

Historias: Latin American Works on Paper, August 9, 2013-January 5, 2014

Latin America is a vast region, stretching from the Caribbean islands and Mexico to the tip of South America, its narratives spanning its pre-Conquest roots through contemporary challenges and struggles. For much of the region, the 20th century marked a time of constant disruptive change to political and social power. The word *historias*—with its dual meaning of both “histories” and “stories”—evokes the rich cultural histories of Latin America’s diverse populations and the role that storytelling and oral history plays in the transmission of the past.

Latin American art often engages with the search for identity—a search pointed both toward the future, and in forging specific national identities, and back to the past, in remaining faithful to native traditions and indigenous cultures. The artworks in this exhibition engage recorded events in Latin America’s history and the inner narratives they inspire. Some artists take on the history of their people while others forefront personal memory; all are searching for artistic and cultural identity within the wider world. Together, they reveal the art of 20th-century Latin America to be as complex and multifaceted as the *historias* that inspire it.

Special thanks to Veronika Totos, Ph.D. candidate in the department of History of Art and Architecture at Brown University, for her assistance with this exhibition.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Sebastião Salgado
Brazilian, b. 1944
A Moment of Rest, Serra Pelada Mine, 1986
Gelatin silver print
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 1991.103



Sebastião Salgado turns his camera on a wide range of social issues all around the world, from famine in the Sahel region of Africa to war in Angola to working conditions in South America. Salgado’s best-known project focused on the Serra Pelada gold mine in northern Brazil, near the mouth of the Amazon River. At its peak, Serra Pelada employed at least 100,000 workers, making it one of the largest mines in the world. Salgado’s images show the backbreaking and hazardous conditions the miners endure, heightening international awareness of their suffering.

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Javier Silva Meinel
Peruvian, b. 1949
Waca Wacas y Perro, Paucartambo, Cuzco, Peru, 1996
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 1997.103.1

This photograph was taken in Paucartambo, Peru, at the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, an annual three-day festival honoring the Virgin Mary, celebrated since colonial times. Festivities include a mix of pre-Columbian Andean ceremonies and Catholic traditions, with troupes of masked dancers re-enacting traditional stories and historic events in a stylized battle of good and evil.

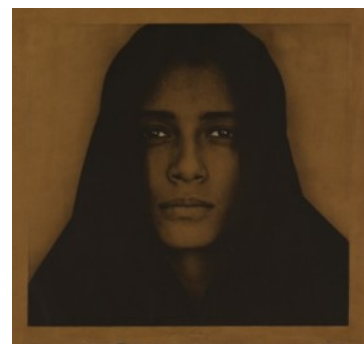
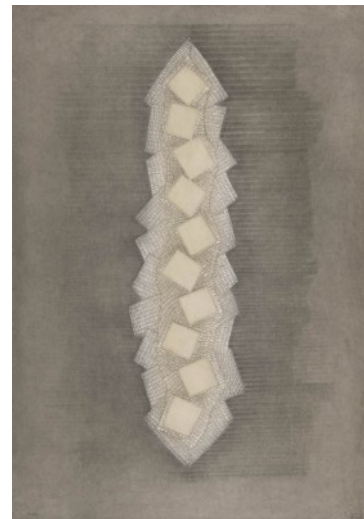
Here Meinel pictures one of these festival troupes, the Waca Wacas or Bulls. By taking the dancers out of the context of the village streets and re-staging them inside his studio, Meinel raises questions about the relationship between ancient indigenous and contemporary traditions.

Arthur Luiz Piza, designer
Brazilian, b. 1928
Exu, ca. 1970
Engraving and embossing
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 1997.33

Many aspects of Afro-Brazilian religious traditions are derived from the Yoruba religion of West Africa. In particular, Yoruban deities, or orishas, are widely worshiped and revered. Exu, the divine messenger between the gods and the humans, is one of the most frequently represented of the orishas. Although Exu is usually presented as a being, Piza depicts him abstractly, as an accumulation of web-like layers and ivory squares that resembles a fissure or opening.

Luis González Palma
Guatemalan, b. 1957
Scott Mathes, printer
Paul Taylor, printer
Renaissance Press, publisher
American
The Silence (El Silencio), 1998
Photogravure with polymer and bitumen
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 1998.49

In his photographs of the Maya people of Guatemala, Luis González Palma uses symbolic iconography to shed light on this group's social, political, and personal plights. Recasting the Virgin Mary as a veiled



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Maya woman, Palma imbues *El Silencio* with all of the connotations of the life of the Virgin as he brings a figure traditionally depicted as a woman of European descent into a Latin American context. The title of the work perhaps refers to the suffering, discrimination, and genocide the Maya often silently have endured for centuries.

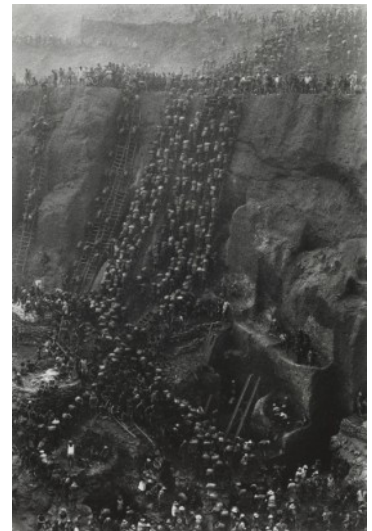
Gerardo Suter
Mexican, born Argentina, b. 1957
Paul Taylor, printer
Renaissance Press, publisher
American
Pages of Days (Tonalamatl), 1991
Photogravure
Gift of Paul Taylor 1999.75



Tonalamatl borrows its title from the ritual calendars of pre-Conquest Mexico. Outlining a 260-day year, these “pages of days” were illustrated with intricate paintings of the day’s reigning deity, with 26 glyphs used to track days of worship and divine the future. Suter’s hybridized page deviates from tradition, however, displaying only 20 glyphs and depicting not an Aztec deity but a naked man whose pose pays homage to Leonardo da Vinci’s *Vitruvian Man* (ca. 1490). This carefully staged image challenges the myth of a pre-Conquest past and its legends, traditions, and gods, now buried in the collective memory.

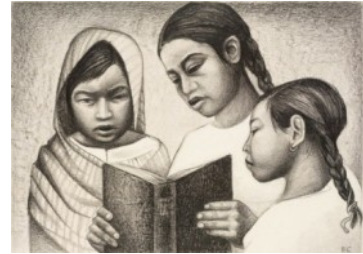
Sebastião Salgado
Brazilian, b. 1944
Serra Pelada, 1986
Gelatin silver print
Gift from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 2001.80.98

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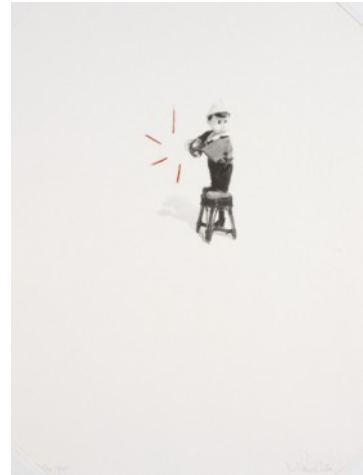
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Elizabeth Catlett
Mexican, b. United States, 1915-2012
The Lesson, ca. 1948
Crayon on paper
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2002.3



Liliana Porter, printmaker
Argentinian, b. 1941
For You, 2001
Lithograph and drypoint
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2002.52.1

In making these prints, Liliana Porter visited flea markets to find vintage toys and mass-produced knick-knacks, in particular those dating to the 1950s, the period of her youth. Isolated by a vast white background, the objects are stripped of their temporal contexts and everyday associations and placed in unusual juxtapositions, resulting in disorienting and absurd vignettes. Such is the case in *The Offering*, in which a toy penguin presents a tiny strip of red rice paper to the geisha printed on porcelain plate.



Liliana Porter
Argentinian, b. 1941
The Conversation, 2001
Lithograph and drypoint
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2002.52.2

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RISD MUSEUM

Liliana Porter

Argentinian, b. 1941

10:08 A.M., 2001

Lithograph and drypoint on paper

Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2002.52.3

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Liliana Porter, printmaker

Argentinian, b. 1941

The Offering, 2001

Lithograph, drypoint, and collage

Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2002.52.4

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RISD MUSEUM

Milagros de la Torre
Peruvian, b. 1965
Sin Título (Untitled), 1992
Photogravure on Gampi paper
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2003.45.1

Lacking a corporeal presence to give them life and meaning, the clothes and accessories populating these images suggest loss. De la Torre heightens this haunting quality by printing on diaphanous sheets of Japanese paper.

The daughter of a Peruvian police chief who dealt with high-profile drug cases, de la Torre infuses much of her work with memories of a childhood fraught with danger. In her youth, the artist lived under the watch of security guards, took a different route to school every day, and often wore bulletproof clothing—even at home—as a precaution against kidnapping and assassination attempts.



Milagros de la Torre
Peruvian, b. 1965
Sin Título (Untitled), 1992
Photogravure on Gampi paper
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Milagros de la Torre

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Sin Titulo (Untitled), 1992

Photogravure on Gampi paper

Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2003.45.5

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Marcela Taboada

Mexican, b. 1958

Solitude (Soledad), From the series *Women of Clay, Oaxaca, Mexico (Mujeres de Archilla, Oaxaca, Mexico)* 1999

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 2004.81



RISD MUSEUM

Wifredo Lam
Cuban, 1902-1982
Untitled, 1961
Charcoal and pastel touched with white gouache on paper
Gift of Arthur and Sybil Kern 2005.49.2

Wifredo Lam fused his Afro-Cuban roots with the stylistic and philosophical aspects of the French Surrealist movement of the 1920s. Upon returning to Cuba after a long sojourn in Europe, he was particularly inspired by Santería, an African diasporic religion that mixes elements of the Yoruba religion of West Africa with Roman Catholic traditions.

In this drawing, layers of mask-like skeletal faces—some of them animal, others perhaps human—emerge from a black cloud at the center. Dreamlike spectral forms refer to the Surrealists' emphasis on the importance of the subconscious mind, while the figures resemble traditional Yoruban festival and ritual masks, evoking orishas (deities) and the concepts of possession and transformation, integral to Santería rituals.



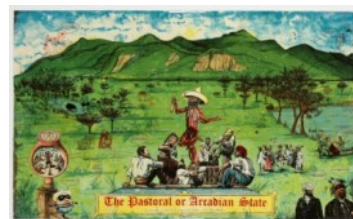
Abelardo Morell
American, b. Cuba, b. 1948
Camera Obscura Image of Havana Looking Southeast in Room with Ladder, 2002
Gelatin silver print
Mary B. Jackson Fund, by exchange 2005.84

During his first trip to Cuba after he and his family fled in 1962, artist Abelardo Morell transformed an entire room into a camera obscura. An optical device that preceded the modern camera, the camera obscura projects an image of its surroundings onto its inside wall, and in Morell's photograph, the cityscape of Havana is superimposed, upside-down, onto objects of personal and cultural significance — a white T-shirt on a hanger, a picture of Christ, a ladder to the attic. By layering the public space outside onto the private indoors, he blurs the lines dividing reality and subjective experience, material and imagined spaces, vision and memory.



Enrique Chagoya
Mexican, b. 1953
The Pastoral or Arcadian State, Illegal Alien's Guide to Greater America, 2006
Color lithograph on handmade ivory amate paper
Gift of Faye Hirsch 2009.113

In this print, Chagoya appropriates imagery from two 19th-century



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sources: George Caleb Bingham's genre painting *The Jolly Flatboatmen* (1846) and Alfred Bierstadt's stately landscapes of the American West. Bingham and Bierstadt both worked during an era of massive waves of European immigration to the existing United States and its western territories. Chagoya also integrates motifs from pre-Columbian mythology, Christian religious iconography, and American pop culture, placing today's debate about illegal immigration into a deeper historical context. His sarcastic take on history is presented on traditional amate paper, used in the Aztec Empire before the Spanish Conquest and later banned by colonial authorities.

José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

The Burial, From the portfolio *25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca*.

1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.12



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

Bullfighters, From the portfolio *25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca*.

1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.14



RISD MUSEUM

José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

Frightened by a Ghost, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.16



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

Portrait, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca.

1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.18



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

Gambler, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca.

1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.19



RISD MUSEUM

José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

Illustration for a Song, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.2



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

The Veterinary, From the portfolio, 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1891-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.23



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

To Die Dreaming, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.25



RISD MUSEUM

José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

The Sweepers, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1980-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.7



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

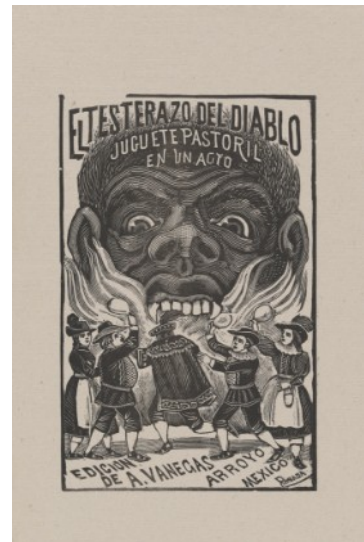
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

Testing the Devil, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.8



José Guadalupe Posada, designer

Mexican, 1852-1913

Taller de Grafica Popular, printer

Mexican, ca. 1942

La Estampa Mexicana, publisher

Mexican, active 20th century

The Quack Doctor, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Jose Guadalupe Posadaca. 1890-1910

Wood engraving

RISD Transfer 52.032.9



RISD MUSEUM

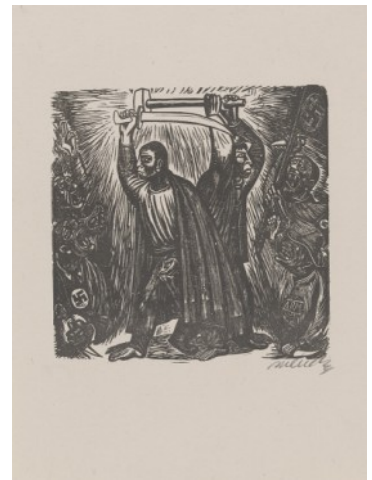
Leopoldo Méndez
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*Newsboys, from the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving on paper
RISD Transfer 52.033.11



Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*Street Meeting, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.12



Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*Illustration for a Popular Song, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.13



RISD MUSEUM

Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*The Peoples Revenge, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.25



Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*Landowner, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.4



Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*Fool's Concert, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.5



RISD MUSEUM

Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*An Accident, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.7



Leopoldo Méndez, designer
Mexican, 1902-1969
La Estampa Mexicana, publisher
Mexican, active 20th century
*The Symphonic Concert of Skeletons, From the portfolio 25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*1943
Wood engraving
RISD Transfer 52.033.8



Diego Rivera
Mexican, 1886-1957
Self-portrait (Autorretrato), 1930
Color lithograph
Museum Works of Art Fund 52.315



RISD MUSEUM

Roberto Matta
Chilean, 1911-2002
Abstraction, ca. 1948
Oil and charcoal
Gift of Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim 54.189

Roberto Matta once described his imagery as “the subconscious in its

burning, liquid state.” He preferred to work spontaneously, using a stream-of-consciousness method that he and fellow Surrealists referred to as “automatic drawing.” Rather than planning out a composition in advance, he left much of it to chance.

In the 1940s and 50s, Matta divided his time between the U.S., Europe, and South America, and it was during this period that his work increasingly reflected world politics. In *Abstraction*, the planes appear menacing, with jagged red protrusions that give them a beast-like quality. They loom over a female figure lying supine in the foreground, bringing to mind the horrors of the air raids of WWII and the massive loss of civilian life during that turbulent time.

Carlos Mérida
Guatemalan, 1891-1985
Kavec, Nihau y Alam, 1966
Pastel and encaustic
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 66.156

As demonstrated by *The Race*, shown on the adjacent wall, Carlos Mérida’s work from the 1930s reflects an interest in Surrealist-influenced imagery. His style shifted following a trip to Europe in 1950 to study Venetian mosaic techniques, and with the adoption of a geometric style indebted to Synthetic Cubism and Constructivism. Mérida’s Mayan heritage, however, played a strong role in all of his work, as he sought to create a visual language that fused European modernism and his native roots.

José Clemente Orozco, designer
Mexican, 1883-1949
Parade, 1935
Lithograph
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 66.319

Orozco honed his skills in caricature and political satire by working as a cartoonist, but despite his commitment to the creation of a more just society, he refused to limit his art to a single ideology. Orozco lived in the United States for five and a half years, returning to Mexico in 1934. In the paintings and prints created after his return, Orozco presented a scathing indictment of post-Revolutionary



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Mexico. Parade warns of the dangers of a directionless radicalization of the masses. The crowds marching for an unidentified goal carry generalized banners of protest, hinting that revolutionary fervor may not always lead to a truly better society.

Roberto Aizenberg

Argentinian, 1928 - 1996

*Seated Figure, From the series In Memory of Juan Batlle Planas (En memoria de Juan Batlle Planas)*1966

Colored pencil and graphite on wove paper

Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 68.055

Roberto Aizenberg's dual interests in architecture and Surrealism are manifest in these two drawings. In *Seated Figure*, the elongated, columnar torso and legs blur the boundaries between figure, sculpture, and architecture. Depending on the viewer's perspective, *Monumento* simultaneously resembles an architectural plan and a two-dimensional rendering of sculptural forms. Despite the surreal nature of his images, Aizenberg said they were fueled by neither fantasy nor imagination, but by the realities of human experience.



Roberto Aizenberg

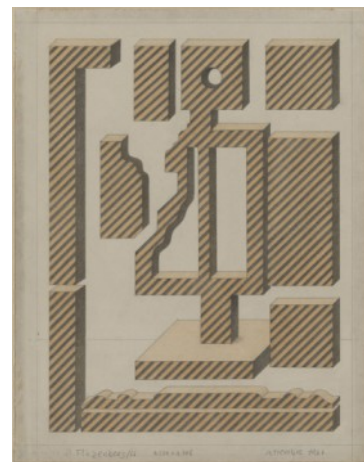
Argentinian, 1928 - 1996

*Monumento, From the series In Memory of Juan Batlle Planas (En memoria de Juan Batlle Planas)*1966

Colored pencil and graphite on wove paper

Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 68.056

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RISD MUSEUM

Antonio Henrique Abeu Amaral, designer
Brazilian, b. 1935
Latin-American Pastime (Passatempo Latino-Americano), 1967
Woodcut
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 68.066

In 1964, Brazilian leader João Goulart was overthrown in a coup d'état and replaced with a military regime whose political policies were closely aligned with those of the United States. In *Passatempo Latino-Americano*, a two-headed man decorated in military medals fires his gun aimlessly as he rides backwards on a donkey, all against the backdrop of an American flag. That this grotesque figure lacks purpose and intent is further emphasized by the work's sarcastic title, which suggests that the mindless violence perceived as a Latin American "pastime" has its roots in U.S. policies.



Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt)
Venezuelan, b. Germany, 1912 - 1994
Maurice Sanchez, printer
American, 20th century
Tamarind Lithography Workshop, publisher
Untitled, 1966
Lithograph
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 70.040



Guillermo Silva Santamaria, designer
Colombian, 1921 - 2007
Crucifixion (Crucifixión), El Hombre Contra El Hombre 1960
Color etching, aquatint, engraving, and drypoint
Museum Collection 77.147.11



Guillermo Silva Santamaria, designer
Colombian, 1921 - 2007
Execution by Firing Squad (Fusilamiento), El Hombre Contra El Hombre 1960
Color etching, aquatint, engraving, and drypoint
Museum Collection 77.147.4



RISD MUSEUM

Fernando La Rosa
Peruvian, b. 1943
Lima, 1974
Gelatin silver print
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 78.181



Fernando La Rosa
Peruvian, b. 1943
Lima, 1978
Gelatin silver print
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 78.182



Jésus Rafael Soto, designer
Venezuelan, 1923 - 2005
Jai-Alai, 1969
Screenprint on Plexiglas
Gift of Mr. Steven Sohacki 79.163.1



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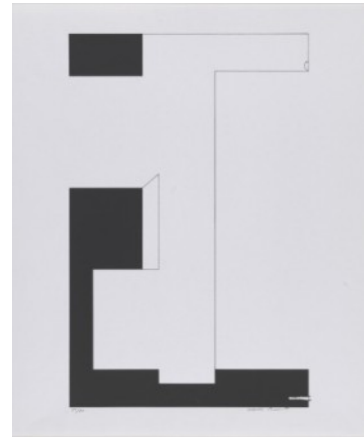
Jésus Rafael Soto, designer
Venezuelan, 1923 - 2005
Jai-Alai, 1969
Screenprint on Plexiglas
Gift of Mr. Steven Sohacki 79.163.2



Antonio Seguí, designer
Argentinian, b. 1934
Untitled, 1965
Color lithograph
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Sonnabend 80.044



Wanda Pimentel, designer
Brazilian, b. 1943
Genaro Rodrigues, printer
Brazilian
Lithos Edições de Arte Ltda, publisher
Brazilian
Guilherme Rodrigues, printer
Brazilian
*Untitled, From the portfolio 10 Serigraphs by Award-Winning Artists
of the Summer Salon (10 Serigrafias Artistas Premiados Salão de
Verão)1975*
Screenprint on wove paper
Gift of Mr. John C. A. Watkins 80.137.10



Carlos Mérida
Guatemalan, 1891-1985
The Race, 1932
Watercolor over graphite on paper
Anonymous gift 81.178



RISD MUSEUM

Jesus Sanchez Uribe
Mexican, b. 1948
En Tepetlixpa, 1976
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Aaron Siskind 84.186.39

