruben, wise and playful, would make a little fun of the whole world, starting with the same POP art. It is interesting the way in which the sobriety of his circular elements is moved by the rhomboidal format, also used by Brey to capture a dynamism in composition. In other instances Torres Llorca is also interested in conferring to objects a more structural meaning.

In HUMAN PRESENCE, a work that requires active participation from the public, GUSTAVO PEREZ MONZON uses movement the same way some kinetic followers have been inclined to do. We are referring to an attempt to approach a more direct reflection of real concrete instances, a greater interest of context, in an expression carrier of meanings, against strictly formal and mathematical researches that had prompted this tendency. Gustavo also explores the road of dissolution of informalism started by contemplative painting and informal spatiality that evolved from emotivity to geometry to ultimately reach the so-called chromatism in the

*llenas de extraños signos y de caligrafías con nombres desconocidos y presagiosos.*

*Todo lo contrario de RUBÉN TORRES LLORCA, que, sobre todo en sus cuadros-etiquetas, ha querido mantenerse bien presentacional. El, como Indiana, se aprovecha de los letreros y señales—en este caso impresos del disco y del tabaco—para construir cuadros abiertos, de proposición escueta e inmediata. Sólo que estas obras rezuman optimismo juvenil y se encuentran transidas por un humor choteador, como si Rubén, sagaz y travieso, quisiera burlarse un poco de todo el mundo, empezando por el POP mismo. Resulta interesante la manera en que la sobriedad de sus elementos circulares es compulsada por el formato rombooidal, usado también por Brey y para intentar un dinamismo en la composición. En otras ocasiones Torres Llorca se interesa también en relacionar objetos con un sentido más estructurado.*

*En PRESENCIA HUMANA, una obra que exige la participación activa del público, GUSTAVO PÉREZ MONZÓN usa el movimiento en un sentido al que se están inclinando últimamente algunos cultores del cinetismo. Nos referimos al intento de acercarse a un reflejo más directo de instancias reales concretas, a un mayor interés en el contenido, en la expresión portadora de significados, en contra de las*



Rubén Torres Llorca

44 new abstraction. He finds himself, then, from one side as well as the other, investigating the borderlines of the two great vertices—the rational and the emotional—of current abstraction. Gustavo uses volumetric COLLAGE and chromatic austerity far removed from the superficial decorativeness of many of those artists and acquires a personal expression full of suggestions and presented with great virtuosity.

The plastic doings of JOSE BEDIA—most of the time it is difficult to call it painting or drawing—have been dedicated to only one theme: the American Indian. But it is not to be thought that monotheme means monotony. The different ways has approached this matter of such little tradition among us, is proof of the freedom, the imagination, the ingenuity, the total lack of strains that characterize his position in toward creation. I remember, for instance, the use he made, so daring and natural at the same time, of COLLAGE, or his picture-boxes where authentic Indo-Cuban archeological pieces appear, with catalog number and all, and all made up the author. Works of this kind, enrolled in the poetic genre of similar to that of Dine and Jasper Johns, enjoy the originality given by the theme and its treatment through a playful childishness that, nonetheless, hides a notable technical mastery.

*búsquedas más estrictamente formales y matemáticamente abstractas que habían impulsado esta tendencia. Gustavo, además, explora ese camino de disolución del informalismo iniciado con la pintura contemplativa y el espacialismo informal, que evolucionó alejándose de lo emotivo para acercarse a la geometría, hasta llegar al llamado cromatismo\*\*, dentro de la nueva abstracción. Se encuentra, pues, tanto desde un ángulo como desde el otro, investigando en zonas limítrofes entre las dos grandes vertientes—racional y emotiva—de la abstracción actual. Gustavo usa el collage volumétrico y la austeridad cromática, muy ajenos al decorativismo superficial de muchos de aquellos artistas, y consigue una expresión propia, plena de sugerencias y servida con gran virtuosismo.*

*El quehacer plástico de JOSÉ BEDIA—la mayor parte de las veces cuesta trabajo llamarlo pintura o dibujo—ha estado dedicado a un tema único: el indio americano. Pero no se vaya a pensar que monotemática equivale a monotonía. Las diversas maneras en que a Bedia se le ha ocurrido acometer este asunto, de tradición tan escasa entre nosotros, es una muestra de la libertad, la imaginación, la ingenuidad y el total desembarazo que caracterizan su actitud hacia la creación. Recuerdo, por ejemplo, su empleo atrevido y a la vez tan*

*ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE. A soft and brilliant light. The greens of a beautiful bush. Zayda carelessly reclined on the grass, an out-of-focus blade in front of her face while she smiles happily with her slanted eyes . . . This image of fulfillment—that would have charmed Walt Whitman—reproduced in posters, newspapers and magazines, became perhaps the most popular picture of Cuban painting of Cuban art of the last times, was enough to give fame to FLAVIO GARCIANDIA, and became one of the best examples of how Cuban photorealism has had the peculiarity of translating a humanistic content, full of optimism and youthful vitality.*

But Flavio did not rest on this achievement. Besides the practice of photorealism (of note *Algunas veces in la Vibora*, 1976; *Nada personal-portrait of Antonia Eiriz*—1977; *Homage to Amelia Peláez*, 1978) new explorations came along removing him from that orthodox exercise. First, in 1977, a series on several popular Cuban singers, portraits (Lenin's had him win First Prize in the National Drawing Salon of that same year) and other ink drawings. In all of them photography presented effects, means or "removal" were used and, within a personal assimilation of the poetry of European POP—especially of the English Peter Blake, who will influence him therefrom—, a more structural message was furnished

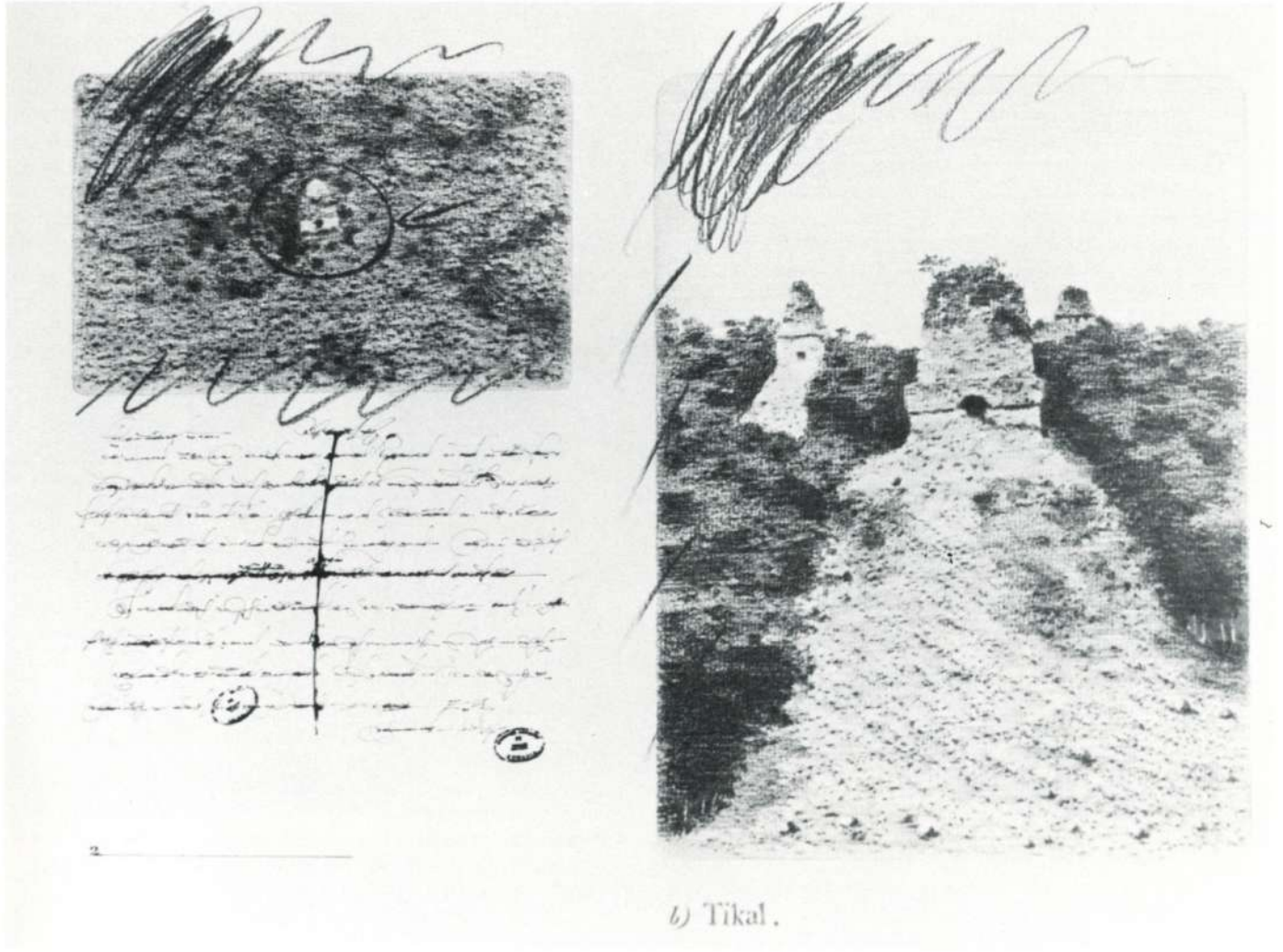
*natural del COLLAGE, evidencia de una concepción completamente anticonvencional del hecho estético, o sus cuadros-vitrina donde aparecen auténticas piezas arqueológicas indocubanas, con sus números de catalogación y todo, fabricadas por el autor. Obras de este tipo, inscritas dentro de una poética general próxima a los Dine y los Jasper Johns, disfrutan de la originalidad que les aporta el tema y su tratamiento mediante ese puerilismo juguetero que, sin embargo, esconde un notable dominio técnico.*

*TODO LO QUE USTED NECESITA ES AMOR. Una luz suave y brillante. Verdes de césped lindo. Zayda tirada despreocupadamente sobre la hierba, una brizna desenfocada delante del rostro, mientras ella sonríe feliz con sus ojos rasgados . . . Esta imagen de plenitud—que encantaría a Walt Whitman—reproducida en carteles, periódicos y revistas, se convirtió quizás en el cuadro más popular de la pintura cubana en los últimos tiempos, bastó para dar renombre a FLAVIO GARCIANDÍA, y resultó uno de los mejores ejemplos de como el fotorrealismo cubano ha tenido la peculiaridad de trasladar un contenido humanista, lleno de optimismo y vitalidad juvenil.*

*Pero Flavio no se estancó en estos logros. Junto con la práctica del fotorrealismo (se destacan ALGUNAS VECES EN LA*



Tomás Sánchez



José Bedia Valdés



through an open and indirect symbolism, that at times would touch some surrealist notes. This fast evolution was very natural if we observe that Flavio, even in his photorealistic pictures of an apparently mainly formal appearance, is a painter, we can say, "of content," an artist always trying to express ideas; with the problem that his expression is frequently very complex, intellectual and crossed by cultural elaborations.

The prize Joan Miró for TOMÁS SÁNCHEZ was a sudden international acknowledgment of one of the representative talents of the young Cuban plastic art. Among the artists shaped by the new condition of the Revolution almost always through the system of art schools, some of the most original personalities of our plastic arts have emerged. But the important thing is that it is not a matter of exceptional cases but a general movement that is varied rich, dynamic and of good technical training.

Anteriorly I have referred to the surprising fact that an unknown in the field of drawing could win the famous Miró Prize. And with nothing less than a naturalistic panorama of Cuban landscape! To appear with a small landscape of hills and palm trees in an environment of avant-garde where have

*VÍBORA, 1976; NADA PERSONAL—retrato de Antonia Eiriz—, 1977; HOMENAJE A AMELIA PALÁEZ, 1978), nuevas exploraciones se abrieron paso para ir alejándolo de aquel ejercicio ortodoxo. Primero, en 1977, fue una serie sobre varios cantantes populares cubanos, retratos (el de Lenin le valió el primer premio en el Salón Nacional de Dibujo celebrado ese año) y otros dibujos en tinta. En todos ellos la foto presentaba efectos, se empleaban recursos de "distanciamiento" y, dentro de una personal asimilación de la poética del POP europeo—en especial del inglés Peter Blake, quien continuará influyéndolo de aquí en adelante—, se procuraba un mensaje más estructurado, a través de un simbolismo muy abierto e indirecto, que en ocasiones tocaba alguna suave nota surrealista. Esta pronta evolución era muy natural si observamos que Flavio, hasta en sus cuadros fotorrealistas de búsqueda preponderantemente formal en apariencia, es un pintor, pudiéramos decir, "contenidista", un artista que busca siempre expresar ideas; con el agravante de que su expresión es con frecuencia muy compleja, intelectual y transida de elaboraciones de cultura.*

*El Premio Joan Miró para TOMÁS SÁNCHEZ fue un súbito reconocimiento internacional a uno de los talentos representativos de la joven plástica cubana. Entre estos artistas*

prevailed graphism, distancing, conceptual will, was already a daring and even more so if we consider the refusal by current plastic arts of cultivating any orthodox genre. For this Tomás' prize astonishes and, above all, spurs to reflection.

*formados en las nuevas condiciones de la Revolución casi siempre a través del sistema de las escuelas de arte, se han destacado algunas de las personalidades más originales de nuestra plástica. Pero lo importante es que no se trata de casos de excepción, sino de un movimiento general variado rico, dinámico y con buena formación técnica.*

*Con anterioridad me he referido al hecho sorprendente de que un desconocido en el campo del dibujo haya obtenido el renombrado Premio Miró. ¡Y nada menos que con un panorama naturalista de la campiña cubana! Aparecerse con un paisajito de lomeríos y palmas reales en un medio de avanzada donde se han impuesto el grafismo, el distanciamiento y la voluntad conceptual, era ya una osadía, más aún si tenemos en cuenta el rechazo de la plástica actual al cultivo ortodoxo de los géneros. Por eso el premio de Tomás asombra y, sobre todo, mueve a la reflexión.*

- 48 **Víctor Manuel García**  
 1. Mujer con sombrero, 1956  
*oil on canvas*  
 2. Gitana  
*oil on canvas*
- Eduardo Abela**  
 3. La gallina  
*oil on wood*
- Eduardo González Puig**  
 4. Isla con soles  
*oil on canvas*  
 5. Niños jugando  
*tempera on board*
- Wifredo Lam**  
 6. Composición, 1959  
*oil on canvas*  
 7. Retrato de una Señorita,  
 1924 *oil on canvas*
- Amelia Peláez del Casal**  
 8. untitled 1958  
*gouache on paper*  
 9. untitled, 1966  
*gouache on paper*
- Mirta Serra**  
 10. Acompañamiento  
*oil on canvas*  
 11. Guajirito, 1978  
*oil on canvas*  
 12. Paisaje 49, 1964  
*oil on canvas*
- Servando Cabrera Moreno**  
 13. Te acompaño  
*oil on canvas*  
 14. Una deliciosa atención  
*ink on board*  
 15. Festejo, 1981  
*ink on board*
- Luis Martínez Pedro**  
 16. untitled, 1949  
*oil on canvas*
- Fidelio Ponce de León**  
 17. untitled  
*drawing on paper*
18. untitled  
*oil on canvas*
- Mariano Rodríguez**  
 19. Abstracción, 1957  
*oil on canvas*  
 20. Misa negra, 1957  
*oil on canvas*  
 21. Retrato de Yemeyá  
*oil on carton*
- Carmelo González**  
 22. Seis sillas, 1956  
*oil on canvas*  
 23. Silla, 1956  
*oil on canvas*
- Fayad Jamís**  
 24. untitled, 1954  
*mixed media*
- Raúl Milián**  
 25. No. 62  
*ink on paper*  
 26. No. 63  
*ink on paper*  
 27. No. 64  
*ink on paper*  
 28. No. 66  
*ink on paper*
- José A. Acosta León**  
 29. untitled  
*oil on canvas*
- Manuel Coceiro**  
 30. La bailarina  
*oil on canvas*
- Antonia Eiriz**  
 31. Retrato de Lola  
*ink on paper*  
 32. No. 1  
*ink on paper*
- Adelaide Herrera**  
 33. Puesta del sol  
*mixed media*  
 34. Por Chile  
*mixed media on wood*
- René Portocarrero**  
 35. Flora no. 12, 1966  
*oil on canvas*  
 36. Flora no. 18, 1966  
*oil on canvas*  
 37. Flora no. 11, 1966  
*oil on canvas*  
 38. Flora no. 24, 1966  
*oil on canvas*  
 39. Flora no. 1, 1966  
*oil on canvas*  
 40. untitled, 1948  
*mixed media*  
 41. untitled, 1948  
*tempera on board*  
 42. Saltinbanqui, 1965  
*oil on canvas*  
 43. Paisaje, 1944  
*oil on board*  
 44. Arlequín, 1950  
*oil on canvas*  
 45. Mujer ornamentada  
*watercolor on board*  
 46. Figura de carnaval  
*oil on canvas*  
 47. Diablito, 1962  
*oil on canvas*  
 48. untitled, 1947  
*pastel on buff paper*  
 49. untitled, 1953 *gouache*  
*with pen and ink on board*  
 50. Rostro en carmelita  
*oil on canvas*  
 51. Carnaval, 1978  
*silk screen*  
 52. Carnaval, 1980  
*silk screen*  
 53. Flora, 1968  
*mixed media on paper*
- Flavio Garciandía**  
 54. Géminis  
*acrylic on canvas*
- Ricardo Rodríguez Brey**  
 55. 5 drawings from the series  
 "El origen de las especies"  
*drawings on paper*
- Rubén Torres Llorca**  
 56. Cine del hogar  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 57. Ceremonia I  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 58. Verano del 67  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 59. Verano del 65  
*mixed media, drawing*
- Gustavo Pérez Monzón**  
 60. untitled  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 61. untitled  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 62. untitled  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 63. untitled  
*mixed media, drawing*  
 64. untitled  
*mixed media, drawing*
- Tomás Sánchez**  
 65. Camino para una ave  
*mixed media on board*  
 66. De la orilla al anochecer  
*mixed media on board*  
 67. Palmar amenazando al  
 pensador del charco  
*mixed media on board*  
 68. Paisaje para una vaca  
*mixed media on board*
- José Bedia Valdés**  
 69. Tikal  
*drawing on paper*  
 70. Macchu Picchu  
*drawing on paper*  
 71. Excavación  
*drawing on paper*  
 72. 21 Piedras  
*drawing on paper*  
 73. Xingu  
*drawing on paper*  
 74. Recordatorio  
*drawing on paper*

**Design:** David Hausman  
**Translation:** Vita Giorgi  
**Photography:** Walter Valenzuela  
**Typesetting:** Gerard Associates  
**Printing:** Kenner Printing Co. Inc.

**THE SIGNS GALLERY**

Contemporary Latin American Art  
37 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019  
212/752-0273