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# Latin America and the United States. Aesthetic and Institutional Fluctuations in the Context of the Arts (1939–1960)

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## **Abstract**

This article aims to provide a basic framework to enable the analysis of various issues related to the artistic exchanges between Latin America and the United States in the context of “Pan-Americanism”, from the outbreak of World War II to the early 1960s. We will attempt to reveal, in a succinct and necessarily general manner, an extremely complex web of issues, eras, places and aesthetics, involving multiple figures and institutions from the entire American continent, who were motivated by very different political, economic, and cultural interests. Various exhibitions and publications from this era bear witness to these exchanges and the

fluctuations occurring within this web of relationships, which were not always easy.

**KEYWORDS:** Latin American art, Cold War politics and art, US art

When analyzing the role played by the United States vis-à-vis aesthetic matters in Latin America from the outbreak of World War II to the early 1960s,<sup>1</sup> we can generally and distinguish between two phases. The first, which developed during World War II, is characterized by US support and the recognition of an art underpinned by social and identity issues, with a leftist slant, the emphasis being on an intention to clamp down on totalitarianism. The second phase leads from the end of the 1940s to the beginning of the 1960s, when abstract trends—and especially Informel—gain the upper hand.

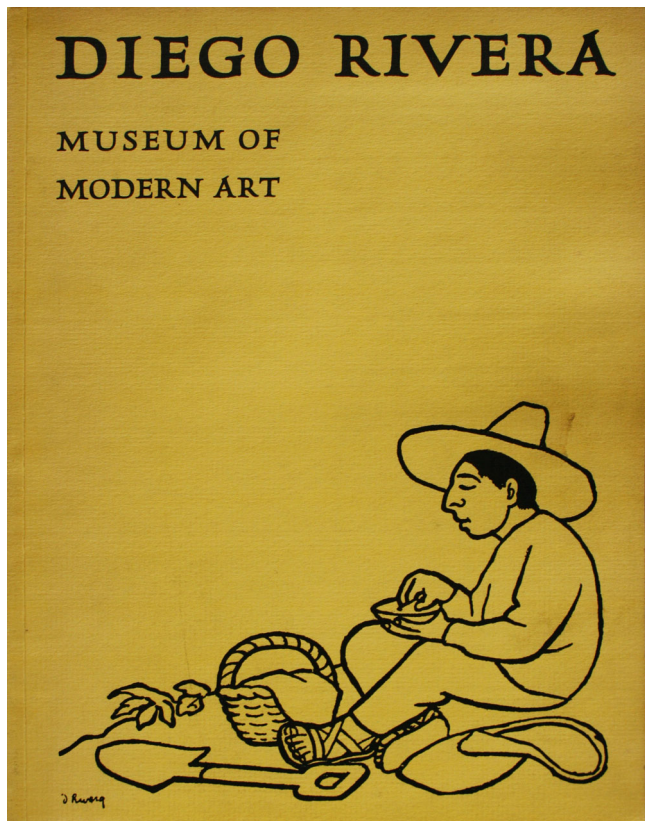
The United States had previously embarked on a plan of action intended to build greater trust and strengthen ties with Latin American countries, as well as to allay resentments and suspicions of the interventionist and appropriative policies that had been implemented following the Monroe Doctrine in 1823.<sup>2</sup> The so-called “Good Neighbor Policy” was the starting point; the policy was introduced by President Herbert Hoover on a goodwill trip to ten Latin American countries and consolidated by Franklin D. Roosevelt following his inauguration in March 1933.<sup>3</sup> The idea of continental unity was based on the fact that the nations of the American continent were former colonies, which had been dominated by European powers, but there was also an underlying unifying strategy in the US treatment of Latin America as a “whole”, which would allow the United States to focus their energy and avoid the dispersion and therefore multiplication of potential bilateral relationships.

For this purpose, within culture and especially art, there was a push to promote the organization of exhibitions of US art throughout the rest of the continent, as well as exhibitions of Latin American art on US soil. Latin American intellectuals and artists were also funded to visit the United States, giving them the opportunity to hold lectures there, to become acquainted with museum institutions and other collections, and to meet with the authorities.

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York came to play a landmark role in this context, spearheading the direction of this exhibition scene by capitalizing on Latin America’s trust in its artistic reputation.<sup>4</sup> The era was characterized by the formation and consolidation of Latin American art holdings, as exemplified by MoMA, which hosted the exhibitions *New Acquisitions: Latin American Art* (1942) and *The Latin-American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (1943) only a little over a decade after opening its doors. Founded in 1929, the museum dedicated a solo show to Mexican artist Diego Rivera in 1931,

**Figure 1.**

*Diego Rivera*, 1931, exhibition catalog, The Museum of Modern Art, NY. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

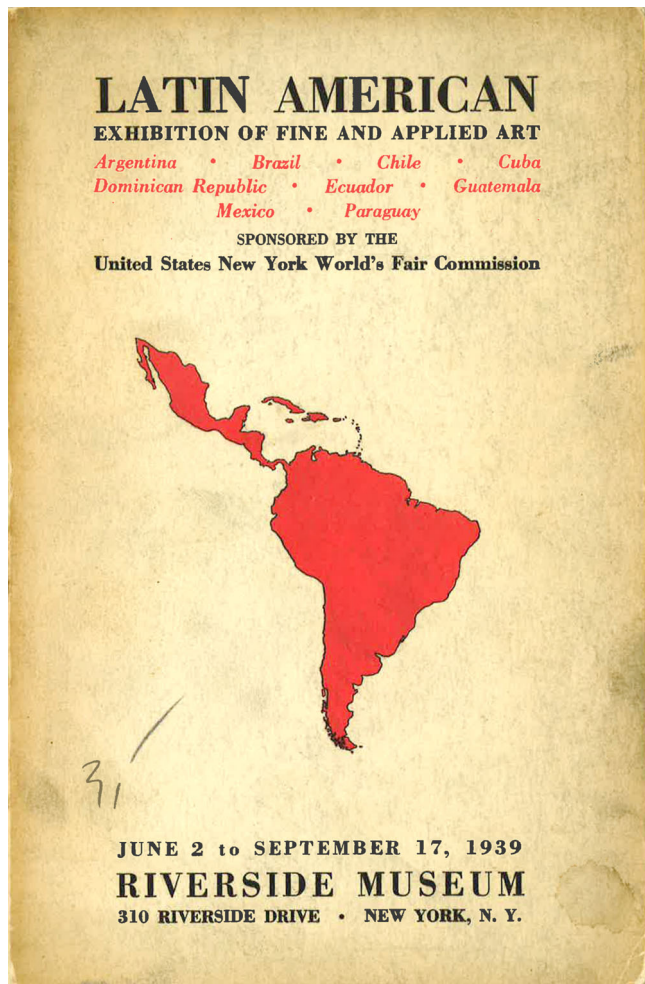


followed in 1933 by *American Sources of Modern Art*, an exhibition incorporating pre-Columbian art from US collections, contemporary Mexican art, and contemporary US art rooted in Mexican traditions. At this time, Mexican Muralism was becoming a reference for the United States due to the useful social-realist iconography it offered in an era of economic depression. During those years, the museum's acquisitions consisted predominantly of Mexican painting, as well as works by other Latin American artists, such as Brazil's Cândido Portinari,<sup>5</sup> and Argentina's Antonio Berni. It was in this era that the driving force and director of MoMA, Alfred J. Barr, began work on his "torpedo" diagrams to illustrate the genealogy of modern art, culminating in US as well as Mexican art.<sup>6</sup> As we will see, however, this paradigm with regard to the presence of Mexico would be gradually phased out (Figure 1).

An important year in this process of exchange was 1939. One of its focal points was the World's Fair in New York, which included the participation of several Latin American countries with specially designed

**Figure 2.**

*Latin American Exhibition of Fine and Applied Art* (New York: Riverside Museum, 1939). Author's collection.

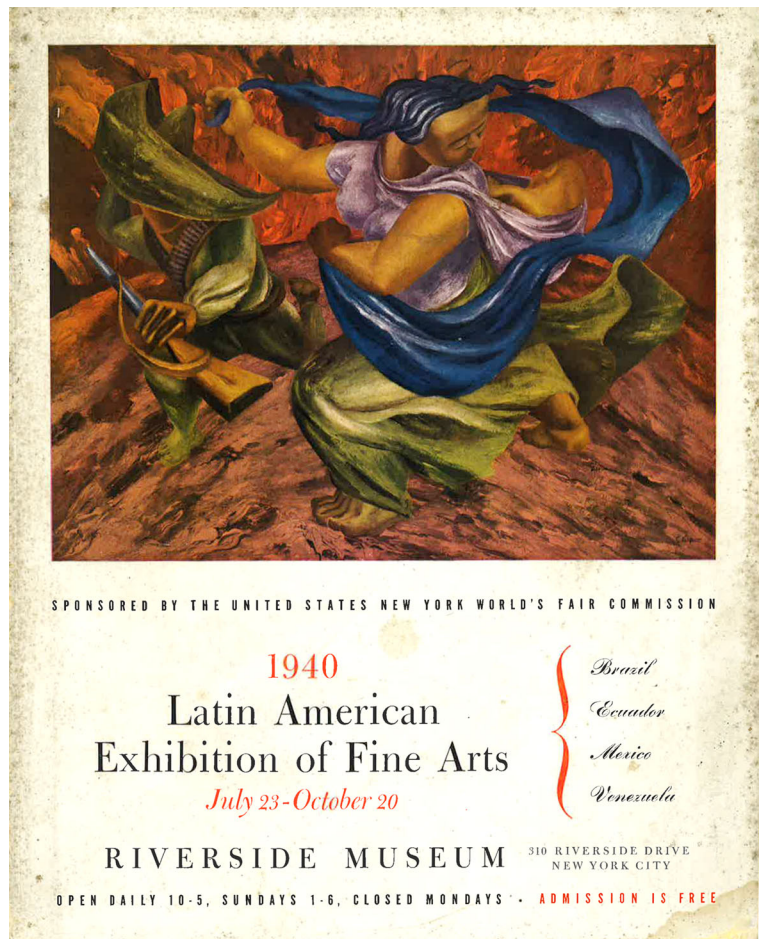


pavilions amid a strong presence of contemporary art. Other exhibitions that were held in this pivotal year included the *Latin American Exhibition of Fine and Applied Art* at New York's Riverside Museum, from June to December 1939 (Figure 2). This museum also hosted the *Latin American Exhibition of Fine Arts* from July to October 1940, a major show that limited its contents to just four countries: Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela (Figure 3). In all these exhibitions, regionalist overtones continued to dominate. This was also the year that MoMA showed *20 Years of Mexican Art*, which filled the entire museum and took place in a wider context of exhibitions dedicated to specific countries, such as, in the following year, the *Chilean Contemporary Art Exhibition* at the Toledo Museum of Art (Figure 4)



**Figure 3.**

*Latin American Exhibition of Fine Arts*  
(New York: Riverside Museum,  
1940). Author's collection.



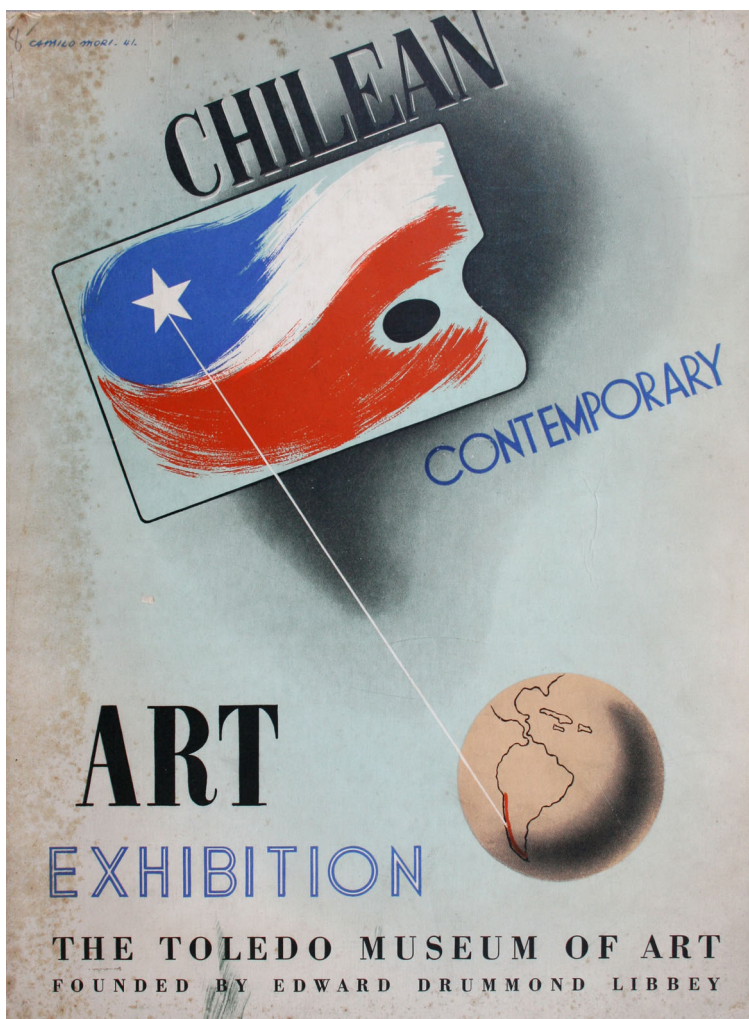
and *Arte Argentino Contemporáneo*, which toured various cities in the country.

Paris fell to the Nazis in June 1940. In August of the same year, Franklin D. Roosevelt (US President from 1933 to 1945) formed a new agency promoting inter-American relations, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), which was tasked with supporting programs to drive commercial and cultural exchange with Latin American nations. The business man and philanthropist Nelson Rockefeller was appointed as the head of this office, which could thus take advantage of his connections to Latin America.<sup>7</sup>

From 1941, there were two exhibitions from the permanent collection of the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM): one focusing on contemporary art, and another on graphic art from the “Western

**Figure 4.**

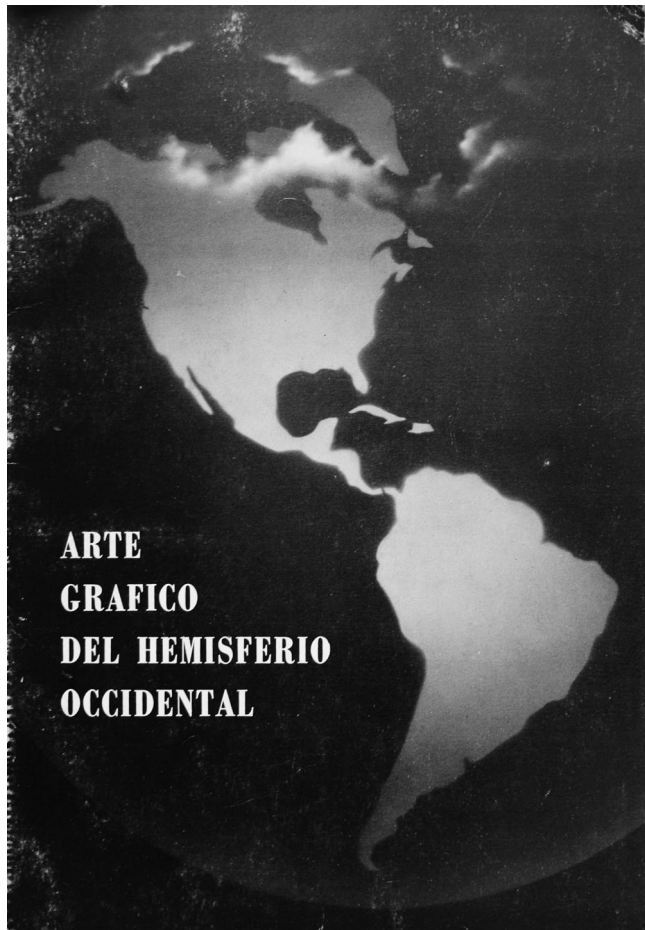
*Chilean Contemporary Art Exhibition*  
(Toledo: Toledo Museum of Art,  
1941). Author's collection.



Hemisphere” (Figure 5), a term intentionally appropriated here in the interests of furthering the Pan-Americanist cause. Originating at the New York and San Francisco exhibitions in 1939 and the Canadian National Exhibition in 1940, the IBM shows were earmarked for a tour of various countries throughout the continent. The preface to the first catalogue, signed by IBM President Thomas J. Watson, reads: “We in the United States feel a strong sense of hemisphere pride when we reflect on the achievements of our neighbors... This exhibition represents the third phase of our company’s plan to stimulate a closer relationship between business and art.”<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 5.**

*Arte Gráfico del hemisferio occidental.* (New York: International Business Machines Corporation, 1941), unnumbered. Author's collection.



Between May and December 1941, the *Exposición de pintura contemporánea norteamericana* was shown in ten Latin American capital cities.<sup>9</sup> The final month of this tour coincided with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor (Hawaii), which prompted the United States to join the war. Funds allocated to promoting cultural relations between the US and Latin America, specifically in the arts, declined in this new scenario. In the following year, Nelson Rockefeller used his own fortune to establish the Inter American Fund with a view to acquiring almost two hundred Latin American artworks.

The Mexican art exhibition at MoMA in 1940 was followed by *Brazil Builds. Architecture New and Old, 1652–1942*, another highly memorable show charting the course of Brazil's architecture from the colonial era to the modern day. Formed of a series of photographs by George Kidder Smith, *Brazil Builds* occupied an entire floor of the museum. The show marked a crucial moment in the consolidation of modern Brazilian architecture at international level and kickstarted a



series of exhibitions to be held chiefly in European capital cities. The construction of Brasilia (1956–1960), with its dual urbanistic and architectural aspect, could be described as the culmination of this process.

One event that is usually overlooked in the historiographical narrative is the *United Hemisphere Posters* competition, which MoMA organized in 1942 (Figure 6). As has been noted:

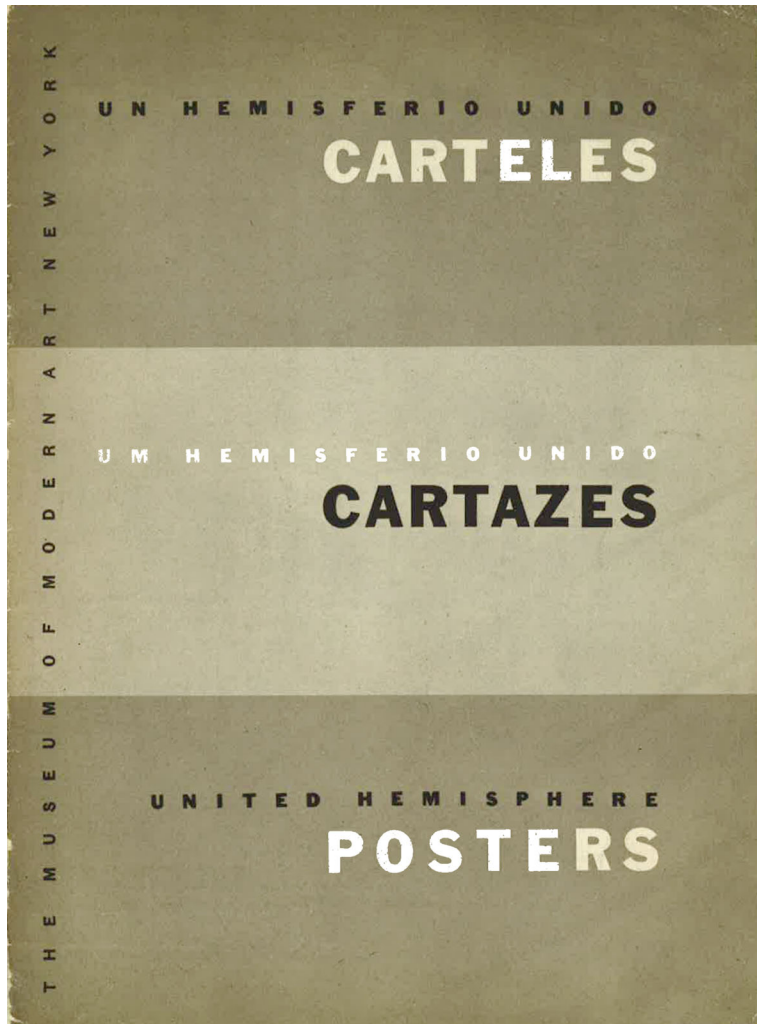
the museum proposed twelve themes, which the artists were invited to use as the basis for their posters. The explicit aim of the exhibition was to express the sense of unity in the hemisphere and the shared fighting spirit against Nazi aggression, through the pictorial expression of ‘the resolve of the American nations to remain free’.<sup>10</sup>

The designs feature such slogans as “Unámonos contra la agresión” (Unite Against Aggression), “Una sola América, una sola acción” (One America, One Movement), “América unida es la paz del mundo” (A United America is World Peace), “Hands Off the Americas”, and “Fight for a Free America”. Interestingly, the introduction to the catalog makes a very clear distinction between the entries from the US and Canada and the posters submitted from Latin America: “On the whole the greater professional skill and method appeared in the posters from the United States; but greater fecundity of imagination was to be found in those from Latin America, even in certain contributions of avowed amateurs and child artists.”<sup>11</sup>

Lincoln Kirstein carried out important work in building and strengthening MoMA’s collection of Latin American art during this same period, particularly in the case of South America. He traveled around the region, visiting institutions and artists’ studios to conduct research and make a series of acquisitions. His selections revealed a penchant for figurative art, especially for pieces that explored what we might understand in terms of ‘cultural identity’, the native, the national, the kind of art that could perhaps attest to a common “Americanist” spirit: for instance, landscapes, traditions, and forms linked to Social Realism, which, as we know, was a dominant trend in the case of Mexican art. The aim of these activities was to reinforce the ideas of Pan-Americanism at a time when the concept of a ‘whole America’ was still intact and before the process of disintegration was underway. This process would become more noticeable from the mid-1940s, first with the division between North America (or simply America, the United States’ appropriation of the continental denomination) and Latin America, portrayed as a simplified regional unit.<sup>12</sup> In this scenario there was virtually no place for abstract painting, which was regarded as merely decorative. All of this helped to create a determinedly biased image of Latin American art, consolidating an ideology that, even until the 1990s, would remain (intentionally) ingrained in the beliefs of many US art

**Figure 6.**

*Un Hemisferio unido carteles* = *Um hemisferio unido cartazes* = *United hemisphere posters*, exhibition catalog, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1942. Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.



critics, some of whom were linked to the *Art of the Fantastic* exhibition (1987), an event that again placed the emphasis on the “sabor”, or flavor of Latin American art as opposed to its “saber”, i.e. the knowledge it contained; as far as these critics were concerned, the latter was still the domain of the mainstream.

Alfred J. Barr, like Kirstein, traveled to Mexico and Cuba on assignment. It was in Cuba in 1942 where Barr came into contact with José Gómez Sicre, with whom he would plan an exhibition of Cuban painting to be held at MoMA in 1944. Unlike the previous Latin American exhibitions (Mexico in 1940, Brazil in 1942, and the collection of Latin American art in 1943), this exhibition was not accompanied by a major

catalog, only a small pamphlet was published. To some extent, Gómez Sicre's *Pintura cubana de hoy* (Figure 7) served as a catalog. Turning our attention to Mexico, Barr and René D'Harnoncourt supported the foundation of the first *Sociedad de Arte Moderno* (SAM) in 1944. This modern art society, based on the model of private US foundations,<sup>13</sup> promoted a series of exhibitions in the following years, including Picasso's first show in Mexico, an exhibition of Mexican masks, and a collection of works by the photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo.<sup>14</sup> Incidentally, D'Harnoncourt would also serve as MoMA's director between 1949 and 1967.

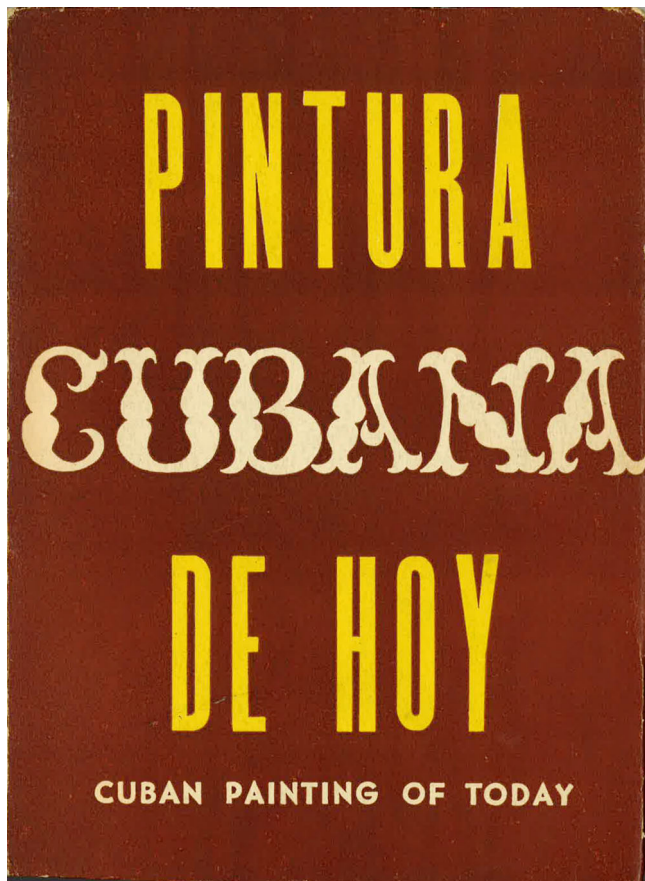
From the end of World War II, MoMA played a key part in configuring the new "Western canon", a discourse that revolved around the offerings from Europe and North America. Mexican art disappeared from Alfred J. Barr's chart of arrows, and there was no longer any possibility for Latin American art, in its manifold forms, to enter the narrative: around this time, the US focused on cementing the concept of "American art", which referred exclusively to art produced in North America and thus clearly signaled the country's appropriation of the term "America" for its own agenda, disregarding the rest of the continent. Latin America, meanwhile, remained bound to the aesthetics of identity and nationalism to which it had been circumscribed in earlier years. With the gradual promotion of Abstract Expressionism as an absolute dogma taking precedence over the "antiquated and ideologically manipulated language of figuration,"<sup>15</sup> forms of expression linked to Social Realism, especially Mexican Muralism, fell out of favor and were pushed into the background. The former admiration of this art gave way to explicit rejection, which intensified in subsequent years.

Abstract art became associated with capitalism and economic liberalism, serving as a vital cog in the diplomatic machinery promoted by the OAS (Organization of the American States) (promoted and targeted at its member countries. It might be said, with the necessary nuances, that the United States attempted—and in some cases succeeded—to impose a neo-colonialist regime in Latin America through art. The exhibitions served the US as real instruments of propaganda, with a view to exporting its brand to the rest of the continent. Based on the Western-centric hegemonic perspective, the establishment of this canon turned the Latin American art into a subsidiary deriving from the mainstream, in other words, it denied Latin American art the possibility of originality.

José Gómez Sicre's interference as an agent of Latin American art in the US gradually grew over the years. In 1945, the curator and critic joined the Pan American Union to work on an archive of artistic activities in the region. Two years later he was appointed Chief of the PAU's Visual Arts Section, aligning himself with the formalism tendency promoted by Clement Greenberg in the US and the idea of promoting this approach within Latin American artworks, thereby moving away from the proposals for Mexican Muralism or *indigenismo* typical of the

**Figure 7.**

José Gómez Sicre, *Pintura cubana de hoy/Cuban Painting of Today* (La Habana: María Luisa Gómez Mena, 1944). Author's collection.



Andean region. Instead, he favored *purifying* paths of modernization through an essentially depoliticized and formalist art, which would enable a more suitable means of accessing the international arena through a kind of “art without frontiers”. He would not hesitate to announce:

To some, Latin American art is the carnival-type, descriptive and superficial pictorial chronicle of South American people and customs that appeal to visiting tourists. This limited concept can damage the reputation of valid Latin American art among serious collectors everywhere. Possibly an explanation for this continuing concept of a picturesque art with no hope of evolution rests in the failure (within various countries) to establish a set of artistic values that recognizes and includes—rather than ignores—some of the interesting new art movements.<sup>16</sup>

The Organization of American States (OAS) was formed in April 1948, during the Ninth International Conference of American States in Bogotá, Colombia. José Gómez Sicre subsequently broadened his remit in the context of the Pan American Union to include research, gathering literature, advising collectors from the United States, and preparing publications and press releases. He was also responsible for promoting the circulation of art around the American continent by way of exhibitions and sales. In this sense, Gómez Sicre became a true art entrepreneur.

Aligned with MoMA's aesthetic policies, he began to show a preference for abstraction (although most of the exhibitions he organized through the Pan American Union were of figurative art)<sup>17</sup> with a particular emphasis on Lyrical Abstraction, as evidenced by the covers of several publications he promoted at the PAU, including the *Boletín de artes visuales* (23 issues published between 1956 and 1973), a biannual bulletin with a print run of 3,500 copies (Figure 8). These covers clearly demonstrate Gómez Sicre's support for the concept of "international" art—as opposed to "universal" art—,<sup>18</sup> which, in the Latin American case, was to be expressed through a "local accent". Gómez Sicre recognized that it is impossible to unify art from all parts of the continent, to universalize a necessarily divergent interpretation. He promoted the publication of the *Art in Latin America Today* series, consisting of ten pamphlets dedicated to art from ten different countries from 1959 to 1969 (Figure 9), and the *Art of the Americas Bulletin* (Figure 10), published on an annual basis from 1966 to 1969. Many of the aforementioned publications confirmed these same aesthetic premises.

The response to this new situation was a kind of entrenchment of the so-called Mexican School (which declared itself the only way out "of the terrible labyrinth of abstract art"), a process that involved a counter-attack consisting of a considerable number of international exhibitions of Mexican art in the 1950s. These exhibitions were held chiefly in Europe—from the 1950 Venice Biennale to the Universal Exhibition in Brussels in 1958—and assembled by the museologist Fernando Gamboa.<sup>19</sup> Another major event held in 1958 was the *Primera Bienal Interamericana en México*. Financed by the Mexican government itself, the biennial was intended to compete with the *São Paulo Bienal* and its staunch support of abstract strains in collusion with MoMA.<sup>20</sup> It also aimed to present a line of resistance against the *Bienales Hispanoamericanas* (Hispano-American Biennials) organized by the Franco regime, as well as to challenge the imperialist agendas that Gómez Sicre was pushing at the Pan American Union.<sup>21</sup>

Gómez Sicre's omnipresence was also a topic of discussion in other countries. An excerpt from a Colombian newspaper published in 1959 reads:

Mr Gómez Sicre constantly visits the countries of Latin America in a stealthy, swift manner to show favor to certain rising stars, disregarding other figures that could contend well on the same



**Figure 8.**

*Boletín de artes visuales*  
(Washington: Pan American Union,  
1956–1973). Author's collection.



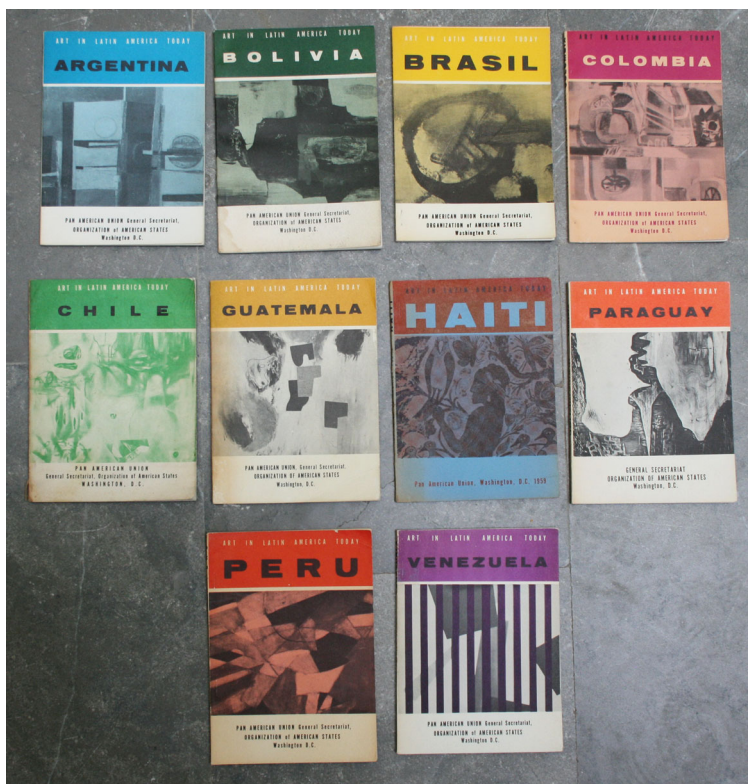
level. An enormous machine operates in service of these objectives, with agents and collaborators all over the American continent. This system allows the chosen [artists] to gain rapid recognition, grants, and fame by means of the major American events at the Guggenheim, Houston, and now also São Paulo.<sup>22</sup>

One factor that deserves attention, although we are not going to look at it in great detail here, is the presence of the Organization of American States (OAS) and specifically Gómez Sicre at various editions of the *São Paulo Bienal*, a subject that Alessandro Armato<sup>23</sup> has explored extensively. Armato's research tells us that Gómez Sicre was in charge of curating the Cuban shipment for the first three editions of the biennial, and that from the second edition of the biennial he reviewed his own contacts to draw up lists of suitable modern artists from all over the continent to participate in the event. He also held sway over the acquisition of Latin American artists for the Museo de Arte Moderno de São Paulo (MAM-SP), which was founded by business magnate Francisco Matarazzo with the technical support of MoMA.

From the third edition of the biennial in 1955, Gómez Sicre succeeded in establishing a separate space for the Pan American Union, which he in turn used as a platform to promote the artists for whom he organized exhibitions and sales of artworks from Washington. The PAU

**Figure 9.**

*Art in Latin America Today*  
(Washington: Pan American Union,  
1959–1969). Author's collection.



section was directed by Sicre until the 9<sup>th</sup> *São Paulo Bienal* in 1967, by which time the space had become completely surplus to requirements on account of its outdated aesthetic proposals. It was also, of course, marred by the end of the Pan-American era, with the rise in leftist militancy bolstered by the success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, and, in Brazil's case, the appointment of Trotskyist intellectual and critic Mario Pedrosa as artistic director of the 6<sup>th</sup> *São Paulo Bienal* (1961).<sup>24</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> *São Paulo Bienal* provided the backdrop for a significant event: Gómez Sicre's meeting with Marta Traba,<sup>25</sup> an Argentine art critic who had been based in Colombia since 1954.<sup>26</sup> Traba coordinated the country's shipment and would serve as an exceptional ally in Sicre's effort to diminish the influence of Mexican muralism. Their encounter therefore marked the beginning of a strong partnership.<sup>27</sup> Traba claimed: "Mexican Muralism became deeply embedded in the continent like a malignant tumor, but the whole world welcomed it and recognized it as a symptom of good health, and for twenty years it was decreed, without appeal, that Latin American vitality would be conveyed according to its formulas."<sup>28</sup>

**Figure 10.**

*Art of the Americas Bulletin*  
(Washington: Pan American Union,  
1966–1969). Author's collection.



Gómez Sicre and Traba worked together on the launches of important inter-American museums of modern art in Cartagena de Indias and in Barranquilla—in 1959 and 1960 respectively<sup>29</sup>—and Sicre commissioned Traba to produce the monograph dedicated to Colombia in the *Art in Latin America Today* series (1959). This all serves as evidence of a collaboration that would continue until the mid-1960s, at which point the duo's paths began to diverge: the Cuban remained within his Formalist guardrails while Marta Traba branched out and moved away from North American parameters, gradually elaborating a concept of *arte de resistencia* (resistance art) for Latin America.<sup>30</sup>

Alessandro Armato speaks of a blow to Gómez Sicre's authority and the "gradual decline of his influence on Latin American art". It is also important to remember that, as Sicre himself also conceded, being based in Washington was not the same as working in New York, the true epicenter of the action. According to Armato:

...the Cuban public official remained an important figure during the first half of the 1960s; however, his staunch anti-Castroism—beginning when Fidel aligned himself with Moscow—and his membership of an institution like the OAS, which was strongly aligned with US policy during the Cold War, were making him politically isolated in a region which had experienced a surge of pro-Cuban enthusiasm, especially among intellectuals. If we also consider Gómez Sicre's proven attachment to traditional media such as drawing and painting, combined with his outright

rejection of the new forms of expression gathering momentum towards the mid-1960s, we gain a fuller picture of why this figure, who was once so central, was gradually relegated to the sidelines.<sup>31</sup>

In her assessment of the significance of the 1960s for Latin American art, Marta Traba refers to this period as the “decade of submission”,<sup>32</sup> in contrast to Thomas M. Messer, Director of the Guggenheim Museum New York, who prefers to call it the “emergent decade”,<sup>33</sup> while Juan Acha defines these years in terms of a “North Americanization, with its pressure on our arts,” and he speaks of a Latin American “developmentalism, which absorbed everything new from New York”.<sup>34</sup> Perspective was everything in the perception of reality.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Notes

1. Claire F. Fox, *Making Art Panamerican: Cultural Policy and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Andrea Matallana, *Nelson Rockefeller y la diplomacia del arte en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 2021). These books are essential resources for understanding, exploring and expanding upon the issues addressed in this paper.
2. President James Monroe’s doctrine invoked the idea of “America for Americans”; in reality, however, this declaration referred not to the inhabitants of the continent as a whole, but only to people from the United States. Roughly speaking, this marked the beginning of the appropriation of the term “Americans” as a label intended exclusively for those from North America. The Monroe Doctrine dictated that any European interference in the American continent would be regarded as an act of aggression against the United States, with the latter adopting a clearly paternalistic stance or acting in the self-appointed role of “big brother”.
3. Fabiana Serviddio, “Los murales de Portinari en la Sala Hispánica de la Biblioteca del Congreso de los EE.UU.: construcción plástica de una identidad panamericana,” in *Cuadernos del CILHA*, año 12, núm. 14 (Mendoza: Centro Interdisciplinario de Literatura Hispanoamericana, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, 2011): 126.
4. See: Fabiana Serviddio, “Relatos nacionales y regionales en la creación de la colección latinoamericana del MoMA,” in *A contracorriente*, Vol. 16 No. 3 (Raleigh: North Carolina State

- University, Spring 2019), 380; Serviddio, 2019a: 380; Eva Cockcroft, “The United States and socially concerned Latin American art,” in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920–1970*, ed. Luis Carcel (New York: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1989), 184–221; Miriam Basilio, “Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibiting Work by Artists from Latin America,” in *Latin American & Caribbean Art. MoMA at El Museo*, ed. Miriam Basilio et al (New York: El Museo del Barrio and The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 52–68.
5. Portinari went on to win high-profile commissions in the US, most notably a series of murals for the Hispanic Room at the Library of Congress in Washington (1941), which he completed following a prestigious solo show entitled *Portinari of Brazil* at MoMA in 1940 and, later, the murals at the United Nations building (1953).
  6. Barbara Haskell et al., *Vida Americana. Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925–1945* (New York: Whitney Museum, 2020).
  7. Serviddio, “Relatos nacionales,” 375.
  8. Thomas J. Watson, “Preface,” in *Contemporary Art of the Western Hemisphere* (New York: International Business Machines Corporation, 1941), unnumbered.
  9. Serviddio, “Los murales de Portinari,” 128.
  10. Fabiana Serviddio, “Until we win la guerra. Transformaciones en la obra de Molina Campos a contraluz del panamericanismo,” *Panambí*, Valparaíso, No. 8 (June 2019), 80.
  11. *Un Hemisferio unido carteles = Um hemisferio unido cartazes = United hemisphere posters* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1942).
  12. Gabriela A. Piñero, “El tránsito entre el proyecto de un ‘Arte Americano’ (1920–1930) y la fórmula de un ‘Arte Latinoamericano’ (1950–1970),” *A contracorriente*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Raleigh: North Carolina State University, Winter 2014): 1–21.
  13. Antonio E. De Pedro, “Viviendo en el diseño de lo contradictorio. Marta Traba y el arte latinoamericano en el contexto de la Guerra Fría,” in Antonio E. De Pedro (coord.) *El arte latinoamericano durante la Guerra Fría: figurativos vs. abstractos* (Tunja: Universidad pedagógica y tecnológica de Colombia, 2016), 229–265.
  14. Marina Vázquez Ramos, “La Sociedad de Arte Moderno y el proyecto de unidad continental,” in Dafne Cruz Porchini, Claudia Garay Molina & Mireida Velázquez Torres (coord.), *Diplomacia cultural en México durante la Guerra Fría. Exposiciones y prácticas artísticas, 1946–1968* (Mexico: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2021), 111–121.
  15. De Pedro, “Viviendo en el diseño,” 242.



16. José Gómez Sicre, "Trends—Latin America," *Art in America*, vol. 47, No. 3 (New York, Autumn 1959), 22. Translator's note: consulted in: Giunta, *Vanguardia, internacionalismo y política*, 331.
17. Nadia Moreno Moya, *Arte y juventud. El Salón Esso de artistas jóvenes en Colombia* (Bogotá: Idartes/La Silueta, 2013), 106.
18. Jonathan Harris notes differences between the terms "international" and "universal": the former has American, clearly state-ideological connotations of the Cold War, while "universal" encompasses a wide variety of political perspectives. See: Jonathan Harris, "'Internacional' contra 'Universal'. El pacto posterior a 1945, la modernidad y el futuro global del arte y de la estética del arte," in *Crítica(s) de arte. Discrepancias e hibridaciones de la Guerra Fría a la globalización*, ed. Paula Barreiro López & Julián Díaz Sánchez (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2013), 30.
19. De Pedro, "Viviendo en el diseño," 241–242.
20. It is not insignificant that the 14<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Bienal in 1977 was the first time that the Grand Prize had been awarded to Latin American artists: Argentina's Grupo de los Trece.
21. Fabiola Martínez Rodríguez, "Haciendo frente a la abstracción: las políticas transnacionales de la Escuela Mexicana durante la Guerra Fría (1950's)," in *Atlántico frío. Historias transnacionales del arte y la política en los tiempos del telón de acero*, ed. Paula Barreiro (Madrid: Brumaria, 2019), 410.
22. Meneghetti, Aristides. "La pintura colombiana. Cómo funciona 'la máquina gigantesca' de Gómez Sicre," *El Espectador-Vespertino*, Bogotá (23 June, 1959). Quoted in: Marco Polo Juárez Cruz & Adriana Ospina Jiménez, "Un anfitrión incómodo. José Gómez Sicre y la construcción de la modernidad latinoamericana desde el Museo de Arte de las Américas," XLVI Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2022). Lecture on the YouTube channel of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas (Institute of Aesthetic Research) at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) on 30 September, 2022.
23. Alessandro Armato, "Una trama escondida: la OEA y las participaciones latinoamericanas en las primeras cinco Bienales de São Paulo," *Caiana: Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual*, No. 6 (Buenos Aires, 2015), 33–39.
24. Armato, "Una trama escondida," 40.
25. Armato, "Una trama escondida," 38.
26. Due to her marriage to the Colombian journalist Alberto Zalamea.
27. Alessandro Armato, "José Gómez Sicre y Marta Traba: historias paralelas," in *Synchronicity; Contacts and Divergences in Latin American and US Latino Art, 19th Century to the Present* (Austin: University of Texas, 2012), 118–127.

28. Marta Traba, *La pintura nueva en Latinoamérica* (Bogotá: Ediciones Librería Central, 1961), 18.
29. Alessandro Armato, “La ‘primera piedra’: José Gómez Sicre y la fundación de los museos interamericanos de arte moderno de Cartagena y Barranquilla,” *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, Vol. XII, No. 24 (São Luis, January–June, 2012), 381–404.
30. Ibid.
31. Armato, “Una trama escondida,” 40.
32. Marta Traba, *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas 1950/1970* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno editores, 1973), 87–153.
33. Thomas M. Messer, *The Emergent Decade: Latin American Painters and Painting in the 1960’s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).
34. Juan Acha, *Las culturas estéticas de América Latina (Reflexiones)* (Mexico: UNAM, 1994), 160.