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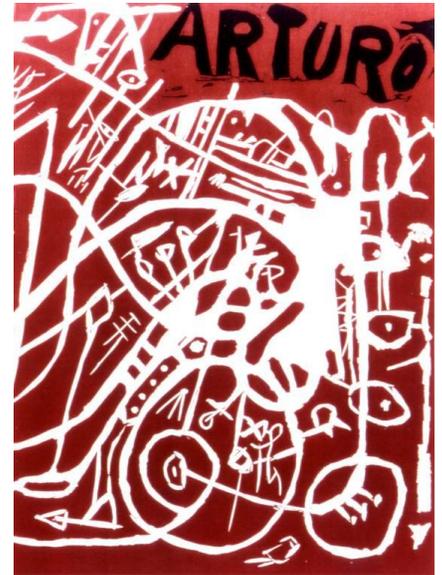
Landmark Digital Archive of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art Launches in 2012, with Companion Book Series; Caps 10th Anniversary of Latin American Initiatives at the MFA Houston

Initiatives are a catalyst for the future of the field of 20th-century Latin American and Latino art

Some 10,000 primary-source documents will be available worldwide for the first time, launching with materials from Mexico, Argentina and the American Midwest

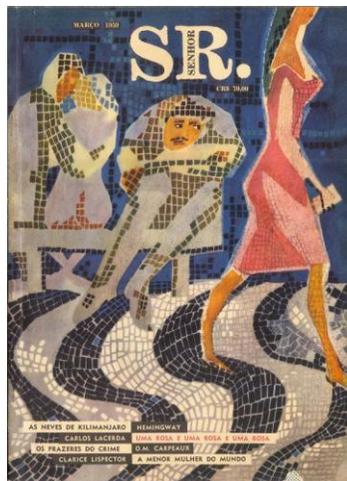
Houston—January 2012— The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and its research institute, the International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA), have devoted ten years and \$50 million to initiatives in 20th-century Latin American and Latino art. In January 2012, the MFAH and ICAA will launch a digital archive of some 10,000 primary-source materials, culled by hundreds of researchers based in 16 cities in the U.S. and throughout Latin America. The online archive will be available worldwide, free of charge at www.icaadocs.mfah.org, and is intended as a catalyst for the future of a field that has been notoriously lacking in accessible resources. The phased, multi-year launch begins with 2,500 documents from Argentina, Mexico and the American Midwest, capping the 10th-anniversary year for the Latin American program. The first volume in a companion series of 13 annotated books will be published with the archive launch, with subsequent volumes in the series published annually.

The online archive is rich in artists' writings, correspondence and other unpublished materials, as well as in texts published in newspapers and period journals by artists, critics, scholars and others who have played a vital role in shaping the cultural fabric of the countries and communities where the Documents Project has had a presence. The material brings to life the ferment of international cultures, ideas and personalities that swept across 20th-century South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Latino communities in the United States as artists, writers and intellectuals sought to define or challenge notions of a national art; art movements emerged in response to changing local political regimes, as well as to what was perceived as the onslaught of North American culture; and the contribution of Latin American artists to the early stages of global avant-garde movements. The archive also highlights the common interests and affinities shared by Latin artists working in North and South America, allowing for first-hand comparative studies of these broad-based, highly heterogeneous groups. Documents from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and the United States will continue to be added to the website over the next three years, with the entire selection of holdings to date available by 2015. As the ICAA research initiatives progress, the website will



continue to develop in perpetuity, making it an indispensable provider of Latin American and Latino primary-source documents.

A series of 13 books to be published over the next dozen years, *Critical Documents of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art*, will accompany the digital archive initiative. Selections from the archive will be translated into English and organized by theme, rather than country or chronology. The general, non-Spanish speaking reader will have access to Latin American primary-source materials in English, while the specialized reader can cross-reference the books with the archive, accessing both the original and the translated versions of the texts. Co-published by the MFAH and Yale University Press, the series is the most ambitious editorial venture of its kind. The release of the first anthology, *Resisting Categories: Latin American and/or Latino?*, by Mari Carmen Ramírez, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto and Héctor Olea, is timed for the Documents Project website launch.



“Latin American art can now fully become part of the worldwide discussion of Modernism. For graduate students especially, this project will be of immense use and interest,” commented Dr. Edward Sullivan, The Helen Gould Sheppard Professor of the History of Art, New York University, and advisor to the Documents Project. “The access to material written at the moment when the art was happening is a major tool to understand the development of artistic movements in Latin America. This project has the potential to integrate the lost chapter of Latin American art into the discipline of art history as it is taught at Western universities.”

“This project is just the beginning of the effort to recover the intellectual production of 20th-century Latin American artists, critics and curators and to further research and awareness of this production in the United States and elsewhere,” said Mari Carmen Ramírez, MFAH curator and ICAA director. “It will be up to future scholars to really make something out of this project and to continue to build what could truly be an amazing resource for the long-term development and consolidation of the field.”

“The ICAA Documents archive and book project is unprecedented in its scope and depth,” said MFAH interim director Gwendolyn H. Goffe. “The research teams have included the artistic production from countries that have been overlooked, opening up whole new avenues of scholarly investigation to as broad an audience as possible.”

Editorial Board and Steering Committee: The editorial board for the *Documents of 20th-Century Latin America and Latino Art* project consists of 16 scholars based throughout the United States and Latin America, and the Project’s steering committee is composed of 12 Latin American and Latino art scholars based in various locations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Argentina team: based at Fundación Espigas (Buenos Aires).

“MADÍ appears in order to found a universal art movement which is to be the aesthetic counterpart to our industrial civilization and contemporary dialectical thought. MADÍ destroys the TABOO of the PAINTING by breaking with the traditional frame.” Gyula Kosice and others, MADÍ (fliers), reprinted in Revista arte Madí universal 0-1 (1947).

The documents recovered here reflect the emergence of early Modernism in the Southern Cone in the 1920s; the embrace and unique interpretations of European Cubist and Surrealist trends; the development of Concrete Art in Buenos Aires in the 1940s; movements toward abstraction from the mid-1950s to the mid-’60s; as well as the rise of Conceptualism and post-Modern art in the region. In addition, these documents provide insight into the intellectual process of key Argentinean artists, since the archive is rich in published art criticism written by or about artists, letters exchanged between artists and their friends, responses to artist lectures, and news coverage of installations and exhibitions.



Major caches of documents by important Argentine artists, or artists working in Argentina, include those by Antonio Berni, León Ferrari, Kenneth Kemble, Gyula Kosice, Julio Le Parc, Tomás Maldonado, Hugo Monzón, Luis Felipe Noé, Aldo Paparella, Aldo Pellegrini, Liliana Porter and David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Extensive texts written by or about artist collectives operating in Argentina in the 1960s include writings and manifestos of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC), which was founded as a multidisciplinary workshop but later turned to Pop art and culture; the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, which promoted the international exchange of ideas; and the Tucumán Arde (Tucumán is Burning) collective, which sought to use art as a means for social change through mass communication in response to military dictatorship.

Mexico team: based at CURARE, Espacio crítico para las artes (Mexico City).

Think about it: the “big three” [Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco] have under their control—the Church in the hands of Luther—the whole production of Mexican murals, and will dictate, from their absolute position of power, who should and should not be painting murals. Wonderful! That is the same ... as having three dangerous criminals just out of prison and telling them: Gentlemen, the city is yours! –artist Maria Izquierdo, El Nacional (1942).

The documents from Mexico are primarily from the first half of the 20th century, with further research on the second half of the century planned. The intellectual production of Mexican artists, from the Mexican Muralists to Cubist and Surrealist artists, is



documented—much of it extensively, including some 200 texts written by or about Diego Rivera alone. Some documents detail the flight of artists, such as Mathias Goeritz, from Nazi Germany. Manifestos for a range of artists’ groups, including the Estridentistas, Grupo de los ¡30-30!, and Los Hartos, are available, as are documents that chart the rise of Mexican Muralism, the influence of *japonisme*, the founding of the Mexican Open-Air Schools of Painting, and more.

Major caches of documents by important Mexican artists and intellectuals include writings by Manuel Maples Arce, Fernando Gamboa, Alfredo Best Maugard, Gerardo Murillo (aka Dr. Atl), José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, David

Alfaro Siqueiros, José Juan Tablada, Rufino Tamayo and José Vasconcelos, among others.

In addition, documentation of important European and American artists and intellectuals who spent time in Mexico are available. These figures include Guatemalan poet and writer Luis Cardoza y Aragón, French Surrealist André Breton, French painter and illustrator Jean Charlot, German sculptor Mathias Goertiz, Guatemalan artist and critic Carlos Mérida, Italian photographer Tina Modotti, Spanish critic Margarita Nelken and American photographer Edward Weston.

The American Midwest team: based at the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, Indiana)

“The Hispanic or Latin American barrio in Chicago is quite distinct from areas contiguous to it, and markedly influences the content the mural artist will choose to convey and that which the audience might anticipate or demand. The environment will predicate to some degree the emotional and intellectual directions that both artist and viewer will take.” Victor Sorell, *“Barrio Murals in Chicago: Painting the Hispanic-American Experience on ‘Our Community’ Walls,”* in *Revista Chicano-Riqueña IV*, no. 4 (1976): 51.

The Latino art and Latino cultural expressions that emerged in the American Midwest have been vastly overlooked by scholars, who have focused typically on such centers of Latino culture as New York, Los Angeles and Miami. The Notre Dame/ICAA research team has recovered and charted the spread of the Midwestern Muralist movement in the 1960s and ’70s, anchored by the legacy of Diego Rivera in Detroit and David Alfaro Siqueiros in Chicago. The documents in this section also highlight the engagement of Latino and Chicano artists in the Civil Rights movement, the actions of university



student groups and collectives across the region and the importance of the graphic tradition established by Argentinean artist Mauricio Lasansky, who was one of the first artists to develop a printmaking workshop at a university (the University of Iowa).

Texts included in the archive are by or about important art critics and historians, including Victor Sorell; artists such as Mario Castillo, Raoul Deal, Mauricio Lasansky, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, and Paul Sierra; artist collectives such as Movimiento Artístico Chicano (MARCH), Association of Latino Brotherhood of Artist (ALBA), and the editorial staff of the journal *Abrazo*; and activists/organizers like Carlos Cortez Koyokuikatl.

Credits

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About the Latin American Art Department and the ICAA at the MFAH

Since its inception in 2001, the Latin American Art Department at the MFAH has acquired more than 400 works of modern and contemporary Latin American art, including a pivotal private collection of 100 works: the Adolpho Leirner Collection of Brazilian Constructive Art, first exhibited in 2007. In addition, major works by Lygia Clark, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Gego, Gyula Kosice, Hélio Oiticica, Xul Solar, Joaquín Torres-García, Cildo Meireles, Luis Jiménez, Daniel Martínez, and Teresa Margolles, among many others, have entered the MFAH collection. Significant exhibitions include *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (2004); *Gego, Between Transparency and the Invisible* (2005); *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* (2006); *Constructing a Poetic Universe: The Diane and Bruce Halle Collection of Latin American Art* (2007); and *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Color in Space and Time* (2011). The department has also established the Partners in Art program with the Fundación Gego in Caracas, the Cruz-Diez Foundation in Paris, and the Brillembourg Capriles Latin American Art Collection in Miami, all of which provide long-term loans to the MFAH for use in exhibitions, research, and publications.

The International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA) was established with the Latin American art department. The center's mission is to pioneer research of the diverse artistic production of Latin American and Latino artists—from Mexico, Central and

South America, the Caribbean, and the United States—and to educate audiences, in order to transform the understanding of Latin American and Latino visual arts while opening new avenues of intercultural dialogue and exchange. Since its inception, the ICAA has organized four international symposia and published 14 books and catalogues.

Media Contacts:

Mary Haus, MFAH Marketing & Communications Director: 713-639-7712/

MHaus@mfah.org

Dana Mattice, MFAH Publicist: 713-639-7516 / DMattice@mfah.org

Lisa Sursavage, MFAH Communications Coordinator: 713-639-7554/

LSursavage@mfah.org

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Tomás Maldonado, *Arturo: revista de artes abstractas*, Summer 1944.

First Issue of the *Revista Senhor*, March 1959. Image courtesy of MFAH © Revista Senhor.

Alberti, Rafael. Letter to León Ferrari. Rome, Italy. April, 1965. Personal Archive of León Ferrari, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Cover of *México en el arte*, no. 6. Mexico City, Mexico. December, 1948.

Dreva, Jerry. *Untitled [Dreva 1977]*, mail art, 1977.