

I PAINT MY REALITY

Surrealism in Latin America

Through Spring 2021

The avant-garde Surrealist movement emerged in France in the wake of World War I and spread globally as artists and art works traveled, and ideas circulated through art journals and mass media. Dreams, psychoanalysis, automatism (creating without conscious thought), collage, assemblage and chance were among the methods the Surrealists used to tap into the unconscious mind and stimulate the imagination. The European Surrealists embraced their Latin American colleagues, who nevertheless expressed ambivalence about the movement. Mexican artist Frida Kahlo famously refuted being labeled as a Surrealist, stating that she never painted dreams, instead asserting, “I painted my own reality,” while Uruguayan Joaquin Torres-Garcia advocated for a modern art that was not beholden to European modern art. Latin America’s complex history, magical landscapes, indigenous cultures, archeological sites, mythologies, migrations, and European and African religious traditions shaped these artists’ reality.

The rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s as well as the Spanish Civil War and World War II shifted the focus of Surrealism to the United States and Latin America, where many of the European artists sought refuge. These artists’ proximity to each other promoted friendships that were especially fruitful during this period and in the post-war years. While many of the exiled European artists who lived in the United States during the war returned home afterwards, those in Latin America and in Mexico in particular, tended to remain there for the rest of their lives.

This exhibition is drawn exclusively from NSU Art Museum’s Latin American collection, including promised gifts from Fort Lauderdale collectors Stanley and Pearl Goodman. The depth of the museum’s substantial collection of contemporary Latin American art and art by South Florida artists makes it possible to follow the influence of Surrealism through today.

Among the exhibition highlights is Leonora Carrington’s *Artes 110*, c. 1942, painted after the British-born artist arrived in Mexico after fleeing Nazi-occupied France, where she had been living with her lover, Surrealist Max Ernst. Titled after the address of where she first lived in Mexico City, the painting represents the artist as a spirited young woman flying away from the crumbling old world towards a new land. Carrington is just one of several women artists in the exhibition who actively contributed to the Surrealist movement in Latin America. Others include photographer Kati Horna, Frida Kahlo, Amelia Peláez, Alice Rahon, Bridget Bate Tichenor, and Remedios Varo, to name a few.

The exhibition also focuses on the catalytic role artists such as Roberto Matta played by connecting the European artists with those based in the United States and Latin America. In addition, it explores how Frida Kahlo, Wifredo Lam, Ana Mendieta, and Xul Solar, among others, drew on ancient symbols and myths as well as indigenous cultures for their distinct imagery. Latin American Surrealism has had a significant impact on contemporary artists in South Florida, such as Luis Gispert’s photograph of a mysterious tower constructed of boom boxes that inexplicably occupies a domestic interior, Pablo Cano’s distinctive marionette assemblages, and Jorge Pantoja’s works that are drawn from Stanley Kubrick’s psychological thriller, *The Shining*.

This exhibition was curated by Bonnie Clearwater, Director and Chief Curator, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.



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I PAINT MY REALITY: SURREALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Leonora Carrington (b. 1917, Lancashire, England; d. 2011, Mexico City, Mexico)

Artes 110 (Arts 110), c. 1942

Oil on canvas

16 x 24 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Leonora Carrington is a leading figure of the Surrealist movement. She first met and saw the work of Max Ernst at an exhibition in London (1936), a pioneer of the Surrealist movement whose exploration of dimensions of the unconscious and unknown paralleled Carrington's artistic sensibilities. The couple lived together in Paris (1937) and the South of France (1938). Ernst's modernist work was declared "degenerate" by the Nazis, and he was arrested and briefly imprisoned (1939) and imprisoned again (1940).

Carrington suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized in Madrid, Spain. Subsequently, she fled war-torn Europe by marrying Mexican diplomat Renato Leduc (1941) in Lisbon and traveled to New York. In 1942, the couple moved to Mexico, where she connected with the art community.

The title *Artes 110* is derived from the street address of her first house in Mexico City. Its dominating female figure is a self-portrait. The figure is topped with a horse form, the symbol of Carrington's alter ego. She flies from the crumbling Old World supported on the back of a rodent towards her new life where a red womb-like gown awaits her.

Kati Horna (b. 1912, Budapest, Hungary; d. 2000, Mexico City, Mexico)

Sin título, de la serie Oda a la Necrofilia (Untitled, from the series Ode to Necrophilia), 1962

Gelatin silver print

15 3/8 x 14 1/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Photographer Kati Horna lived in Berlin and Paris before seeking refuge in Mexico (1939) from the ravages of World War II. As a teenager she met and remained close to photographer Robert Capa. Before she moved to Mexico (1939), she distinguished herself with her Spanish Civil War photographs. In Mexico, Horna became friends with other European Surrealists, such as Remedios Varo and Leonora Carrington. The highly personal work Horna produced in Mexico addresses a provocative, disquieting subject, as in her *Ode to Necrophilia*, which is from a series of photographs on the subject, six of which were published in *S.nob*, the short-lived, Mexican avant-garde literary periodical of the post-World War II period.

In this work, a shrouded female figure (Leonora Carrington was the model) casts an eerie shadow on the wall behind her, as she stands adjacent to an empty bed adorned by a death mask. Horna thus juxtaposes unrelated enigmatic, arousing forms that derive from her Surrealist sensibilities and experiences of World War II, the Holocaust and the Spanish American War. This series of disturbing dreamlike images of desire and loss relates them to Mexico's Day of the Dead celebration that takes place annually from October 31 to November 2, days marked by prayers and rituals, such as fasting in remembrance of the first anniversary of the dead.

Frida Kahlo (b. 1907, Mexico City, Mexico; d. 1954, Mexico City, Mexico)
Self-portrait on Diary Page (Autoretrato en una pagina de cuaderno), 1945

Watercolor, crayon, pen, and ink on paper

9 x 5 ¾ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Frida Kahlo was a self-taught artist who suffered with polio as a child and at 18 was the victim of a devastating traffic accident (1925) that caused severe injuries and from which she never fully recovered. She began painting while convalescing (1929) and, at 22 years of age, married renowned Mexican Muralist painter, Diego Rivera. They divorced (1939) and remarried (1940). Although recognized as a painter in her lifetime, Kahlo's reputation soared beginning in the 1970s in the wake of the Feminist and Multiculturalist movements. She derived her imagery from her imagination and personal experience, making herself and personal events the subject of her work. Yet, in many of her self-portraits, she defined herself as a strong, authoritative Mexican woman in customary dress, who stares directly at the viewer.

The work on view here is a self-portrait drawn in her diary. Despite having experimented with Surrealist techniques as early as 1932 and her inclusion in Surrealist exhibitions in Europe, New York, and Mexico, Kahlo refuted being labeled a Surrealist, stating that she never painted dreams, rather "I painted my reality."

José Clemente Orozco (b. 1883, Ciudad Guzmán, Mexico; d. 1949, Mexico City, Mexico)
Figuras grotescas (Grotesque Figures), 1945

Oil and tempera on canvas

19 ½ x 14 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

José Clemente Orozco is best known as a Mexican muralist artist, along with Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Rufino Tamayo. His murals, however, depict universal themes rather than the contemporary political struggles that populated the narrative paintings of his colleagues. He moved to the United States (late 1910s), completing mural commissions in California and New Hampshire before returning to Mexico City to live and work (1920).

Figuras grotescas (Grotesque Figures) depicts massive, heavily outlined abstracted, but recognizable human figures that seem lifted from his large mural paintings. A blocky figure steps forward from swirling waters stepping onto the chest of a dead body while carrying another figure, seemingly saving him from the same fate.

Remedios Varo (b. 1908, Anglès, Spain; d. 1963, Mexico City, Mexico)
El minotauro (The Minotaur), 1959

Oil on Masonite

24 x 12 3/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Remedios Varo studied art in Madrid before moving to Paris (1930s), where she befriended and was influenced by the Surrealist artists there. Her work was exhibited at the International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris and Amsterdam (1938). Varo, along with other avant-grade artists, fled Europe during World War II and settled in Mexico (1941), where she became close friends with Surrealist painter Leonora Carrington.

Varo's painting depicts the dreamlike world of the Greek mythological creature, the Minotaur, a monster born of the union between the queen of Crete and the bull she loved. Instead of killing this hybrid beast, the queen housed her offspring in an enormous labyrinth whose complexities prevented its escape. This human and animal creature so fascinated Pablo Picasso, that he identified it as his alter ego in his work. Varo's Minotaur, however, is a thin, elegant female form, who suggestively holds a key, implying she has found an escape from her confinement, and the promise of a new life.

Bridget Bate Tichenor (b. 1917, Paris, France; d. 1990, Mexico City, Mexico)

Subsolares no. 17 (Subsolars No. 17), 1977

Oil and tempera on canvas

19 7/8 x 19 3/4 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Bridget Bate Tichenor attended schools in France, Italy, and England, living in the homes of her mother's aristocratic relatives. She was mentored in drawing and painting by Italian Surrealist Giorgio di Chirico, when living in Italy, and was later influenced by her mother's friend the Argentinian painter Leanor Fini, a close friend of Leonora Carrington. Tichenor lived in New York (1945-1953), working as a fashion editor at *Vogue* magazine.

Tichenor's international background and exposure to world cultures and religions were important influences on her work, and especially the paintings she produced in Mexico when she first visited there (late 1940s). In New York, American painter Paul Cadmus had acquainted her with the medium of tempera (pigments mixed with a water-soluble binder medium, such as egg yolk), and she subsequently worked on Masonite covered with gesso. She layered transparent oil glazes on the gesso surface, often applying it with a sable brush made of a single hair, so as to produce a jewel-like finish.

Tichenor moved to Mexico (late 1940s and early 1950s). She participated in the First Salon of Women's Art at the Galerías Excelsior, Mexico City (1958), together with European Surrealist painters such as Leonora Carrington, Alice Rahon, Remedios Varo, among others. She was interested in depicting enigmatic supernatural worlds, but like Frida Kahlo, she resisted being identified as a Surrealist, considering her work a realization of her interests in the spiritual and the alchemy of "magic." In *Subsolares no. 17 (Subsolars No. 17)*, she includes an enigmatic, masked witch and bat-like figures, and eggs gathered around a boiling caldron in a cave-like space through which we see a circle of blue sky. One of the winged, red, masked figures reads from a book to direct the preparation of the brew.

ARTISTS AND IDEAS TRAVEL

Rufino Tamayo (b. 1899, Oaxaca de Juarez, Mexico; d. 1991, Mexico City, Mexico)

El fantasma (The Ghost), 1953

Oil on canvas

39 ½ x 31 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Rufino Tamayo attended the National School of Art, San Carlos, Mexico City (1917), where he became acquainted with European modern art and was influenced by Fauvist and Cubist painting. Tamayo was a Mexican muralist, who along with Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, was commissioned by the government in the 1920s to create murals for public buildings as a means of unifying the country after the Mexican Revolution. These painters revived the indigenous art of fresco painting (pigment applied to wet plaster), creating scenes of political and social content that acquainted the public with Mexico's rich and diverse history.

Tamayo, however, did not identify with the often personal social and political agendas of his fellow Mexican muralists. Rather, he aimed to convey his interest in science and the history of human progress in his work. Feeling that he could not express himself freely in Mexico, he moved to New York (1926). He returned to Mexico (1929) and during subsequent decades lived in New York and Paris, where he came to know and greatly admired works by Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse and the works of the Surrealists. The enigmatic, floating forms in his *El fantasma (The Ghost)*, reveal his keen interest in dreamlike, imaginative works derived from the unconscious, as seen in the works of Surrealist artists in the exhibition, such as Leonora Carrington, Roberto Matta, Carlos Mérida, Wolfgang Paalen, Alice Rahon, and Remedios Varo.

Carlos Mérida (b. 1891, Guatemala City, Guatemala; d. 1984, Mexico City, Mexico)

Fecundidad (Fertility), 1944

Oil on canvas

32 ¼ x 26 7/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Carlos Mérida received his initial art training in Guatemala. When he was 17, he moved to Paris (1908) and traveled throughout Europe. In Paris, he was influenced by the work of modern artists Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani, and Piet Mondrian, as well as Mexican modernist artists who were then working there, such as Diego Rivera and Ángel Zárraga. After returning to Guatemala (1914), he committed himself to forging a style authentic to his homeland; he also authored articles for *Mexican Folkways* on Mexican popular art. After moving to Mexico (1919), he assisted Diego Rivera (1922) on his first mural for the National Preparatory School in Mexico City, thus briefly becoming part of the then flourishing Mexican muralist movement. He subsequently painted a mural for the Children's Library there, returning to Paris (1927), where he met modern artists Paul Klee and Joan Miró. He returned to Mexico (1929), where his work was influenced by the émigré Surrealist artists living there: Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, José and Kati Horna, and Alice Rahon. His early Surrealist work, *Fecundidad (Fertility)*, is filled with imaginative, rhythmic, and lyrical figures that are reminiscent of Aztec and Mayan deities.

Francisco Toledo (b. 1940, Minatitlan, Mexico; d. 2019, Oaxaca, Mexico)

Sin título (Untitled), n.d

Ink and watercolor on paper

Sin título (Untitled), 1966

Gouache and ink on paper

21 ½ x 29 ½ inches, 22 ¼ x 30 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gifts of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Francisco Toledo was a graphic artist who also worked in the mediums of sculpture, pottery, painting, inspired by Pre-Hispanic, Zapotec lineage for the depiction of the quasi-animal human forms that populate his work. He studied in the Escuela de Bellas Artes de Oaxaca and the Centro Superior de Artes Aplicadas del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, where he worked with Colombian artist Guillermo Silva Santamaria.

Toledo traveled throughout Europe (early 1960s), where he saw and was influenced by the work of Paul Klee and Jean Dubuffet. He eventually settled in Paris, pursuing studies at the workshop of British artist Stanley William Hayter. Toledo returned to Mexico (1965), where he devoted himself to an art that combined aspects of European modern art with elements of his own culture, as in *Untitled*, n.d., a work influenced by his awareness of Klee and Dubuffet.

Alice Rahon (b. 1904, Chenecey-Buillon, France; d. 1987, Mexico City, Mexico)

Noche sobre la ciudad (Night Over the City), 1946

Oil and sand on canvas

23 x 28 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Alice Rahon was a well-known poet when she met and married Surrealist painter Wolfgang Paalen in Paris (1934), who introduced her to the art and ideas of the Parisian Surrealists. Rahon and Paalen fled Europe, settling in Mexico (1939), where she turned her attention to painting, initially repurposing Paalen's used palettes to create her earliest works. Friends with artists Frida Kahlo, Carlos Mérida, Diego Rivera, and Rufino Tamayo, among others, Rahon became a Mexican citizen (1946). This abstract painting is filled with imagined, dreamlike organic and geometric forms that express the artist's interest in the Surrealist commitment to automatism, using unconscious or involuntary action to realize inner and involuntary thoughts and dreams.

Wolfgang Paalen (b. 1905, Vienna, Austria; d. 1959, Taxco, Mexico)

Paysage totémique (Totemic Landscape), 1937

Oil on panel

9 ¾ x 9 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Wolfgang Paalen moved with his family from Vienna to Berlin (1911) and then to Rome (1919), where he began his art education. He settled in Paris years later, where he met the founder and spokesman for the Parisian Surrealist movement, poet André Breton, as well as many of its members. He married the French poet and Surrealist painter Alice Rahon, whose work is also on view in this exhibition. In Paris, Paalen helped organize the *Exposition Internationale du*

Surréalisme (1938) and was keenly involved with the movement through the early 1940s, after moving to the United States and then Mexico, where he settled in Taxco (1939). Paalen, the Peruvian poet César Moro, and the French poet André Breton organized an international Surrealist exhibition at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano (1940). In Mexico, he founded and published the modern art magazine *Dyn* (1942-1945) that featured international avant-garde artists and writers and archeological studies of indigenous art.

Paalen's journey to Mexico was inspired in part by his great interest in the remote indigenous civilizations of North America. His friends in Mexico included the Surrealist painters Leonora Carrington, Frida Kahlo, Remedios Varo, and Kati Horna. Paalen invented techniques that freed him to express dreamlike, imaginative images, such as "fumage"—allowing burning candle smoke to establish form—a technique that can be seen in the blurred forms in the upper left and right of *Paysage totémique* (*Totemic Landscape*). Although painted before he moved to Mexico, it is indicative of the type of work he painted when he arrived in Mexico.

Gunther Gerzso (b. 1915, Mexico City, Mexico; d. 2000, Mexico City, Mexico)

Panorama, 1944

Oil on canvas

19 7/8 x 25 3/4 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

As a child, Gunther Gerzso lived in Germany and Switzerland, where he subsequently studied art. He returned to his homeland (1934), spent two years in the United States, and began painting after returning to Mexico (1941), by which time he had achieved acclaim as a playwright and award-winning set designer.

In Mexico, he became friends with the émigré Surrealist painters, including Leonora Carrington, Wolfgang Paalen, and Remedios Varo. In 1942, Gerzso began experimenting with the Surrealist method of automatism (creating art without conscious thought), producing biomorphic forms that combined figuration and abstraction.

Despite its fanciful appearance, *Panorama*, might have been inspired by the newly emergent volcano in the Mexican state of Michoacán (1943), which became a geological sensation and attracted Gerzso and other artists in Mexico's Surrealist circle as witnesses. Gerzso's painting represents a barren landscape subsumed by bright rhythmic streaks of paint and cones that spew red and yellow emissions.

Roberto Matta (b. 1911, Santiago, Chile; d. 2002, Civitavecchia, Italy)

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Sans titre (*Untitled*), 1937

Colored crayon and pencil on paper

Istmo de Panamá (*Isthmus of Panama*), 1935

Colored pencil on paper

RIGHT:

13 x 20 inches, 9 1/2 x 14 inches, 39 1/2 x 33 inches

El profeta (The Prophet), 1948

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; both promised gifts of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Roberto Matta is known for his Surrealist as well as abstract paintings. He studied architecture and interior design at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and moved to Paris (1934) to work for architect Le Corbusier, where he also became friends with avant-garde writers and artists, such as Gertrude Stein and Marcel Duchamp. He soon traveled to Madrid where he met pioneering Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí, who introduced him to the founder and spokesman for the Parisian Surrealist movement, poet André Breton. He joined the Surrealist movement (1936), but fled Europe, moving to New York (1939) in response to the threat of World War II, where he used automatism (unconscious or involuntary actions) in his paintings. He shared his knowledge of Surrealism with his New York artist friends, including Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, William Bazotes, and Robert Motherwell. Matta and Motherwell traveled together to Mexico and stayed with Wolfgang Paalen in Taxco (1941), where a recently formed volcano was attracting global attention. During the 1950s and 1960s, Matta divided his time between South America and Europe.

His works on view in the exhibition are representative of different phases of his art. *Istmo de Panamá (Isthmus of Panama)* and *Sans titre (Untitled)* were made when he was most closely associated with and influenced by the Surrealists. The organic, free-floating forms in these drawings emerge spontaneously from his unconscious sometimes materializing as forms that relate to specific things, such as the Isthmus of Panama. In *Sans titre*, quasi-animal-like, organic forms suggestive of seals, birds, and ducks float in small boat-like shapes below a large-fish filled sky. *El profeta (The Prophet)* is a more geometric structure than his earlier work.

Mario Carreño Morales (b. 1913, Havana, Cuba; d. 1999, Santiago de Chile, Chile)

Agua (Water), 1947

Pyroxylin on canvas

16 1/4 x 20 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Mario Carreño Morales began his career as a graphic designer after completing studies at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes “San Alejandro,” Havana (1925-26), and he subsequently studied at the Academia de Bellas Artes, Madrid (1934), leaving Spain for France (1937) prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1939). In Paris, he was a student at the École des Arts Appliqués and the Académie Julian. One of his teachers, a Dominican painter, Jaime Colson, introduced him to Italian Renaissance fresco paintings. He was also influenced by modern artist Pablo Picasso and Cuban artist Wifredo Lam. While living in New York (1940s), Morales came into contact with abstract art, such as the work of painters Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, and László Moholy-Nagy, and began experimenting with abstract painting.

Both phases of Morales’s works are on view here. *Agua (Water)* with its swirling masses suggests the influence of the Surrealist method of automatism (working directly from the unconscious).

The use of the industrial proxylin in paint, a quick-drying plastic-based lacquer, was introduced by Mexican painter David Alfaro Siqueiros, who was living and teaching in New York at the time.

Jackson Pollock, who was a student of Siqueiros, similarly used automatism and industrial paints in his “drip” paintings (1947-50).

DREAMS AND SYMBOLS

Mario Carreño Morales (b. 1913, Havana, Cuba; d. 1999, Santiago de Chile, Chile)

Niña en paisaje tormentoso. Ruinas (*Girl in Stormy Landscape. Ruins*), 1942

Ink on paper

17 x 12 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Niña en paisaje tormentoso. Ruinas (*Girl in Stormy Landscape. Ruins*) depicts a small girl lost in a foreboding dream world (on the adjacent wall).

Joaquín Torres-García (b. 1874, Montevideo, Uruguay; d. 1949, Montevideo, Uruguay)

Gare II (*Railway Station II*), 1931

Oil on canvas

28 ½ x 23 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Joaquín Torres-García moved with his family to Barcelona (1891) where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts (1894). Ultimately, he challenged the academic system of imitative realism to explore avant-garde developments in modern European art, such as Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, and particularly in the Cubist art of Pablo Picasso, as well as the work of Henri de Toulouse Lautrec and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes.

Torres-García was introduced to the geometric abstractions in the work of Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg (early 1920s) and adopted their reliance on the grid in the construction of his own compositions, as can be seen in *Gare II*, (*Railway Station*). He also participated in the Constructivist Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square) group and wrote for its magazine. Torres-García departs from Mondrian’s geometric abstraction by filling the grid in his work with narrative symbols, such as fish, human figures, and geometric forms.

Torres-García’s keen interest in the pre-Hispanic art of his homeland played an important role in the development of his work. When he returned to Montevideo (1934), he was determined to introduce Uruguayan artists to modernist and Constructivist aesthetics and to create a new art that fused the differing characteristics of pre-Hispanic and modern art, reason and emotion, figuration and abstraction. This mode of working came to be known as Universal Constructivism. In 1935, he founded the Association of Arte Constructivo in Montevideo, and wrote and presented lectures that argued for the importance of establishing South and North American schools of modern art that were independent of European modern art.

He furthered this mission by establishing a school in which students learned the principles of Constructivist art (1943). The studio influenced the direction of art in Uruguay, Argentina, and elsewhere for a generation after Torres-García’s death.

Hector Ragni (b. 1897, Buenos Aires, Argentina; d. 1952, Montevideo, Uruguay)

Locomotive 214 (Locomotora 214), 1934

Tempera and graphite on paper

11 x 8.5 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

While pursuing studies at the Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires (1913), Hector Ragni worked in advertising. He met (1917) Adolfo Bellocp, an important Argentinean avant-garde artist, thus associating himself with Bellocp and other artists who were part of the group “Artistas del Pueblo,” Ragni’s first encounter with an art community. He lived in Montevideo, Uruguay before moving to Spain in 1918, where, living in Barcelona, he met various avant-garde artists, such as those of the “Agrupación Courbet,” whose members included modern painters Joan Miró and Joaquín Torres-García. After traveling to France with a group of artists, Ragni returned to live and work in Montevideo (1927).

Ragni was keenly interested in the work of Torres-García, who founded (1935) Arte Constructivo, a hybrid modernism rooted in Pre-Hispanic identity. Torres-García also founded the Taller Torres-García (1934), a training ground for future generations of artists that became known as the School of the South, attended by his sons, Augusto and Horacio, as well as José Gurvich and Gonzalo Fonseca, among others. Ragni’s *Locomotive 214 (Locomotora 214)* is filled with precisely edged, harmoniously arranged, lushly colored geometric forms that convey his assimilation of the modernist aesthetic espoused by Torres-García.

Xul Solar (b. 1887, Buenos Aires, Argentina; d. 1963, Buenos Aires, Argentina)

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Nuncio solar (Messenger of the Sun), 1923

Montes y escaleras (Mountains and Stairs), 1950

Watercolor on paper

8 ¼ x 4 ¾ inches. 12 x 9 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Pearl and Stanley Goodman

Early in his career, Oscar Agustín Alejandro Schulz Solari changed his name to Xul Solar (solar light), in order to create a new identity for himself. He also sought to create a new identity for his country by fusing European modernism with Argentinian nationalism.

Solar’s work depicts mystical worlds and alternate, perfected spaces filled with floating cities, arcane symbols, angels, winged horses, pyramids, snakes, and frightening half-breeds of airplanes and people. He dreamed of a self-sufficient city in outer space that would be a “celestial Jerusalem” and flying cities that could solve the world’s overpopulation problem. He often incorporated elements of astrology and Eastern religions to forge ethereal and mystical scenes as in his *Montes y escaleras (Mountains and Stairs)*.

Amelia Peláez (b. 1896, Yaguajay, Cuba; d. 1968, Havana, Cuba)

Olimpia (Olympia), 1953

Gouache on paper

17 ½ x 22 ¾ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

A pioneer among Latin American modernists, Cuban artist Amelia Peláez was highly influential in effecting the break from the traditional styles of painting promoted by Havana's conservative Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes "San Alejandro," from which she graduated (1924). Following graduation Peláez studied at the Arts Student League in New York and later that same year in Paris. She enrolled in courses in design and color theory taught by Russian constructivist painter, Aleksandra Exster (1931) and acknowledged the influence of Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, and Pablo Picasso on her highly personal version of Synthetic Cubism comprised of simple, usually geometric, colors shapes. She returned to Havana (1934) where she was an active participant in the vanguard (1927-38) and classical (1938-51) phases of Cuban modernism.

Peláez's painting, *Olimpia*, is based on Édouard Manet's provocative 1863 masterpiece of a reclining nude courtesan and her maid. Unlike Manet's realistic painting, Peláez's figures are expressively calligraphic, verging on abstraction. Rather than stare out at the viewer like Manet's nude courtesan, the two women in this painting look directly at each other.

Wifredo Lam (b. 1902, Sagua la Grande, Cuba; d. 1982, Paris, France)

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Sans titre (Untitled), 1959

Personnages (Characters), 1945

Oil on canvas

31 3/8 x 25 ½ inches, 24 ½ x 24 1/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; bot promised gifts of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Wifredo Lam, who was of Chinese, Spanish and Congolese African ancestry, studied Western art in Spain in the 1920s. He subsequently studied in Paris (1938), where he met and befriended Pablo Picasso. Through Picasso he met the founder and spokesman for the Parisian Surrealist movement, poet André Breton. Lam joined the Surrealist group in 1939.

Upon returning to Cuba (1941), Lam began making works that synthesized these European sources with elements of his own cultural heritage. In his *Personnages (Characters)*, Lam's organic, floating, symbolic or quasi-animal forms derive from Miró's imagery, while referring simultaneously to components of Afro-Cuban culture, such as the ambiguous forms that tower above the winged, owl-like creatures below. *Sans titre (Untitled)* reveals his ability to synthesize geometric, faceted, overlapping forms seen from multiple perspectives simultaneously that derive from his awareness of the new, revolutionary, pictorial language that Picasso and Georges Braque invented in the 1910s: Cubism. Its *femme cheval* (female horse) figure, which appears frequently in Lam's art, refers to Mantonica Wilson, the healer and priestess of the African religion, Shango, who was Lam's Afro-Cuban godmother. As Lam pointed out after returning to Cuba: "I was taken aback by its nature, by the traditions of the blacks, and by the transculturation of its African and Catholic religions. And so, I began to orientate my paintings toward the African."

Maria Martinez-Cañas (b. 1960, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

Somos una historia de distancia (We Are History from Afar), 1991

Gelatin silver print

30 ¼ x 29 11/16 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul and Estelle Berg, 98.8

Cuban-born Maria Martinez-Cañas was an infant when her family moved to Puerto Rico (1960) following the Cuban Revolution. She has lived in Miami since 1986. Martinez-Cañas acknowledges that her Cuban birth and experience of living in different cultures—Puerto-Rican and American—has shaped her vision and the meaning of her work, that depicts ambiguous and enigmatic combinations of images of natural forms, people, and urban and domestic scenes. Estranged from her country as an infant, Martinez-Cañas learned about her heritage primarily through memories, photographs of her family and stories. The unified, non-perspectival space in her works, as in *Somos una historia de distancia*, refers to aspects of her history, past events, and experimental ideas.

Martinez-Cañas's work is "photo-based" in that over the last 30 years she has used virtually every photographic medium to realize her objectives. Although her work can be technically elaborate, the process never gets in the way of the forcefulness and impact of her imagery. In this photograph made from photographs she has cut into pieces, arranged on photo paper, and rephotographed, she refers to the collage aesthetic fundamental to her practice, which is derived from her awareness of the montage and collage work of modernist artists George Grosz, Hannah Hoch, and Kurt Schwitters. She creates work that is expressive of her anxieties and feelings about separation, longing, and isolation. The seemingly arbitrary arrangement of white organic, enigmatic, totemic forms calls to mind aspects of Wifredo Lam's compositions.

Guillermo Trujillo (b. 1927, Horconcityos, Panama; d. 2018, Panama)

Plantas Nuchos (Ceremonial Plant Staffs), 1990

Acrylic on canvas

50 x 60 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Stephen Gordich, 2008.7.1

Guillermo Trujillo attended the National Institute in Panama where he received a Bachelor of Science degree (1947) and studied painting at the Academy of San Fernando in Madrid (1951). He continued his studies of ceramics and landscape design at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid. Trujillo forged a style that incorporated elements of indigenous Panamanian art, graceful hieratic figures and plants into compositions based on modern art characteristics of simple, flat forms. Although this painting looks like a surreal landscape, the figures are based on indigenous ceremonial plant staffs.

Gilberto Ruiz (b. 1950, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

Like Frogs and Planes (Como sapos y aviones), 1987

Oil on canvas

79 x 51 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Dr. Fernando Alvarez, 96.57

Gilberto Ruiz studied at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes "San Alejandro" and at the

Escuelas Nacionales de Artes in Havana. He left Cuba for Miami (1980) on the Mariel Boat lift, after being told, his work was “insulting and offensive to [Cuba’s] Revolutionary Principles.” He settled in New York, creating work that addresses themes of dislocation, exile, and destruction inspired by various styles, including Surrealism. This influence can be seen in his imaginative and enigmatic *Like Frogs and Planes (De sapos y aviones)*, a dramatic and chaotic scene of struggle between nature and technology. It is part of the artist’s *The Sky is Falling* series, inspired by fears of world annihilation prompted by the 1986 reappearance of Halley’s Comet in its 75-80 year cycle, which brought it close enough to the earth to be seen with the naked eye. Black fighter planes symbolizing failed technology, dive-bomb the earth, as terrified frogs, representing life and fertility, leap like zombies into the sky to either escape or battle the planes to thwart Armageddon. Repeating horizontal bands of white clouds offset the strong verticals within the composition, to infuse the painting, as the artist has pointed out, with a sense of calm that promises the possibility of new beginnings.

César Menéndez (b. 1954, Sonsonate, El Salvador; lives and works in San Salvador, El Salvador)
La Fiesta del disfraz (The Costume Party), 1992

Oil on canvas

56 5/8 x 59 1/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Shaari Hallman Ergas

César Menéndez’s art derives from various aspects of his culture, both past and present, often including religious processions of priests, other religious figures, costumes, and objects. In combination, these forms convey mystery, ambiguity, and uncanniness, qualities that derive from aspects of Surrealism and define Magical Realism. The realistic images in *La fiesta del disfraz*, (*The Costume Party*), do not follow an inherent logic, and thus can be read in many ways, releasing an internal romantic narrative in the viewer fed by the imagination.

GODDESSES, MONSTERS, AND FOOLS

Demi (b. 1955 in Camaguey, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

Niño con biberón negro (Boy with Black Pacifier), 1993

Acrylic on canvas

46 1/8 x 42 1/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Arturo Rodriquez, 94.37

When Demi was five, her father, who was in the Cuban military, was executed. Fearing for Demi’s life, her mother sent her to live with relatives in Puerto Rico (1961). Demi subsequently moved to New York (1971), and settled in Miami (1978). This period in which she was torn from her mother, father, home, and country stimulated profound feelings of loss, dislocation, and helplessness that are the subject matter of her art.

Demi was not interested in or involved with art or the art community until she met Cuban artist Arturo Rodríguez (whose work is also on view in this exhibition) while studying at Miami Dade College. They developed a close relationship (later marrying), and she was deeply influenced by watching him paint. They traveled to Spain, where she encountered and was fascinated by the works of other artists, such as those by Velásquez and the Renaissance painters, Fra Angelico

and Fra Fillipo Lippi in particular.

Encouraged by Rodríguez, Demi began painting in 1983 and named herself Demi in reference to feeling torn in half through her experiences of dislocation. Her subjects are angst-filled, unsettling depictions of bald, suffering children with exaggerated and distorted features, such as *Boy with Black Pacifier*. These children are symbols of innocence and helplessness. In this painting, the large pacifier (a symbol of security and comfort) obscures the mouth of the infant, who anxiously stares at the viewer.

Santiago (Chago) Rodríguez Salazar (b. 1940, Cuba; lives and works in Miami and New York)
Camaleón triste (Sad Chameleón), 1991

Acrylic on canvas

59 ½ x 52 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of the artist, 96.45

Santiago (Chago) Rodríguez Salazar moved to Miami from Cuba (1990) and attended Florida International University. Like the European and Mexican Surrealists in this exhibition, he creates works expressive of the imaginative, the unconscious, and the irrational. He paints with no pre-conceived plan, filling his work with demon-like, organic, ornamental brightly colored figures. He sees himself as the intermediary between his “dreams and the canvas” transcribing an extraordinarily provocative human world that obeys its own rules.

Ana Mendieta (b. 1948, Havana, Cuba; d.1985, New York, NY)

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Untitled, 1981 (Estate printed 1994)

Suite of six black and white photographs

Gelatin silver print

19 ½ x 13 inches, 13 x 19 3/8 inches, 19 ½ x 12 7/8 inches, 19 ½ x 12 ¾ inches, 13 x 19 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of C. Richard Hilker, 94.48.a, 94.48.b, 94.48.d, 94.48.c, 94.48.e

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Galeria Lelong and the Estate of Ana Mendieta, 94.49

Ana Mendieta left Cuba when she was 13, along with her sister, via Operation Peter Pan that brought more than 14,000 unaccompanied children by plane to the United States from 1960-62, the largest mass exodus of minor refugees in the Western Hemisphere at the time. The Mendieta sisters lived with various families in Iowa City, Iowa, where Ana attended the University of Iowa before moving to New York (1978).

She has long been celebrated for her contributions as a pioneer in site-specific sculpture and outdoor performance art. During her brief career, she produced a body of work that included drawings, installations, performance, photographs, and sculpture, much of it based on silhouettes of the female body (sometimes her own) that she found or created from natural materials, such as blood, mud, sand, and grass.

The series of works on view are photographs documenting carvings she made in rock in Iowa, whose figures are based on the mythological goddesses of the native Caribbean Taino people. Because these and other works by Mendieta are ephemeral, her photographs of them provide a lasting record of her achievement.

Ricardo Viera (b. 1945, Ciego de Avila, Camaguey province. Cuba; d. Miami, 2020)

Sin título. De la serie Isla en mi mente (Untitled. From the series The island on My Mind), 1976

Drawing on lithograph

30 ½ x 38 1/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of the artist, T3.2010

Ricardo Viera work expresses his feelings of loss and dislocation as a Cuban exile. In this work, the map of Cuba is overpowered by or emerging from a series of dark, casket- or cocoon-like shapes, which may refer to the black-outs that occurred in Cuba after its takeover by the Castro regime. These forms become a screen of repetitive shapes through which the map of Cuba either emerges or disappears, a metaphor for death or rebirth of that artist's homeland.

Viera arrived in the United States in 1962, via Operation Peter Pan that brought more than 14,000 unaccompanied children by plane to the United States (1960-62), the largest mass exodus of minor refugees in the Western Hemisphere at the time. The experience of being separated and dislocated from his family and home filled him with nostalgia and longing for his native country. Although he considers himself a conceptual artist, the enigmatic dreamlike image in this work reveals the influence of Surrealism and Magical Realism, and shares a concern for themes of longing, death, and rebirth in the works of other artists in the exhibition.

Arturo Rodríguez (b. 1956, Ranchuelo, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

Self-portrait with a Paper Hat (Autorretrato con sombrero de papel), 1990

Graphite on paper

22 ½ x 18 ¼ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of artist and Gutierrez Fine Arts, 93.18

Arturo Rodríguez moved from Cuba with his family to Spain (1971), living in both Asturias and Madrid, where he was introduced to the art of Diego Velázquez and Francisco Goya at the Prado National Museum. His family settled in Miami (1973), where he completed high school and studied life drawing briefly at Miami Dade College. He met his future wife there, the artist Demi, whose work is also on view in the exhibition. Concentrating on the universal theme of "displacement," he filters his experiences predominantly through unconscious derived images, manifested in many of his works. His drawing, *Self-Portrait with a Paper Hat (Autorretrato con sombrero de papel)*, was influenced by his awareness of the tradition of self-portraits in the style of "Flemish painters Bruegel and Bosch." By depicting himself with a paper bag on his head, he subtly introduced an element into a pictorial tradition that he has pointed out, "makes it more real."

Fernando Botero (b. 1932, Medellín, Colombia; lives and works between Paris and Italy)

Autorretrato según Rembrandt (Self-Portrait in the Style of Rembrandt), 1959

Oil on canvas

16 ½ x 24 ½ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Fernando Botero is celebrated for his paintings and sculptures that feature animals and figures with inflated proportions, reflecting the artist's predilection for satire, caricature, and political commentary. He traveled throughout Europe (1950s), including Spain, Italy, and France, to study the work of Renaissance and Baroque masters. Botero became renowned for the varied source material he drew upon and synthesized, from Colombian folk imagery to canonical works by Diego Velázquez and Pablo Picasso.

In this early self-portrait, Botero presents himself in the guise of the famous Dutch artist Rembrandt, who made almost 100 self-portraits, often wearing an artist's smock and hat or beret, holding the symbols of his practice—a paintbrush and palette—and presenting his head and face realistically and in great detail.

Botero also presents himself in a smock and hat, thus identifying himself and his purpose with the tradition of self-portraiture, and especially the self-portraits of Rembrandt. However, Botero represents himself in caricature with his smock and bloated face and body.

HYPERREALITY

Jorge Pantoja (b. 1963, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

Addict (Adicta), 2009

Encounters (Encuentros), 2009

Graphite, colored pencil, ink, pastel on paper

11 x 14 inches, 11 x 14 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of David Horvitz and Francie Bishop Good

Cuban-born Jorge Pantoja moved to Miami (mid-1990s). Many of his works are based on memories, especially of Hollywood films, such as those he saw as a child in Cuba. He was also deeply influenced by the Surrealist art of René Magritte, the works of Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, and those of the Mexican artist Juan Rulfo, as well as the writings of German author Günter Grass. He explores memory as a means of enlightening the present and offering commentary on cinematographic history and the human faculty of receiving impressions.

The two works on paper in the exhibition derive from scenes in one his favorite films, the Stanley Kubrick thriller, *The Shining*. In this film, an ambitious writer loses his mind while spending a winter as the caretaker of the isolated, historic Overlook Hotel, Colorado, with his increasingly distraught wife and young son, who exhibits psychic powers. Pantoja captures the dread Kubrick constructed in his uncanny scenes of domestic strife and struggle for survival.

william cordova (b. 1971, Lima, Peru; lives and works between Miami, FL and New York, NY)

Billy Dee and the Colt 45s (Billy Dee y los Colt 45), 2001

Gouache and ink on postcard

9 ½ x 11 ¼ inches

Sometimes I Just Can't Keep It All in My Mouth? (¿A veces no puedo mantenerlo todo en mi boca?), 2001

Tempera on postcard

4 ¾ x 6 ¾ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; both promised gifts of David Horovitz and Francie Bishop Good

william cordova moved from Peru to Miami with his family when he was six, attended high school and college in Miami before completing graduate studies at the Art Institute of Chicago and Yale University.

Using a Surrealist technique of juxtaposition of diverse figures, his images can seem arbitrary, thus evoking feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty, as in *Sometimes I Just Can't Keep It All in My Mouth*, (2001) and *Billy Dee and The Colt 45s* (2001). cordova used postcards as supports for these drawings and are the last that he made in the series.

I Just Can't Keep It All in My Mouth? was inspired by two very different stories, *Catcher in Rye* by J.D. Salinger and *Casa de Carton*, written by Martin Adan as a teenager. cordova's drawing includes a carousel, a circular form that refers to the cycle of life. The subject is inspired by Salinger's reference to a carousel in the last part of his novel. *Casa de Carton*, however, proposes constant shifts, change, and transformation in the streets of Lima, Peru. By juxtaposing imagery derived from these disparate sources, the artist conveys the anxiety of the human condition.

cordova's *Billy Dee and The Colt 45s* was made in response to the death of an artist friend who called himself Billy Dee. This drawing, a pile of useless antennas whose functionality has ended, is a metaphor for death and dying. As symbols of obsolete, discarded technologies, antennas convey the artist's anxieties about death, uncertainty, and the longing for the past.

Luis Gispert (b. 1972, Jersey City, NJ, lives and works in Brooklyn, NY)

Untitled (Tower) from *Urban Myths PT 1* (*Sin título [Torre]* de la serie *Mitos Urbanos PT 1*), 2003

Cibachrome

62 x 50 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Joan and Michael Salke, 2019.4

Luis Gispert is a sculptor and photographer who often incorporates multimedia in his work. Raised in the Miami Cuban exile community, he has described his aesthetic as "hip-hop baroque." His films, sculptures, installations, and large-scale photos include various urban cultural trappings, such as audio systems, plush and gaudy interior spaces, and hip-hop ornament. His integration and juxtaposition of beauty and grotesquerie realize a new kind of baroque satire and drama.

Untitled (Tower) is part of the artist's *Urban Myths* series. A statement about innocence, materialism, and vulnerability. It features a signature juxtaposition of baroque features, religious imagery and social and material icons of pop culture, such as lavish draperies, porcelain figurines, elaborate lamps, wooden furniture, and oversized boom boxes (made by the artist especially for this photograph). Its composition derives from what the artist calls "birthday photography tropes," photographs of children at birthday celebrations gathered around a cake.

The tower of musical equipment is the centerpiece of an elaborately carved wooden table, while children play (they are all twins), crawl, and move about, innocently exploring this material splendor. Their joyful exploration has the potential of causing the collapse of the precarious

tower.

Guillermo Kuitca (b. 1961, Buenos Aires, Argentina; lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Untitled, from the series *Seven Last Songs* (*Sin título*, de la serie *Siete ultimas canciones*), 1987
Acrylic on canvas
56 x 75 inches
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Mr. Alan Gordich, 2007.4

Guillermo Kuitca began painting when he was 11. The art of dance in performances by avant-garde dancer, Pina Bausch, that he saw in Buenos Aires (1980) was an early influence. He began his career directing experimental theater productions and later incorporated geographical maps and architectural plans into his work (late 1980s and early 1990s) in which he explored themes of loss and migration. Although he draws on his life experiences, Kuitca prefers that his work not be interpreted as personal, as his aim is to create imagery free of geopolitical parameters. The unusual filmy and scrim-lighted stage-like structure in *Untitled*, from the series *Seven Last Songs* (*Sin título*, de la serie *Siete ultimas canciones*) is a mysterious scene of small figures that enact inexplicable dramas. Viewers see them from the perspective of seats in the Teatro Julio Jiménez Rueda, Mexico City, and thus separated by the theatrical “fourth wall,” become passive voyeurs to the disturbing actions depicted on the stage. The title of the work was inspired by the *Four Last Songs* of German composer, Richard Strauss.

Emilio Martinez (b. 1981, Tegucigalpa, Honduras; lives and works in Miami, FL)
Being Happy Is My Choice (*Ser feliz es mi decision*), 2019
Pastel, acrylic, charcoal, and pencil on heavy paper
48 x 77 inches
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; purchased with funds provided by Michael and Dianne Bienes, 2019.51

Honduras-born Emilio Martinez moved with members of his family to Miami when he was 13. His mixed-media work (painting, sculpture, installation) is based on his childhood memories and dreams, which he records in his sketchbooks. He conveys his anxieties and experiences of dislocation in his work by using spiritual symbols derived from ancient, indigenous peoples.

Being Happy Is My Choice presents an imaginative hybrid animal-human form in blue high-heeled shoes, sporting a helmet-like hat out of which sprouts spiky hair. The artist describes this work as a representation of the state of happiness that accompanies self-conscious acceptance of who we are despite our physical limitations. Martinez’s imagery is influenced by his awareness of animal forms in the work of the European and Latin American Surrealists, Pablo Picasso, and Cobra artist Karel Appel.

Pablo Cano (b. 1961, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)
Lady Liberty (*La dama libertad*), 2001
St. Catherine (*Santa Catalina*), 2001
Industrial materials, aluminum trash cans, terracotta, cigarette foil, glue, plastic

87 x 35 x 31 ½ inches, 90 ½ x 35 x 26 inches
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Martin and Cricket Taplin, 2017.8, 2017.9

Pablo Cano was an infant when his family moved from Cuba (1962), settling in Miami. He is best known for his marionettes constructed out of found objects that he stages in elaborate performances. Among his acknowledged influences are the works of Alexander Calder, Kurt Schwitters, Robert Rauschenberg, Pablo Picasso, and Russian Constructivist Alexandra Exter. His work is also inspired by Magical Realism, Dada, and Surrealism.

Cano's larger than life-size marionettes *Lady Liberty* and *St. Catherine* are made of silver-colored metal trash cans and terracotta heads with painted faces. The proportions of the facial features of the figures derive from Classical sculpture, suggesting connections with deities and mythical goddesses. Both figures are of recognizable symbols, the Statue of Liberty and a Christian saint, chosen by the artist because of their political, religious, and visual significance. These works are among a series of six marionette sculptures he created for an exhibition in New York (2001).

Tomás Sánchez (b. 1948, Aguada de Pasajeros, Cuba; lives and works between Miami, FL and Costa Rica)

Segunda version de Basurero en la playa (Second version of Dump on the Beach), 1991

Acrylic on canvas

11 7/8 x 15 7/8 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Pearl and Stanley Goodman

Tomás Sánchez depicts meticulously detailed expansive landscapes and seascapes. At first glance the sandy white beach in this seascape seems pristine and idealized. Upon closer inspection one discovers a landscape marred by garbage and trash. Sánchez notes: "I have always had two fundamental interests in life: art and meditation. The interior spaces that I experience in meditation are converted into the landscapes of my paintings; the restlessness of my mind transformed into landfills."

Tonel (Antonio Elgio Fernández) (b. 1958, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Vancouver, Canada)

Fire and Smoke on Gramsci's Bed (Fuego y humo en la cama de Gramsci), 1997

Watercolor on paper

29 x 36 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, N.2015.10.29.1

Tonel received a degree in Art History at the University of Havana, Cuba (1982). His installations, caricatures, drawings, and graffiti contributed to the revival of conceptual humor in Cuban art of the 1990s. He was inspired by the countercultural comics of the 1960s, as in the work of the American cartoonists and painters, such as R. Crumb, Saul Steinberg, Philip Guston, and Peter Saul.

Fire and Smoke on Gramsci's Bed is part of a series of installations and drawings Tonel made during the late 1990s and early 2000s dealing with the subject of the Italian Marxist philosopher and politician Antonio Gramsci, including his imprisonment by the Italian Fascist regime. This painting represents the bed in Gramsci's prison cell. For Tonel the flames and smoke represent

Gramsci's intellectual power, even under duress, and the great energy he interjected into his writing.

Julio Larraz (b. 1944, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

El supremo (The Supreme One), 1997

Oil on canvas

16 x 20 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Julio Larraz was traumatized early in his life by witnessing the incineration of his father's extensive library during the Cuban Revolution and the subsequent dislocation of his family as Cuban exiles. The family moved to New York (1958), Washington, D.C. (1960), and Miami (1961). While in New York (1964-67), Larraz created political caricatures for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune* and other publications.

Larraz is best known for the precision of his technique through which he reveals the world of his imagination as a metaphor of the human condition. *El Supremo* presents a military figure addressing the public through a microphone. Light reflects off of the figure's glasses and obscures his eyes, seemingly a comment on power as a blind and ruthless force.

José Bedia (b. 1959, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL)

A la deriva (Adrift), 1998

Oil on canvas

14 ½ x 69 ¼ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Alan, Paul, and Robert Farago, 2018.9

José Bedia was born in Havana, Cuba (1959) and has lived and worked in Miami since 1993. One of the most prominent artists of Cuba's venerated '80s Generation (the generation that grew up in Cuba after the 1958 revolution), Bedia and his work are deeply rooted in Afro-Cuban traditions. His first direct encounter with Africa was in 1985, when he was conscripted for mandatory service in the Cuban army and sent to Angola as part of an "artistic brigade."

Such contact with Africa was a revelation for Bedia, as he discovered how much of his Cuban heritage derived from West Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, and Egypt. As an initiated practitioner in Regla de Congo, a group of religions brought to Cuba by West African slaves, Bedia imbues his work with his spiritual beliefs. He combines calligraphic figures with abstract symbols that bear a close affinity to the tribal African art that he studies and collects.

Much of his work addresses his experiences as a Cuban exile and conveys his feelings of dislocation, change, and loss of home. The title of the painting *A la deriva (Adrift)* corresponds with the artist's feelings of rootlessness and the universal struggle for human survival. In this composition, a house, an ox, and a human head seem to strive to stay above water, while another human head has descended below the surface.

Benjamin Cañas (b. 1933, Tegucigalpa, Honduras; d. 1987, Annandale, Virginia)

El baile de las muñecas (The Dance of the Dolls), 1974

Oil on wood

46 x 66 inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Mr. Alan Gordich, 2009.4

Benjamin Cañas studied architecture at the Universidad de San Salvador, El Salvador before he trained as a painter at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas in San Salvador (1958). He joined an architectural firm in Washington, D.C. (1969) and attended the Corcoran School of Art (1974-76), where he began exploring the traditions of his homeland, such as Mayan folklore and legend. After learning about recently discovered petroglyphs in Gruta del Espíritu Santo, El Salvador, he embarked on his studies of ancient civilizations and archeology that along with the European Surrealist movement influenced his art.

His paintings are timeless and innovative, filled with brightly colored, highly detailed mythological and religious forms (angels, satyrs, dwarfs, nymphs). He increasingly distorted them as his style developed, as can be seen in *El baile de las muñecas (The Dance of the Dolls)*. Sometimes characterized as a Magical Realist, Cañas represented El Salvador at the Sao Paulo Biennial (1977).

Nahum Zenil (b. 1947, Chicontepec de Tejeda, Mexico; lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico)

Echando un ojo (Taking a Look), 1990

Oil, ink and mirrors on illustration board

20.5 x 15 ¾ inches

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; promised gift of Stanley and Pearl Goodman

Nahum Zenil's collage is a self-portrait as a skeletal bride in the style of 19th-century Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada's popular satirical illustration "La Calavera Catrina." This image of an elegant skull donning 19th-century European attire has become associated with the Mexican Day of the Dead celebration that takes place annually October 31 to November 2, days marked by prayers and rituals, such as fasting, in remembrance of the first anniversary of the dead. In Zenil's and Posada's works, the cadaver's fancy, aristocratic dress suggests that death is the great equalizer. Whether rich or poor, everyone dies. The mirrors covering the cadaver's eyes in Zenil's self-portrait reflect the face of its viewers, reminding them of their fate.



José Guadalupe Posada (b. 1852, Aguascalientes, Mexico; d. 1913, Mexico City, Mexico)

La Calavera Catrina, c. 1910-1913

Zinc etching