BOOM AND DUST: THE RISE OF LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO ART IN NEW YORK EXHIBITION SPACES AND THE AUCTION HOUSE MARKET, 1970S - 1980S

by

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ABSTRACT

Boom and Dust: The Rise of Latin American and Latino Art in New York Exhibition Spaces and the Auction House Market, 1970s-1980s.

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Adviser: Dr. Katherine Manthorne

In the early 1980s, a growing number of international exhibitions on Latin American and Latino art and the creation of Latin American art departments at main auction houses in New York signaled an expanded interest in these art fields beyond an audience of specialists. In 1989, art historian Shifra Goldman named this phenomenon "the Latin American art boom," comparing it to the Latin American literary boom that propelled Gabriel García Márquez and others into world renown in the 1960s. For Latin American and Latino art experts, "the 1980s Boom" became the historical concept of the decade, encapsulating the state of the field vis-à-vis the cultural mainstream.

Critical accounts of the Boom by scholars of Latino and Latin American art such as Goldman and Mari Carmen Ramírez weighed the benefit of heightened visibility brought by signature Boom shows such as *Art of the Fantastic: Latin American Art 1920-1987* (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1987), and *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (Museum of Fine Arts Houston and the Corcoran Gallery, 1988), against the simplistic notions of Latin American and Latino art they projected. Experts perceived these shows, organized by museum staff with no expertise in the field, as perpetuating views of Latino and Latin American art as exotic, folkloric, and colorful.

Historical readings of the Boom have focused on its climax of large-scale, traveling exhibitions, occurring between 1987 and 1993. But the focus on this mainstream break-through has overshadowed the histories of non-mainstream institutions committed to the art of Latinos and Latin Americans. This dissertation expands readings on the Boom, through an enlarged chronological scope covering from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, and a New York-localized analysis of the dynamics of circulation of Latin American and Latino art in selected exhibition venues and the secondary market. The city's proliferation of showcasing venues for Latin American and Latino art during that time and its cradling of the Latin American art market, harnessed national and international attention for this art.

This dissertation is concerned with the underlying structure of a series of exhibitions staged by four focus venues, and their public reception. I argue that the Center for Inter-American Relations/Americas Society, El Museo del Barrio, Cayman Gallery/The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, and the Bronx Museum, nurtured national mainstream interest in the art of Latinos and Latin Americans through the exhibitions they staged. In so doing, they helped to shape notions of Latino and Latin American art as irreducible to any specific style or aesthetic, and integral to Modern and contemporary art.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the process of doing research and writing this dissertation, I have become indebted to many individuals who have provided inspiration, guidance, and support along the way, and whom I would like to thank here. First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee, a group whose individual scholarship I respect deeply and whom I feel privileged to say have been shaping forces in my education as an art historian. Over the course of my Ph.D. studies, I have been a student of my adviser, Dr. Katherine Manthorne, and my readers, Dr. Rose-Carol Washton Long, and Dr. Edward Sullivan (New York University). I owe great thanks to all of them for imparting their love for the discipline of art history through passionate lectures, the rigor of their research, and their commitment to sharing knowledge. I was not a student of Dr. Indych, but have followed her research for years. Her incisive work on the reception of Mexican art in the United States has inspired my interest in historical revisionism and in finding new research angles for subjects that have been extensively documented.

I thank Dr. Long for her helpful suggestions to my comparative analysis of exhibition practices in venues committed to Latino and Latin American art, from her perspective as an art historian with a particular interest in institutional histories. I am grateful to Dr. Sullivan for his guidance in the process of defining my dissertation topic, and his willingness to participate in my research as an interviewee, sharing his experience as one of the early promoters of the field of modern and contemporary Latin American art in academia during the 1980s.

I thank Dr. Manthorne for her close mentorship over the years, her unwavering patience through the interruptions that delayed the completion of this document, and her encouragement through the process. And I thank my whole committee, for their invaluable input towards refining the ideas presented in this dissertation and making it a readable, and hopefully, a

valuable contribution to the field. In addition, I thank the Latinamericanists in my committee for directing me to pertinent interviewees for my research and facilitating contact with them.

I am grateful to the Graduate Center and The Museum of Modern Art for contributing to finance my graduate studies through the Dean Hearst Fellowship and MoMA's tuition benefit.

I derived the idea for this dissertation from my experience as Project Coordinator of the Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art. This project, conducted by The Museum of Modern Art Library between 2003 and 2006 under the auspices of the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO) was my first window into a comparative view of the different institutional archives in New York of museums, galleries and alternative art spaces devoted to Latin American Art. In the process of identifying the institutions to survey and of describing the scope of their archival records, it became clear that the role of these spaces as hubs for the visibility and understanding of the work of Latino and Latin American artists was largely under-documented. I am deeply grateful to Milan Hughston, Chief of Library and Museum Archives at The Museum of Modern Art, for hiring me to conduct this project, which became a cornerstone of my academic interest in historiography, archives, and institutional histories. I am also grateful to Dottie Hiebing, then Director of METRO, and for the agency's board for ensuring the survey's support for the maximum time allowed for projects conducted under the Documentary Heritage Program. I extend my gratitude to the Survey's advisory committee: Dr. Sullivan, Susana Torruella Leval, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Liza Kirwin and Michelle Elligott for helping us map out the institutions to survey, and pointing to the most vulnerable archives.

During the survey's second year, as I had decided to write a dissertation on New York institutional support to Latin American and Latino art, I had the fortune to take a course with Professor Miriam Basilio at the Department of Museum Studies of New York University, on the

history of exhibitions of Latin American art in the United States. This course provided me with a broad overview of U.S. institutional engagement with Latin American art, and its politics of representation. Through this course and MoMA's survey, I was able to identify understudied areas of sustained institutional commitment to Latin American and Latino art in order to formulate my dissertation topic. Professor Basilio's brand of historical analysis on exhibitions, which strongly emphasized archival research into the motivations and logistics of each show and their reception, provided a good methodological model for my own work. As I advanced in my study, she became a close interlocutor and a friend. I am grateful for her generosity, which has included research and writing stays at her house, access to her library, and intellectual stimulation through serious thought that lacks no humor.

Gabriela Rangel, Director of Visual Arts at the Americas Society has been another colleague, turned close friend who has lent great support through the various stages of research of this dissertation, particularly on the parts that referred to the history of the Americas Society. I am grateful to her and her current and past staff, including Isabela Villanueva, Assistant Curator until 2009 and Marcia Cohen, Exhibition Coordinator, for allowing me entry into the AS institutional archives and for providing a critical eye on my interpretation of its history. I also thank Melisa Luján, Exhibition Coordinator at El Museo del Barrio, for facilitating entry to the archives of El Museo and responding to my many email inquiries into particular exhibitions or details of the institutional history. Sergio Bessa, Director of Curatorial and Education Programs at the Bronx Museum, allowed me access and authorized the publication of the exhibition history of the Bronx Museum, compiled from 1977 to the present, by the institution itself. I am very grateful and honored to be publically presenting this unpublished document—for the first time—in this dissertation, complemented by my own compiling of the institution's exhibition history

between 1971 and 1976. Bessa also facilitated access to the Bronx Museum's exhibition history and facilitated contact with Peter Derrick, Archivist at the Bronx Historical Society, who provided access to the archival records generated at the museum during Luis Cancel's tenure as director. James Moske, Managing Archivist at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, assisted me in piecing together the early collaborations between the Met and the Bronx Museum. Jennifer Whitlock, Archivist at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, provided access to and kindly digitized many documents belonging to the exhibition file of *Art of the Fantastic*.

At Hostos Community College, I owe great thanks to Bill Casari, Assistant Professor Archivist and Instructional Service Librarian, and to Matthew Flaherty, Assistant Archivist, for allowing me access for extended periods of time into the institutional archives of Cayman Gallery and The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, for responding to my numerous email inquiries and for facilitating contact with their collection digitally when I was distanced from it geographically. I thank Matthew as well for sharing his admirable insight on the history of Cayman/MoCHA, which he gained while processing its institutional records.

My past colleagues at MoMA Library Jenny Tobias, Ian Goulston, David Senior, Philip Parente, Danny Fermon, Jen Bandini, and Rachel Morrison generously provided assistance during the many hours I spent there looking and photographing rare catalogs and subject files from my focus institutions. The centralizing function of MoMA Library as a gatherer of the catalogs produced by countless exhibition spaces in New York and around the country and the dedication of its staff to make it accessible are truly admirable.

At the Library of El Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, I researched materials related to the showcasing of Puerto Rican art from the island and the diaspora in New York. I thank a wonderful team, some of whose members are not at Centro anymore: Nélida

Pérez, Chief of Centro Library and Archives until her retirement in 2005, Pedro Juan Hernandez, Senior Archivist, Felix Rivera, Reference and Film Librarian, and Jorge Matos, Head of Reference Librarian when he left Centro in 2008. Yasmin Ramírez, Research Associate at El Centro until 2012, and a friend has also been a source of inspiration for her groundbreaking dissertation on the Nuyorican movement, which gave birth to some of the focus institutions in this dissertation "Nuyorican Vanguards: Political Actions/ Poetic Visions, A History of Puerto Rican Artists in New York 1964-1984" presented at the Graduate Center, CUNY in 2005. Dr. Ramírez has allowed access to materials she generated while doing research for her dissertation by donating them to El Centro Archives. I benefitted from her donation by accessing the videotaped interviews she conducted with Nilda Peraza and Luis Cancel. I also thank the kind staff of the Biblioteca Nacional de Puerto Rico, which I made my office space for writing between August 2011 and November 2012. I would also like to thank the International Center for the Art of the Americas, at Museum of Fine Arts Houston, for its brilliant *Documents of Twentieth-Century Latin American and Latino Art*, which has bridged the gap between anyone's writing station—including mine—and many archives and libraries through Latin America and the United States that contain important and rare documents on Latino and Latin American art.

In addition to those who facilitated my way through repositories, I am deeply grateful to individuals who shared as interviewees, interlocutors, and email correspondents their personal accounts of involvement in the New York-Latino and Latin American art scene. I would like to thank Holly Block, Luis Camnitzer, Luis Cancel, Julia P. Herzberg, Mary Anne Martin, Ralph Montañez Ortiz, Nilda Peraza, Gabriel Pérez Barreiro, Liliana Porter, Ana Sokoloff, Edward J. Sullivan, Carla Stellweg, and Susana Torruella Leval. To Diógenes Ballester, Marcos Dimas, Fernando Salicrup, Nitza Tufiño, Cheryl Hartup, Papo Colo and the late and beloved Jeanette

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Several chapters of this dissertation were worked in sections and presented at different fora including conferences, lectures, and seminars. I thank the organizers of these different events, including Deborah Cullen, Director of Curatorial Programs at Museo del Barrio until 2012, Amy Hoshank, Jennifer Josten, Nandi Cohen, Marisa Lerer, Arden Decker, Miriam Basilio, Francesca dal Lago, and Valerie Fraser, who invited me to present my work and offered editorial advice or support in shaping my arguments.

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Finally, I must thank a number of people who have inspired and supported me in my writing and research in different but deeply personal ways. I thank my peers and intellectual community at the Art History program of the Graduate Center who sustained this dissertation through a shared and genuine excitement for research and the exchange of ideas. I thank particularly Marisa, Arden, Nandi, Jennifer Samet, Orlando Hernández, Daniel Quiles, Julia Clapp, Lawrence Waldron, Liz Moran, and Keith Jordan, and Allison Moore. I also thank my dear friend and dissertation partner Ana Tallone for her solidarity and her close readings of my chapters. Her husband Daniel Kerner, made bibliographic recommendations on Latin American economy, which were useful on Chapter Four. Marta Aponte, Sydney Briggs, Sheila Barrios, Judy Escalona, Cecille Blondet, Cheryl Hartup, José Vidal, Jay Smith, and Emanuel Bravo have also been present over time and shared in this process through interest in my work and sincere encouragement. Miguel Luciano has provided inspiration and perspective into the present of some of the institutions discussed here through an ongoing dialogue on museums and the role of art in society that we have sustained for years. Thanks to my friends Mary Boncher and Diógenes Ballester, with whom I have shared many intimate moments at the intersection of private life, academic research, and career-development. I am grateful for their love and nurturing, and for lodging me on "research and writing residencies" at their house in New York.

I am wholeheartedly thankful to my family. I thank my parents Migdalia Barreto and Alberto Caragol for their loving guidance and the effort they put in my education; my mother for providing the first example I saw of a mother tenaciously dissertating, and my father for providing the first example I saw of a husband supporting his wife in that kind of project. My brother Ri always encouraged me and facilitated my remote research into the Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives. Zio Willie Caragol generously lent his keen eye for proofreading.

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INTRODUCTION

> If the decade of the sixties became known for a literary boom that brought writers Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, José Donoso, and Mario Vargas Llosa to U.S. attention, the eighties is surely the decade of a Latin American art boom.
>
> --Shifra Goldman, "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin America"

In the literature of Latin American art in the United States, the 1980s are known for the heightened visibility of the art of Latin Americans and Latinos in mainstream museums and the market.[1] Occurring at a time of increased circulation of images, knowledge, and capital in the art world, the strong surge of interest in Latino and Latin American art was not circumscribed to the U.S. This phenomenon marked the internationalization of Latin American art.[2] The contrast

[1] Shifra M. Goldman, "The Booming Spirit of Latin America," *Artweek*, July 1, 1989; Shifra M. Goldman, "The Latin American-ization of the United States," *Art Nexus*, October 1998.The epigraph in this Introduction cites Shifra Goldman's essay "The Booming Spirit of Latin America" where she coined the concept of the 1980s "Latin American art boom," through an analogy with the 1960s Latin American literary boom that propelled Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortazar, José Donoso, and Mario Vargas Llosa to the international center-stage of literature. A decade later, Goldman acknowledged the importance of the Boom as a historical concept that had gained traction amongst scholars and artists of Latino and Latin American art, becoming the epithet of the late '80s and early '90s in describing the state of mainstream visibility of the field. A recent mention of the 1980s boom can be found in Edward J. Sullivan, "Art Worlds of Nueva York," in *Nueva York: 1613-1945* (New York: The New-York Historical Society in Association with Scala Publishers, 2010), 172–215.

[2] Gerardo Mosquera, "Latin American Art Ceases to Be Latin American," *Arara*, 2011, http://www.essex.ac.uk/arthistory/arara/araraissue10.html.http://www.essex.ac.uk/arthistory/arara/araraissue10.html (Accessed May 1st, 2013). In this short essay, originally published in Spanish under the title "El arte latinoamericano deja de serlo" in the catalog ARCO Latino, of the Spanish art fair ARCO, Mosquera refers to what he sees as the state of internationalization of Latin American art in the mid-1990s. For him, this internationalization manifests in ways that are internal and external to Latin American art. Internally, it does so in a gradual overcoming of the "identity neurosis" of Latin America, by artists, critics and curators, which allows for greater internationalization in the artistic discourse. Externally, it manifests in a greater acceptance of Latin America as a participant in international circuits of the art world without necessarily referring to its context. The interest of the international art mainstream in the art of Latin America, as well as the opening up of alternative art circuits through the rise of what became known as "peripheral biennials" starting in the mid-1980s in places like Havana, Johannesburg, Taipei, and others has facilitated this process. For a more extensive explanation of this phenomenon see Gerardo Mosquera, "From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America," *ArtNexus*, April 2003, http://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/THEARCHIVE/FullRecord/tabid/88/doc/1065622/language/en-US/Default.aspx (Accessed June 1st, 2013). This dissertation deals extensively with systems of circulation for the art of Latin Americans and Latinos. Thus, when invoking internationalization, I refer mainly to Mosquera's external manifestation.

between the noun "internationalization" and the category "Latin American art" points to the dimensions of this phenomenon. Latin American art—an art category defined by a geographic appellative, delimiting its origins, and presumably also its "look" and audience—received world-wide attention through a series of blockbuster shows in the U.S. and Europe and through its emergence as a marketing category. The center of the art world noticed the margin.

Signs of an expanded interest in the art and cultural production of Latin America were apparent since the early 1980s. One tangible proof was the 1979 watershed of the first Latin American art auction organized by Sotheby Parke Bernet, and the subsequent creation of Latin American art departments and bi-annual sales at Christie's and Sotheby's.[3] But it was not until 1989 that this phenomenon in the visual arts was named by Shifra Goldman as "the Latin American art boom." The "Latin American art boom"—or simply "the Boom"—became the historical concept that encapsulated the 1980s.[4] Through magazine articles, exhibition reviews, and anthology essays, scholars and curators of Latin American art, including Goldman, Mari Carmen Ramírez, Edward Sullivan, George Yúdice, and artists such Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Felipe Ehrenberg, among others, set out to assess and criticize the reasons for the new fashionable status of their field, as well as to evaluate its outcome through particular shows.[5]

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[3] Mary-Anne Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age," in *Leonard's Price Index: Latin American Art at Auction* (Massachusetts: Auction Index, Inc., 1999), 3–10.

[4] Contemporaneous Latin American and Latino art specialists who referred to the Boom never capitalized the term. Throughout this dissertation I will capitalize it to emphasize its transition into a historical concept that defines the 1980s U.S. and the international showcasing of Latin American art.

[5] In addition to the aforementioned texts by Goldman and Ramírez, some other essays and exhibition reviews that reflected on the phenomenon included Edward J. Sullivan, "Art of the Fantastic," *Art Journal* 47, no. 4 (December 1, 1988): 376–379; George Yúdice, "Transnational Brokering of Art," in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute of International Visual Arts and MIT Press, 1995), 196–215; Guillermo Gómez-Peña, "The Multicultural Paradigm: An Open Letter to the National Arts Community," in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Insitute of International Visual Arts and The MIT Press, 1996), 183–193; Felipe Ehrenberg, "On Our Own Terms," in *¡Adivina! Latino Chicago Expressions* (Chicago: Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 1988), 4–7.

Most interpretations of the Boom are contemporaneous with the phenomenon. Critical historiographic accounts of the Boom consistently weighed the benefit of heightened visibility brought by exhibitions such as *Art of the Fantastic: Latin American Art 1920-1987* (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1987), and *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (co-organized by the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and the Corcoran Gallery, 1988), against the simplistic notions of Latin American and Latino art they propagated. According to scholars such as Goldman and Ramírez, these shows organized by curators with no expertise in the field, conveyed stereotypical views of Latin American art as exotic, folkloric, and colorful.[6]

Due to the proliferation of large-scale traveling exhibitions of Latin American and Latino art between 1987 and 1993, such as the aforementioned, *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States 1920-1980* (Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1988), *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), and *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* (The Museum of Modern Art, 1993), historical readings of the Boom have mainly focused on its showcasing climax. Within the fields of Latin American and Latino art, the Boom has been seen as a break-through for Latino and Latin American art in the U.S. cultural landscape, after decades of low-profile existence.[7] In the process, the non-mainstream histories of institutional commitment to Latin American and Latino art during that decade have often been overlooked. As a result, the Boom has appeared in the writings of Latin American and Latino art

[6] Shifra M. Goldman, "Homogenizing Hispanic Art," *New Art Examiner* 15, no. 1 (December 1987): 30–33; Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art," in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute of International Visual Arts and MIT Press, 1995), 229–246. Ramírez essay first appeared in the Winter 1992 issue of *The Art Journal*.

[7] Shifra M. Goldman, "The Booming Spirit of Latin America"; Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic': Framing Identity in U. S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art," *Art Journal* 51, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 60–68; Mosquera, "Latin American Art Ceases to Be Latin American."

specialists as a moment of spontaneous combustion with no preamble, a phenomenon defined by an outsider's view of the fields of Latin American and Latino art.

This dissertation expands readings of the Boom, through an enlarged chronological scope covering a period from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, and through a New York-centered analysis of the dynamics of circulation of Latin American and Latino art in selected exhibition venues and the market. It is concerned with the underlying structure of a series of exhibitions staged by four focus venues, and their public reception. I rescue the histories of commitment to Latin American and Latino art of small, specialized galleries, and alternative art spaces, and present these venues as interlocutors to the art mainstream. Institutional commitment is here defined as the explicit prioritization of art by Latin Americans and Latinos in institutional mission statements and/or of the sustained and regular organization of exhibition programs related to the art of Latin Americans and Latinos for over a decade. The mainstream is here defined as a circulation system of legitimizing venues that include well-established museums, commercial galleries, and the auction house market.[8]

The Naming and Shaping of Latin American Art

The construction of art categories and the writing of art history are two main topics of interest that inform this investigation. My analysis of the way in which Latin American and Latino art as distinct art categories have been articulated for diverse audiences through curatorial practice and market branding is based on the assumption that these categories are conceptual

[8] Lucy Lippard, "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York Since 1969," in *Alternative Art: New York 1965-1985: a Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, ed. Julie Ault, 2n ed. (Minneapolis, London: Minnesota University Press, 2002), 79–120. This definition of the mainstream is derived from Lucy Lippard's articulation of what the art mainstream meant for the Alternative Arts Movement, which emerged in the late 1960s with the aim of providing an alternative system of circulation for artists who had traditionally been excluded from the mainstream in ways that mirrored their underprivileged status in society (i.e. women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other people of color).

constructions. Similarly, the revisionist impulse in this dissertation—the aim to go back to a decade of U.S.-Latin American art showcasing and to reinterpret it—underscores the notion that history, art history, is not a univocal, infallible narrative, but one open to questioning and reconfiguration as historic information such as archival records and library collections are uncovered. Before tackling both, it is useful to have a background on the development of Latin American art as a category and on the history of its showcasing in the U.S.

Despite its growing visibility in the international art world, market, and academia, Latin American modern art is a much-contested concept. Since at least the 1970s, scholars in the United States and Latin America have debated the validity of a term that groups together the art produced in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries extending from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and depending on who invokes it, the French Caribbean.[9] The cultural diversity of this region is enormous, as is the range of factors informing

[9] The earliest example of an event where artists, critics and art historians from Latin America and the United States gathered to question the category of "Latin American art" was a symposium organized in October of 1975 at University of Texas, Austin, under the leadership of Argentine critic Damian Bayón, who was then Professor of colonial and contemporary Latin American and European art at that university. Participants included Juan Acha, Dore Ashton, Aracy Amaral, Stanton L. Catlin, José Luis Cuevas, Barbara Duncan, Fernando Gamboa, Terence Grieder, Feredico Morais, Alejandro Otero, Octavio Paz, Jacinto Quirarte, Kazuya Sakai, Fernando de Szyszlo, Marta Traba, and others. The proceedings read more like a round-table than a symposium, with a conversation developing among multiple speakers on subjects including the role of identity in Latin American art, its expression through particular aesthetics, the role of artists in society, and the place of transnational artists such as Mexican-Americans within the art of Latin America. No overall conclusions were reached, testifying to the difficulty of finding consensus over what defines such a broad art historical category. Damián Bayón, ed., *El Artista Latinoamericano y Su Identidad*, Colección Estudios (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1977). A smaller event—a panel—that questioned the existence of Latin American art had taken place in 1966 at The New School for Social Research in New York, with participants Stanton Loomis Catlin, curator of *Latin American Art Since Independence* (Yale University 1966), and Thomas Messer, curator of *The Emerging Decade* and then director of the Guggenheim Museum, and with artists Marcelo Bonevardi and Ernesto Deira. Independent curator of Latin American art, Jacqueline Barnitz, offered a report of the event and exposed her own views in an article titled "The Question of Latin American Art: Does it Exist?". According to her, at the panel Messer and Catlin provided ambiguous responses to the question, while Bonevardi and Deira opposed vehemently the existence of Latin American art. Barnitz claimed that the singularity of Latin American art relies not on its style, but on its content—particularly on its value for life and interest in the human subject. See Jacqueline Barnitz, "The Question of Latin American Art: Does It Exist?," *Plástica Latinoamericana* (special edition of *Plástica. Revista de La Liga de Arte de San Juan*, September 1984, 14-16. Originally published in *Arts Magazine* (New York City) Vol. 47, no. 3, (December 1966-January 1967): 54-55.

Before the Texas symposium, two articles published in the early '40s in the *Art Journal* of the College Art Association note the vastness of the field of Latin American art. See Elizabeth Wilder, "Call for Pioneers," *College*

the work of its artists. In the arts development of Latin America, international and intercontinental cultural exchange and hybridity have been constant since the European colonization. Thus, to subsume the work of artists from Latin America under a single, pre-determined category according to a geographic and geopolitical criteria is not just arbitrary, but severely reductionist. Even though it has become a convention, its epistemic value and intellectual appropriateness are a fundamental question to the field.[10]

Art Journal 1, no. 1 (November 1, 1941): 6–9. http://www.jstor.org/stable/773605 (accessed May 10, 2010); Laurence Schmeckebier, "Modern Art First, Not Last," *College Art Journal* 1, no. 3 (March 1, 1942): 60–63. http://www.jstor.org/stable/772750 (accessed May 22, 2013). Schmeckebier hints at the difficulty of imposing a regional categorization over the art of countries that are deeply nationalist, but he or Wilder do not question the term Latin American art as reductionist.

[10] This question underlies most research inquiries in the Latin American and Latino art fields since at least the 1970s. It is a question about essence, and thus, it inquires on the identity—in a categorical Aristotelian sense—of "Latin American art"—and its specificity. The questioning has undergone several stages. One stage has been characterized by a belief in the authenticity and the possibility of producing it—that is, the belief that it is possible and important to create an art that differentiates itself from European or U.S. art trends, through the distillation of Latin American's unique socio-historical experience and indigenous culture. Early writings associated to that stage include Pedro Figari, "Regional Autonomy," (*La cruz del sur*, Montevideo, 1924) reprinted in *Readings in Latin American Art*, trans. and ed. Patrick Frank (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 17–18; Joaquín Torres-García, "The New Art of America," (*Apex*, 1942) in *Readings in Latin American Art*, trans. Anne Twitty ed. Patrick Frank (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 135–141.

Another stage can be located in the 1970s, and characterized by the possibility of imagining a Latin American authenticity outside the recovery of indigenous sources. In *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas, 1950-1970,* originally printed in 1973, Marta Traba posited the importance of resisting European and U.S. cultural imperialism towards Latin American art. Contemporary local context and formal innovation went hand in hand here, without necessarily relying on the indigenous root. Marta Traba, *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas 1950-1970*, Revised edition (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Argentina, 2005). On a related vein, but lacking the anti-imperialist discourse, Damian Bayón proposed that the possibility of a Latin American art is contained within a formal innovation that can be readily recognized as autochthonous to that region and impossible from sprouting anywhere else. The terms of that authenticity do not reside in indigenism, folklorism or easy nationalism, but rather in an artistic capturing of a zeitgeist that can be local but can be understood internationally. He provides multiple examples of artists and movements that he considers as achievers of this Latin American authenticity, including José Guadalupe Posada, Joaquín Torres-García, Emilio Pettoruti, the Argentinean *Neofiguración* artists, and kinetic artists Julio LeParc, Jesús Rafael Soto and Carlos Cruz Diez. See Damián Bayón, "Contestación a Una Pregunta: ¿Cuándo Se Vuelve Latinoamericano El Arte En Latinoamérica?," *Artes Visuales-Museo de Arte Moderno, Chapultepec*, June 1976.

The present stage has been influenced by the notion of cultural hybridity that emerged during the height of postmodern theory in academia in the 1990s. It can be characterized by a disinterest in finding regional or national authenticity or identity in the art made by Latin Americans or Latinos, and a cautioning that Latin American and Latino art categories should not be taken at face value but always questioned, as constructs that change over time and are informed by contemporaneous social, political and cultural contexts. See Guy Brett, Ikon Gallery, and Cornerhouse (Gallery : Manchester, England), *Transcontinental: An Investigation of Reality: Nine Latin American Artists: Waltercio Caldas ... [et Al.]* (London; New York: Verso: in association with Ikon Gallery, Birmingham and Cornerhouse, Manchester, 1990); Luis Enrique Pérez-Oramas, "The Art of Babel in the Americas," in *Latin*

The Modern art category "Latin American art" did not originate within the geographic region it designates.[11] It has been traced to New York, and in particular to The Museum of Modern Art.[12] MoMA is widely recognized for having been the first museum outside of Latin America to start systematically collecting art by artists from that region in the 1930s. In 1943, an exhibition titled *The Latin-American Collection of The Museum of Modern Art* baptized these works by non-European and non-American artists as MoMA's "Latin American Art Collection."[13] The simple gesture of creating a geographic appellative—the first one in the institution's history—for nominally containing these works, otherwise organized by media with the rest of MoMA's collection, had important repercussions well beyond the institution. The act of collectively naming and displaying the art of Latin America contributed to a general

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American and Caribbean Art: MoMA at El Museo, ed. Miriam Basilio et al. (Museo del Barrio, The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 34–43; Mosquera, "From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America."

[11] Here, I am strictly talking about the creation of an art category that implies internal coherence, be it stylistic, thematic, and/or of medium. Practically simultaneous to MoMA's naming of the Latin American collection, Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García and his Escuela del Sur or School of the South promulgated a project in 1942 for the creation of a "New Art of America," a concept of universal aim, but rooted in the indigenous cultures of the Hemisphere. This would be the first movement within Latin America to embrace a theoretical discourse based on a common Latin American cultural experience and to pursue the creation of a matching aesthetic discourse. The *fait accompli* of Latin American art as a category was, however, firstly proposed by MoMA.

[12] For a history of the Latin American collection at MoMA see Miriam Basilio et al., eds., *Latin American & Caribbean Art: MoMA at El Museo* (New York: Museo del Barrio: Museum of Modern Art, 2004).

[13] In accordance with its general standards, these artworks were integrated in MoMA's medium-based sub-collections, comprised at that time by Painting and Sculpture, Prints and Drawings. The Latin American collection existed only nominally. The catalogs of the 1943 exhibition reinforced this identity, as well as the political agenda that justified the establishment in 1942 of the Latin American and Caribbean Fund, anonymously endowed by Nelson Rockefeller, then Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in Washington D.C., to further good relations with Latin America at a time of susceptibility to Nazism. Miriam Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America," in *Latin American and Caribbean Art: MoMA at El Museo*, ed. Miriam Basilio et al. (New York: Museo del Barrio, The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 52–63.
Concurrent with the naming and first years of assembling of MoMA's Latin American collection, between 1939 and 1940, the Riverside Museum organized *The Latin American Exhibition of Fine Arts*, under the auspices of the United States New York's World Fair Commission. The show was divided into two parts. The first opened from June to September 1939, and the second a year later. Countries represented included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and Venezuela. The exhibition was installed by countries. Both exhibition catalogs and the press highlighted the usefulness of these shows in promoting international understanding. See United States, Riverside Museum (New York), and New York World's Fair, *Latin American Exhibition of Fine Arts* (New York: Riverside Museum, 1940); "A Latin-American Show," July 28, 1940, http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F60E17FE355A167A93CAAB178CD85F448485F9 (accessed February 22, 2013).

understanding of the work made by artists south of the Rio Grande as something *sui generis*, different from Modern art.[14]

MoMA seemed to understand those repercussions. In May 1945 it organized a three-day symposium titled "Studies in Latin American Art."[15] The event convened U.S. experts in pre-Columbian, colonial, modern, and folk art from Latin America. This educational program constituted a very early—to my knowledge the first—example of "self"-analysis of Latin American art as a field of research in the U.S. and internationally. The field's expansive chronology and history—divided in stages that comprised pre-Conquest times and indigenous art, the coming-together of European art forms and local craftsmanship through colonization, the 1820s Wars of independence and the foundation of national art schools and languages, and 20th century artistic development in conjunction with local politics and events—were mentioned at this symposium as some of its most challenging specificities.[16] Participants also noted the field's condition of under-documentation, a result itself of its "gigantic scope."[17]

The naming of Latin American art entailed the forging of its concept: the erection of an idea about what it constitutes. This concept is not a fixed one. It has been constructed, reinforced and, I will argue, reshaped, over time through the building of museum collections, the

[14] No other world region or continent received the treatment of a nominal collection such as European Art, or Asian art within MoMA's permanent collection. European art was understood as Modern art, with France being its main exponent. But since the general public was well aware of Europe as a continent, MoMA did not need to introduce it as a region. The art of Asia or Africa has never been systematically collected at MoMA.

[15] Joint Committee on Latin American Studies, Studies in Latin American Art; *Proceedings of a Conference Held in the Museum of Modern Art*, New York, 28-31 May 1945, under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Latin American Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Research Council and the Social Science Research Council (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1949).

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid. I am borrowing this qualifier from Wilder, "Call for Pioneers." http://www.jstor.org/stable/773605 (accessed May 10, 2010). This essay is a U.S.-based call to art historians to break-away from well-documented subjects in Western art history and archaeology and to direct their research towards the many under-studied areas of Latin American art.

organization of exhibitions, the production of scholarship, debate and critical theory, and through the art market. This process has taken and still takes place from multiple sites and regions, central and peripheral to the art-world, including New York, Paris, London, Mexico City, Bogotá, San Juan, Caracas, and Buenos Aires, only to name a few.

Central to the construction of the term "Latin American art" is the recent concept known as the Boom of Latin American and Latino art. Starting in the mid 1980s and lasting until the early 1990s this phenomenon was characterized by unprecedented international visibility of the art of this region achieved through the emergence and rise since 1979 of a Latin American auction house market, and through large-scale—often traveling—exhibitions organized mostly by well-established museums in the Western art-world. Another phenomenon crucial to this definition is the emergence of Latino art (also known as U.S. Latino art and as Hispanic art) during the late 1960s as a cultural and research field, and the continuing dispute of whether "Latino art," created by "Americans" of Latin American background should be considered as distinct from Latin American art or as its sub-field.[18]

[18] "Latino" and "Hispanic art" started to be used as art categories in the 1970s, shortly after the adoption of the term "Hispanic" by the U.S.-Census to refer to that growing immigrant population. The 1960s Chicano and Nuyorican art movements preceded the larger category of Latino/Hispanic art. In 1979 Jacinto Quirarte, one of the first art historians in the United States to start documenting the art of Mexican Americans and Chicanos organized the first symposium devoted to defining "Hispanic-American art." This was the first instance in which experts from Nuyorican, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Cuban American background gathered to discuss the commonalities of the art produced in their communities. In his synopsis of the symposium, Quirarte affirmed that Hispanic-Americans were characterized by their colonial situation vis-à-vis the United States. Their artistic production stemmed from this relationship, and maintained a strong commitment to social and political issues in their communities, particularly for Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, and not so much for Cuban-Americans. The synopsis also attested to the different states of development and cultural positioning of media or artistic genres such as theater, music, and the visual arts in the Hispanic-American community. In music, many Hispanic-American artists ally themselves with a Latin American tradition. In literature, Nuyorican and Chicano artists feel they are creating new traditions. Jacinto Quirarte, "Synopsis of the Symposium on The Hispanic American Aesthetic: Origins, Manifestations and Significance," ed. Jacinto Quirarte (Texas: Reseaerch Center for the Arts and the Humanities. The University of Texas at San Antonio, 1983), 2, http://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/THEARCHIVE/FullRecord/tabid/88/doc/846381/language/en-US/Default.aspx (accessed June 2, 2013).

Existing Scholarship and Personal Contribution

This dissertation is concerned with the process by which Latin American art as a category has been constituted in the United States and the changes it has undergone. Largely guided by political theory, research on this topic has concentrated on the period from the 1930s until the 1950s. Scholarship has predominantly focused on how the ideology of Pan-Americanism adopted by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt under his Good Neighbor Policy was a main motor for the U.S. showcasing of Mexican art. This ideology proposed to build stronger cultural ties to Mexico through art display with the aim of promoting hemispheric unity against Nazism and Fascism and of securing the Mexican economic investments in oil of the Rockefeller family.[19] It has been well documented that the work of the muralists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco also enjoyed U.S. popularity in the years of the Great Depression, as a model that emphasized collective social power in the (re)building of a country.[20]

The resulting cultural visibility of Mexico from the late 1920s until the 1940s—unparalleled to that of any other Latin American country—contributed to building a paradigm of Latin American art that relied heavily on figurative art of a Social Realist tendency. Latin American art became almost synonymous with figurative art that was politically engaged.[21]

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[19] See Holly Barnet-Sánchez, "The Necessity of Pre-Columbian Art in the United States: Appropriations of Heritage, 1933-1945" in Elizabeth Hill Boone ed. *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks*, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993) 177-208.

[20] Laurance Hurlburt was the first to document the appeal of the Mexican Muralists in the United States and the projects that Orozco, Rivera and Siqueiros undertook in each of their U.S. stays. More recently, Anna Indych-López has published a more nuanced investigation of the dynamics of cultural exchange between the Mexican muralists and the U.S., that took place within the context of their appeal in the U.S., and Mexico's need to redeem a Revolution that had resulted in a public-relations disaster with Mexico's northern neighbor. As Indych-López has documented, Mexican Muralism was mythologized as a model of American (continental) artistic renewal vis-à-vis the European avant-gardes. On the other hand, its ties to the Revolution were a source of political unease for U.S. Americans. Anna Indych-López, *Muralism Without Walls: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros in the United States, 1927-1940*, 1st ed. (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); Laurance P. Hurlburt, *The Mexican Muralists in the United States*, 1st ed (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

Scholarship has also addressed changes to this paradigm in the 1950s, when Social Realism became increasingly associated in the U.S. with communism, and institutions like MoMA and the Visual Arts Department of the Organization of American States in Washington promoted a Latin American art closer to the abstract trends that came to embody the U.S. values of freedom and democracy.[22] More recently the exhibition *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis* and its eponymous catalog broke ground for the documentation of Latin American artistic activity between the beginning of the 20th century and the First World War, and the vitality they infused into New York's international art scene.[23]

The 1970s and 1980s are still understudied decades in the U.S. history of Latino and Latin American art. The 1970s are loosely associated with the rise of the Alternative Arts Movement that created exhibition platforms for artists under-represented in commercial galleries and mainstream museums. Longstanding institutions such as El Museo del Barrio and El Taller Boricua in New York, Self-Help Graphics in Los Angeles, and the Mexican Museum in Chicago, are seen by Latino art experts as main institutional strongholds in this period.[24] The 1980s—

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[21] For an analysis of the cultural appeal of Mexico in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century see Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992); Cathleen Paquette, "Public Duties, Private Interests: Mexican Art at New York's Museum of Modern Art, 1929-1954" (University of California, 2002).

[22] See Eva Cockroft, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," (1974) reprinted in Frascina, Francis, ed. *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 125-133, and "The United States and Socially Concerned Latin American Art," in Luis Cancel, ed., *The Latin American Spirit*, (New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1988) 201-212.

[23] Deborah Cullen, ed., *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis* (New York: Museo del Barrio, 2009).

[24] Some writings that register the importance of these institutions include: Lucy Lippard, "The Socio Political Implications," in *Taller Alma Boricua: Reflecting on Twenty Years of the Puerto Rican Workshop 1969-1989* (New York: El Museo del Barrio, n.d.), 22; Yasmin Ramírez, Henry Estrada, and Gilberto Cárdenas, *Pressing the Point: Parallel Expressions in the Graphic Arts of the Chicano and Puerto Rican Movements* (New York: El Museo del Barrio, 1999); Olga U. Herrera, Midwest Latino Arts Documentary Heritage Project, and University of Notre Dame, *Toward the Preservation of a Heritage: Latin American and Latino Art in the Midwestern United States* (Notre Dame, IN: Institute for Latino Studies, Univ. of Notre Dame, 2008); Karen Mary Davalos, *Exhibiting Mestizaje: Mexican (American) Museums in the Diaspora* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001);

particularly its late years—are perceived as a moment of mainstream breakthrough for Latin American art, through blockbuster touring exhibitions and via the art market. The link or transition between the Alternative Arts Movement and the Boom of Latin American art remains to be studied. Arlene Dávila and Yasmín Ramírez have addressed the increasing institutionalization of El Museo del Barrio, and its turning away from its founding ethos of serving the under-privileged and showcasing the under-exhibited. Their critiques have offered a poignant analysis that can be seen as the perfect case study of the fate of alternative museums that want to survive in an economic climate of dry funding for culture.[25]

With respect to the 1970s, landmark anniversaries of venues like El Museo del Barrio which celebrated forty years in 2009, have provided a good opportunity for the compiling of institutional histories. But in general, many spaces committed to Latin American and Latino art emerging between late '60s and early '80s still need to be historicized and have their programs contextualized with the broader showcasing of Latin American art and other so-called "marginal" art productions in their cultural city-networks.

As for the 1980s, most of the literature on Latin American and Latino art in the U.S. has been framed under Goldman's concept of the Boom. The bibliography on the Boom of Latin American art is not very extensive. It often appears as exhibition reviews of some of its landmark

Yasmin Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions: A History of Puerto Rican Artists in New York, 1964--1984" (Ph.D., City University of New York, 2005).

[25] Yasmin Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York," ed. María C. Gaztambide, *ICAA Documents Project Working Papers* no. 1 (September 2007): 46–52; Arlene Dávila, "Latinizing Culture: Museums and the Politics of Multicultural Encompassment," *Cultural Anthropology* 14, no. 2 (May 1999): 180–202; Arlene M. Dávila, "Culture in the Battlefront: From Nationalist to Pan-Latino Projects," in *Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York*, ed. Agustín Laó-Montes and Arlene Dávila (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 159–181; Arlene Dávila, "El Barrio's 'We Are Watching You' Campaign: On the Politics of Inclusion in a Latinized Museum," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 153–178.

shows.[26] Sometimes it also takes the form of expositive essays comparing several exhibitions and reflecting on the phenomenon. Mari Carmen Ramírez' much cited essay "Beyond the Fantastic: Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art", which first appeared in the 1992 Winter issue of the *Art Journal* and was reprinted in the critical anthology of Latin American art *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America* (MIT Press and InIVA, 1995) still constitutes the most comprehensive text on the context and motivations of the Boom and its main flaws as seen by Latin American experts.[27] Anthropologist Arlene Dávila also addresses the Boom in "Latinizing Cultures: Art, Museums and the Politics of U.S. Multicultural Encompassment," where she analyzes and decries the unequal and poor exposure it yields for U.S. Latino and diasporic artists, vis-à-vis non-diasporic Latin American artists.[28]

On a similar note, in his essay "On Our own Terms" artist Felipe Ehrenberg, discusses the polarization and false hierarchies imposed by the Boom between Latino artists who show in grassroots/ethnic art centers and those who are consistently acknowledged by the art mainstream.[29] He cautions against the possibility that the Anglo art mainstream becomes the voice that defines Latino art and calls for Latino artists and art professionals to unite and show their art "on their own terms."[30] Others, such as performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña and cultural critic George Yúdice, criticized the Boom as the expression of an institutional

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[26] Shifra M. Goldman, "Latin Visions and Revisions," in *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 347–362; Goldman, "Homogenizing Hispanic Art"; Edward J. Sullivan, "Art of the Fantastic," *Art Journal* 47, no. 4 (December 1, 1988): 376–379. http://www.jstor.org/stable/776988 (accessed March 15, 2012).

[27] Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic'."

[28] Dávila, "Latinizing Culture: Museums and the Politics of Multicultural Encompassment."

[29] Ehrenberg, "On Our Own Terms." http://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/THEARCHIVE/FullRecord/tabid/88/doc/782463/language/en-US/Default.aspx (accessed June 18, 2012).

[30] Ibid.

multiculturalism that paid lip service to cultural diversity but did not question structures that maintained profound social disparities between the white Anglo culture and Latinos.[31] If this body of literature provides a sense of immediacy to the Boom phenomenon for a contemporary reader, a current perspective that re-examines the Boom as a historical concept and takes into account what happened posterior to it still awaits formulation. This dissertation will fill that void.

Critical literature on the initial role of the art market in defining Latin American art and providing it with visibility is also scarce. One of the few sources on the topic is a guide to artists' records at auction, which contains an essay by dealer Mary Ann Martin sketching the chronology and fluctuations of the Latin American art market from its inception until the late '90s.[32] An analysis focusing on how 1970s small-scale non-commercial galleries and alternative art spaces nurtured public interest and a market for Latin American and Latino art is still lacking.

To study the repercussions of the Alternative Arts Movement over the mainstream might seem like a mission bound with contradictions. Emerging in the late 1960s, the Alternative Arts Movement and the grassroots museums and experimental galleries that emerged from it were meant to function as *alternatives* to the traditional art circuit, ruled by the mainstream museum, the commercial gallery, and the auction house market. Inspired by Marxist theory, this movement decried the prevailing exclusion of artists from minorities or disempowered groups (e.g. Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, women) from that circuit, as well as the instant commodification of the artwork within the traditional art circuit, i.e. the effective abolishment of art's experimental value or revolutionary power through its absorption into the

[31] Gómez-Peña, "The Multicultural Paradigm: An Open Letter to the National Arts Community"; Juan Flores and George Yúdice, "Living Borders/Buscando América: Languages of Latino Self-Formation," *Social Text* (1990): 57–84.

[32] Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age."

market.[33] I contend, however, that despite standing in opposition to the art mainstream, alternative art spaces helped bring the art of Latin Americans and Latinos to the forefront of the New York art scene. This happened as the ideological boundaries that separated the alternative art scene from the mainstream art circuit began to subside against the grander purpose of bringing visual and critical attention to the work of Latin American and Latino artists. This process will become evident in this dissertation as I analyze the exhibition histories of my four focus institutions: the Center for Inter-American Relations, renamed The Americas Society in 1985; El Museo del Barrio; the Bronx Museum of the Arts; and Cayman Gallery, renamed The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, MoCHA in 1985.[34] The concurrent activity of the emerging Latin American auction house market, and the showcasing circuit of Latin American and Latino art helped magnify public attention, and fostered the interest of mainstream museums in artists of Latino and Latin American background.[35]

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[33] Julie Ault, "For the Record," in *Alternative Art: New York 1965-1985: a Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 1–16; Lippard, "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York Since 1969."

[34] In the interest of clarity I will hereafter refer to the CIAR and the Americas Society as CIAR/AS. I will keep the distinction of Cayman Gallery and The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art when I elucidate the history of their move or differences in their program. Whenever I refer to the institution as an entity from its inception to its demise I will use the abbreviation Cayman/MoCHA.

[35] Luis Cancel, interview by Taína Caragol, skype, April 15, 2009; Susana Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, April 7, 2009; Nilda Peraza, interview by Taína Caragol, skype, September 7, 2009. Several of my interviewees who worked in alternative venues discussed in this dissertation agreed that the rise of the Latin American market magnified the visibility and "buzz" around their institutional programs. In addition Susana Torruella Leval, former curator at MoCHA and Nilda Peraza, Director Cayman Gallery and then MoCHA confirmed that during their work course at Cayman/MoCHA they received regular calls from mainstream museums in New York and across the United States asking for recommendations of Latino and Latin American artists to include in group exhibitions. The Indianapolis Museum of Art's *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* were two exhibitions for which Cayman/MoCHA provided advice.

In this scenario of converging aims between two opposing camps, i.e. the alternative and the mainstream, it is pertinent to consider the question of whether the most powerful force—the mainstream—won over the alternative camp, obliging the recognition that for art, an aim at visibility will inevitably translate short or long term into acceptance or canonization and marketability. The disappearance of some alternative art spaces such as Cayman/MoCHA, The Alternative Museum, Charas-El Bohío, and Exit Art, among others, and the will of institutionalization of El Museo, a museum born from the alternative art movement (evident in the hiring of well-known professionals from the mainstream art sector), suggest that—indeed—the alternative art sector has been weakened by the realities of a cultural landscape where funding for experimentation has become scarce. This reality

As the cultural capital of the U.S. and a main destination for artists and migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean since the early 20th century, New York was a main catalyst for the international phenomenon known as the 1980s Latin American art Boom. The city's proliferation in the 1970s of small galleries, museums, and alternative spaces that showcased this art, and the appearance of a specialized Latin American market after 1979 at New York auction houses, harnessed attention for the art of Latin America and facilitated its projection to the rest of the country. Nationally, mainstream art spaces such as the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art dedicated mainly to European and U.S. art became increasingly aware and interested in the art of Latin America, making room for it in their exhibition programs.[36]

The advent of multiculturalism in academic discourse and the cultural industry, and the growth of the U.S. Latino population also brought the art of Latinos and Latin Americans into focus, as museums looked to reflect a broader cultural and demographic diversity while

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has been apparent since the early 2000s. See Brian Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces," in *Alternative Art: New York 1965-1985: a Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 161–181.

[36] The number of exhibitions of Latino and Latin American art at these three museums prior to their Latino and Latin American surveys attests to this growth of interest in the 1980s. Only two exhibitions of Latin American art had taken place at the Indianapolis Museum of Art between the '70s and '80s, before they organized *Art of the Fantastic.* These were *Recent Latin American Drawings 1969-1979* and in 1984 *The Colbert Collection: Handcrafts and Folk Art from Latin America*. During the 1980s and 1990s they organized no other art exhibits related to Latin American or Latino Art. See http://www.imamuseum.org/art/exhibitions/past-exhibitions (accessed February 2, 2013).

The Corcoran and the MFAH, collaborators in *Hispanic Art in the United States* had different histories of engagement with Latino and Latin American art. No other exhibitions focusing on the art of Latinos or Latin Americans took place at the Corcoran during the 1970s or 1980s. The Corcoran did engage more often with the art of Latin Americans and Latinos in the 1990s. See http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/archives. Probably because of its closeness to the Mexican border and its large Mexican population, the MFAH devoted since the 1970s a substantial number of exhibitions to artists and art forms from that country. This trend continued through the 1990s. In 1987, the year of *Hispanic Art in the United States*, the MFAH held two other shows on Latino artists, i.e. *Houston Hispanic Artists: New Views*, and *Four Houston Artists* (Atanacio Dávila, Frank Fajardo, Benito Huerto, Philip Renteria).The only exhibition held at the MFAH between the 1980s and the end of the century that was not devoted to Mexican or Hispanic artists was the 1987 *Torres-García: Grid-Pattern-Sign, Paris-Montevideo 1929-1949*. See http://prv.mfah.org/archives/home.asp?par1=1&par2=1&par3=1&par4=1&par5=1&par6=1&par7= (accessed February 2, 2013).

attracting untapped audiences.[37] Scholars of Latino and Latin American art also identified the art market as a main factor prompting the valuation of Latin American art in the mainstream, mostly dormant since the 1940s.[38] The auction-house category for Latin American art emerged in 1979 and became increasingly established through the 1980s. Museums and private collectors in the U.S. who had for decades owned artworks by renowned artists from that region were faced more acutely with the choice of holding on or selling them, both alternatives promising considerable benefits, and important implications on the public and private circulation of art from Latin America.[39]

Critical texts on the Boom by Ramírez, Goldman, and others, define the distinctiveness of this phenomenon as the heightened presence of Latin American and U.S. Latino art in museums committed to a Euro-American canon of Modern art. The mainstream visibility of Latin American art was a real, "recordable" phenomenon in the archival sense. However, concurrently there was also another variety of less notable institutions providing visibility to Latino and Latin American artists that have remained outside most of the 1980s literature on Latin American art in

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[37] Shifra M. Goldman, "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin America," in *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 358–361; Shifra M. Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth," in *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 317–325; Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic';" Laird W. Bergad and Herbert S. Klein, *Hispanics in the United States: A Demographic, Social, and Economic History, 1980-2005*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

In regards to U.S. demography, the 1970s saw a shift in the cultural make-up of immigrants to the US, which had been dominated by Europeans. New waves of immigrants from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean started arriving with the result that in 1980 Latin Americans officially accounted for a third of the foreign-born, an increase from the 19% found in 1970.

[38] Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age"; Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic'"; Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth."

[39] Mary-Anne Martin, interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, May 13, 2010. Alan Riding, "Inflation Gives a Big Push to Art in Mexico," *The New York Times*, July 27, 1981, sec. C; Cultural Desk. http://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/27/arts/inflation-gives-big-push-to-art-in-mexico.html (accessed February 5, 2011). The Mexican auction at Sotheby's on May 1981 had a number of high-profile consignments including works in the collection of Alice Bache from the stockbroker family, the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Los Angeles County Museum, Arthur Murray, the dancer, and the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporations.

the U.S. In New York, art made by Latin Americans and U.S. Latinos was present in a broad spectrum of venues and arenas.[40] Their work and interaction remain to be acknowledged, investigated, and their long-term impact explored. During the late 1960s and 1970s Latin American and Latino art was mainly seen in grassroots/community museums, alternative galleries, and one reputable, specialized non-commercial gallery.[41] From the late 1970s and during the 1980s it penetrated auction houses, prompted the creation of commercial galleries, and started to re-gain ground in powerhouse museums where its presence had faded since the end of World War Two.[42]

Along with an examination of the emergence of a new Latin American art paradigm, a central purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the role played by five New York-based small galleries and alternative museums, and by the city's auction house market in fostering the Latin American art Boom. What Latin American and Latino artists or art trends did these venues showcase? Were there aesthetic, thematic, and value distinctions evident in the showcasing of Latin American artists vs. Latino artists? Did the institutional missions of the venues to be discussed impart a particular notion on Latin American art as part of their program? What sort of curatorial and theoretical frameworks did these spaces employ to make art by Latin American and U.S. Latino artists accessible to audiences unfamiliar with it? What impact, if any, did the

[40] These include the focus institutions of these dissertation, and the Bronx Council on the Arts (early 1960s-present), Taller Boricua (1969-present); Longwood Arts Gallery (1981-present); The Nuyorican Poets Café (1974-present); The Alternative Museum (1975-2000; 2000-present as an internet-based museum); En Foco (1974); INTAR Gallery (1982 -1999), the Institute of Contemporary Hispanic Art (1973-?); ABC No Rio (1980-present), Art in General (1981-present), P.S. 64 El Bohío, a.k.a. Charas (1977-2001), and the archive-based gallery named Political Art Documentation/Distribution PAD/D(1980-1986).

[41] For an overview of the importance of the Center of Inter-American Relations/ Americas Society as the main 1960s and 1970s showcase of Latin American art in New York see Gabriela Rangel, "Tract of Time," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. Gabriela Rangel and José Luis Falconi (New York: The Americas Society, 2006), 12–21.

[42] Edward Sullivan, interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, February 23, 2010; Mary-Anne Martin to Taína B. Caragol, "Answers Re Latin American Auctions," February 6, 2011.

first-established, non-commercial exhibition venues have in the creation and rise of the Latin American auction house market? These are some of the questions this dissertation will tackle. At their heart is a concern with piecing together untold histories that lie fragmented in institutional archives, newspaper and magazine archives and as personal memories of artists and art professionals who laid the foundations for the Boom in the 1970s, and who were interlocutors in the 1980s to mainstream art spaces that were showcasing Latin American and Latino art.

The reconstruction of this history will allow for a broader look at the Boom that considers alternatives to the simplistic views of this region's creative production supported in mainstream blockbuster exhibitions. It will also interrogate curatorial models for Latino and Latin American art that were proposed in the alternative art circuit. By revisiting the 1970s and 1980s history of circulation of Latin American and Latino art in New York vis-à-vis the U.S.' art mainstream, this dissertation also intends to examine the implications of the Boom as a historical concept. The assumption here is that the Boom—qua historical concept—defined as the rise in mainstream visibility of Latin American art, determined the focus of scholarly criticism on the phenomenon's extra-artistic motivations and its failed politics of representation of "the Other." I contend that this definition of the Boom entailed, indirectly, the under-documentation and analysis of exhibition activity around Latino and Latin American art outside the mainstream.

This dissertation also expands ideas of Latin American art by being one of the first studies to consider the art of U.S. Latino art within the same discursive frame. Definitions of what constitutes Latin American and Latino art are fluid and continue to shift since the 1970s, in agreement with curatorial and scholarly frameworks. Most commonly studies that address Latin American art do not take into account of U.S. Latino art, and vice-versa. The showcasing of Latino and Latin American art in New York during the 1970s and 1980s provides a good context

to address them together. The important number of exhibitions organized at our four focus venues where Latino and Latin American artists were showcased alongside each other without epistemological, formal, or aesthetic differences, prompts the question of whether a separation of fields in this case is always necessary or fruitful.[43]

Latin America is not the only region considered marginal to the canon of Western art that has undergone a dramatic rise in mainstream visibility since the late 20th century. Since the 1990s African art and Chinese art have also risen quickly to the center of mainstream museum activity and the art market. Exhibitions such as the highly publicized *Africa: The Art of a Continent* (Royal Academy of Art, England, 1995), as well as *The Short Century* (P.S. 1, New York, 2002) curated by Okwi Enwezor (artistic director to *Documenta 11*, Kassel, Germany in 2002), and the increased presence of contemporary African artists in European and U.S. galleries and international biennials have prompted critics to talk about "a new golden age of African art."[44] As for Chinese art, its contemporary sector has become the single fastest-growing segment of the international art market.[45] The factors that triggered the rise of these art fields and their

[43] Chapter One deals extensively with definitions of Latino/Hispanic art within the context of the exhibition *Hispanic Art in the United States*. Along the text issues of differentiation between Latino and Latin American art re-emerge as to the missions and showcasing priorities, differences and convergences of my focus institutions.

[44] Mega-shows and festivals dedicated to African contemporary art have been on the rise since the mid-1980s in Europe and North America. See Deborah Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology," in *Voces y Visiones: Highlights from El Museo Del Barrio's Permanent Collection, 1969-2004.*, ed. Fatima Bercht and Deborah Cullen, vol. 1, 5 vols. (New York: Museo del Barrio, 2003), 36–79. See also Suzanne Preston Blier, "Nine Contradictions in the New Golden Age of African Art," *African Arts* 35, no. 3 (September 2002): 1–6.

At the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007) contemporary African art was highlighted in a special section of the Arsenale exhibit. Chosen out of requested proposals by a jury of experts, this section was organized by Angolan artists Fernando Alvin and France-based curator Simon Njami, from Cameroon. The exhibition presented selected works from the Sindika Dokolo African Collection of Contemporary art in Luanda. For more information and photographs of artwork see http://universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/eng/2007/tour/africa/index.htm (accessed February 22, 2013).

[45] Barbara Pollack, "The Chinese Art Explosion," *ARTnews* 107, no. 8 (February 2008): 118–127. In addition to the market, another symptom of the Boom of Chinese art has been the media explosion around contemporary artist and political activist Ai Weiwei, whom the contemporary art magazine *ArtReview* named

circulation dynamics deserve analyses of their own. I hope, however, that my dissertation transcends the fields of Latin American and Latino art, by shedding light on the forces and counter-forces at play in the construction of broad geographic artistic categories that have had little or no entry into the canon of Modern art as constructed in the U.S. and Europe.

Selection of the Focus Institutions and Research Methodology

The exhibition venues discussed here are some of the most important non-commercial galleries and museums prioritizing the art of Latin Americans and Latinos in New York. They were chosen on the basis of the critical attention that some of their exhibitions received amongst the press and art professionals, the quality and scope of some of their published catalogs, and of their role in providing early visibility to particular Latin American and U.S. Latino artists and art trends. As mentioned before, these venues are the CIAR/AS; El Museo del Barrio; the Bronx Museum of the Arts; and Cayman Gallery/MoCHA.[46] Exit Art, INTAR Gallery and The Alternative Museum are other no longer existing venues that will be superficially addressed.[47]

All of these spaces developed their missions and programs between the 1970s and early 1980s. The Visual Arts Program of the CIAR/AS was founded in 1967 by David Rockefeller, following the institution's mission of fostering "hemispheric understanding" through a program that combined the visual arts, music, and literature with conferences on economy and public

number 1 in its annual "Power 100" list of 2011. This list identifies the most powerful figures in the art world. See http://www.artreview100.com/power-100-lists-from-2002-through-2008/2011/ (accessed February 22, 2013).

[46] In the interest of clarity the CIAR and the Americas Society will hereafter referred to as CIAR/AS. I will keep the distinction of Cayman Gallery and The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art when I elucidate the history of their move or differences in their program. Whenever I refer to the institution as an entity from its inception to its demise I will use the abbreviation Cayman/MoCHA.

[47] The study of the latter three presents some challenges given the culturally diverse nature of their rosters in the case of Exit Art and The Alternative Museum and because of the scarcity of archival records, with regards to INTAR.

policy in the Americas.[48] Artist and educator Rafael Montañez Ortiz founded El Museo del Barrio in 1969, responding to a request from the Department of Education to create a curriculum that would take into account the Puerto Rican and African-American cultural make-up of children who comprised most of District 4 of New York's Department of Education. El Museo was created to educate the New York-Puerto Rican community about its history, and to exhibit and safeguard Puerto Rican art produced by artists from the island and the U.S.[49] The Bronx Museum of the Arts was founded in 1971 by Bronx philanthropist Irma Fleck with help from the Bronx Council on the Arts, to serve the culturally diverse populations of the Bronx. By the end of the 1970s, its mission had been modified to include "exhibiting and interpreting works by artists of cultural communities with strong ties to the Bronx."[50] Cayman/MoCHA was founded in 1973 by Puerto Rican cultural activists that included Luis Cancel, Jack Agüeros, and Nilda Peraza, to provide exposure to Hispanic artists who were underrepresented by mainstream museums, galleries and organizations within the U.S.[51] The variety of spaces and their different missions manifested in idiosyncratic exhibition programs that made up for diverse and—initially—rarely overlapping rosters of Latin American and Latino artists. Except for Cayman/MoCHA, which ceased to exist in 1990, all of the focus venues addressed in this dissertation maintain active exhibition programs.

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[48] David Rockefeller, "Foreword: Creating a Space," in *A Hemispheric Venture: Thirty-Five Years of Culture at the Americas Society*, ed. Ilona Katzew (New York: Americas Society, n.d.), 18–25.

[49] Deborah Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology," in *Voces y Visiones: Highlights from El Museo Del Barrio's Permanent Collection, 1969-2004.*, ed. Fatima Bercht and Deborah Cullen, vol. 1, 5 vols. (New York: Museo del Barrio, 2003), 36–79.

[50] Douglas Martin, "Irma Fleck, 84, Who Battled Decay in the Bronx, Is Dead - New York Times," *New York Times*, accessed November 11, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/26/nyregion/irma-fleck-84-who-battled-decay-in-the-bronx-is-dead.html; Cancel, interview by Taína Caragol, April 15, 2009.

[51] Peraza, interview by Taína Caragol, September 7, 2009; Cancel, interview by Taína Caragol, April 15, 2009.

As Latin American art gained ground in the city's cultural landscape, as its audience grew wider and its New York-based artists became acknowledged as part of the city's art constituency, a market for Latin American art also developed. By comparing the rosters of auction and exhibition catalogs, auction sale results, and through testimony of auction market representatives, I argue that the emergence of this market was a significant factor for the rise of the Boom. The presence of Latin American art in the secondary market provided it with substantial standing in the upper-most level of the art circuit; through its dynamics of supply and demand, it ratified for public and private collectors the value of this art in monetary and—consequentially—art historical terms. The break-through of Latin American art in the market established certain artists within the Modern art canon (e.g. Rufino Tamayo, Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam) while bringing world-wide attention to lesser-known ones such as Frida Kahlo, Joaquín Torres García, Emilio Petorutti, Remedios Varo, and others. The presence of a growing circuit of venues showcasing Latino and Latin American art in New York during the 1980s alongside the emerging Latin American market provided a variety of settings for the circulation, validation, and interpretation of Latino and Latin American art.[52]

[52] This is not to say that scholarship arose only from the market and exhibitions. Early publications on Latin American art in English beyond the catalogs published by MoMA date from the mid-1940s and reveal an interest in mapping the field from pre-Columbian to contemporary times. But it can confidently be said that exhibitions and scholarship went hand in hand, supporting each other. Some of the early professors of Latin American art included Stanton Loomis Catlin, who had become interested in the region while doing research for *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*. Catlin taught Latin American art at Hunter College in the 1970s, shortly after leaving the CIAR/AS. Subsequently he became a full time professor of Latin American art at Syracuse University. On the early development of texts on Latin American art written in the US see Robert C. Smith, "The First History of Latin American Art," *The Americas* 2, no. 3 (1946): 357–368; Stanton Loomis Catlin, Oral history interview with Stanton L. Catlin, interview by Francis V. O'Connor, Sound recording, September 1, 1989, http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-stanton-l-catlin-5454. More recently, Edward J. Sullivan, the Helen Gould Sheppard Professor of the History of Art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, has pinpointed the importance of exhibitions in the field of Latin American art as often leading the way for research. At the same time, he has recognized the educational value of early auction house catalogs and preview exhibitions as tools he relied on when the fields of Latino and Latin American art did not have the footing they have now and students were largely unfamiliar with them. Sullivan, interview by Taína Caragol.

The importance of small-scale galleries and alternative art spaces for Latin American and Latino art in the U.S. is only starting to be recognized. This is due in great part, to the advent in the early 21st century of academic and museum projects promoting the accessibility and preservation of institutional archives and libraries.[53] This dissertation project is closely tied to one of the Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American art led by The Museum of Modern Art Library between 2003 and 2006. This survey, for which I served as Project Coordinator, identified and described the holdings of close to forty New York- arts and cultural organizations that had a history of showcasing Latino and Latin American art. A worrisome finding of this three-year survey was the constant economic precariousness faced by many institutions, whose two and three-decade histories could easily be folded and their contributions to the New York art-scene forgotten if resources were to dry up one day. This dissertation also constitutes an attempt to counter the possibility of oblivion through the rescuing and interpretation of the institutional histories of New York venues prioritizing Latino and Latin American art. It relies heavily on archival research at the venues analyzed and on digital press archives where the media reception of their exhibitions can be found.

[53] Taína B. Caragol, "Archives of Reality: Contemporary Efforts to Document Latino Art," *American Art* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 2–8. Julia Halperin, "MFA Houston Announces Massive Project to Put Latin American Art History Online | Artinfo," *Artinfo*, June 29, 2011, http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/37989/mfa-houston-announces-massive-project-to-put-latin-american-art-history-online (accessed October 2, 2012).The early 2000s saw the launching of several online archival projects across the United States sponsored by academic institutions and museums to document the work of alternative art spaces and small-scale galleries, and describe the content of their archives. These projects have included The Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art, led by The Museum of Modern Art Library between 2003 and 2006; a survey of the archival holdings of Self-Help Graphics art workshop in Los Angeles, led by the Chicano Studies Research Center, and a series of Latino Art summits held between 2004 and 2006 to survey the state of documentation of the Latino art community in Los Angeles; and—most ambitiously—the International Center for the Art of the Americas *Documents Project'* which aims to digitize and make available online primary and secondary sources from the U.S. and Latin America of critical importance to Latino and Latin American art. The ICAA is part of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. The Documents Project does not aim at documenting institutional activity per se, although it is a collaborative effort that draws heavily on the scanning of archival documents of institutions in the U.S. and across the Americas.

In a broad sense, an archive is a collection of historical records. It is often understood as a repository of primary (i.e. unpublished) sources.[54] The institutional and exhibitions files I consulted contained a variety of them, including installation shots, slides or photos of artwork, letters between artists and curators, artists' *curriculum vitae*, and notes, checklists and internal reports related to exhibitions. They also contained secondary sources, such as out-of- print exhibition catalogs published in-house and by others, newsletters, and clippings related to the institutions' programs. The secondary sources in the archives are only referenced as published sources and not as part of archival collections because in theory they are available elsewhere.[55] The completeness of each archive varied widely, even within itself.[56] It was common to find exhibition files containing little more than an exhibition checklist, while others had drafts of catalog essays, correspondence with artists, photographs, and clippings. Some exhibitions in this

[54] Tanya Clement, Wendy Hagenmaier, and Jennie Levine Knies, "Toward a Notion of the Archive of the Future: Impressions of Practice by Librarians, Archivists, and Digital Humanities Scholars," *The Library Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (April 1, 2013): 112–130, http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/stable/full/10 (accessed June 5, 2013). The notion of what an archive is has changed during the past two centuries. The meaning has shifted from "the place" where historical records are housed to "a collection of historical records." The new digital age is blurring the notion of primary materials as the main components of the archive. This has happened as more and more collections that call themselves archives are simply broadening access to secondary sources with scarce circulation.

[55] One has to take into account, however, that some secondary sources had little circulation. As an example, the exhibition history of Cayman/MoCHA, includes some 137 exhibitions that had published catalogs (some including only a checklist). It can confidently be said that the largest collection of those catalogs is in the MoCHA Archive at Hostos Community College. MoMA Library and the Benson Collection of the University of Texas Austin constitute the other large repositories of MoCHA catalogs. They contain respectively 59% and 12% of the catalogs published.

[56] This was the case at most of the institutions I visited, reflecting the unsystematic documentation of exhibition programs, and in some cases the loss of materials due to improper housing or institutional moves. In relative terms, of all the institutions discussed here Cayman Gallery/MoCHA's at Hostos Community College, contained the largest amount of primary sources, including mainly notes from the curators. Still, the richness of this archive relies mainly in its reception clippings and rare exhibition catalogs. Documentation on the 1970s and 1980s for the Bronx Museum of the Arts is dispersed between the museum, and the Bronx Historical Society. The archives of the CIAR/AS are mainly housed at the institution and contain some primary sources from curators. It is also possible to find primary source, exhibition file materials of this institution within the artist files that the CIAR/AS donated to MoMA Library in 2003. The archive of El Museo del Barrio contains mainly published documents such as clippings and exhibition catalogs. Many of them were reproduced in Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology."

dissertation rely only on secondary sources present at the institutional archives.[57] Notwithstanding, when this is the case, the materials used have "archival value" as records that help reconstructing and reassessing the importance of institutions and their work. Institutional files, exhibition files, oral histories with former directors and curators, with Latin American and Latino artists, and with auction house professionals active in New York in the 1970s and '80s, serve here as main instruments for reconstructing a panorama of Latin American and U.S. Latino art in New York in those decades, from which a critical analysis of the Boom as a concept in Latin American and Latino art history will derive.

The replacement of the word "bust" as in the expression "boom and bust" in the title of this dissertation by "dust" encapsulates this dissertation's revisionist intent. This change of words intends to override the idea of an end to the phenomenon that marked the heightened visibility of the art of Latin Americans and Latinos in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and to recover the histories of non-mainstream commitment to this art in New York that have seemingly languished in the dust of a former era of high interest. The recuperation of these histories can provide a new perspective for understanding the process by which since the 21st century the art of Latin America is becoming an institutional priority in museums internationally.

Structure

Chapter One analyzes the two most criticized exhibitions of the Boom: *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America 1920-1987* (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1987), and *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (Corcoran Gallery, Washington D.C. and Museum of Fine Arts Houston). They are compared to contemporaneous exhibitions

[57] That is the case for all exhibitions of El Museo, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts. The archives of the CIAR/AS and Cayman/MoCHA contained a larger number of unpublished sources.

held at the focus venues of this dissertation that have received less critical attention. These shows are *New Forms of Figuration* (CIAR/AS, 1985), *The Latin American Spirit* (The Bronx Museum, 1988), and *The Decade Show* (Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, The Studio Museum Harlem, and The Queens Art Museum, 1990).[58] The aim here is to undermine the idea that the U.S. representation of Latino and Latin American art in the 1980s was uniquely a prerogative from the art mainstream, by contrasting the two big trademark shows with exhibitions organized by New York-specialized small venues that challenged simplistic, exotic and ghettoizing views of Latin American and Latino art.

Chapters Two and Three address the emergence, mission and early exhibition histories (i.e. roughly their first decades) of the focus institutions of this dissertation in detail, with the aim of discerning their different missions and curatorial scopes. Chapter Two focuses on the CIAR/AS as the only venue in this dissertation that did not emerge from a grassroots cultural initiative, but as a cultural showcase to foster good political and economic relations with Latin America. In accordance to that mission, I show in my analysis the institutional privileging of Latin American over Latino artists and the strong emphasis on abstract and conceptual art practices over figuration.[59] Chapter Three addresses the early histories of El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Cayman Gallery, three institutions that emerged out of the Alternative Arts Movement. In New York, this movement was born in the late 1960s out of the frustration of artists and cultural activists with the chronic under-representation of women and

[58] *New Forms of Figuration* is the first exhibition at the CIAR/AS to include artists from Latino and Latin American background. Its examination of the appeal of Neo-Expressionism from a pan-American lens stands in contrast to *Hispanic Artists in the United States*, which branded Latino artists as bound to that style.

[59] Beverly Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. José Luis Falconi and Gabriela Rangel (New York: Americas Society, 2006), 24–41. Adams documents the interest in Latino art at the CIAR/AS as the consequence of new guidelines from the NEA towards cultural institutions applying for grant money, at a time when the CIAR/AS was undergoing a slowdown in economic resources for art showcasing.

cultural minorities in the mainstream art system (comprised of well-established museums and commercial galleries).[60] The movement also objected the elitist and apolitical stance of the mainstream art circuit, which it saw as inevitably leading to the commodification and fetishization of the artwork.[61] El Museo, The Bronx Museum, and Cayman Gallery were three institutions that emerged out of a panoply of alternative showcases. They prioritized Latin American and Latino art with varied national and cultural emphases. El Museo del Barrio was created to exhibit and preserve the art of Puerto Ricans.[62] Once a mission was effectively in place in the late 1970s, the Bronx Museum established an exhibition program that mirrored the demographics of the Bronx. Cayman Gallery/MoCHA exhibited Puerto Rican artists and artists from Latin America residing in New York. In terms of exhibition scopes, the alternative art spaces showed no strong allegiance to art tendencies in a way comparable to the CIAR/AS promotion of abstraction and conceptual art. My survey of exhibition activity at the Bronx Museum and Cayman/MoCHA will reveal that the priority was showcasing the art of Latinos and Latin Americans, rather than endorsing particular art modes or styles, e.g. abstraction over figuration, conceptual art.[63] As for El Museo, a strong folkloric vein prevailed in its early years, which by the end of the decade was relinquished in favor of exhibitions of established artists.[64]

Chapter Four introduces a short hiatus in the institutional narratives of previous chapters in order to study the emergence and rise of the Latin American auction house market in the

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[60] Ault, "For the Record."

[61] Lippard, "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York Since 1969."

[62] Julie Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups , and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85," in *Alternative Art: New York 1965-1985: a Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 17–76.

[63] See Appendices One and Two of this dissertation, which detail the exhibition histories of The Bronx Museum and Cayman/MoCHA.

[64] Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology."

1980s. This phenomenon is approached as the result of several factors that included an increasingly diversifying and strong auction market, the visibility provided by early showcases of Latin American art in New York—particularly the CIAR/AS—, and the availability of capital in countries such as Mexico. Although none of the alternative art venues at the center of this dissertation were directly tied to the emergence of the Latin American auction house market, the rise of the latter and its presence in the media lent momentum to the exhibition programs of all Latino and Latin American art showcases in New York, helping the emergence of a collective awareness among them, and broadening critical attention.

Chapter Five resumes the comparative analysis of the focus institutions through a discussion of their evolving trajectories and exhibition histories in parallel to the market. I argue that the 1980s are characterized by the surge of a collective consciousness shared by main exhibition venues of Latin American and Latino art, and the loosening of strict institutional missions or exhibition scopes of Latin American and Latino art showcased earlier. As an example, the CIAR/AS showcased more frequently contemporary artists working in figuration, and they also included more diasporic Latino artists in their exhibitions. El Museo del Barrio, on the other hand, diversified its exhibitions in a pan-Latino and Latin American direction. A collective awareness emerged that is evident in the inter-institutional collaborations it generated and the overlapping of artists showcased.[65] The joint analysis of the rise of the Latin American art market and the emergence of a New York-circuit of Latin American art, yields several new and coexisting notions of Latin American and Latino art: notably the emergence of a transnational paradigm of Latin American art, where the art of U.S. Latinos and Latin Americans

[65] For instance, John Stringer, director of the CIAR/AS gallery between 1979 and 1988 wrote the catalog essay for the show *Abstract Visions*, 1988 at MoCHA. In an example of overlapping rosters, artists such as Liliana Porter, Raquel Rabinovich, Edgar Franceschi, and Marcos Dimas, to mention only a few, had exhibitions at multiple institutions within the four focus venues in this dissertation.

living outside their countries has equal importance, and the loosening of paradigms of Latin American and Latino art put forward by mainstream showcasing and commercial institutions.[66]

Chapter Six and Epilogue conclude this dissertation with a summary of claims and a reassessment of the Boom as a historical concept; its unintended consequence of under-recognition for alternative art spaces as exhibition outlets for Latin American and Latino artists, and its validity from a current standpoint that has been proposed as "the coming of age of Latin American art in the United States."[67]

[66] Here I mean paradigms of Latin American/Latino art in the sense of how exhibition scopes become a way of framing the art of a particular community or region. For example, Latin American art as abstract and conceptual art was favored at the CIAR/AS during its first decade of exhibitions. As the institution's exhibition scope became broader in the 1980s, the paradigm of Latin American art it promoted was also expanded.

[67] Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, "Foreword," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. José Luis Falconi and Gabriela Rangel (New York (680 Park Ave., New York 10021): The Americas Society, 2006), 10–11. This new era is manifest in the apparent sustainability of Latin American art in the mainstream, through the establishment since the 2000s of Latin American curatorial positions at museums like MoMA, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and its regular presence in their exhibition programs.

CHAPTER ONE. Vis-à-Vis: Looking at the Boom Nationally and from New York

1. 1 Beginning with a Bang: A Background on the Boom

In July 1989 Shifra Goldman coined "the Latin American art boom" as a concept, drawing attention to a phenomenon that had been underway for about two years.[1] Even before being baptized as "the Boom," approximately since 1987, the heightened visibility of Latin American and Latino art had already been the subject of talk and debate by Goldman herself and other critics, artists, and scholars in the fields of Latino and Latin American art in magazines, catalog essays and journals.[2] In Goldman's words, booms in the art world had the following features: "Booms in the art arena can be identified by numerous blockbuster museum shows, lots of mainstream critical attention, a proliferation of gallery exhibits, and sustained activity on the auction market."[3] 1987 to 1993 marked a climax in these characteristics for Latin American art. In her article "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift-Horse in the Mouth," published a few months after her naming of the Boom, Goldman described the Latin American Boom scenario in the following way:

> The decade of the 1980s has ushered in an amazing proliferation of Latin American art shows at major U.S. art museums, and numerous galleries, a phenomenon unknown since before World War II, and, indeed, unknown since the cross-fertilization between Mexico and the United States during the 1930s. … Though Mexico still has primacy, the art of other Latin American nations is becoming visible. Not enough, not free from distorted

[1] Goldman, "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin America." It is important to mention that the word "boom" had been used to describe other phenomena in the art and culture of Latin America. As mentioned in the Introduction, it had served to describe the world-wide recognition of Latin American writers during the 60s. The "boom" was also used to describe the wide embrace of the medium of drawing by artists from Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s. See Inter-American Relations Center, *Latin American Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of John and Barbara Duncan* (New York: The Center for Inter-American Relations, 1970); Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Un-drawing Boundaries: A Curatorial Proposal," in *Re-aligning Vision: Alternative Currents in South American Drawing* (New York: Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas at Austin, 1997).

[2] The fora where these debates took place included *Art Nexus*, *Arte en Colombia*, *New Art Examiner*, and *Third Text*.

[3] Goldman, "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin America." This essay first appeared in *Artweek*, July 1, 1989: 1-2.

> museum presentations, not sufficiently to have any kind of parity with the Euro-American axis, but, nevertheless, no longer invisible.[4]

After this description, Goldman proceeds to list some of the most notable traveling blockbuster shows of the 1980s. She mentions *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective* which opened at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1986; in 1987 the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and the Indianapolis Museum of Art inaugurated the shows *Hispanic An in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors*, and *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America, 1920- 1987*, respectively. In 1988, *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* opened at the Bronx Museum of the Arts; and *Images of Mexico*, which had originated at the Schirn Kunsthalle of Frankfurt opened at the Dallas Museum of Art. In addition, she mentions two other blockbuster exhibitions that were in the planning and scheduled to open in 1990: i.e. UCLA's Wight Gallery *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation*, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's proposed "largest-ever Mexican art show," which would open under the title of *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*.[5]

Blockbuster exhibitions are conceived not only as shows that bring high volume audiences to museums, but also as exhibitions that outlast their time of display through substantial catalogs and abundant reviews.[6] For Goldman, the outcome in the production of knowledge and media reception of the Latin American art show being planned was predictable, based on those that had already taken place:

> All [these exhibitions], of course, are or will be accompanied by luxurious, well-illustrated catalogues which help to fill the lacuna created when the last survey of modern Latin American art in English went out of print in the United States. (How accurate and

[4] Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth." This essay was first published in *New Art Examiner* 17 (December 1989): 25-29.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Emma Barker, "Exhibiting the Canon: The Blockbuster Show," in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, ed. Emma Barker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 127–146.

> balanced a view is presented by the catalogues is, of course, another matter. The best of the catalogues, obviously, will be those whose editors turned to essayists conversant with the field). Thus far, the exhibitions have been handsomely mounted in their home institutions (though some have suffered on the road), and many were complemented by programs of various kinds, from concerts and films to symposia.
>
> All of these shows have been (or will be) surrounded by a flurry of reviews in each of the locations they visit. But judging by what has already appeared, there is little analysis and even less critical evaluation. Critics—to say nothing of art historians—know very little about Latin American art. Therefore the reviews, with important exceptions, have generally ranged from gushing to stereotyped.[7]

The specifics of the debate about the benefits of the Boom are laid out here, and suggested already in the inquisitive title of Goldman's article. She examines the gift-horse she calls the Boom, deconstructing this phenomenon and exposing the "extra-artistic agendas" that supported the new fashionable status of that art.[8] As a phenomenon, the Boom started with a blast. It was named at what seemed the climax of its existence, compared to the international visibility of Latin American and Latino art before 1987 and after 1993. However, evidence of a growing international interest in the art of Latin America can be found since the late 1970s, in the emergence of an auction house market, the 1983 publication of Hayden Herrera's biography on Frida Kahlo and its quick turn into a bestseller, and the organization of exhibitions such as *Torres-García, Grid-Pattern-Sign*, held at the Hayward in 1985.[9] Some of the exhibitions that took place in the late 1980s were in the planning since the early and midyears of the decade.[10]

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[7] Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth."

[8] Ibid.

[9] The publication and immediate success of Hayden Herrera's biography on Kahlo was as much part of a growing mainstream interest in the art of Latin America, as of the rise of the second-wave of feminism in academic and cultural circles.

[10] For instance, *Hispanic Art in the United States* originated around 1982 in conversations among the curators and Peter Marzio (then Director of the Corcoran Gallery, and by the time of the show of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston). Similarly, Waldo Rasmussen, organizer of Latin American *Artists of the Twentieth Century* and Director of MoMA's International Program proposed the exhibition in 1976 to John Drummond, then Director of Edinburgh International Festival, for showing in 1981. After numerous difficulties the exhibition was canceled. Renewed support for Latin American art by the end of the 1980s facilitated the exhibition undertaking at MoMA in

Artists, scholars, and critics had already noted a rise in visibility for Latino and Latin American art before Goldman's naming of it.[11]

Between 1987 and 1993, museums whose programs had traditionally focused on a Euro-American canon of Western art took on organizing survey exhibitions of Latin American and U.S. Latino art, or retrospectives of veteran artists of Latin American background. In those six years, approximately eight traveling, widely publicized, large-scale exhibitions of art from Latin America were held in the U.S. and Europe. Goldman's list does not account for all. Some that could still be added include *Latin American Art: The Modern Era*, organized in 1989 by the Hayward Gallery, London; the mega-exhibition *America, Bride of the Sun: 500 Years of Latin America and the Low Countries* held in 1992 at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp; and *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, organized by MoMA in 1993, which became the last large Latin American survey at a mainstream museum until the 21st century.

Those same years also marked the rise of a Latin American auction house market, which had been developing steadily since the first auction at Sotheby Parke Bernet in 1979. In 1991 the competitiveness and potential of this new market became widely tangible, as Frida Kahlo's *Diego and I*, 1943, became the first auctioned Latin American work to sell for over one million dollars.[12] This happened after years of steadily mounting records at bi-annual sales for artists such as Wifredo Lam, Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, and Kahlo herself. Signs of a slowdown in

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1993. See John Beardsley and Jane Livingston, "Preface and Acknowledgments," in *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (Houston and New York: Museum of Fine Arts Houston and Abbeville Press Publishers, 1987), 7; Waldo Rasmussen, "Introduction to an Exhibition," in *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Rasmussen, Waldo (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 17.

[11] See Ehrenberg, "On Our Own Terms." My intent here is not to argue with Goldman as of when "the Boom" took place, but to establish the fact that before the mainstream took notice of the art of Latin America in the 1980s, Latin American art was strongly present in alternative art circuits and even the art market.

[12] Rita Reif, "Auctions," *The New York Times*, May 10, 1991. http://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/10/arts/auctions.html (accessed November 9, 2012). At Christie's Latin American spring auction *Diego and I* sold for 1.4 million to art dealer Mary-Anne Martin. The collector who sold the painting had bought it from Martin in 1982 for $85,000.

the marketability of Latin American art were apparent in 1993, when for the first time half of the lots went unsold in Christie's spring auction.[13]

The abundance of exhibition catalogs, reviews, and auction reports related to Latin American art in the late '80s and early '90s, attests to the heightened visibility of this art brought by the Boom. Critical literature about this phenomenon exists mainly in the form of journal articles, exhibition reviews, and some essays included in anthologies in the fields of Latin American art and Museum Studies. But a proper full-length art historical analysis of this literature still awaits writing. In terms of overall reception in the field, it would be easy to imagine the excitement of Latin American and Latino art professionals (i.e. curators, artists, scholars, museum directors) over the heightened visibility provided by the Boom and the immediate benefits it would be expected to yield for Latino and Latin American artists. Among these, we could mention real and frequent opportunities for the acquisition of works and their showcasing at mainstream art spaces; career and financial success for a substantial number of living artists from these communities; a place as equals in the international contemporary art scene. The Boom could have also been expected to yield increased leverage for resources directed towards teaching and investigation in the field of Latin American and Latino art in academia and museums; and the creation of a discursive space where Latin American artists are considered integral to Western art history.

However, this easily imagined optimism is absent when reviewing the Boom literature written by experts in Latin American and Latino art. Reactions ranged from neutral distance to outright hostility. The benefits of a broader visibility and a relatively expanded knowledge on Latin American and Latino cultural production were frequently measured against the Euro and

[13] "Latin American Art Boom Comes to a Halt at Christie's," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 18, 1993, sec. A. 11, http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed November 8, 2012).

Anglo-centric cultural biases and simplistic ideas around this art of which several Boom exhibitions were the vehicle.[14] Mari Carmen Ramírez, Edward J. Sullivan and Shifra Goldman, all scholars and curators specializing in Latin American and Latino art, signaled important failures in some of the most ambitious Boom exhibitions, including *Art of the Fantastic*, and *Hispanic Art in the United States.* The critical tone of each is different, but overall they agreed that the curatorial frameworks of these shows were prone to project essentialist views of Latin American or Latino art as exotic, colorful, and different from Modern art.

Other critical angles included the one provided by anthropologist Arlene Dávila, an expert on the intersection between cultural production and consumer culture among the U.S. Latino population. Dávila found fault with the asymmetries veiled within such a broadly-named phenomenon as the "Latin American Boom." Despite having been greatly motivated by the growing U.S. Latino consumer market, the Boom, according to Dávila, provided exposure and financial success almost exclusively to artists from Latin American independent republics and not to diasporic Latino artists, members of colonized communities such as Chicanos and Puerto Ricans.[15] Along those lines, Goldman also questioned the mainstream's sudden eagerness to organize Latin American and Latino art shows, pointing to the corporate interests that sustained

[14] In exhibition reviews it is common to find a praising statement followed by temperate criticism that subsequently highlights several failures and ends in a tone of ambivalence towards the exhibition endeavor. See Sullivan, "Art of the Fantastic"; Shifra M. Goldman, "Latin American Arts' U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth," *New Art Examiner* 17, no. 4 (December 1989): 25–29; Goldman, "Latin Visions and Revisions." Some reviews are outright negative and make few positive remarks. See Shifra M. Goldman, "3,000 Years of Mexican Art," *Mexico, Splendors of Thirty Centuries: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York* 51 (Summer92 1992): 000; Shifra M. Goldman, "Metropolitan Splendors. The Buying and Selling of Mexico," *Third Text* 14 (Spring 1991): 16–25.

[15] Arlene Dávila, "Latinizing Culture: Art, Museums, and the Politics of U.S. Multicultural Encompassment" in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (1999), 180-202.

some of these efforts and to a U.S. utilitarian tradition of showcasing Latin American art as a tool for furthering economic and political relations with that region.[16]

These critics seem to suggest that the Boom was not created ex nihilo. A complex web of demographic, political, and economic developments and landmark historic events had already laid the groundwork and contributed to a growing interest in Latin America and its art across the U.S. and internationally. The gradual return to democracy in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile brought cultural openness towards South America.[17] In the U.S., the influx of immigrants fleeing civil wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and the coming of age of a second and third generation of Latinos or "Hispanics" that included U.S-based Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and Cuban-Americans brought attention to these groups as both a strong cultural presence and a potential consumer market.[18] President Ronald Reagan's support of the war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua via its financing and arming of the counter-revolutionary forces, and the protests it generated amongst the American leftists, anti-militarists, and human rights activists brought Latin America into focus. So did pluralism, multiculturalism and identity politics in academia and the public sphere, as well as the demands of marginalized groups in the U.S. for the

[16] Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth." According to Goldman, the most obvious example of this instrumentalization of Latin American art was the exhibition *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1990. This show served as a bombastic gesture of good-will between the U.S. and Mexico at the crucial time of approval of the contested North American Free Trade Agreement. For a detailed essay on the economic and cultural politics behind the Met exhibition see Goldman, "Metropolitan Splendors. The Buying and Selling of Mexico."

[17] Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America,* Sixth Edition, 6th ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2005), 58-59. In Brazil, Argentina and Chile repressive military governments consolidated dictatorships a.k.a. "bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes" in 1964, 1966 and 1973. These governments were characterized by their curtailing of civil liberty and political opposition in the form of punishment towards dissenters and banning of political competition. In the 1980s, increasing civic participation and the weight of the Latin American debt crisis slowly gave way to re-democratization.

[18] On July 11, 1988, *Time Magazine* issued a special edition titled "Hispanic Art Breaks out of the Barrio" dedicated to the explosive U.S. increase of the Latino population. An article inside the magazine reported that major advertisers were expecting great profits from this new population with an estimated buying power of $134 billion. Cited in Shifra M. Goldman, "Homogenizing Hispanic Art," in *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States*, vol. 15 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 409–415.

acceptance and recognition of their identity in coexistence with white and Eurocentric cultures in the U.S.[19] Last but not least, towards the late 1980s, the approaching Quincentennial of the discovery of the Americas brought renewed international interest in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of the New World, prompting the revision of narratives on the encounter of the Old and New Worlds, and the surveying of the region's economic, social, and cultural achievements.[20]

Against this background, museums and other cultural institutions around the U.S. found it increasingly important to engage with Latin American culture. A particular concern in the U.S. was fulfilling the demands for representation of the Latino population while tapping into its consumer market.[21] These political and economic events created the foundation for the signature exhibitions that defined the Boom in the first place. The criticism for their clichéd approaches is

[19] Samuel P. Huntington eloquently describes the 1980s and 1990s interest in identity politics and the struggles of traditionally disadvantaged groups for cultural representation in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). According to Huntington these cultural dynamics are directly linked to the Post-Cold War Era and the fragmentation of a previously bi-polar World, into a multipolar one.

[20] In the visual arts, this was certainly a motivation for the exhibition *Latin American Art, the Modern Era*, as attested by Dawn Ades, curator of the exhibition held at the Hayward Gallery in London in 1989 in an interview with the author, August 10th, 2007. It was also an inspiration for the mega exhibition *America Bride of the Sun. 500 Years of Latin America and the Low Countries*, held at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp in 1992, and the publication of its catalog. The Quincentennial served also as a pretext for the College Art Association to dedicate the Winter 1992 issue of its *Art Journal* to the art of Latin America. Luis Camnitzer and Shifra Goldman served as guest editors. See Shifra M. Goldman and Luis Camnitzer, "The Columbus Quincentenary and Latin American Art: A Critical Evaluation," *Art Journal* 51, no. 4 (December 1, 1992): 16–20.

[21] Emerging in the early 1980s, the industry of Hispanic marketing and advertising in the U.S. has been central to the present popularization of Latino culture that has allowed for the success of artists like Ricky Martin, and J-Lo, or of Mexican food into the U.S. cultural mainstream. This industry has been responsible for promoting generalized ideas about "Hispanics" to be readily marketed by corporate America. While this culture-specific market feeds one of the fastest growing sectors of the marketing industry in the U.S., Hispanic marketing has become an arena for self-representation for a traditionally politically disenfranchised population. For an analysis of the complex economic and political dynamics involved the Hispanic marketing industry see Arlene Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People,* 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2001).

a sign of their shortcomings and points to a concurrent existence of a sophisticated understanding and engagement with Latin American and Latino realities at the time.[22]

Several signature shows of the Boom, such as *Images of Mexico, Art of the Fantastic*, *Hispanic Art in the United States*, and *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* were received with ambivalence or in a plainly negative way by Latin American and Latino art experts. Sullivan qualified *Art of the Fantastic* as a show that was "thought provoking, if somewhat quirky," which despite its failures should be acknowledged as an ambitious undertaking raising awareness in the U.S. about many under-acknowledged artists from Latin America.[23] He and Goldman called for a clarification of the ties of certain art to the notion of "the fantastic," in order to rectify the exotic bias evident in the highlighting of this notion as the main characteristic of Latin American art.[24] In her essay "Looking a Gift-Horse in the Mouth," Goldman also expressed the need for a critical analysis of the motivations of the Boom.[25]

But it was Mari Carmen Ramírez's much cited and sharply argued 1992 essay "Beyond the 'Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art," that fully discredited the impetus and results of the art Boom and called for a rethinking of curatorial strategies for exhibiting the art of Latin America and the peripheries of the art world.[26] Her essay strongly criticized several exhibitions of the Boom, including *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors*. Ramírez explored failures

[22] Goldman, "Homogenizing Hispanic Art," 1987; Goldman, "Latin Visions and Revisions"; Sullivan, "Art of the Fantastic"; Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic'."

[23] Sullivan, "Art of the Fantastic."

[24] Ibid; Goldman, "Latin Visions and Revisions."

[25] Goldman, "Latin American Arts' U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth."

[26] Ramírez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art." Ramírez's is arguably the most quoted and circulated critique of the Boom since it was published. It is an essential text in the Latin American and Latino art historical canon.

in these shows that can easily be perceived in their exhibition catalogs. They are (1) the reliance of mainstream institutions on their in-house curators unfamiliar with the field of Latino and Latin American art for the organization of these exhibitions; (2) the mainstream's insistence on exclusively discussing the art of Latinos and Latin Americans as a manifestation of their cultural identity, almost invariably associated in the U.S. with clichés of color, passion, and fantasy; and (3) the prevalence of the survey as an exhibition model and its ambition of total knowledge. The first two points were also signaled by Edward Sullivan in his review of *Art of the Fantastic* and by Shifra Goldman in her review of that same exhibition and of *Hispanic Art*.[27] At the heart of the experts' criticism was a resistance to the Boom becoming an instrument to signal the "otherness" of Latin American art, to promote an essentialized and isolationist view of it, or to perpetuate the idea of Latin American art as dependent on European and U.S. American art.

The criticisms of Ramírez and other experts of the aforementioned shows were sound. Their wide circulation through magazines and anthology reprints, vis-à-vis reviews of Latin American and Latino art shows by perhaps benevolent non-experts, immediately re-framed the Boom as a historiographic reading of a larger phenomenon lasting longer than a decade, i.e. 1980-1993, with a climax around 1988. In this historiographic reading, the Boom came to be mainly seen as a monologue led by a culturally-biased Euro-American art mainstream, ill-informed of the art of Latinos and Latin Americans.[28]

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[27] Sullivan, "Art of the Fantastic"; Goldman, "Homogenizing Hispanic Art," 1987; Goldman, "Latin Visions and Revisions."

[28] This was a puzzling situation: immediately upon its inception the Boom was sharply criticized, pointing to an existing alternative way of showcasing Latin American and Latino art that had been brewing for years in the shadows. The signature Boom shows brought apparently a strong alternative Latin American and Latino art reality to the fore. At the same time, it could be argued that the controversy about the signature shows may have seemed to contribute to the apparent arrest of the Boom after the 1993 MoMA exhibition, along with other factors, such as the culmination of festivities and commemorations around the Quincentennial of the discovery of the Americas, which had an important role in prompting the Boom's climax.

In a later essay titled "Brokering Identities: Art Curators and the Politics of Cultural Representation," Ramírez elaborates on the role that has been "bestowed" to art curators since the 1980s advent of multiculturalism.[29] In this new era seemingly avid to acknowledge the cultural productions of regions marginal to the West, the role of the curator has changed from that of "taste-maker" to cultural mediator or *broker*—to use Ramírez's term. Cultural brokers are expected to serve as the interpreters of marginal cultures for the West. This poses a predicament for the contemporary curator, who while helping dismantle "Old world hierarchies, seemingly democratizing the space of cultural action," is forced to participate in the construction of reductive, essentializing frameworks for showcasing the identity of "the other."[30]

Ramírez's essay is impressive in its effort to describe the complexities intrinsic to the dynamics of cultural representation of Latinos and Latin Americans during the Boom. As she explains, in times of globalization, the showcasing of these cultural productions comes not only from the interest of the art mainstream in the culture of "the Other." Incentives for it also originate in the needs and demands of interest groups that include the U.S. government and its business sector, Latin American impresarios, and Latino activists who want equal access to the U.S. cultural scene and marketplace.

Despite her nuanced analysis of triggers for broad cultural visibility, Ramírez's discussion of these dynamics still understands the Latin American art Boom as a mainly mainstream phenomenon, giving little importance to what happened outside the circuit of well-funded, reputable museums and the marketplace. Her failure to consider in detail alternative discourses on Latin American and Latino art that emerged from non-mainstream art spaces,

[29] Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Brokering Identities: Art Curators and the Politics of Cultural Representation.," in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 21–38.

[30] Ibid, 16.

ultimately results in an involuntary validation of the mainstream as the sole showcase of Latin American art during the Boom—the main shaping force and agent articulating the idea of Latin American art at the time.

This chapter will revisit the Boom and challenge the notion that exhibitions at mainstream museums constituted the only voice on Latin American art at the time. To that end, I will review the curatorial premises, exhibition catalogs, and reception of some of the most criticized exhibitions of Latino and Latin American art during the 1980s, alongside those of other important but less-remembered or referenced exhibitions organized by smaller venues that contested essentialist notions of Latin American and Latino art. My aim is to demonstrate that the Boom was a moment when art spaces of various types brought to the fore through their shows different notions of Latin American and Latino art. Examples of exhibitions held in New York during the time of the Boom reveal a will to atomize the notion of a homogeneous Latin American and Latino art. These shows convey an institutional effort at reclaiming for artists the right of self-definition and of finding their place in an international art dialogue.

1.2 Within and Outside the Mainstream

The 1980s Boom of Latin American and Latino art is broadly understood as a moment of heightened visibility for this art in the international art mainstream.[31] Discussing the meaning of "the art mainstream" is thus, essential to understanding the Boom as a historical concept. In art historical discourse "the mainstream" is a common trope that makes reference to power structures within the spaces of validation and circulation of art. "The mainstream" art circuit is comprised of institutions that operate in various realms. These are namely museums and other exhibiting venues (e.g. national salons and biennials), academia and its organisms of

[31] Ramírez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art."

dissemination (i.e. journals, books), and the art market (i.e. galleries and auction houses). Together, these institutions play a crucial role in conferring value to art as worthy of study, exhibition, and collecting. As such, "the mainstream" is also used as a metaphor for success. For an artist, "to gain access to" or "to become mainstream" means to attain fame and status; to become a household name; to have commercial success, and to become (or be closer to becoming) part of "the main canon of art."[32] According to Anna Brzyski, the canon of art is often understood as "a body of works traditionally considered to be the most significant and therefore the most worthy of study."[33] The canon has been consistently identified with a universal standard of quality.[34] Being part of the canon, thus, implies making art that is universally pertinent. In the global art world, what is not "mainstream" or canonic, most times stands as marginal or under-recognized. In spite of the powerlessness this marginality may invoke, since the late 1960s some art venues and artist collectives have reclaimed their center of activity outside the mainstream, in an emancipating gesture against conservative structures perceived to deprive art it of its revolutionary potential.[35]

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[32] Luis Camnitzer, "Access to the Mainstream," in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America* (London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute of International Visual Arts and MIT Press, 1995), 218–223. In the words of artist and critic Camnitzer: "Although the term 'mainstream' carries democratic reverberations, suggesting an open and majority-supported institution, it is in fact rather elitist, reflecting a specific social and economic class. In reality 'mainstream' presumes a reduced group of cultural gatekeepers and represents a select nucleus of nations. It is a name for a power structure that promotes a self-appointed hegemonic culture. For this reason the wish to belong to 'the mainstream' and the wish to destroy it often arise simultaneously in the individuals who are, or feel marginal to it. Depending on origin and background, individual access is more difficult for some than for others."

[33] Anna Brzyski, "Introduction: Canons and Art History," in *Partisan Canons*, ed. Anna Brzyski (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 1–25. Scholars acknowledge the possibility of multiple canons specific to a subfield, but they identify the Western art canon as a group of works with a uniquely privileged position "regulating the entire system of cultural appraisal."

[34] *Partisan Canons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

[35] Julie Ault, *Alternative Art, New York: 1965-1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective* (New York: The Drawing Center; Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press) 2002; Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, eds., *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960-201*0 (The MIT Press, 2012).

I will refer to "the art mainstream" and to "mainstream museums" throughout this dissertation. For the purpose of this investigation, the category of "mainstream museum" will always imply three main aspects that make a museum into a *de facto* supporter of what Elizabeth Mansfield calls "the myth of Art History as a discipline."[36] Not all art museums have equal status in the field of art history and in the cultural field in general. Some possess greater authority and power than others, as loci from where art is defined as a category and from where the boundaries of the field of Art History are drawn.[37] This power of designation and delimitation is attained through a series of conditions including (1) a founding history and trajectory either as the endeavor of private individuals who make their collections viewable to the public, or as public institutions funded by the state; (2) international reputation acquired through collecting and showcasing practices; (3) the soundness of its infrastructure to carry out its main functions as an art repository, showcase, and site of interpretation.[38] Mainstream art museums are institutions with strong local and international reputations. They aim at exposing the public to art that is

[36] Elizabeth Mansfield, "Art History and Modernism," in *Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 11–27. Mansfield's edited anthology is a study on the institutions that have helped art history to coalesce as a discipline in museums and academia since the 19th century. For her, art history as an intellectual discipline is like any social organization, which coheres around a community with a shared history, common language, and seemingly similar beliefs and goals, propagated through a variety of institutions. The recording, historicizing, and safeguarding or cultural heritage is a main goal of art history supported through museum institutions, particularly through universal museums.

[37] This becomes clear when thinking about the recent tendency in U.S. and European museums of organizing retrospectives of the work of fashion designers. If some museums had collected garments for decades, these collections were mostly relegated to storage, study areas or used as contextual material in shows with an approach based on "visual culture". Their new impetus for historicizing haute-couture has implications for the discipline of art history, adding a new medium to its repertoire of study, and disturbing deeply-set notions associated to what constitutes an art work, such as the need not to serve a practical function (such as covering oneself), or the notion that value is tied to originality or uniqueness.

[38] Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995). The conditions I list are partly derived from Carol Duncan's interpretation of the public art museum as a civilizing institution.

considered of universal value.[39] They may feel the pressure of economic crises, but their status as custodians of a cultural heritage and as educational institutions is protected through endowments and through state funding and private donations.[40] These museums, in general, adhere implicitly or explicitly (through universal collections or through more focused scopes) to a classic trajectory of periods, artists, and works that lead from Egypt through Greece and Rome to the Renaissance and modernism in Western Europe and North America.[41]

To put the mainstream complex into the perspective of the Boom, the increased presence of Latin American and Latino art in numerous blockbuster shows, the art market, and the media, made this phenomenon into a recordable event.[42] The art of Latinos and Latin Americans seemed finally "worthy" of access to the international mainstream and the main canon. But, putting the arbitrariness of the main canon in art history, and the criticisms of the trademark shows of the Boom into perspective, Latin American and Latino art also were undoubtedly present outside the mainstream, in their own sub-canonic universes. As such, alternative institutions and specialized venues did play their role in bringing national visibility to this art, and countering Latin America clichés of fantasy and otherness.

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[39] This is not limited to universal art museums. Mainstream museums with chronological, regional, or national scopes can claim universal validity for their collections. A case in point is the Museum of Modern Art, which promotes Modern art as a universally important cultural development.

[40] Rozalia Jovanovic, "A Boogie Down Biennale: Holly Block Is Bringing the Bronx to Venice," *The New York Observer*, sec. The Gallerist, October 9, 2012, http://galleristny.com/2012/10/a-boogie-down-biennale-holly-block-is-bringing-the-bronx-to-venice/ (accessed October 9, 2012). This economic feature of the mainstream museum is discussed by Jovanovic in relation to museums traditionally chosen to curate national pavilions in prestigious art world events such as the Venice Biennale. In 2013 the Bronx Museum will be the first non-mainstream American art museum to curate the U.S. pavilion in Venice.

[41] James Elkins has written about the impact in Art History of this trajectory of movements, popularized through E.H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, first published in 1950, and reprinted many times in numerous languages. Having sold several million copies, *The Story of Art* constitutes the best selling art book ever. The wide acceptance of this sequence stands as an obstacle for the construction of a global art history. James Elkins, "Canon and Globalization in Art History," in *Partisan Canons*, ed. Anna Brzyski (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 55–77.

[42] Goldman, "Latin American Arts' U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth."

1.3 Explosive Agents: Latino and Latin American Art Blockbusters of the Boom

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, two exhibitions through which the Boom earned an ambivalent reputation were *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America 1920-1987* organized by The Indianapolis Museum of Art and *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors*, held at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and co-organized with the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. Both were conceived as "blockbuster shows" intending to boost attendance numbers at their host institutions by way of presenting selections of artwork that were mostly unfamiliar to regular museum visitors.[43] These shows also meant to attract a Latin American and Latino audience that might have been compelled to see their cultural production represented and validated by these prestigious institutions. Audiences for these exhibitions multiplied as they traveled to various museums. *Art of the Fantastic* traveled to the Queens Museum (New York), and the Center for the Fine Arts (Miami), while *Hispanic Art* was also seen at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and The Brooklyn Museum.[44]

As their titles suggest, these exhibitions were different in scope. *Art of the Fantastic* addressed the development of art in Latin America from the 1920s—the decade that marked the emergence of Modern art movements in countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina—until the year of the exhibition, highlighting the aspect of what the curators termed "the fantastic" over time. *Hispanic Art* was a survey about art made by contemporary artists of either Latin American origin or descent working in the United States.

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[43] *Final Report: Art of the Fantastic: 1920-1987. Organized by the Indianapolis Museum of Art.*, Exhibition Report (Indianapolis Museum of Art, n.d.), Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives. The intention of maximizing audiences is evident at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, which timed the exhibition concurrently with Indianapolis hosting of the Tenth Panamerican Games. The grand total of attendants to the show according to the final report was 26,592 people.

[44] Ibid. *Art of the Fantastic* was also supposed to travel to Centro Cultural/Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City, but the rise in costs after the devaluation of the Mexican Peso prompted the venue to cancel.

The problems of each exhibition deserve to be treated individually. However, it is useful to summarize a common deep-set problem of both addressed by Ramírez, which I take as a point of departure to distinguish the failed "mainstream-made" exhibitions of the Boom from the New York-models I will propose as alternatives. Both types of exhibitions relied on the survey exhibition model, whose ambition to fully contain the art of a culture or region can be considered an unrealizable project.[45]

1.3.1 The Fuse: Problems of the Survey Show

As an exhibition model, the survey aims to classify and to provide a panoramic view of art framed chronologically, geographically, and/or culturally. Ramírez has persuasively argued that the survey is essentially a Western exhibition model, derived from the Enlightenment and its encyclopedic and taxonomic impulses.[46] The survey embodies a vision of progress that is key in its goal of knowing, defining, and giving coherence to a subject.[47] Within this framework, the chronological survey presents itself as a teleological model.[48] It departs from the premise of evolution in aesthetic development. It conceives history, and in particular Modern art history, as an unfolding linear narrative organized in styles and movements. Geographic and cultural surveys presuppose a common artistic purpose and aesthetic among the members of a culture or the inhabitants of a geographic region, as well as simultaneity in the development of art forms within the different communities that conform that region or culture.

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[45] Ramírez, "Un-drawing Boundaries: A Curatorial Proposal."

[46] Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic'"; Ramírez, "Un-drawing Boundaries: A Curatorial Proposal."

[47] Taína B. Caragol and Isobel Whitelegg, "The Archival Avant-Garde: Latin American Art and the UK" (presented at the Latin America: The Last Avant-Garde, The Graduate Center, CUNY, 2008).

[48] Ibid.

The problems posed by this model are several. First, the survey, in general, aims to be a comprehensive and conclusive history. While the survey model provides the viewer with the possibility of a panoramic view on a determined artistic production, it also precludes the possibility of exclusion of movements or artists not contemplated within its narrative. Second, the chronological survey as conceived by mainstream museums frequently follows the canonical history of Modern art, in which regions and countries outside of Western Europe and the U.S. only constitute marginal players, measured against canonic standards. Survey exhibitions generated by employing this background often project a vision of the art of Latin America that is derivative or *retardataire* vis-à-vis the aforementioned territories. With regard to the geographic and cultural survey, the coherence of their narratives is dependent upon a forcefully homogenized vision of the artistic production of a region or people. These problems are often aggravated when the curators organizing the exhibitions are outsiders to the designated area of study and specialists are left only to work as counselors or consultants. This was a common *modus operandi* during the Boom and the kernel of the ambivalence and even resentment of certain artists and scholars towards the Boom.[49]

[49] Hollister Sturges and Holliday T. Day, "Acknowledgments," in *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America 1920-1987*, by Holliday T. Day and Hollister Sturges (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art ; Distributed by Indiana University Press, 1987), 12–14; Beardsley and Livingston, "Preface and Acknowledgments." The curators of *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States* relied on the advice of specialists in Latin American and Latino art, but experts on the field felt their advice was not properly incorporated or plainly misrepresented. Among other institutions and individuals, the acknowledgements of *Art of the Fantastic* credit John Stringer at the CIAR/AS, and Susana Torruella and Nilda Peraza at Cayman/MoCHA. Those of *Hispanic Art in the United States* credit Peraza and Torruella, as well as Inverna Lockpez, director of INTAR Gallery and Jack Agüeros, former director of El Museo del Barrio, Rafael Colón Morales, current director of El Museo.

On the reactions of Latino and Latin American art experts that were consulted for the organization of *Art of the Fanstastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States*, see Goldman, "Latin Visions and Revisions"; Ramírez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art"; and Grace Glueck, "The Many Accents of Latino Art," *The New York Times*, September 25, 1988, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/25/arts/the-many-accents-of-latino-art.html (accessed November 5, 2012).

1.3.2 Fantastically Exotic: The Indianapolis Museum of Art Exhibition

The exhibitions *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art* confronted these problems in one measure or another. Planned to coincide with the 10th Pan American Games, celebrated in Indianapolis in the summer of 1987, *Art of the Fantastic* was the first thematic survey of Latin American art covering most of the twentieth century taking place at a mainstream institution.[50] It was held from June 28 to September 13. Organized by IMA in-staff contemporary art curator Holliday T. Day and chief curator Hollister Sturges, *Art of the Fantastic* featured the work of twenty-nine artists from eleven countries.[51] Argentine artists included Roberto Aizenberg, Guillermo Kuitca, Armando Rearte, Jorge de la Vega, and Alejandro Xul Solar; Brazilians included Tarsila do Amaral, Antonio Henrique Amaral, Siron Franco, Alex Vallauri, and Waldemar Zaidler; Chile was represented by Roberto Matta; Colombians comprised Fernando Botero and Beatriz González; from Cuba José Bedia, Luis Cruz Azaceta, and Wifredo Lam; from Mexico were featured Frida Kahlo, Alberto Gironella, Rocío Maldonado, Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo, Germán Venegas; Nicaragua, Peru and Puerto Rico had Armando Morales;

[50] Prior to *Art of the Fantastic*, Stanton Loomis Catlin and Terrence Grieder's *Art of Latin America Since Independence* covered the artistic development of the region since the nineteenth century. Catlin and Grieder's exhibition originated at the Yale Art Gallery in 1965 and then traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. This survey was organized by two specialists in Latin American art; Catlin was a modernist, while Grieder was a pre-Columbianist. The show constituted the first exhibition attempt in the U.S. at mapping the chronology of modern Latin American art. As such, it had the advantage of being able to define the Latin American modern canon for the first time. As field specialists, they had a strong awareness of the educational value of the exhibition and its catalog. The catalog's preface designates university students as the main target audience of the show. The exhibition follows an organization suitable for teaching. The book is intended as a first laudable effort to map the field chronologically and regionally, but it recognizes itself as a point of departure for others to delve into particular artists of moments in history. See Stanton L. Catlin, "Preface," in *Art of Latin America Since Independence* (New Haven and Austin: The Yale University Art Gallery and The University of Texas Art Museum, 1966), IX–XIV.

[51] Neither Day nor Sturges had done exhibitions of artists from Latin America prior to *Art of the Fantastic.* Before working at IMA, both curators had organized exhibitions at the Joslyn Art Museum, Nebraska. Earlier shows organized by Day at the Joslyn included *The Shape of Space: The Sculpture of George Sugarman* (1981), *Elyn Zimmerman: Images of the City, Photographs and Sculpture* (1985), and *New Art of Italy: Chia, Clemente, Cucchi, Paladino* (1985). Sturges's shows at the Joslyn included *Jules Breton and the French Rural Tradition* (1982), and *The Rural Vision: France and America in the Late Nineteen* Century (Joslyn Art Museum, 1987). Shortly after *Art of the Fantastic*, Day was named Curator of Contemporary Art at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Tilsa Tsuchiya and Arnaldo Roche Rabell, respectively; Venezuelan artists included Jacobo Borges and Armando Reverón; Uruguayan artists included José Gamarra and Joaquín Torres-García. A total of one hundred forty-nine works were shown at the exhibition. In a review of the show, Robert Yassin, then Executive Director at IMA, was quoted saying: "This is perhaps the most ambitious exhibition project the Indianapolis Museum has ever undertaken."[52]

The show rested on the notion that Latin American art was "a mirror of identity, of a uniqueness of each country and the region itself."[53] The curators argued that such identity was reflected in the expression of fantasy, or "the fantastic" in the work of artists from the region. It is important to note that Argentine critic Damián Bayón, who had endeavored at defining the specificity of Latin American art, suggested the overarching theme of "the fantastic" to Day and Sturges.[54] For Day and Sturges, this surely validated the show's curatorial premise. From today's standpoint, it seems that the challenge of making the art of Latin America intelligible to curators and an audience unfamiliar to it pressed Bayón to find an overarching concept that seemed present throughout the 20th century.[55] His choice of "the fantastic" was informed by the

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[52] Dianne Heilenman, "Indianapolis Show Puts Latin American Art's Value into Perspective," *Louisville Courier*, 87-6-28.

[53] Holliday T. Day and Hollister Sturges, "Introduction," in *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America 1920-1987* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art; Distributed by Indiana University Press, 1987), 38.

[54] *Final Report: Art of the Fantastic: 1920-1987. Organized by the Indianapolis Museum of Art.* Edward Sullivan noted this fact in his review of the show for *The Art Journal*, suggesting potentially the critic's absorption of Eurocentric cultural biases towards Latin America. My superficial survey of Bayón's writings indicates that "the fantastic" as an overarching characteristic of 20th century Latin American art was formulated for *Art of the Fantastic*, and not before. The incentive of a broad survey exhibition in a mainstream museum served as an incentive for Bayón to formulate this concept. A detailed study of Bayón's criticism awaits to be published. See Bayón, *El Artista Latinoamericano y Su Identidad*; Damián Bayón, "El Estado Del Arte Latinoamericano En Europa," *Plástica Latinoamericana. Revista de La Liga de Arte de San Juan*, September 1984.

[55] Damián Bayón, "Another View," in *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America 1920-1987* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art ; Distributed by Indiana University Press, 1987), 207–209. In Bayón's essay there is a visible impulse to "break down" Latin American art for the uneducated public and curators. With real empathy for them he says, "Dealing with twenty-some different countries must be a tedious task for readers and viewers who do not know us well […]." He also specifies that "the fantastic" is an element that is seen in the figurative art of Latin America, which is an art that alludes to some aspect of the exterior world. However in Latin America there have also

prominence of Magical Realism as a literary genre in Latin American since the 1960s, and by the international success of Gabriel García Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.[56] As Day and Sturges elaborated in the introduction to their catalog:

> Fantastic art is characterized by the juxtaposition, distortion, or amalgamation of images and/or materials that extend experience by contradicting our normal expectations formally or iconographically … The fantastic may be an ingredient in almost any style, including geometric art. Devices such as metamorphoses, incongruous hybrids, dislocations in time and space, and shifts in scale and materials create fantastic images which break the rules of the natural world.[57]

This quote is revealing in many ways. The curators' explanation of what the fantastic constitutes is at once precise and vague. They describe it as a characteristic of Latin American art in the six decade-span of their exhibition. To emphasize this continuity, they divided the exhibition in three chronological sections that corresponded to three generations of artists within their roster. The sections were titled "The Early Moderninsts: Forging an Identity"; "Generation in Conflict: Ideas Unmasked"; and "The Contemporaries: Confrontations with Mass Culture." As Day and Sturges described, the first period was marked by the introduction of European modern art forms into Latin American countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, and by these countries' adaptation of European formal innovations to their local cultural context, in a synthesis that freed them from still prevalent colonial academic traditions. The second and third periods were harder to delimit in stylistic terms. The second presented artists who came to

been abstract and conceptual artists and "the fantastic" should not necessarily be used to explain their art. This specification is not present in Day and Sturges's introduction, suggesting a stretching of the concept over the limits suggested by Bayón.

[56] Day and Sturges, "Introduction." García Márquez novel was published in Spanish in 1967 and translated into English in 1970. The Latin American literary boom is a main point of reference in the curators' introduction to the catalog. For them, the international exposure achieved by Latin American writers should facilitate attention towards the visual arts production of the region. That they were comparing the international visibility of Latin American literature to its art leads us to think that they might have also transposed important literary motifs into the visual arts.

[57] Ibid.

maturity in the first decades after World War Two, and the third, contemporary artists working since the 1970s. Along those six decades and a half, artists had—according to the curators—used "the fantastic" to explore a myriad of themes, including: the influence of the pre-Columbian past, the African diaspora, and the impact of Christianization brought by colonizers into their national cultures. They had also employed "the fantastic" to explore the nature of political oppression (as colonies and republics) and the role of Latin America in Western culture. "The fantastic" also served to express a sense of psychological and geographic isolation.[58]

For the curators, the manifestation of "the fantastic" in Latin American art was not programmatic, as it was for Surrealism in Europe. Instead it was a natural tendency. "The fantastic" could appear spontaneously in any art form of any period in any Latin American country. For them, it was present in Joaquín Torres García's *Construction with Strange Figures* (1931)[Fig. 1-1], a painting in the artist's signature style of Universal Constructivism that he started to develop when he went back to Uruguay after prolonged stays in Barcelona, France, Italy, and New York. As seen in *Construction with Strange Figures*, Universal Constructivism combined the grid structure that was fundamental to Neo-Plasticism with a symbol system of Torres García's authorship composed of schematic drawings like the sun, fish, the clock, and a man that stood for concepts such as divinity, food, humankind. Another painting where "the fantastic" was manifest was Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Monkeys* (1943) [Fig. 1-2], where the artist depicts herself staring somewhat defiantly at the viewer and accompanied by four monkeys. The background is obstructed by broad and abundant foliage and a flower of *Strelitziae Reginae* or "bird of paradise" frames Kahlo's neatly coiffed head with braids tight at its top. The artist conveys authority over the viewer and over her natural surroundings.

[58] *Final Report: Art of the Fantastic: 1920-1987. Organized by the Indianapolis Museum of Art.*

Consistent with other self-portraits of Kahlo, where roots anchor her body to the land, or where she metamorphoses into animals such as deer, nature is portrayed as integral to human life.

Another painting that is presented within the framework of "the fantastic" is Fernando Botero's *Self-Potrait with Louis XIV* (1973) [Fig. 1-3], an ironic take on the tradition of commissioned devotional portraiture where the artist paints *Le Roi Soleil*, Louis XIV, as an oversize obese figure with big hair and blue royal robes that match the curtain beneath him.[59] At the king's left, stands a tiny Botero, less than half the size of the king, with a suit and tie that add to the painting's comical effect by emphasizing the absurdity of this anachronistic encounter. The title reverses the scale hierarchy of the painting, and mocks the Renaissance tradition of commissioning devotional portraits of saints in which the patrons appeared in a smaller scale, while also laughing at artistic narcissism. On a sinister note, Jacobo Borges's *Meeting with Red Circle of Lunatics* (1973) [Fig. 1-4] employs "the fantastic" in a painting where a group of faceless militiamen in full garment gather around a rectangular red space, conveying the oppressive power of consensus in military *Juntas*. This analysis reveals "the fantastic" to be a facile and arbitrary construct imposed upon these works, which discourages a proper discussion of art within its context of production, and the sources that inform it.

The varied selection of works in the survey, of which the above works are only a sample, and the lavishly illustrated catalog aimed precisely at displaying an art that was monolithic in style or subject matter. Ironically, the curators' effort of displaying region-specific uniqueness and flexibility was betrayed by their persisting adherence to a fantastic framework that revived the colonial, stereotypical view of a primitive Latin America untouched by Western rationalism. The aforementioned quote underscores the curators' bias. By implication, it strangely seems to

[59] The curtain backdrop is a reference to Baroque painting, where pulled curtains were often used as framing devices to provide a theatrical effect.

equate Western Modern art with Naturalism, erasing the Modernist quest started by the Impressionists and carried on through the twentieth century for modes of representation that depart from or subvert reality. Meanwhile the "juxtaposition, distortion, or amalgamation of images" that the curators attribute to Latin American art, and their effect of "extend(ing) experience or contradict(ing) our expectations formally or iconographically" could be applied—almost arbitrarily—to a multitude of canonic works of Modern and contemporary art produced in Europe and the U.S., from Henri Matisse's *The Red Studio* (1911) [Fig. 1-5] to Claes Oldenburg's *Floor Cone* (1962) [Fig. 1-6] or Joseph Beuys' *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me* (1977) [Fig. 1-7].

Day and Sturges' foregrounding and imposition of 'the fantastic' *qua* the unreal, magical, or irrational as an intrinsic component of art across countries and historical periods in Latin America, crassly simplified the region's art and the intellectual sophistication of its artists. It portrayed them as exotic and estranged vis-à-vis the Modern art canon.[60] The message was effectively conveyed, judging from some exhibition reviews by critics who were presumably unfamiliar with the art of Latin America. As an example, Dianne Heilenman, art critic for *The Louisville Courier*, reported the following:

> Latin American art, which evolved in part from centuries of varied religious practices, has a tinge of mysticism, primal emotion, and intuitive expression. These traits distinguish it from European Surrealism, which it resembles, but which developed as a deliberate intellectual movement.[61]

[60] As Shifra Goldman observed in her review of this show, relating Latin American art to the fantastic is not completely inaccurate. In the 1940s, Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier in a seminal essay titled "Lo real maravilloso americano" defined the notion of reality in the Americas as fundamentally different from that in Europe. This reality is marvelous in its chaos, its disorder, its exuberant nature, its history and its picturesque quality. *Art of the Fantastic* might have benefited from narrowing down its focus to artists inspired by Carpentier's theory, instead of making "the fantastic" a blanket category for the region.

[61] Heilenman, "Indianapolis Show Puts Latin American Art's Value into Perspective." Much of the local press surrounding the exhibition is imbued with a tone of celebration and festivity at the opportunity of seeing works by artists seldom showcased in the United States, and leaves the curators' premises undisputed. See "Ole! Looking

1.3.3 More Cinder: *Hispanic Art in the United States*- The Geographic and Demographic Problem

Hispanic Art: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors also broke ground as a first-time exhibition at a national mainstream museum, this time of artists of "Hispanic" origin in the United States. The exhibition was curated by Jane Livingston and John Beardsley, who had also co-curated the 1982-landmark exhibition *Black Folk Art in America, 1930-1980*.[62] Like in *Art of the Fantastic*, in *Hispanic Art*, the title announced some of the show's problems. The term Hispanic had been coined by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1970s to quantify all peoples of Latin American descent in the United States.[63] It encountered opposition virtually since its creation from numerous members of the communities this term designated.[64] Opponents rejected

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to the Latin Beat," *Exhibit. Magazine of Art*, August 1987, n.p.; Bill Golightly, "Fantastic Festival!," *Horizon*, August 1987, n.p. Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives.

[62] "Gallery View; A Remarkable Exhibition of Black Folk Art in America; Washington," *The New York Times*, February 14, 1982, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/1982/02/14/arts/gallery-view-a-remarkable-exhibition-of-black-folk-art-in-america-washington.html (accessed March 11, 2013). *Black Folk Art in America, 1930-1980*, is today recognized as an exhibition that raised awareness about the achievements of self-taught African-American artists from the South. *Hispanic Art in the United States* was the first exhibition of Latino artists co-curated by the team. Livingston had some experience with Latino and Latin American artists. She had served as Curator of Contemporary Art of the Century at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1967-1975, and then as Curator, and eventually Associate Director at the Corcoran Gallery from 1975 to her resignation in 1989. Her exhibitions at LACMA included the first major exhibition of Bruce Nauman, co-curated with Marcia Tucker (1972) at the Whitney Museum of Art, and *Los Four*, a show of the Chicano artist collective comprised of Carlos Almaraz, Gilbert Luján, Frank Romero, and Beto de La Rocha. At the Corcoran, Livingston curated numerous exhibitions, mostly of photography, including a survey exhibition on Manuel Alvarez Bravo (1979), and *The Indelible Image: Photographs of War* (1985), co-curated with Frances Fralin.

A specialist in public and environmental art, John Beardsley had curated the exhibition *Probing the Earth: Contemporary Land Projects* (Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 1977) and authored *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape* (Abbesville Press, 1984). Beardsley is currently Adjunct Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Director of Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks. She was Chief Curator at the Corcoran Museum of Art from 1983 to 1989.

[63] Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States*. The rise of the Hispanic population in the 1970s, led Congress in 1976 to require self-identification questions on Hispanic origin or descent to be included in all government census work. The Census Bureau began enumerating Hispanics as a separate category in 1980.

[64] On the resistance to that term and the emergence of Latino as a self-identifier see Suzanne Oboler, *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re) Presentation in the United States* (University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

the term's implicit emphasis on Latin America's Spanish cultural heritage, its condoning of the violent process of colonization, and its simultaneous obliteration of the indigenous and African elements that are also part of the region's ethnic and cultural makeup.[65]

The term also distorted a demographic reality in the U.S. Countering an Anglo- and Eurocentric attempt to name and define the cultural heritage of this constituency, many so-called "Hispanics," particularly those born and/or brought up in the United States—as opposed to born and raised Latin Americans who had arrived to the U.S. as adults—adopted the term "Latino" as a self-identifier. "Latino" emphasized a broader cultural background than Hispanic. It contained within it the idea of "Latin America"—a French invention from the 1830s coined by statesman Michel Chevalier in order to define a political project against the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic nations. As such, the term can be thought as also sanctioning colonial enterprise. But as Kahlil Chaar reminds us, "Latin America" also contained within it the idea of political resistance, as nineteen century Latin American intellectuals and politicians rallied around it: "resignifying it to build their own political and cultural affiliations, but directed against the threat from the North,"—the U.S.[66] The idea of *latinidad* carries that history of opposition. According to Chaar: "even as in the present day it is constructed within the U.S., *latinidad* took form against it, against the U.S. as its other."[67]

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[65] This does not mean that the term was discarded all together, as attested by the names of major cultural organizations such as the Association of Hispanic Art and the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA).

[66] Kahlil Chaar, "A Latin Americanist in U.S. Intellectual History," *U.S.- Intellectual History Blog*, April 28, 2013, http://s-usih.org/2013/04/a-latin-americanist-in-u-s-intellectual-history.html#more-5110, (accessed June 10, 2013). The idea of Latin America was deployed by Napoleon III for the first time in 1862 to justify the invasion of Mexico.

[67] Ibid. Unlike "Hispanic," Latino connected U.S.-born or raised people of Latin American ancestry with Latin America, building a transnational or "transregional" cultural link, while symbolically invoking a history of colonial and counter-colonial aims.

Objections to the term "Hispanic" were not only against its colonial charge. They were also against its homogenizing power. The word emerged as an artificial ethnic label to group peoples with widely different social, cultural, economic, and racial backgrounds residing in the United States. Hispanic—and later for that matter—Latino, became imprecise categories referring as much to different ethnic backgrounds as to various conditions of being somehow culturally displaced in the cultural hybridity of the U.S.[68] Today, these terms are tropes. In a broad sense, they summon the myriad experiences—traumatic or not—of the people who share a Latin American background in the United States, from the diasporic Puerto Ricans of Operation Bootstrap to the Cubans who left from the Port of Mariel to the U.S. in 1980 and the children of Operation Peter Pan; from Central American civil war refugees and self-exiles fleeing South American dictatorships to a large force of low-skill workers and trained professionals alike from all over the region who have come to the U.S. in search of opportunities, challenges, and a different way of life. The latter became an increasingly common practice among artists from South America in the 1970s. The subsuming of these very different life experiences affecting the lifestyles, the political status, and attitudes of these individuals into one, is evidently, inherently reductionist and problematic. The curators of *Hispanic Art in the United States* acknowledged some of the different nuances of the term Hispanic, but ultimately and contradictorily, they relied on it as an art category, aesthetically capable of bridging the social and cultural differences inherent to those called "Hispanics."[69] In order to understand fully the failures of the show

[68] Latino and Hispanic started to refer interchangeably to U.S. born and raised Latinos as well as to Latin Americans who resided in the U.S. In the interest of precision, the term "U.S. Latino" is becoming more prevalent in scholarly work.

[69] John Beardsley, "And/Or: Hispanic Art, American Culture," in *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 43–84. Among the authors of the exhibition catalog, Beardsley is the only one who analyzes critically the implications of defining the exhibition under an ethnically-constructed art category. He dedicates the first six pages of his essay to elucidate the pros and cons of ethnic identification within a greater society, and within art making. In art historical and social terms, he

concerning this matter, it is necessary to provide some more details on the differentiation of U.S. Latinos and U.S.-based Latin Americans.

Despite their heterogeneity, U.S. Latinos have a fundamentally different relationship to the United States than Latin Americans who live in that country. Permanence in the U.S. is the main factor that differentiates that relationship; and the nature of interactions with their host and home countries. The Latino population started growing in numbers and diversifying significantly since the 1960s. By the 1970s, Latin Americans and Hispanic Caribbean migrants constituted 44% of all immigrants entering the United States, reversing together with the Asian immigration, the downward trend in the relative number of the foreign-born persons within the national population that had been falling between the 1920s and 1950s.[70] This immigration pattern was facilitated, among other factors, by changes to U.S. immigration law.[71] But immigrants also arrived illegally across the U.S.-Mexican border. The arrival of these many Latin Americans was met with ambivalence. While the economy welcomed cheap labor and eventually a new consumer sector with particular needs to direct marketing efforts, the noticeable change in demographics for white America, paired with Reagan's discourse against illegal immigration from Mexico and media sensationalism, helped fuel fear among U.S. Americans of the assault

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seems ambivalent towards the adoption of ethnic labels that might, on the one hand affirm cultural difference and demand a place for it within society, while, on the other hand, serve as possible grounds for prejudice and segregation. Regarding the ethnic term "Hispanic" he superficially states cultural differences and diasporic conditions between Chicanos, Cuban-Americans, Puerto Ricans and other groups from South American and Central American origins. He does not address the social and economic differences between Latin American artists who come to the U.S. to be part of an international art-scene, as opposed to artists from Latino communities born and/or raised in the U.S.

[70] Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States, 31*. Asians constituted another 35%. The average annual immigrant flow was of 434,000 people in the 1970s, the highest average number of arrivals since the 1920s, when Northern Europeans constituted the main immigrant group to the U.S.

[71] Ibid, 30. Among these we can mention the Congress abolition of the Quota Law established in 1921. This allowed to anyone the right to apply for admission into the United States.

that the arrival and permanent stay of so many Latin American immigrants could constitute for white American culture.[72]

Despite the media's emphasis on the Latin American and Latino immigration to the U.S. as a phenomenon of the 1970s and '80s, the Latino presence in the U.S. can be traced to the early 19th century, when peoples from Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico came to participate in diverse sectors of the economy.[73] In the case of Cuba and Puerto Rico migrants also came to the U.S. fleeing the repressive Spanish colonial regime.[74] In the years following the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, under which Mexico lost its northern half to the United States, the U.S. absorbed a significant number of Mexicans who resided in the newly acquired American Southwest and California.[75] Others came in the following years to work in the mineral industry, railroad construction, and other jobs.[76] The incorporation of Puerto Rico as a U.S. territory after the Spanish-American War of 1898, and the subsequent approval of the Jones Act, which granted U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans in 1917, created an important influx of islanders to the U.S. who were suddenly available as part of the legal workforce—and the military—of the U.S. Puerto Rican migration spiked between the 1940s and 1960s as the island changed its economic model from an agrarian to an industrial one, displacing thousands of rural workers who left for

[72] Tom Marganthau et al., "Closing The Door?," *Newsweek*, June 25, 1984. As quoted by Marganthau et al., in a news conference held on June 14, 1984, President Ronald Reagan famously declared: "The truth is we have lost control of our borders, and no nation can do that and survive." At the same time, Reagan spent considerable resources in his second election campaign to court Hispanic voters.

[73] For a study of the origins of Hispanic culture in New York, as it refers to the presence of Spaniards and Latin Americans in the city since its founding in the seventeen century until the 1930s see the exhibition catalog Edward J Sullivan, ed., *Nueva York* (London: Scala, 2010).

[74] Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*: *A History of Latinos in America* (Penguin (Non-Classics), 2001).

[75] Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States*, 43. It is estimated that at the end of the Mexica-American War, there were about 81,000 Mexicans living in the annexed regions.

[76] Ibid.

the U.S. to work as cheap labor in the post-War industries.[77] Immigrants from Cuba and the Dominican Republic also arrived in important numbers during the 1960s, the former fleeing the Cuban Revolution, the latter the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Joaquín Balaguer.[78]

Although composed of culturally distinct peoples, U.S. Latinos initially broadly shared a working-class origin, a common history of social displacement and lack of political self-determination, and a resistance to assimilating completely into Anglo- and Eurocentric U.S. culture, in spite of their generations-long engagement with it.[79] For self-identified Latinos, the term often invokes the political situation of U.S. colonial subjects who are second-class citizens, foreigners in their own land.[80]

The U.S.-based Latin American population is also very diverse. However, among its largely common traits, and in contrast to U.S. Latinos, their presence in the U.S. tends to be determined rather by individual choice than diasporic necessity.[81] To the point where this generalization is admissible, they have not migrated to the U.S. "en masse" and with the urgency that demands political and economic strife. As this demographic often maintains deep cultural and emotional ties with their countries of origin, their permanence in the U.S. seems less forced,

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[77] Ibid, 29-30. During the 1940s some 151,000 Puerto Ricans arrived, most destined for New York City, and this was followed by an impressive 470,000 Puerto Rican arrivals in the 1950s, and another 214,000 during the 1960s.

[78] Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* (Penguin (Non-Classics), 2001).

[79] Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States*, 147. This is a complex demographic matter with variables and exceptions. The words Hispanic and Latino have strong connotations of working class, but that precludes the group's social diversity. Second and Third generation Latino immigrants are, according to Bergard and Klein, very much like any other immigrant group with respect to social and economic stratification, as well as mobility. The large-scale arrival of immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean from rural areas in the 1980s exacerbated the problem of Latino poverty in the U.S. However, a solid and growing Latino middle class and high-income individuals exist within every national group of the Latino Population.

[80] Flores and Yúdice, "Living Borders/Buscando América: Languages of Latino Self-Formation."

[81] In the U.S. Census they are accounted as Hispanics as well, although many of them will not self-identify as Latinos or Hispanics. I make this assertion in a purely empiric basis from my conversations with Latinos and U.S.-based-Latin Americans. However, I lack statistic evidence to support my argument.

but a matter of choice compared to U.S. Latinos. Many of them maintain their Latin American citizenships and there is no need or expectation for them to assimilate into Anglo culture.

By means of ties to diasporic communities whose cultural and linguistic identity remains somewhat connected to their countries of origin, Latinos are uniquely positioned between at least two cultures: that of their Latin American antecedents and Anglo-America. What was perhaps two or three generations ago their host country has become their home country.[82] Their permanence in the U.S., and the unlikely probability of moving back to their original countries has demanded more than a temporary adaptation to their surroundings.[83] It has required everyday engagement with them: the absorption, to a certain extent, of Anglo culture to guarantee their survival in the place they will probably work all their lives, raise their families, and die.

The curators of *Hispanic Art* acknowledged nowhere in the catalog the contentiousness of their word choice, nor the cultural and social differences between Latin Americans and Latinos.[84] Their facile insertion of the term "Hispanic" along the text without defining it or acknowledging its U.S. bureaucratic origins, assumed the readers' familiarity with the word and their indifference to its politics, as well as that of the artists in the show. Only a loose definition was provided by invited essayist, the Mexican writer, Octavio Paz, who wrote: "Concerning the term Hispanic: What should we call the various Spanish-American communities living in the U.S.—

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[82] There are varying degrees of "return migration" within the various national groups and generations that compose the U.S. Latino population.

[83] Among certain populations such as the Mexican and the Puerto Rican there is a phenomenon of reverse migration, i.e. migration of U.S.-based Mexicans and Puerto Ricans who return to their original countries. See Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States*; Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island & in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[84] Beardsley, "And/Or: Hispanic Art, American Culture." In his essay Beardsley does acknowledge Hispanics as a culturally diverse group with different experiences in the U.S. and different views regarding assimilation and the retention of their culture. However, he does not differentiate this population from the Latin Americans coming to the U.S. temporarily either as political exiles or simply to expand their work experience and then return to their countries.

the Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans, and so on? It seems to me that the most common term, Hispanics, covers all of them in their complex definition."[85] Paz made it clear that he was referring to U.S. Latinos. However, the choice of artists in the show, including the Chilean Ismael Frigerio and the Uruguayan Lydia Buzio alongside Chicanos like Gronk, and Carmen Lomas Garza, and Puerto Ricans Arnaldo Roche Rabell and Ibsen Espada, made also clear that co-curators Livingston and Beardsley had a broader criterion and were adhering to the term's U.S.-census usage to indiscriminately refer to all Latinos and Latin Americans in the U.S. This double oversight—the failure to qualify the term "Hispanic," and the subsuming of the Latino and Latin American experience in the U.S. into one—undermined Livingston's and Beardsley's noble intentions of providing the artists in their show with mainstream visibility.[86]

To their credit, the curators did acknowledge existing notions of Hispanic/Latino art, in particular, the paradigm of Latino art that is tied to community-based, socially-engaged art.[87] This paradigm has its origins in the 1960s and 1970s movements of Chicano and Nuyorican art. Emerging more or less simultaneously on opposite sides of the country—the Chicanos in the Southwest and the West Coast and the Nuyoricans in New York—these two movements fought

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[85] Octavio Paz, "Art and Identity: Hispanics in the United States," in *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors*, ed. John Beardsley (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 13–42.

[86] Beardsley's essay "And/or: Hispanic Art, American Culture" Despite elaborating on the cultural diversity of Latinos and the circumstances of their presence in the U.S., Beardsley does not examine the difference between Latinos and Latin Americans in the U.S., seemingly homogenizing both groups into one. This was at best a missed chance and a main detonator of criticism towards the show.

In an essay written in response to the negative reception their show met, Beardsley and Livingston elaborated on their motivations for organizing the exhibition, their research process, and their perspectives on the most criticized aspects of the show. In regards to Goldman's claim that they had "homogenized" Hispanic art partly by relying on the census category "Hispanic," Beardsley and Livingston argued that during the organization of the show they wrestled incessantly with alternatives to this category, which made them uncomfortable. However, they had opted to use it because for them it was the only one that could capture the diversity of artists they were including in their show, i.e. U.S.-born Latin American artists, Spanish American artists from the Southwest, Chicanos, Latin American immigrants to the U.S. John Beardsley and Jane Livingston, "The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 104–120.

[87] Beardsley and Livingston, "Preface and Acknowledgments."

for the social empowerment and cultural affirmation of Mexican Americans and New York Puerto Ricans.[88] Artists engaged in these movements sought an aesthetic vocabulary that could convey the complexity of the Chicano and Nuyorican experiences in the U.S., particularly their social and geographic displacement and hybrid cultural heritage vis-à-vis the Anglo white hegemonic culture. Due to their mass-media communicative power, mural painting and printmaking were favored by these movements.[89] The emergence of Latino art as a paradigm had ambivalent consequences. On the one hand, it implied the recognition of Chicano and Nuyorican art of the '60s and '70s as a specific artistic production with a coherent purpose, aesthetic, and a common rhetoric of collective political action. On the other hand, it also "ghettoized" Latino artists and reduced their expressive possibilities by signaling their artwork as something alien or *sui generis,* not conversant with U.S. or Latin American art.[90]

Beardsley and Livingston made reference to community-based Latino art in their catalog but, did not dwell on it or give it any wall space within the exhibition.[91] This omission drew harsh criticism from field specialists, from artists, and even from art critics who were not specialists. The curators disputed the criticisms of their show as one where political art was absent.[92] They did acknowledge that "the politics of revolution or dissent" presumably

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[88] Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "The Chicano Movement/ The Movement of Chicano Art," in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Insitute of International Visual Arts and The MIT Press, 1995), 165–182; Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions."

[89] Ramírez, Estrada, and Cárdenas, *Pressing the Point*. Alan W. Barnett, *Community Murals: The People's Art* (Philadelphia, New York: Art Alliance Press and CornwallBooks, 1984).

[90] Taína Caragol Barreto, "Beyond Visibility: Latino Artists at the Americas Society," *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* no. 78 (2009): 100–116.

[91] Beardsley and Livingston, "The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective."

[92] Dianne E. Lewis, "The Fine Arts: A World Without Color," *The Boston Globe*, January 8, 1991. This review stated: "Though it was billed as one of the largest and most ambitious exhibitions of contemporary Latino art in the United States, bitter criticism arose over the curators' failure to include the angry, political art of Chicano

attributable to community-based Latino art had not played a strong role in the show. Political murals, in particular had been excluded for the shipping difficulties they presented for a traveling exhibition. However, for the curators their show was far from apolitical, as works raising themes of social alienation, confrontation, and dispossession were present throughout.

I agree partly with this last part of Beardsley and Livingston's defense argument. It is evidenced in works such as Luis Jimenez's *Working Drawing for Cruzando el Rio Bravo*, 1986, which depicts an indigenous couple: a man carrying his wife on his shoulders, who in turn carries their baby son as they cross the Mexico-U.S. border. But the overall selection of works in the catalog speaks to an understatement of politics. In any case, through the absence of the Chicano and Nuyorican political traditions, and other curatorial choices, Beardsley and Livingston reconfigured anew the paradigm of Latino art. Among their odd choices was the inclusion of professionally-trained contemporary artists alongside outsider artists such as Martín Ramírez, self-schooled artists like Felipe Archuleta, and folk artisans Félix A. López, and Luis Tapia. A Mexican immigrant who went in 1925 to the United States in search of temporary work, Ramírez was prevented from returning to his home-state Jalisco due to the political and religious upheaval that broke out after he left. His sadness and solitude seem to have provoked erratic behavior that led to his manic-depressive diagnosis and his institutionalization in a mental hospital from 1948 until his death in 1963. There, encouraged by his psychiatrist, he produced what is known as his oeuvre—hundreds of drawings with recurring Madonna and train motifs [Fig.1-8]—which were certainly inspired by his religiosity and his experience working in

artists as well as the contemporary works of Puerto Ricans. Incensed, artists charged that mainstream museums and curators were afraid of the confrontational aspects of the art and could accept the work only through a filter that canceled out the politics, the anger - the "unacceptable."

railroad building in California.[93] Without underestimating the harmonious compositions and communicative power of Ramírez's art brut, it is clearly difficult to consider it within the "neutral" terrain of contemporary art, due to its context of production.

As for Archuleta , Tapia [Fig. 1-9], and López [Fig. 1-10], creators of small *retablos* or small altars and carved saints, their inclusion equaled the production of objects of Christian private devotion whose aesthetic framework is derived from tradition, with works of art made with a non-utilitarian purpose and a consciously-chosen aesthetic framework. If it is true that folk and popular arts have been historically a source for Latino and Latin American artists, their inclusion side-by-side in this exhibition suggests the inseparable character of these two different kinds of cultural productions among Hispanics, and risks projecting a persisting *naïveté* based on the lack of sophisticated training or artistic intentionality in art making.[94]

Another highly problematic choice was the absence of media other than painting and sculpture. Beardsley and Livingston's acknowledged that Hispanic artists were working on a broad range of artistic media including photography, video, installation, and performance.[95] However, their decision of focusing their exhibition only on painting and sculpture conveyed the impression that Hispanic artists held on to traditional ways of art making, either by conservatism or perhaps because of the lack of resources needed to experiment with technology.[96] This portrayal of Hispanic art obliterated certain significant Latino and U.S.-based Latin American

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[93] Luis Camnitzer, "Martín Ramírez — Armando Reverón.," *Art Nexus* 6, no. 66 (October 2007): 72–76. The most comprehensive exhibition of Ramírez was organized by the American Folk Art Museum in 2007.

[94] The leveling of folk art and art made by professionally trained artists demarks the works of Hispanic artists as foreign to the Modernist tradition.

[95] Beardsley and Livingston, "Preface and Acknowledgments."

[96] Beardsley and Livingston, "The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective." Beardsley and Livingston defended their circumscription to painting and sculpture with the rationale that theirs would be the first exhibition dedicated to Hispanic art, and as such, it was acceptable to reduce the number of media for the sake of providing an introductory approach.

artists whose work engages technology or defies categorization into one media. Such is the case of Puerto Rican/Chicano artist Rafael Montañez Ortiz or the Chicano collective Asco and their pioneering experimental work in film, video and performance, or of U.S.-based Uruguayan artist Luis Camnitzer, who has worked in media-crossings like photo-etching, or the New York-based Chilean Alfredo Jaar, whose work is conceptual and largely political.[97]

Some works in the show included Gilbert Luján's Chicano urban culture icon *Our Family Car* (1985-86) [Fig. 1-11] a Chevrolet two-door sedan painted over in yellow, white, green, red, and blue that combines images of *chiles*, race flags, schematic dogs, desert landscape, and a man and woman who look like indigenous super-heroes. Gronk's *Cabin Fever* (1984) [Fig. 1-12], a group portrait of two-elegantly dressed couples at a party, painted with jagged lines and gaudy colors was also showcased. Other works included Felipe Archuleta *Lyon,* 1979, representative of the animal sculptures made by this self-taught artist from New Mexico; and Martín Ramírez's *Madonna* ca. 1950s, a religious icon of byzantine hieraticism and expressiveness.

Overall the paintings showcased emphasized an aesthetic characterized by bold color, warm hues, a predilection for figuration, and for bold and large, expressionist gesture. Many reviews noted these characteristics and considered the possibility they might reveal the curators' aesthetic biases instead of an accurate representation of current artistic practices among Latinos.[98] The classicist sculptures of muscular human torsos by Robert Graham, and the hard-edge geometric granite sculptures by Jesús Bautista Moroles [1-13] resounded as strong

[97] Perhaps weary of this imbalance Alfredo Jaar was invited by the Brooklyn Museum to do an intervention in their lobby concurrent with their hosting of Hispanic Artists.

[98] See Mark Stevens, "Devotees of the Fantastic," September 7, 1987. Regarding these claims, Beardsley and Livingston defended the show as a testament to the important contributions of Hispanics to the re-emergence of the figure and Neo-expressionism in the U.S. Beardsley and Livingston, "The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective."

counterpoints to the prevalent expressionist figuration. However, their minority status within the show also projected a sense of anomaly into the aesthetic choices of these two artists.

Shifra Goldman designated the combination of the curators' unreflective use of the term Hispanic and "the funky aesthetic of the show" as primitivizing.[99] In the Brooklyn Museum's iteration of *Hispanic Art* (two years after it originated), Michael Kimmelman, critic for the *New York Times*, wrote: "Bodies are mutilated, burned and twisted into ecstatic poses. Canvases are not just covered, but swamped with paint. Colors are not simply vivid but electric. Almost everything is at fever pitch."[100] Granting the curators the benefit of the doubt, Kimmelman speculated that their aesthetic choice may have been dictated by the popularity of Neo-Expressionism while the show was being planned, and the curators' will to present Hispanic artists as conversant with the mainstream.[101] Nonetheless, the unbalanced representation of this Neo-expressionist aesthetic—slightly outdated when the show finally opened and completed its tour—succeeded in tying Hispanic art to the gestural, visceral, and colorful.

Significantly, as the exhibition toured the United States, some museums understood the implications of Beardsley and Livingston aesthetic choices and political silencing and offered counter-points through concurrent installations of contemporary U.S.-based Latin American artists whose work departed from these aesthetics. According to Kimmelman, while showing *Hispanic Art,* the Brooklyn Museum exhibited Alfredo Jaar's *The Fire Next Time*, 1989 [Fig. 1-14] inspired by the writer James Baldwin. This work presented photographs of the Civil Rights

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[99] Goldman, "Homogenizing Hispanic Art," 1987.

[100] Michael Kimmelman, "Review/Art; 30 Hispanic Artists At Brooklyn Museum," *The New York Times*, June 9, 1989, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/09/arts/review-art-30-hispanic-artists-at-brooklyn-museum.html (accessed November 21, 2012).

[101] Other reviewers were not as benevolent as Kimmelman, accusing the curators of making Expressionist, gestural painting the vehicle for projecting on Hispanics their prejudices of these people as hot, passionate, and visceral.

Movement in the U.S. in illuminated boxes displayed haphazardly that suggested beams of a collapsed building, possibly making a reference to Minimalist sculpture.[102]

The different failures listed here point back to the original problem of *Art of the Fantastic* and of *Hispanic Art*: their reliance on an exhibition model whose main purpose is *to define* an artistic production framed culturally or geographically and the organization of these exhibitions by non-experts who even if advised by scholars in the field, had the last word in formulating the curatorial premise and choosing the artists for each show.[103] None of these exhibitions treated artists individually, but as members of a culture and a geographic region whose works express common concerns or aesthetic sensibilities. In doing so, these mainstream institutions tied the art of Latin Americans and their descendants in the United States to issues of identity. Such identity is not defined individually through the exploration of personal or family history or ways of social interaction, but rather as a collective cultural identity. That identity was often constructed as unchangeable and essentially different from North American and European identity. It is these artists' belonging to a culture or a geography that determines their interest in particular concepts like the fantastic, or their adherence to certain styles or aesthetics. In the case of *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art*, such correspondence is established artificially, by way of vast generalizations and curatorial choices made by professionals from mainstream institutions who were not conversant with Latino and Latin American artistic traditions and theoretical issues.[104]

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[102] Kimmelman, "Review/Art; 30 Hispanic Artists At Brooklyn Museum."

[103] According to art critic Catherine Fox, experts in the art of Latinos complained that these exhibitions relied on their support without offering them consulting fees and ultimately making curatorial decisions that somehow contradicted their advice. See Catherine Fox, "Hispanic Art. Exhibits Surge With Power to Convey Minority Experience," *The Atlanta Journal/ The Atlanta Constitution*, 87-11-22, sec. C1 Art Review, Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives.

[104] Beardsley and Livingston, "The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective." Livingston and Beardsley admitted that for them, their initial approach to the subject of Hispanic art, which lacked extensive

The approach of the cultural survey in *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art* appears gross and schematic. In hindsight it comes across as a first-time realization of the under-representation of and ignorance about Latin American and Latino artists in the mainstream art world and as an unsuccessful attempt at remedying it with a broad and sweeping gesture. In the process of making this art known and intelligible to a public largely unfamiliar with it, the cultural productions of Latino and Latin American artists were unified under ethnic categories and aesthetic biases, masking their diversity and complexity.[105]

1.4 Cooking on a Smaller Flame: New York Shows in the 1980s – Alternatives to Mainstream Frameworks of Latino and Latin American Art

While it is a commonplace to discuss the Boom in terms of the two exhibitions previously analyzed, there is an inherent possibility of oversimplifying the phenomenon by a wholesale dismissal of the Boom.[106] During this period of heightened visibility and in the years

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knowledge or preconceptions, seemed at first a great asset and starting point to curate a show, as it would be essentially an approach open to all sorts of artistic manifestations.

[105] These curatorial simplifications and showcasing dynamics were common in the last decade of the twentieth century, when mainstream art museums became interested in art productions that had remained marginal to the Western art canon. For instance, Salah Hassan, Professor of African and African American art history at Cornell University, has commented on the strikingly low numbers of African curators who have engaged in the organization of exhibitions of African art in Europe and the United States between the mid-1980s and the early 2000s. He also mentions a persistent tendency in the Western art establishment to treat the art of sub-Saharan Africa as a homogeneous entity, which displays characteristics that have been integral to the traditional European gaze towards Africa. For Hassan, the construction of an African identity by the Western art establishment is as questionable here as the persistent exclusion of North Africa from that identity. Hassan highlights the European and U.S.-American insistence on a primitive aesthetics of African art, which has led curators to privilege self-taught artists such as Chérie Samba, Twin Seven-Seven, and Takoudagba, and to dismiss college-trained African artists as copy-cats of European artistic traditions. These traits were all visible in the exhibitions *Africa: The Art of a Continent*, which opened at the Royal Academy in England in 1995 and traveled a year later to the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and in *African Art Towards the Year 2000*, (Round Tower, Copenhagen, 1996). See Hassan, "Inside/Outside: Western Curatorial Practices and the Politics of Representation in Contemporary African Art."

[106] I say this on the grounds of my experience as a graduate student specializing in the field, and of courses I have taken that have addressed the U.S. showcasing of Latin American art in the 1980s. Between 2007 and 2008 I served as a researcher for the investigation *Latin American Art in the UK: History, Historiography, Specificity, 1960s to the Present*, led by University of Essex in England. In conversations with my co-investigators and

leading to it, a number of shows were organized that fostered a more complex outlook on the art of Latinos and Latin Americans. Turning our attention to the simultaneous Latin American and Latino art scene in New York, three such exhibitions easily come to mind: *New Forms of Figuration*, *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* and *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s*. A fundamental difference of these exhibitions from those staged by the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston was that they emerged as the product of sustained and prolonged engagement with Latino and/or Latin American artists on the part of the curators and institutions that organized them.[107] Some of these new approaches clearly emerged as reactions and alternatives to the notions of Latino and Latin American art proposed in mainstream-made shows perceived as faulty. These three exhibitions differed in size, reception, and subject matter. In order to better understand their curatorial approaches, and contributions I shall examine them individually.

1.4.1 A Place for Latinos at the CIAR/AS: *New Forms of Figuration*[108]

Between December 1984 and January 1985, the pastel-colored highway crashes of Carlos Almaraz [Fig. 1-15], Salvador Rosillo's oneiric abstractions, David Herszkowitz's boldly-colored religious scenes, and Julio Rosado del Valle's impastoed portraits, among many other works, coexisted on display in the exhibition *New Forms of Figuration* [Fig. 1-16]. The show

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interviewees such as Dawn Ades, *Art of the Fantastic* emerged as the exhibition epitomizing the Boom of Latin American art.

[107] *New Forms of Figuration* was the first exhibition at the CIAR/AS that included Latino artists within a hemispheric exhibition. But the institution had been committed to Latin American art since its founding, as well as to promoting a hemispheric understanding of art. As such, the inclusion of Chicano, Cuban Americans and diasporic Puerto Rican artists during the tenure of gallery director John Stringer seemed a natural intellectual development within the institution.

[108] This analysis of *New Forms of Figuration* within the context of the showcasing of Latinos at the CIAR/AS has already been published within my article "Beyond Visibility: Latino Artists at the Americas Society."

also included the work of Luis Cruz Azaceta, Edgar Franceschi, Luis Frangella, Roberto Gil de Montes, Marcia Grostein, Maria de la Paz Jaramillo, Ernesto Leon, Carlos Loarca, Marcelo Llorens, Andrew Moszynski, Dulio Pierri, Jorge Salazar, John Scott, Paul Sierra, Jorge Tacla, Gaston Ugalde. Due presumably to the number of artists and the large format of their works, the exhibition had to be split between the modest exhibition space of the CIAR/AS at 680 Park Avenue, and that of City Gallery on 2 Columbus Circle. Organized by John Stringer, Visual Arts Director of the CIAR/AS from 1981 to 1987, this show was one of a few organized by this institution that featured U.S. Latino artists, particularly Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, alongside temporary émigrés, exiles, and residents from Latin American countries.

In order to understand the singularity of this show, it is useful to quickly elucidate the background of the CIAR/AS and some of the institution's exhibition history. While the CIAR/AS has been, since its inception, a main U.S. showcase for artists from Latin America, exhibitions that included the work of Latino artists are scarce in the institution's well-documented history. Up until 2006, when a book was published recounting the institution's forty-year history, Latinos had been part of approximately eight out of nearly one-hundred and sixty exhibitions and visual art events organized there.[109]

Within the elusive definition of Latino, the absence of colonial subjects or U.S. Latinos such as Chicanos, Nuyoricans, and Puerto Ricans—as opposed to expatriate or traveling Latin Americans—is striking. The latter had been consistently present in exhibitions since the creation

[109] Ibid. The shows where they were present included *Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York* (1968), *Emilio Sánchez* (1971), *Six Cuban Painters Working in New York* (1975), *Iman: New York* (1976), *Realism and Latin American Paintings: 1970s* (1980), *New Forms of Figuration* (1985), *Modern and Contemporary Art from the Dominican Republic* (1996); *Puerto Rican Light: Allora & Calzadilla* (2003), and *Beyond Geography: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society* (2005). This can confidently be called under-representation, given over thirty million Latinos living in the U.S. today. In this counting I have included Cubans and Dominicans in exile, as well as New York-Puerto Ricans and Chicanos. In this group, Cubans are the most numerous.

of the CIAR/AS gallery program in 1968.[110] Cuban exiles in the U.S. had also had considerable presence since its early years. Several reasons account for this disparity in representation. They are explored in Chapter Two.

Despite the low numbers of exhibitions of Latino artists, the CIAR/AS proposed in a few of them a non-reductive approach characterized by an outlook based on pluralism that in the end benefited not only Latinos, but also Latin American artists in general. Among them are exhibitions such as *Iman: New York* (1976) [Fig. 1-17] and *Variations on Latin American Themes in New York* (1978) curated by Ida Rubin and Peter Frank respectively. *Iman* was a 1970s reprise of the exhibition *Magnet: New York* (Galería Bonino, New York, 1964) that highlighted Latin American artists working in New York in the 1960s and in the later version in the 1970s.[111] *Variations* examined some thematic concerns of Latino and Latin American artists working in the city. Not much archival information survives about these shows. Of the three, a catalog was only published for *Iman*. But both rosters suggest a great diversity of artistic practices. Works in *Iman* ranged from Tony Bechara's *Entropy IV*, a work representative of his signature-style, large grids of tiny squares painted in colors that form abstract patterns, to Sigfrido Benítez's *Musician #2* [Fig. 1-18], an expressionist portrait of a saxophone player, or Emilio Sánchez's studies of light and shadow in architectural facades [Fig. 1-19]. The work of Marcos Dimas, Carlos Osorio and Jorge Soto, all members of the Nuyorican arts workshop Taller Boricua, invested in the rescuing of Taíno and Afro-Caribbean iconography as an expression of Puerto Rican identity, were also in the show. As a way of stating the importance of

[110] Among the traveling or expatriate artists from Latin America showcased at the CIAR/AS were Marta Minujín, Liliana Porter, Juan Downey, Julio Alpuy, and Fanny Sanín.

[111] Interestingly, *Magnet* had a third sequel at Cayman Gallery in 1978, with a different roster of artists. See Chapter Five.

broadening notions of Latin American art in geographic, cultural and aesthetic terms, Ida Rubin states in her preface to the catalog:

> The words in this exhibition remind us that the old clichés about art by Latin Americans—"picturesque," "primitive," "quaint," "social realist," are untrue as indeed they always were. The range of media and techniques visible in this exhibit underlines the varied and vital form these individualists have given their art.[112]

Variations featured Hugo Consuegra, a member of the Cuban abstract expressionist group *Los Once*, Puerto Rican Rafael Ferrer, known for his paintings of lush tropical life, as well as for performance works like his *50 Cakes of Ice* (MoMA, 1970) mocking minimalism, and Ana Mendieta, known for her performances and earth works about her exilic experience or exploring feminist themes. Through the diversity of their rosters, these two exhibitions seem to have avoided the exploitation of identity politics for the showcasing of Latino and Latin American art. The reference to New York in their titles acknowledges the urban landscape as the backdrop and informative context of their work. This city-focus set a precedent that was not revisited for the blockbuster shows of the Boom. New York implicitly and explicitly functions as the urban ground common to these artists and the communities they inhabit. Be they diasporic, exilic, or simply the community of international art, their habitat was the city.

New Forms of Figuration differed from the already discussed exhibitions in that it broadened the scope of artists to be included in the American hemisphere. It proposed, yet, a new way of looking at the work of artists from Latin America examining current art practices across a Pan-American geographic expanse. According to the show's textual material, the aim was to "turn away from the ideas of structure, order, and systems prevalent in minimalism and

[112] Ida Rubin, *Iman: New York* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1975).

conceptual art, and the return to painting, expressionism, and figuration."[113] As Stringer explained, his choice of a broad group of twenty artists from twelve American countries (including the U.S. and Canada), living across the Americas, aimed "to illustrate the broad hemispheric impetus of Neo-Expressionism."[114] Through his selection of artists, and by drawing connections to their better-known peers in the U.S. and European avant-garde, Stringer systematically avoided identifying the Neo-expressionist style as particularly Latino or Latin American, unlike Beardsley and Johnston in *Hispanic Art in the United States*. Despite investigating the resonance of a contemporary art movement amongst a group of artists, Stringer did not shy away from discussing individual motivations and cultural references that informed individual art practices. As described in the exhibition text, these ranged from a Historicism revived in relation to the international legacy bequeathed by classical Europe (Franceschi, Frangella, and Llorens), to the indigenous heritage of the New World, which he saw expressed in the work of Almaraz, Gil de Montes, Leon, Loarca, Rosillo and Salazar.[115] Susana Torruella Leval wrote an enthusiastic review of the show for *ARTnews* [Fig. 1-20].[116] Reproduced in the article is the only identifiable image of a work in the show: i.e. Cruz Azaceta's acrylic on canvas *The Urban Beast* (1984). In a powerful metaphor of survival in the city, the work depicts a four-legged man/beast at once terrified and terrifying on what appears to be a zebra crossing. In

[113] No catalog was published for this show. The only installation shot in the exhibition file at the Visual Arts archive of the Americas Society is the one reproduced in this dissertation. The exhibition file contains an unpaged explanatory text of the show written by John Stringer that probably served as the basis for a hand-out for visitors, and a checklist of the works on view. No images of the works were found in the file.

[114] See explanatory text in exhibition file at the CIAR/AS.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Susana Torruella Leval, "Painting from Under the Volcano," *ARTnews*, March 1985; clipping The Americas Society archive.

reviewing the exhibition Torruella Leval alludes to the depth of expression and painterly techniques within a style associated with the urge to communicate sensations. She writes:

> Within the expressionist mode, the handing varied widely: fast, textured strokes for Paul Sierra, Carlos Almaraz and Luis Cruz Azaceta; slick buttery ones for Roberto Gil de Montes, deft illusionism from Luis Frangella and Edgar Franceschi,; a fine calligraphic sense from Andrew Moszynski. In many works, the sensuous oil or acrylic medium combined with delicately drawn marks in pastel or pencil to produce surprising effects.[117]

In keeping such a broad outlook, Stringer's ideas in *New Forms of Figuration* reflect one of the most comprehensive visions of the American hemisphere seen in an art show at this institution. That vision is characterized by a transnational outlook that does not establish barriers for the possibility of dialogue between the art made by Latin American, Latino, or U.S. American artists, or hierarchies of value among them. Interestingly, this outlook was achieved through a narrowing of focus to a current painterly style. Cultural essentialism and the pigeonholing of Latino and Latin American art are avoided in favor of a common stylistic platform on which artists from the whole continent can communicate. In reviewing the show for *The New York Times*, Vivien Raynor, criticized the lack of innovation announced in the show's title.[118] Perhaps the hemispheric scope of the venue and the timing of the show, a few years after the human figure and gestural painting had come back into the art-scene in full swing, heightened expectations. Nonetheless, from Susana Torruella Leval's review of the show, it can be deduced that the innovation of Stringer's curatorial proposal was, indeed his Pan-American approach.[119] Looking at the resonance of the current artistic movement of Neo-Expressionism across the hemisphere, considering well-recognized and off-the-radar artists alike must have

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Vivien Raynor, "ART: Divided Exhibition Presents Old as New," *The New York Times*, January 4, 1985, sec. Arts. http://www.nytimes.com/1985/01/04/arts/art-divided-exhibition-presents-old-as-new.html (accessed November 9, 2012).

[119] Torruella Leval, "Painting from Under the Volcano."

functioned as an eye-opener at the time, revealing the impact and currency of the style within and outside the mainstream, and debunking the dichotomy of Latin American versus international art.

1.4.2 *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970*

In September 29, 1989, while *Hispanic Art* was on its tour around the nation, the Bronx Museum of the Arts opened its doors to the exhibition *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970.* This was the first show to take place in the Bronx Museum after a $5.8-million renovation that transformed a former synagogue in the borough's Grand Concourse into a highly functional art exhibition facility. Created in 1971, the Bronx Museum of the Arts was one among several alternative museums that emerged then in New York to decentralize the city's cultural offerings, focused on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, and to showcase artists under-represented in the art mainstream. During its first eleven years, the BXMA was located in the rotunda of the Bronx County Court House. From there, it fulfilled its mission to showcase the work of contemporary artists with ties to the Bronx and its demographic diversity.

The *Latin American Spirit* was the largest and most complex exhibition the BXMA had ever undertaken. It required loans from museums around the United States and Latin America, and involved the production of a 343-page catalog which twenty years after its publication remains one of the main sources on Latin American and Latino artists in the United States.[120] After closing at the Bronx Museum in January 1989, the show traveled to El Paso Museum of Art, the San Diego Museum of Art, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the Center for the Arts, Vero Beach, Florida, until spring 1990.

[120] *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970: Essays* (New York: Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988).

As quoted in Grace Gluek's review for *The New York Times*, the goal of Luis Cancel, Director of the Bronx Museum and orchestrator of the exhibition, did not fall short of "aiming to redefine the way Latin American art is viewed and discussed in this country."[121] With this show, Cancel intended to debunk the idea that Latino art was homogeneous. In a quote that evokes the simplifications of the *Hispanic Art* show, Cancel commented:

> Bright, hot colors. Exuberant brushstrokes. Lots of folksy storytelling, and maybe a little graffiti - that's the cliché Anglo view of Latin American art. But the so-called Latino style is a myth, a phantom. Twentieth-century Latin American artists have worked in every mode, from Surrealism to geometric abstraction to Conceptualism to Expressionist figuration, just as Europeans and North Americans have done. The trouble is that curators in this country have had their own ideas of what constitutes Latin American art, and those who didn't conform to it were largely ignored.[122]

The strategy for fostering this change of outlook was methodically stated on the first pages of the exhibition catalog:

> 1. To document and examine the participation of Latin American artists in the cultural life of the United States during a period of fifty years. 2. To demonstrate the reach of Latin American participation, which includes the contribution of artists generally unmentioned by critics and historians in the United States. 3. To document and attest the activity of Puerto Rican artists as Latin Americans, both in the island as well as in the continent of the United States.[123]

One main difference between *The Latin American Spirit* and the mainstream shows *Hispanic Art* and *Art of the Fantastic* was the expertise of the show's curators in the field they were surveying. The curatorial team of the Bronx show was headed by Cancel, a New York-born Puerto Rican artist and art administrator who had been involved with Latino and Latin American art since the 1970s when he directed Cayman Gallery (a.k.a. Galería Caymán), and as an artist

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[121] Glueck, "The Many Accents of Latino Art."

[122] Ibid.

[123] Luis Cancel, "Introduction," in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (Bronx, N.Y: The Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988) 7.

himself.[124] The team was comprised of Félix Angel, Marimar Benítez, Eva Cockroft, Jacinto Quirarte, Lowery S. Sims, and Carla Stellweg, who were all professors, scholars, and curators with a history of engagement with the art of Latinos and Latin Americans. Other noted scholars and U.S. pioneers of the study of Latin American art history served as advisers to the show during its research phase. Among them was Stanton Loomis Catlin, Professor Emeritus of Art History at Syracuse University and first Director of Visual Arts at the CIAR/AS. *The Latin American Spirit* was dedicated to him. Jacqueline Barnitz, lecturer on Latin American art at the University of Texas in Austin, and Donald Goodall, specialist in Latin American art and founder of the museum of the University of Texas were also advisers to the show. Furthermore, a starting point for the Bronx exhibition was the existing vacuum in scholarship around Latino and Latin American art in the U.S., and the general lack of knowledge outside the field of specialists about Latino and Latin American art.[125] It aimed to start rectifying that situation where simplistic statements and stereotypical notions originate.

Like *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States*, *The Latin American Spirit* was conceived as a survey exhibition. This show would essentially be a study of a half-century of Latin American and Latino artistic activity in the U.S. In spite of the word "spirit" in its title, and its associations with essence and soul (defined culturally in this case), the exhibition was all but committed to an "authentically Latino" expression in the arts. Unlike in *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art*, these cultural and ethnic categories were acknowledged but not

[124] Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (New York, N.Y.), *MoCHA: Anniversary Journal 1985-1986: Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art* (New York, N.Y: Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, 1986). Cayman Gallery existed from 1973 to 1984, when it moved locations and was renamed the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art. It was administered by Friends of Puerto Rico an advocacy group created in the 1950s for the purpose of promoting and fostering cultural vibrancy within the Puerto Rican Community in New York. Chapter Three and Five of this dissertation explore the history of this institution.

[125] Cancel, "Introduction," 8.

instrumentalized and condensed into a particular ideology or aesthetic sensibility.[126] Instead the Bronx show focused on the "Latin American presence" in the U.S.—both Latino and Latin American—its history, and the nature of its contributions to the local art scene. Similar to the way the American continent was viewed in *New Forms of Figuration*, *The Latin American Spirit* maintained a transnational vision. This vision embraced movement and negotiation between U.S. and Latin American national cultures and territories as intrinsic to artistic practice. Within this vision, Puerto Rico is included as "a special case"—aptly named by Marimar Benítez—in which artists have had to negotiate the island's particular situation as a Latin American country that is also a territory of the United States.[127] This inclusion and approach to discussing Puerto Rican art history in relation to the U.S. and to Latin America was highly significant, as it proposed to open a door for the inclusion of the island in American and Latin American art historical narratives, and to consider the impact of its ambiguous political status on the island's cultural production. Furthermore, despite its title, the *Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States,* did not restrict the map of transnational exchanges in art to U.S. and Latin America. It extended it to Europe, by addressing artists from Latin America who prior to arriving in the U.S. had spent significant parts of their careers in that continent.[128] Artistic output was treated as the result of

[126] The essay by Jacinto Quirarte, for example, addresses the contributions of Mexican and Mexican-American or Chicano artists to the United States from the 1920s to the 1970s, providing enough political and historical context to understand different perspectives and motivations within both groups and without recurring to generalizations. Jacinto Quirarte, "Mexican and Mexican-American Artists in the United States: 1920-1970," in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 14–65.

[127] Marimar Benítez, "The Special Case of Puerto Rico" in Jacinto Quirarte ed. *The Latin American Spirit*, 72-105.

[128] Félix Angel, "The Latin American Presence" (Bronx, New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 222–283; Lowery S. Sims, "Dada in New York and Surrealism in the New World," in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (Bronx, New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 125.

multiple cultural experiences occurring through physical presence in a named space, but also by way of contact with international artist communities and institutions in particular places.

In this regard, Félix Angel contrasts the isolationist way in which artists from Latin America have been traditionally showcased in the United States, vis-à-vis the broad notion of contemporary art promoted by Latin American art institutions such as the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Caracas, Museo de Arte Moderno in Bogotá, where one can find modern and contemporary artists from Europe and North America, alongside local artists with a common sensibility to the modern vanguards.[129] At an individual level, Roberto Matta's experience as a Chilean émigré in Paris during the mid-1930s integrated to the surrealists would become a cornerstone of his personal contribution to U.S. art. Works such as *Years of Fear* (1941) [Fig. 1-21] attest to his value as a precursor to Abstract Expressionism.[130]

The exhibition was not only to be framed chronologically and culturally. Its structure was comprised of six thematic axes: "Constructivism and the New Geometry," "Social Content in Latin American Art," "New World Surrealism," "Abstraction," "Figuration and Realism," and "Idea and Process: Beginnings" (this last one was dedicated to 1960s artistic pluralism).[131] Only modern and contemporary artists who had a substantial artistic career in the U.S. with exhibitions, commissions, grants, and critical reviews were included in the show and its catalog. The show made a point of exhibiting artists who had already been accepted into the Modern art canon such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, Rufino Tamayo, Matta, and Wifredo Lam alongside artists lesser-known in the U.S. Other artists in the show included the Venezuelan

[129] Angel, "The Latin American Presence," 228.

[130] Ibid. 227.

[131] Ibid, 7.

painter Héctor Poleo [Fig. 1-22] who inspired by the Mexican Muralists and the indigenist movement of South America represented the Andean peoples of his country; Carlos Mérida [Fig. 1-23], a contemporaneous painter to the Mexican Muralists who sought to make an art of lyrical abstraction based on the Maya myths of his native Guatemala; Brazilian Maria Martins [Fig. 1-24] creator of surrealist-inspired sculptures of organic forms and threatening appearance; and the Chicano artist from El Paso, Luis Jiménez [Fig. 1-25], whose fiberglass and acrylic lacquer pop sculptures honor the Mexican heritage of the South West or criticize Anglo-American society and its love for material commodities. The eclectic choice of artists, and the myriad media and styles in which they worked, which were informed by Surrealism, Mexican Muralism, Pop Art, Geometric Abstraction, among other movements or art modalities, aimed at conveying the heterogeneous aesthetics and thematic sources of Latino and Latin American art and the impossibility of creating a unified aesthetic paradigm around it.

Whether the exhibition fully succeeded in the goals set by Cancel is still up for discussion. Amongst the Latino and Latin American exhibitions of the Boom this was certainly one of the most widely reviewed. Articles appeared in the local press, as well as in several art publications. In two separate reviews for *The New York Times* Michael Kimmelman and Vivien Raynor commended the show's educational goals, but coincided in their view that the selection of works was uneven and needed editing.[132] Raynor and Kimmelman agreed that the inclusion of artists unfamiliar to the U.S. public was at times revealing but not always useful. According to Kimmelman, it all too often confirmed the merits of those already acknowledged by U.S. historians. Kimmelman also criticized the show for conforming to a standard art history that tried

[132] Michael Kimmelman, "Review/Art; Calling The Roll Of Latinos," *The New York Times*, September 30, 1988, sec. Arts; clipping, Luis Cancel-Bronx Museum files at the Bronx Historical Society; Vivien Raynor, "ART; Decades of Latin-American Artists In a Contemporary Hispanic Setting," *The New York Times*, October 16, 1988, sec. N.Y. / Region, http://www.nytimes.com/1988/10/16/nyregion/art-decades-of-latin-american-artists-in-a-contemporary-hispanic-setting.html (accessed October 27, 2012).

unsuccessfully to insert Latino artists under-represented in the mainstream by displaying the work of artists informed by major art movements, instead of questioning the mechanisms of exclusion that have kept Latinos outside the master narrative of Modern art.[133]

Grace Glueck's review "The Many Accents of Latino Art" was more informative than critical, describing rather the intentions and curatorial strategies of the Bronx show without taking a stance on their effectiveness.[134] However, she positioned *The Latin American Spirit* confrontationally against *Hispanic Art*, giving ample room for expression to critics of the latter, including Cancel himself. Luis Jiménez, who was also in the roster of *Hispanic Art* voiced his disappointment at the show's clichéd curatorial views.[135] Nilda Peraza, director of the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art in New York (MoCHA), who had served as adviser to *Art of the Fantastic,* expressed regret at how the Indianapolis exhibition, as well as *Hispanic Art* misrepresented many artists and underscored a primitivist aesthetic.[136]

Shifra Goldman lauded *The Latin American Spirit* for being the only major blockbuster mounted during the Boom to be conceptualized and controlled by a Latin American director and curators, and for effectively presenting in its exhibition and catalog the problematic and aesthetic solutions offered by modern and contemporary Latino and Latin American artists in the U.S.[137]

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[133] Kimmelman, "Review/Art; Calling The Roll Of Latinos."

[134] Glueck, "The Many Accents of Latino Art." Glueck gave ample space in her article to Cancel to express his views. In one of his long quotes she writes: "He [Cancel] also sees "The Latin American Spirit" confrontationally: as a response to what he feels is the narrow focus of "Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors," the joint Corcoran Gallery-Houston Museum of Fine Arts exhibition now in Santa Fe (it will come to the Brooklyn Museum next June). "My statement is the contrast in approaches between theirs and ours," he says. "We took an art historical and scholarly view of issues and questions. They discarded anything that didn't fit their notions."

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Goldman, "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin America"; Goldman, "Versions of the South: Challenging the Parameters" in *Art Nexus*, No.40 (May-June 2001), 84-88.

It seems *The Latin American Spirit* may not have been flawless, but in contraposition to the other exhibitions of the Boom, this show was by far the one to sensitively articulate a curatorial model for understanding Latino and Latin American art. This model was defined by a collaboration of experts in the fields of Latino and Latin American art convened to address particular knowledge gaps through scholarship, and through a chronological and thematic survey narrative that did not rely in fraught unifying concepts.

The catalog, with its extensive essays by the many experts who assisted in curating the show on themes as varied as Mexican and Mexican- American Art from 1920-1970; the art of Puerto Rico from the island and the mainland; Constructivism and Geometric Abstraction; New York Dada and Surrealism in the New World; the U.S. and socially-engaged Latin American art; and Latin American abstract and figurative currents in the U.S.; and Conceptual Environmental and Installation art by Latin American artists in New York, remains the proof of this complexly articulated discourse nurtured by diverse Latin American social contexts and cultural traditions as much as from contact and exchange with U.S. American and international cultures in general.

1.4.3 *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s*

The Latin American Spirit was one of a number of shows organized from the late 1980s and through the '90s whose curatorial approach was based on collaboration.[138] Curatorial team-work (between more than two people) became one of the strategies generated in the alternative art-scene to counter the tendency of mainstream museum curators to define and speak for under-

[138] Rosati and Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories*. Collaboration was paramount to the Alternative Arts movement, but *The Latin American Spirit* can certainly be considered a pioneer and successful blockbuster show to have relied on it as a curatorial modus operandi.

represented communities.[139] The idea was to create a multi-vocal discourse richer in experiences and deeper in knowledge than what could be achieved by a sole curator and institutional voice. This became one of the guiding principles of the exhibition *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s*. This show was organized as a joint effort between three young, New York-based alternative institutions, i.e. the late Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA), The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Studio Museum in Harlem, and held simultaneously at the three institutions between May and August 1990.[140] The aim was not only to present three different institutional visions, but also to reach out to their different audiences, by intermixing rosters of artists that would more likely be shown at one institution than the other.

According to Marcia Tucker, founding director of the New Museum, the idea for the show developed from her eccentric and heterogeneous view of the artistic production of the decade, vis-à-vis the homogeneous view that her colleagues in the U.S. and Europe had of it.[141] To her, their view seemed "very white, very male," and populated by a dozen artists well established in the mainstream.[142] Nilda Peraza and Kinshasha Conwill, directors of MoCHa and the Studio Museum respectively, shared Tucker's perspective.

The Decade Show was thus conceived to explore the 1980s from the different perspectives of three institutions operating largely outside the art mainstream and whose

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[139] Other exhibitions organized following this principle included *CARA: Chicano Art Resistance and Affirmation* (Wight Art Gallery, University of California, 1991), and *Seven Stories About Modern African Art* (Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1995).

[140] Each venue had a different opening date. The exhibition was inaugurated on May 12 at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, May 16 at The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, and May 18 at The Studio Museum in Harlem. The closing date for all venues was August 19. To maximize attendance a free shuttle service worked between all venues through the exhibition.

[141] Nilda Peraza, Marcia Tucker, and Kinshasha Conwill, "Director's Introduction: A Conversation" (Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Studio Museum of Harlem, 1990), 9–16.

[142] Ibid.

missions differed considerably from each other, while being "surprisingly complementary," as described by Calvin Reid, who reviewed the show for *Art in America*.[143] The New Museum and MoCHA were located across the street from each other on 583 and 584 Broadway respectively, a few buildings south of Houston Avenue, while the Studio Museum was and continues to be located in the heart of Harlem on 125th Street.[144] The Studio Museum, the most senior institution, was created in 1967 with the commitment of showing the work of national and international black artists and work that has been inspired by black culture. The New Museum was created in 1977 to exhibit contemporary art from around the world. According to Reid, the New Museum had since its beginnings sustained a focus on questions of gender and sexual politics. MoCHA was created in 1985 as the second and more ambitious iteration of a contemporary art gallery to showcase the work of Latino and Latin American artists.[145] All three institutions were committed to exhibit the work of artists who were under-represented in the mainstream art circuit.

The chronological scope of this show is fundamentally different from the scope of the other exhibitions discussed in this chapter. Instead of surveying the Latin American or Latino art of a determined historical period, the reach of a style in the Americas, or the contributions of Latino and Latin American artists to U.S. visual arts, this show put the spotlight on a decade and on a broad range of artists active then. The exhibition comprised approximately 100 artists working in painting, sculpture and installation, and forty others who worked in video and performance. The selections of artwork were organized around six themes identified by the curators as important in the work of contemporary artists, and disregarded by the art mainstream.

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[143] Calvin Reid, "Multi-site Exhibitions: Inside/outside.," *Art in America* 79 (January 1991): 56.

[144] In 2007 the New Museum relocated to 235 Bowery, New York.

[145] The first iteration of such gallery was Cayman Gallery, which operated from 381 East Broadway, SoHo. The history of Cayman and MoCHA will be explored in Chapters Three and Four.

These themes were biography/autobiography and sexuality/gender (at MoCHA) [Fig. 23]; myth/spirituality/nature and discourse/media (at the New Museum) [Fig. 1-24], and social practices/cultural criticism and history/memory/artifact (at the Studio Museum) [Fig. 1-25]. *The Decade Show* was heavily anchored in U.S. social issues prevalent at the time, among them, the growing social inequality, income disparity, the increasing rates of homelessness, the second feminist wave, the AIDS epidemic, and the increasing racial and cultural diversity and tensions in urban areas. Amidst this social climate, identity was seen as the all-encompassing theme of the show, but conceived in its broadest sense as informed by a myriad factors, including culture, class, gender, sexuality, race, religion, and others. Latino and Latin American artists were shown within this context, alongside African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Americans of European descent. According to Reid, all artists in the show seemed "overwhelmingly concerned with creating a zone of cultural security–with constructing an ethnic or gender persona inside a hostile or indifferent cultural system."[146]

Among the Latin American and Latino artists included were the late Ana Mendieta, Cecilia Vicuña, César Paternosto, Liliana Porter, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Yolanda López, Coco Fusco, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Rafael Montañez-Ortiz, Nestor Millán, Arnaldo Roche, Merián Soto and Pepón Osorio, Alfredo Jaar, Luis Jiménez, Catalina Parra, Nick Quijano, Juan Sánchez, and María Brito-Avellana. Artists collectives partially comprised of Latino members, such as Tim Rollins collective Kids of Survival (K.O.S.) composed primarily by Latino youth from the Bronx, as well as the U.S.-Puerto Rican team of sculptors John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres were also part of the show. Non-Latino or Latin American artists included Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold, Barbara Kruger, Adrian Piper,

[146] Reid, "Multi-site Exhibitions: Inside/outside."

Howardena Pindell, Tomie Arai, Hans Haacke, the Guerilla Girls, Jenny Holzer, Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, Martin Puryear, David Wojnarowicz, Martin Wong, among many others.

A large number of works in *The Decade Show* deconstructed the myth of the United States as "the land of opportunity" and a bastion of democracy. Based on her own experience as a Chicana artist, Yolanda López's installation *Things I never told my son about being Mexican* (1984) [Fig. 1-27], poetically referenced the social displacement of Mexican Americans and other U.S. Latinos and their stigmatization as Others. Assembled over a yellow background guarded by barbwire, a series of found objects that included children's clothing, toys, cereal boxes, and kitchenware contained derogatory images of peasants with sombreros, playing the maracas, or sleeping over cacti.

On a related note, Alfredo Jaar's photo-documentation of his project *A Logo for America* (1987-1990) [Fig. 1-29], denounced the custom of calling the United States "America," obliterating by that the rest of the hemisphere. *A Logo for America* was comprised of a 45-seconds animated sign on Spectacolor lightboard presented in Times Square under the auspices of the New York Public Art Fund. The animation showed a map of the United States invaded with the text "This is not America," followed by a map of North and South America clarifying "This is America."

Another example of a work that referenced discontent towards U.S. policy was Juan Sánchez's *The Bandera Series* or "The Flag Series" (1982). This series juxtaposes the Puerto Rican flag with messages from the Young Lords Party—a radical activist group of second generation Puerto Ricans from New York who sought to improve the living conditions of people of color in New York and other U.S. cities—and the terrorist group for the liberation

of Puerto Rico the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional, to make a statement against U.S. colonial rule in the island [Fig. 1-30].

The catalog also followed this tendency, with opinionated texts criticizing the excesses of the decade, the conservative politics of the Reagan administration, persecution against illegal immigrants, the curtailing of women's rights, racism in the media, and the government's oblivion to AIDS. It included contributions by scholars and curators engaged in the multiculturalist debate, who were invested in spreading knowledge about artists and art practices considered marginal. Among them were curators Julia Herzberg (MoCHA), Laura Trippi and Gary Sangster (The New Museum), Sharon F. Patton (The Studio Museum), Lowery Stokes Sims (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), Susana Torruella Leval (El Museo del Barrio), and artists Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Margo Machida, and Jimmie Durham.

In contrast to his expressions on the deficiencies of *The Latin American Spirit*, Michael Kimmelman found *The Decade Show* effective in presenting the 1980s multi-sided attack on the art-historical canon as being Eurocentric, sexist, and elitist.[147] The choice of artworks was uneven, or as Roberta Smith called it: "messy."[148] For Reid, from *Art in America*, the cluttered nature of the show in its display, as well as probably in its saturation of political commentary, was effectively a rebuttal of a self-constricting curatorial practice that sought coherence at any cost.[149] Messiness served the purpose of providing a better sense of "what artists are doing and

[147] Michael Kimmelman, "ART VIEW; The Force Of Conviction Stirred by the 80's - New York Times," New York Times, May 27, 1990, sec. 2; Arts and Leisure Desk. http://www.nytimes.com/1990/05/27/arts/art-view-the-force-of-conviction-stirred-by-the-80-s.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed October 24, 2012).

[148] Roberta Smith, "Review/Art; 3 Museums Collaborate To Sum Up a Decade - New York Times," *New York Times*, May 25, 1990, http://www.nytimes.com/1990/05/25/arts/review-art-3-museums-collaborate-to-sum-up-a-decade.html?src=pm (accessed November 11, 2011).

[149] Reid, "Multi-site Exhibitions: Inside/outside."

why."[150] According to Kimmelman, some artworks could not rise from the level of agitprop, while others were eloquent in subtle and poetic ways.[151] Among the latter, he mentions, Cecilia Vicuña's *Precario/Precarious* a sculptural installation made out of found materials [Fig. 1-31], painted sticks, pebbles and stones, some balancing against each other, gathered in a way that suggested a shrine to nature. Kimmelman saw in *Precario* an evocation of the mystical inventions of Paul Klee, even if the work's sources were in Pre-Columbian and Andean cultures. Inspired by this work, Kimmelman refused to judge the *Decade Show* as a simple assault on tradition. For him, such a view overlooked the conciliatory tone of the display, which ultimately called for broader art mainstream and more flexible criteria for judging art.

For Roberta Smith the show was important in taking postmodern theory out of a purely academic context by exhibiting the work of artists from oppressed communities who directly challenged structures of power:

> The show is important as an effort to democratize and widen post-modernist art theory, which has often argued that art should be critical of various forms of power This show's message is: when dealing with issues of oppression and difference, let's hear from the oppressed and different, from artists whose sensibilities have been shaped by being Asians or women or homosexuals.[152]

Smith's last sentence is revealing in that it points to a possible pitfall of the show: the price of access to the mainstream is victimization, and a self-imposed difference or abnormality. This was precisely the criticism that Mari Carmen Ramírez made about *The Decade Show* in her essay "Brokering Identities."[153] For her, this show illustrated a tendency to force the acceptance

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[150] Ibid.

[151] Kimmelman, "Art View; The Force Of Conviction Stirred by the 80's - New York Times."

[152] Smith, "Review/Art; 3 Museums Collaborate To Sum Up a Decade - New York Times."

of Latino and Latin American artists into the U.S. art world on the basis of "difference."[154] According to Ramírez, in *The Decade Show*: "… the artistic production of each group was presented in terms of exotic cultural attributes and symbols which served as a point of contrast with Anglo culture."[155] However, the presence of artists such as Jaar, Vicuña, Liliana Porter, and César Paternosto, who have developed their practices along a conceptual or abstract/ constructive language very much in tune with international currents seems capable of countering Ramírez's argument. So does the inclusion of well-known artists from the United States like Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman side-by-side of non-Anglo artists, although these inclusions could arguably be seen as having been instrumentalized to normalize the non-U.S. or mainstream artists. As Kimmelman noted, there is certainly an emphasis on artistic practices outside the mainstream, but this does not automatically imply they are exotic vis-à-vis Anglo culture, particularly when analyzed in the context of the 1980s Culture Wars and the thriving of a politicized alternative arts movement in New York.

Despite its imperfections, its sometimes ill-tempered tone, its abundance of political-pamphlet work, and even possible "self-exotization," *The Decade Show* proposed a different way of looking at art. Through a roster of artists composed of well-known figures accepted in the mainstream, and others who had traditionally worked in its margins, the show destabilized the hierarchies established by spaces that privilege the showcasing of one group over the other, arguing for a different way of looking at art, beyond the dialectics of the central and the marginal. The show advocated for the emergence of an all-encompassing vision that allows for the equal consideration and validation of different artistic practices rooted in diverse

[153] Ramírez, "Brokering Identities: Art Curators and the Politics of Cultural Representation."

[154] Ibid, 33.

[155] Ibid.

sources and cultural traditions. By engaging a large number of art scholars and artist-writers invested in issues of under-representation and/or misrepresentation in the art circuit, the show also provided them with a voice. This gesture favored self-representation, and doing away with the practice of the mainstream curator or catalog essayist becoming the spokesperson of the under-represented or marginal artist. For Latino and Latin American artists, this new framework seemed promising in that it allowed for the consideration of their work in relation to that of non-Latino or Latin American artists, without the loss of meaning that comes when the curator is not familiar with the sources and context of production of the artwork. Certainly this model of self-representation and continual institutional engagement with Latino and Latin American art developed in *New Forms of Figuration*, *The Latin American Spirit*, and *The Decade Show* had the potential of eliminating the exotic projections of Latin American or Hispanic art as imbued with fantasy, passion and bold color that came to be associated with the Boom through their manifestation in *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art*.

CHAPTER TWO. The Path to the Boom. The CIAR/AS: An Establishment for Latin American Art·

2.1 Introduction: Typologies of U.S. Exhibition Venues Committed to Latin American Art

Despite their conceptual flaws, Boom blockbusters such as *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States* effectively expanded the audiences that Latin American and Latino artists traditionally had between the 1960s and late 1970s. Through their traveling itineraries and lavishly illustrated catalogs, these shows constituted the first post-war mainstream validation of the work of Latin American and Latino artists as worthy of display and acquisition.

The Boom has been seen as a break-through of Latin American and Latino art into the U.S. cultural landscape, after decades of low-profile existence. Interpretations of this moment are mainly inserted within reviews of the exhibitions that have become the Boom's signature shows. As a result, the Boom has appeared as a phenomenon entirely produced and led by the art mainstream. This focus has been to the detriment of smaller, less-established galleries and museums, and specialized venues, which paved the way for mainstream museums to engage with Latin American and Latino art. The systematic oversight of exhibition activity in the years preceding the Boom has made the phenomenon look like a moment of spontaneous combustion. An aura of suddenness remains around it that obscures the long years it took for the work of Latin American and Latino artists to start being noticed by mainstream art spaces and the role that small venues played as their harbingers.

Chapter Two and Chapter Three begin to redress this historiographic imbalance. They are concerned with the role that New York-based specialized, non-commercial galleries and alternative institutions had in providing first exposure to Latin American and Latino artists.

· The analysis presented in this chapter of curatorial practices during the first decade of exhibitions at the CIAR/AS constitutes an edited and refined version of a paper titled "Hemispheric Tendencies: The Display of Latin American Abstraction and Perceptual Art at the Center for Inter-American Relations, 1967-1977," that I presented at *The Revolution Will Not Be Curated. Third Annual Graduate Symposium*, The Museum of Modern Art, 2007.

These two chapters will propose a close look at the early history and activity of four of these New York institutions. They are, in order of emergence, the 1965-born CIAR/AS, the 1969-founded El Museo del Barrio, the 1971-founded Bronx Museum of the Arts, and the 1973-founded Cayman Gallery/MoCHA. I will focus on their founding histories, and the first decade of programming at each, highlighting how their missions determined the scope of their Latin American and Latino art showcasing. With their individual agendas and through their exhibition programs, these venues expanded U.S. notions of Latin American art that had taken hold in the first period of national mainstream support—from the 1930s to the mid-1940s. They achieved this by shedding light on contemporary art trends that emphasized an international modernity, or by bringing attention to the art of countries and populations that had not yet entered the canon of Latin American art constructed through MoMA's exhibitions and collecting practices.

The reason for dividing the discussion of these exhibition spaces into two chapters obeys a distinction in the typology of venues that have traditionally showcased Latin American and Latino art in the U.S.[1] The first type follows a tradition established by MoMA in the early 1940s of exhibiting Latin American art as a means to further government politics and diplomacy. Chapter Two will be devoted to the CIAR/AS as an institution representative of that type. Following an introductory context on the history of institutional support to Latin American art in New York before and after World War II, this chapter will focus on how the CIAR/AS took over MoMA's showcasing efforts towards Latin American art. With the help of MoMA the CIAR/AS became a reputable and solidly established exhibition venue that legitimized Latin American art, while putting it at the service of hemispheric politics (particularly during its first decade).

[1] This is not to say that these were the sole two types of venues where Latin American and Latino art were visible. Over the course of the 20th century the art of Latinos and Latin Americans in the U.S. was also seen at world art fairs, university galleries, commercial and non-commercial galleries, and museums that could not be categorized under these typologies. See Cullen, *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis*.

Chapter Three will, in turn, be devoted to the second historical type of exhibition venue for Latin American art in the U.S. This second type has been comprised of grassroots exhibition spaces emerging after the 1960s as alternatives to counteract the racial, sexist, and culturally-biased prerogatives of the mainstream art circuit, and its commodification of the artwork. These institutions also emerged with a political purpose. But instead of supporting official government policies, like the CIAR/AS, they challenged structures that maintained traditionally disempowered populations (such as blacks and Puerto Ricans, and peoples who lived in outer New York-boroughs) without representation in the cultural arena. In this dissertation El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum, and Cayman Gallery comprise this second type of exhibition venues, together with Exit Art, a venue founded in the early 1980s, which will only be discussed superficially in Chapter Five.[2]

As will be evidenced in Chapter Two and Three, the different founding motivations in these two types of exhibition venues had numerous implications on the showcasing and reception of work by artists from Latin American and Latino background. In the case of the venues addressed here, their origins determined in many ways the availability of resources to maintain consistency in exhibition programs and to preserve institutional archival records. Institutional origins also determined the kinds of audiences that would support their programming, and—most importantly—their curatorial scopes and the discursive frameworks accompanying the art showcased. Finally, the different institution typologies also defined the dynamics of these exhibition spaces with the developing market of Latin American art, and the commercial success

[2] Chapter Five will address shifts in the ways of conceiving and showcasing Latin American art by the venues in Chapters Two and Three. While the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the founding of a variety of spaces whose agendas had given rise to rarely intersecting visions of Latin American art, the 1980s saw a rapprochement in the ways these venues conceived of Latin American art and even some institutional collaborations. Exit Art emerged in that decade as a main showcase of Latinos and Latin Americans within New York's multicultural artistic scene.

of individual artists showcased at one institution or another.[3] The focus institutions in this dissertation were just emerging between the late 1960s and 1970s. They evolved organically through changes in staff, funding challenges, and through the development of ideas in academia and the cultural industry. As such, when examining the trajectories of these institutions, changes over time can be expected in their concept of Latin American art and their missions towards it.

By distinguishing the types of showcasing venues and analyzing their early exhibition histories, I want to bring attention to their early exhibiting frameworks for Latin American and Latino art. My aim is to demonstrate the new art paradigms these institutions advanced, and the process by which a circuit of Latin American and Latino art in New York coalesced in the 1980s.

2.1.2 Individuals within Institutions

Institutional validation has been crucial for the development of Latin American and Latino art as fields of study and exhibitions in the U.S.[4] The relationship between artists of Latino and Latin American background and each of the spaces surveyed in Chapters Two and Three has been greatly determined by institutional models (e.g. specialized gallery, cultural embassy, alternative art space) and missions. However, it would be shortsighted to look at these organizations as autonomous organisms governed by an unchangeable set of aims, rules, and values. The history of institutional commitment to Latino and Latin American artists is also the history of individuals who worked as directors, curators, and even board members at those

[3] The dynamics of these exhibition spaces and the incipient Latin American art market will be addressed in Chapter Four.

[4] Edward J. Sullivan, "Information Networks. Collecting and Display of Latin American Art in the United States," in *Order, Chaos, and the Space Between.*, ed. Beverly Adams and Vanessa Davidson (Phoenix: The Phoenix Art Museum, 2013), 105–117. A considerable amount of exhibitions in the field of Latin American and Latino art have broken ground in terms of research, helping the establishment of the field in academia and further nurturing the interest of museums in exhibiting the art of Latino and Latin America. Some of thee include *Latin American Art Since Independence, Oller: a Realist Impressionist* (Museo de Arte de Ponce, 1983), and *CARA: Chicano Art Resistance and Affirmation* (Wight Art Gallery, 1991).

venues, advancing certain kinds of institutional engagement, committing to particular relationships with artists, steering their organizations towards specific aims at times conflicting, at times consonant with the institution's missions. Amid the often rigid statutes of a cultural organization, sinuously or overtly, these individuals introduced a myriad of other factors such as political ideologies, friendships, scholarly interests, personal taste, agendas, and visions that decisively informed exhibition and collecting practices within their institutions.

The impact of some of these individuals in the institutions they worked poses challenges to the construction of a coherent history of institutional support of Latin American and Latino art. It introduces contingency and arbitrariness into the account, particularly for those institutions that had frequent turnovers or changes in their organizational structure. Some cases in point are the CIAR, El Museo del Barrio, and the Bronx Museum.[5] The CIAR/AS had two gallery directors between 1966 and 1972. Stanton Loomis Catlin, director from 1966-1971, stands as an illustration of that individual impact on an institution, and also of personal will at tension with overarching general policies. Catlin was instrumental in defining the comprehensive historical scope that the gallery still maintains, and in stating the independence of the CIAR/AS gallery from The Museum of Modern Art, which lent important expertise and resources for its founding.[6] He did this convinced that the gallery deserved "a principality of its own" rather than, as documented by Anna Indych-López, to be subject to MoMA's "business politics and cultural

[5] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own." In regards to the CIAR/AS, Adams has stated: "The many roles taken on by the visual arts department over the last forty years have not yielded a unified, directed program in line with the CIAR's broader mission. Instead, like most museum offerings, the visual arts program has resulted from the sedimentation of forty years of uneven interest, changing budgets, catch-as-catch-can exhibitions, different directors and boards, and the overall shifting politics of the context."

[6] Stanton Loomis Catlin, "Center for Inter-American Relations: A Cultural Showcase," *Museum News*, February 1970; Catlin, Oral history interview with Stanton L. Catlin; Sullivan, "Information Networks. Collecting and Display of Latin American Art in the United States."

diplomacy."[7] He aspired to make of the CIAR an alternative center for exhibiting, researching, and collecting Latin American art, and to contribute a more comprehensive view of its history, that avoided the creation of strict aesthetic and stylistic paradigms.[8] However, he left in 1971 under pressure from CIAR/AS management and New York-based Latin American artists, unable to reconcile his genuine interest in advancing the showcasing and interpretation of Latin American art with the CIAR/AS's economic and political interests.[9] Between 1971 and 1972 Hans van Weerek took over as gallery director and tried to mediate good relations between the Latin American artistic community and the CIAR/AS with little success.[10] After that, the post of Gallery Director temporarily ceased to exist and gallery management was put into the hands of an advisory board that invited guest curators to do exhibition programming.[11] The post was reinstated and John Stringer appointed to it in late 1979.[12] Stringer stayed for eight years, leaving his imprint on the exhibition history through an unprecedented period of openness and cultural inclusiveness manifest in the exhibition program.[13]

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[7] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own"; Anna Indych-López, "Between National and Transnational: Aspects of Exhibiting Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art at the Americas Society," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. José Luis Falconi and Gabriela Rangel (New York: Americas Society, 2006), 84–99.

[8] Indych-López, "Between National and Transnational: Aspects of Exhibiting Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art at the Americas Society."

[9] Catlin, Oral history interview with Stanton L. Catlin; Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own"; Luis Camnitzer, "El Museo Latinoamericano and MICLA," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. Gabriela Rangel and José Luis Falconi (New York: Americas Society, 2006), 216–229.

[10] Camnitzer, "El Museo Latinoamericano and MICLA."

[11] This information was provided to me by Isabela Villanueva, Assistant Curator at the Americas Society from 2004 to 2009, who compiled the institution's exhibition chronology for its arts program 40th anniversary publication. Between 1971 and 1979 every show at the CIAR/AS was curated by a guest curator. See Isabela Villanueva, "Introduction Timeline," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society* (New York: The Americas Society, 2006), 274–301.

[12] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own."

The first years of El Museo del Barrio and the Bronx Museum were also marked by changes in staff. The first two directors of El Museo, Ralph Montañez Ortiz (1969-1971) and Marta Moreno Vega (1971-1977) established the institution as an alternative museum geared towards educating New York-Puerto Rican children on Puerto Rican culture through exhibits of folk traditions, anthropology, and art. The directorship of Jack Agüeros (1977-1986) brought an increased focus in the fine arts of Puerto Ricans, Latinos and Latin Americans, and a change in target audience towards adults. With regards to the Bronx Museum of the Arts, it was after 1978, under the directorship of Luis Cancel, that its mission and curatorial scopes were successfully defined, slowly becoming an institution of reputable exhibitions and programs, a main New York art venue outside Manhattan.

By the same token, the consistency that can be seen in the exhibition program of institutions like the latter Cayman/MoCHA and Exit Art are very much the result of the continuous presence of their founding directors, their loyalty to one mission and work strategy through the years.[14] In some cases this consistency became a brand for success, as in the case of Exit Art, considered until its recent closing in May 2012 an enclave of avant-garde art practices in the city and a haven of multiculturalism.[15] In others, like Cayman/MoCHA it led to disappearance. Chapters Two and Three will interweave these institutional and individual histories in an effort to understand the affinities and differences they had in their ways of conceiving Latin American and Latino art.

[13] This will be elaborated in Chapter Five.

[14] MoCHA and Exit Art will be addressed in Chapter Five.

[15] Exit Art closed in May 31, 2012 due to the passing of its co-founder and director Jeanette Ingberman.

2.2 A Brief Survey of Institutional Support of Latin American Art in New York and of its Evolution as a Category: 1930s to 1980s

In order to analyze how New York-institutional support between the '60s and the late '80s shaped notions of Latin American art, it is useful to survey the history of U.S. institutional support to this art in the first half of the 20th century, and the way Latin American art was shaped through exhibitions. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, Latin American artists in New York constituted a vibrant presence in the city's art-scene since the beginning of the twentieth century.[16] Many of them arrived to pursue artistic training and to be part of the cosmopolitan art scene. [17] Artists from Latin America came into contact with artists from the U.S. and Europe at numerous institutions that included galleries such as Alfred Stieglitz' *291*, art schools and academic institutions such as the Art Students League and the New School for Social Research, and at workshops like Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17.[18] These places were hubs where ideas were exchanged and collaborative relationships established, some of which would carry on even as artists moved away from New York. Uruguayan Joaquín Torres García, and Ecuadorian Camilo Egas, are examples of artists who came to the city during the '20s for extended stays and achieved recognition. Torres García who was in New York from 1920 to 1922 was honored by

[16] For a history of Latin American artistic activity and institutional support in New York before World War II see Cullen, *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis*; Jacqueline Barnitz, *Latin American Artists in New York Before 1950* (New York: Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College, 1981); Sullivan, "Art Worlds of Nueva York."

[17] Cullen, *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis.*

[18] For a study of the cultural and artistic exchanges happening at the Art Students League between artists from Latin America and the United States in the first decades of the 20th century see Katherine Manthorne, "Art School as Contact Zone: Latin American Students and Their Teachers," in *Nexus New York: Latin/ American Artists in the Modern Metropolis*, ed. Deborah Cullen (New York: El Museo del Barrio, 2009), 48–55. See also Anna Indych-López, "Making Nueva York Moderna: Latin American Art, the International Avant-Gardes, and the New School," in *Nueva York- 1613-1945*, ed. Edward J. Sullivan (New York: The New-York Historical Society in Association with Scala Publishers, 2010), 234–255. As Indych-López has documented, Latin American artists had a prominent role in the development of the art program of the New School for Social Research.

the Whitney Studio Club with an exhibition in 1921. His work was collected and showcased by the Gallery of Living Art.[19] Camilo Egas who arrived in 1927 and stayed for the rest of his career was a key figure in art education in the city, where he taught and mentored a variety of artists from 1929 until his death 1962.[20] In 1931 the New School hosted Egas's first solo exhibition in New York entitled *Paintings of Indians of Ecuador*. The exhibition, which featured a selection of fourteen of his Indigenist paintings, was widely reviewed and admired.[21]

Museums respected for their collections and exhibiting trajectories such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, or for their pedigree and modernity, such as the incipient MoMA, also lent important support to Latin American art, legitimizing it across the U.S.[22] In 1935, through Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's bequest of Orozco's painting *The Subway* (1928) [Fig. 2-1] and various works on paper by Diego Rivera's watercolor, including *May Day, Moscow* (1928)

[19] The Whitney Studio Club, established in 1918 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney at 147 West 4th Street, was an expanded version of the contemporary art space called the Whitney Studio, which she had also founded in 1912 at 8 West 8th Street. As documented by Deborah Cullen, the Studio Club served as a gathering place for artists until 1931, when Vanderbilt annexed two nearby buildings and founded the Whitney Museum of American Art. In 1954 the Museum moved to its current location on Madison Avenue.

The Gallery of Living Art was the first museum in the U.S. dedicated to modern art. It was established in 1927 by Albert Eugene Gallatin in the Washington Square Branch of New York University, where Gallatin served as a trustee. The gallery included works by Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger, Robert Delaunay, and Joan Miró, among others. It closed in 1943. See Deborah Cullen, "Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis 1900-1942: An Introduction," in *Nexus New York: Latin/ American Artists in the Modern Metropolis* (New York: Museo del Barrio, October 17, 2009-February, 28, 2010), 10–45.

[20] Michele Greet, "From Indigenism to Surrealism: Camilo Egas in New York, 1927-1946," in *Nexus New York: Latin/ American Artists in the Modern Metropolis* (New York: Museo del Barrio, 2009), 168–179; Indych-López, "Making Nueva York Moderna: Latin American Art, the International Avant-Gardes, and the New School."At the New School Egas directed the Art Workshops from the mid-1930s until his death.

[21] Greet, "From Indigenism to Surrealism: Camilo Egas in New York, 1927-1946." According to Michele Greet, reviews of the show appeared in *Art News*, *Art Digest*, *The New York Evening Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Herald Tribune*, among others.

[22] Pedigree here refers to Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's role as the driving force for the establishment of MoMA, together with her friends Lily P. Bliss and Mary Quinn Sullivan. Abby was the second-generation matriarch of the Rockefeller family. She was married to John D. Rockefeller. On the life and cultural endeavors of Abby Aldrich see Bernice Kert, *Abby Aldrich Rockefeller: The Woman in the Family* (New York: Random House, 2003).

[Fig. 2-2], MoMA started the first collection of Latin American art outside of Latin America.[23] Alfred H. Barr, Jr., founding director of the Museum, initially started collecting and showcasing Latin American art prompted by founding members of MoMA who saw in the museum the potential of using culture as leverage for maintaining good political and economic relations between the U.S. and Latin America.[24] As Barr worked to satisfy this aim, he grew interested in the art of the region.[25] Between 1931 and 1944 the museum held ten exhibitions devoted to art and artists from the region.[26] Mexican art, in particular, enjoyed great mainstream attention at

[23] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America."

[24] Holly Barnet-Sánchez, "The Necessity of Pre-Columbian Art in the United States: Appropriations and Transformations of Heritage, 1933-1945," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, October 6-7*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1993); Indych-López, *Muralism Without Walls*, 158-163; James Oles, "South of the Border: American Artists in Mexico, 1914-1947," in *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 141. As a Rockefeller-founded institution, MoMA played an important role in guarding the interests of one of the most influential families in American politics and economy. Latin American art was a means to that end. For example, *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* (1940), was greatly motivated by the renewed urgency of Franklyn Delano Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy at the outbreak of World War Two, and the need to counter the spread of fascism. Concurrent with this hemispheric priority, Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas had started in 1938 a process of nationalization of the oil industry. As the founders of Standard Oil, the Rockefellers had great stakes in the issue of Mexican oil reserves. Barnet-Sánchez has proposed that *Twenty Centuries* served as an effort to solve or relieve "the oil crisis" created by Cárdenas. However, most recently, Indych-López has evidenced that by the time the exhibition took place, the process of negotiation of U.S. oil companies and the Mexican government had reached an impasse due to the lack of understanding of the "Mexican perspective" by the U.S. oil company's representative. According to Indych-López, *Twenty Centuries*, only served to assuage Cárdenas frustration with U.S. industry's inability to understand the Mexican perspective on the oil matter. Through the exhibition Rockefeller deflected attention from the negotiations and facilitated their progress.

[25] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America." As Basilio has documented, despite MoMA's institutional categorization of Latin American art as something sui generis Barr seemed to conceive of it within Modern art in general. A proof of this can be found in the preliminary plan and final checklist of the first general installation of the Museum's collection of painting and sculpture in 1942, which included a substantial number of Latin American art works within movements and tendencies labeled as "Cubist Tradition," "Abstract Painting—Out of Cubism," and "Social Comment."

[26] See The Museum of Modern Art, "Exhibition History List," http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives_exhibition_history_list (accessed May 1st, 2012). These included *Diego Rivera* (December 22, 1931- January 27, 1932), *Color Reproductions of Mexican Frescoes by Diego Rivera* (February 20-March 12, 1933), *American Sources of Modern Art* (Aztec, Mayan, Incan) (May 8- July 1, 1933), *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* (May 15- September 30, 1940), *Portinari of Brazil* (October 9- November 17, 1940), *New Acquisitions: Latin American Art* (January 13, February 15, 1942), *Mexican Costumes by Carlos Mérida* (May 3-24, 1942), *Brazil Builds* (January 13-February 28, 1943), *The Latin-American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (March 31- June 6, 1943), and *Modern Cuban Painters* (March 17- May 7, 1944).

MoMA and across the country.[27] In 1940 MoMA inaugurated its celebrated *Twenty-Centuries of Mexican Art*, a historical survey exhibition which included the work of Orozco, Rivera and Siqueiros, in addition to numerous pre-Columbian and colonial artworks. A decade earlier, the exhibition *Mexican Arts* organized by the American Federation of the Arts was inaugurated at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, subsequently touring thirteen U.S.- museums.[28]

The presence of artists from Latin America was palpable in academic milieus, in some commercial and public galleries and small museums, and in international world exhibitions. However, MoMA's collecting and showcasing of Latin American art was arguably one of the most tangible forces to help consolidate a paradigm and define a canon, a selection of works and/or artist names that would define the field itself aesthetically and ideologically.[29] Several reasons account for this. First and foremost is MoMA's foundational aspiration of showcasing—and by that defining—Modern art, and its unmatched resources for accomplishing that task.[30] Through its ambitions MoMA was, from its very inception, a museum with national and

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[27] Eva Cockroft, "The United States and Socially-concerned Latin American Art," in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (The Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 184–221.

[28] The exhibition was conceived by U.S. ambassador to Mexico Dwight Morrow, and curated by René d'Harnoncourt. The show aimed at tracing 'authentic' Mexican culture through the display of colonial, folk, and modern art. See Indych-López, *Muralism Without Walls*. For an account of the U.S.' interest in Mexican culture between the 20s and the 30s see Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*. For an analysis on Mexican culture as constructed from the U.S. in the first half of the twentieth century see James Oles, ed., *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1917-1947* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993).

[29] This is just one of several ways of defining a canon in art history. Another common definition of the canon is "a body of works traditionally considered to be the most significant and therefore the most worthy of study." See Brzyski, "Introduction: Canons and Art History." In the case of such a contested category as Latin American art, the definition I have articulated will highlight the construction of ideas of how Latin American art is or is supposed to "look like," through curatorial choices at exhibition venues where it has been prioritized or featured periodically for extended periods of time.

[30] See membership solicitation document signed by seven founding trustees of MoMA and reproduced in Harriet Schoenholz Bee and Michelle Elligott, *Art In Our Time: A Chronicle of the Museum of Modern Art* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 27.

international projection; MoMA meant to constitute the art mainstream, while most other New York institutions showcasing Latin American artists were part of a localized art system. In considering this context, MoMA's shaping of one collection named geographically, amidst its other collections defined by media, cast upon the diverse art of the region a sense of peculiarity vis-à-vis the works by European and North American artists integrated within the museums "normal" collections.[31] The works that comprised MoMA's Latin American art collection became representative of this Otherness. An indication of this is the oscillating relationship of the Museum towards Latin America in its acquisitions and exhibitions, as opposed to art made by Western Europeans and North Americans, which have been constants in its program.[32] The strong presence of Mexican art by the Muralists in MoMA's early exhibition and collecting efforts, and their legacy visible in some works acquired in the 1940s through the Inter-American Fund (a fund established in 1942 for the acquisition of Latin American works of art), such as Peruvian Mario Urteaga [Fig. 2-3], and the Argentine Antonio Berni [Fig. 2-4] fostered associations of Latin American art with figuration, folklore, and social commitment.[33]

[31] Ibid. The sub-collections within MoMA's permanent collection as of 1939 included painting, sculpture, architecture, graphic art, popular or folk art, industrial design, commercial art, photography, and moving pictures. All these media were included in the exhibition *Art in Our Time*, which celebrated the institution's first 10th anniversary. As it can be observed, besides the Latin American collection (whose works were not included in this show, presumably because the Latin American collection was only formally showcased as such in 1943), the "popular and folk art collection" also stands out as a group of works that is not defined by medium but by the lack of artistic formal training of its producers. Presumably, like the Latin American collection, the Popular or Folk Art collection included artworks in diverse media. The epistemologic implication of their grouping under categories that describe the origin of the artist culturally or in terms of training is that these art productions (e.g. Folk and Latin America) stand outside the norm of "the modern" as defined by MoMA. To the best of my knowledge this relationship has not yet been established by scholars specialized in Latin American or Popular art.

[32] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America." The showcasing and acquisition patterns of MoMA towards the art of Latin America until the 1980s can be for—the most part—directly tied to U.S. foreign policy and its interest of keeping Latin Americans away from Fascism or Communism. There have been, however, individuals such as Barr himself, William Liberman, Elaine Johnson, and Riva Castleman, who have taken a genuine interest in the art of the region and tried to advance research around it, but the success of their feat was subject to institutional priorities.

[33] Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.), *The Latin-American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum, 1943).The catalog of the 1943 exhibition entitled *The Latin-American Collection of the*

By the end of World War II interest in the region's artistic production waned significantly.[34] It resurged briefly between mid-50s and 1970, although with less of a visible impact beyond MoMA, due to a stronger focus on collecting than on mounting exhibitions. However, the variety of works that entered the Latin American collection during those years attested to an effort for filling lacunae that were becoming evident, and of collecting art representative of contemporary practices.[35] A work acquired in the 1950s was Alejandro Otero's *Colorythm no. 1* (1955) a narrow vertical rectangular composition of white and black parallel stripes and abstract color shapes floating in an alternating foreground and background. Jesús Rafael Soto's *Untitled* (1959) [Fig. 2-5], was purchased in the sixties. This one consisted of a wood panel painted in black with fine white lines, creating his signature *moiré* effect, which was intensified with an abstractly-shaped wire that extended from the center of the painting into space, creating a sort of visual interference. Rafael Montañez-Ortiz *Archaeological Find, 3* (1961) [Fig. 2-6], also entered the collection in the '60s. Following his interest in destruction as a

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Museum of Modern Art, depicts almost exclusively works of figurative nature. Amongst a selection of 104 works reproduced, only a handful are abstract or non-representational. These are works relating to cubism, surrealism and Latin American indigenous abstract movements like Torres-García's Universal Constructivism. Most of the works comprising the Latin American collection had been purchased since 1942 by Lincoln Kirstein, through the Inter-American Fund. This fund was anonymously endowed by Nelson Rockefeller, Coordination of the Office of Inter-American Relations, with the purpose of serving to deter Latin Americans from joining Fascist forces. The prevalence of figuration in the 1943 showing of the collection reveals Kirstein's personal taste, as much as direct links presupposed then between abstraction as an art mode of alienation, and figuration, as an art mode concerned with the present time and the human. These stylistic preferences would be overturned in the mid-1940s as realism came to be associated with socialist regimes and Abstract Expressionism became the flag of freedom.
Gustavo Buntix had explored the implications of MoMA's politically-driven Latin American collecting policy for Antonio Berni's New Realist painting *Club Atlético Nueva Chicago* (1937-1942). This work acquired by MoMA in 1942, was displayed a year later at the Latin American collection exhibition, before "disappearing" for the next six decades, due presumably to the difficulty of inserting it into a modernist art historical discourse. Gustavo Buntinx, "The Missing Link: The Ups and Downs of Club Atlético Nueva Chicago," in *Berni y Sus Contemporáneos: Correlatos. Homenaje a 100 Años de Su Nacimiento.* (Buenos Aires: MALBA: Colección Constantini, 2005), 188–196.

[34] Pérez-Oramas, "The Art of Babel in the Americas." As Pérez-Oramas, the Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art at MoMA, has noted, MoMA's waning interest in Latin American art from the mid-1940s until the 1960s resulted in the absence of new powerful trends that emerged in the 1940s in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela, which rejected figuration and embraced abstraction.

[35] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America."

creative force, *Archaeological Find, 3* is a burned mattress that belongs to a series of objects destroyed by the artist to release their inner energy.

While MoMA was acquiring new works by Latin American artists, parting with the 1940s Latin American art paradigm was not all that easy. According to Waldo Rasmussen, who directed the International Program from 1959 to 1993, during the 1950s until 1964 MoMA had an entire gallery devoted to works by Latin American artists, mainly Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros and Tamayo.[36] Works by Matta were always present in the Surrealist galleries and Alfred Barr gave Wifredo Lam's *The Jungle* [Fig. 2-7] a prominent position in the museum's lobby.[37]

From April 13 to 30th, 1967 the Latin American Collection was showcased for a second time, in honor of the Pan American week.[38] In a quest towards revising old paradigms and showcasing new acquisitions since 1942, works like the ones mentioned above were prominently displayed.[39] The assessment of *New York Times* critic John Canaday, reveals a successful attempt

[36] Rasmussen, "Introduction to an Exhibition."

[37] Ibid. Lam's painting remained in the same place Alfred H. Barr had given to it until the 1990s. The so-called prominence of this position "in a hallway leading to the museum's coatroom," was deconstructed by poet and art critic John Yau as a failure from MoMA to integrate Lam's work into the master narrative of modern art. See John Yau, "Please Wait by the Coatroom," *Arts Magazine*, December 1988.

[38] The exhibition was titled Latin-American Art, 1931-1966. Pan American week is a continuing celebration started by President Roosevelt in 1930. The Pan American week commemorates the first International Conference of American States held in 1890. On the week of April 14 (Pan American Day) the U.S. President proclaims the celebration of the day and week and invites cultural and political institutions from the U.S. and other countries in the continent to mark the occasion with the organization of cultural events that celebrate continental solidarity, interdependence and cordiality. See "Pan-American Day Proclamation Made," *Spokane Daily Chronicle* (Spokane, Washington, March 31, 1936), http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1338&dat=19360331&id=J9VXAAAAIBAJ&sjid=BPUDAAAAIBAJ&pg=2332,9067942 (accessed November 10, 2012); "Presidential Proclamation - Pan American Day and Pan American Week | The White House", April 12, 2012. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-proclamation-pan-american-day-and-pan-american-week (accessed November 10, 2012).

[39] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America."

by MoMA of reflecting an expanded and more complex notion of Latin American art in terms of the styles and artistic strategies it encompassed.[40]

This second period of engagement with Latin America at MoMA went hand-in-hand with the ideology of hemispheric rapprochement at the core of the Alliance for Progress.[41] It was also furthered through the personal interest on the art of the region of William S. Lieberman, Elaine Johnson and Riva Castleman, all curators in the Prints Department.[42] By the end of the 1960s a change in directorship and priorities at MoMA resulted in a further decreased engagement with the art of Latin America, and the channeling of resources to facilitate Latin American art exhibitions at the newly-founded CIAR/AS.[43]

From the early 1950s, when Latin American art's presence dwindled at MoMA, until its re-entrance in the United States' mainstream art circuit in the late 1980s, artists from Latin America were visible in a variety of venues that included university galleries, small specialized museums, a few commercial galleries, and alternative art spaces in different parts of the U.S.[44]

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[40] John Canaday, "Art: Three Samplings From Abroad; Yugoslav, Israeli and Latin-American Works Are Exhibited Here," *The New York Times*, April 22, 1967, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F7071EF63E5E137A93C0AB178FD85F438685F9 (accessed April 27, 2012). Along with the Latin American art show, Canaday reviewed two other gallery exhibitions of Yugoslavian and Israeli art, and noted a general tendency in contemporary artists to move away from nationalism expressed through art. In regards to contemporary Latin American artists, he said that these should rather be described as Pan-American, for the increased degree of mobility they had in the 1960s as opposed as in the 1930s through 1950s. Many of them were based in New York. The show took place between March 17 and June 4, 1967.

[41] Ibid, 59.

[42] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America."

[43] Ibid.

[44] A venue of national importance that took over the showcasing of Latin American art after its visibility waned at MoMA was the Visual Arts Section of the Pan American Union, secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington D.C., directed by Cuban critic José Gómez-Sicre between 1946 and 1983. In the 1950s and 1960s Gomez-Sicre organized numerous one-person and group exhibitions and publications for the Union. He also encouraged the OAS to build a permanent collection of Latin American art. In 1976 this effort was started, with the inauguration of the OAS's Museum of Modern Art of Latin America. Neither the OAS Visual Arts Section nor its Museum will be addressed in this dissertation as it falls outside my geographic scope. To know more about the Pan American Union and the ideology that supported its Latin American art showcasing see Claire F. Fox,

Important sectors of Latino and Latin American artistic activity were concentrated in cities where people of Latin American background represented an important demographic sector, among them Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. Despite the fact that all of these cities have nationally-important art scenes, many of the structures that took on the showcasing of Latin American art, consciously operated at a local city-level, often showcasing artists who resided there, and interacting with other surrounding art spaces.

2.3 The CIAR/AS: Context of Emergence

The CIAR/AS was created in 1965 against the backdrop of President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, a program to counter Communism in South America through political and social reform.[45] The institution was the brainchild of David Rockefeller and the result of his

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"The PAU Visual Arts Section and the Hemispheric Circulation of Latin American Art During the Cold War," *Getty Research Journal*, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 83–106.

Other institutions that picked up the baton of Latin American art showcasing and/or collecting between the 1950s and 1980s included the University of Texas's Archer M. Huntington Museum of Art, renamed the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art in 1997, IBM (the computer manufacturer), and private collectors Barbara Duncan and Nancy Sayles Day. Between 1964 and 1971the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence also built a memorial collection of Latin American Art in honor of Sayles Day. The collections of Duncan and Sayles were both showcased by the CIAR/AS in 1970 and 1987 respectively. In 1965 the Yale Art Gallery served as the originating site of *Latin American Art Since Independence,* curated by Stanton Catlin and Terrence Grieder. A year later the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum opened *The Emergent Decade: Latin American Painters and Painting in the 1960s*. This exhibition was co-organized by Cornell University and the Guggenheim Museum. For a brief overview of the collecting practices of these institutions and individuals see Anna Indych and Thomas M. Messer, "Kaleidoskopic Visions: Contemporary Latin American Art in the United States and the Americas Society," in *A Hemispheric Venture: Thirty-Five Years of Culture at the Americas Society* (New York: The Americas Society, 2000), 90–136.

[45] Ilona Katzew, "A Forum for the Arts: An Introduction to the Americas Society," in *A Hemispheric Venture: Thirty-Five Years of Culture at the Americas Society*, ed. Ilona Katzew (New York: The Americas Society, 2000), 27–87.Tony Smith, "The Alliance for Progress: The 1960s," in *Exporting Democracy: The United States and Latin America*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2001), 71–89. Inaugurated in 1961,The Alliance for Progress constituted a new strategy of rapprochement between the U.S. and Latin America at the time of the Cold War. It was an ambitious multilateral $10 billion, ten-year program intended to counter the appeal of the Cuban Revolution in Latin America by bringing political reform and social and economic progress to the Southern Cone. It also included US programs of military and police assistance to thwart Communist subversion. The Alliance called for a 2.5 % annual economic growth rate, a more equitable distribution of national wealth, emphasis on industrialization, public housing for the poor, and economic development, among other improvements.

advocacy for the involvement of the U.S.' private sector in the Alliance for Progress.[46] Located in a neo-Georgian mansion on 680 Park Avenue, in Manhattan's affluent Upper East Side, the CIAR/AS [Fig. 2-8] was conceived as a non-for-profit membership corporation that would serve to: "inform leading professional, academic, business, artistic and governmental people of the value, the achievements and the problems of other countries of the Americas."[47] Reciprocal knowledge from the United States towards the rest of the American hemisphere and vice-versa, would foster amiable relationships, essential to maintain the tense peace known as the Cold War.[48] Founded six years after the Cuban revolution, the CIAR/AS would become a cultural stronghold to the Federal government's anti-communist efforts.[49] This would be attained through two main divisions: one on Public Affairs and another on Cultural Affairs.[50] In 1981 a division on Canadian Affairs was also established. The Cultural Affairs Division was sub-divided into Literature, Music, and Visual Arts departments. [51] The latter sub-division is our main concern.

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[46] Rockefeller, "Foreword: Creating a Space." Technically the CIAR/AS was founded by The Council of the Americas, a group of chief executives from major U.S. corporations assembled by David Rockefeller, then President of the Manhattan Chase Bank. The project counted with the support of President John F. Kennedy, and later by that of Lyndon B. Johnson.

[47] *Annual Report*, Center for Inter-American Relations, New York, 1970, cited in Katzew, "A Forum for the Arts: An Introduction to the Americas Society," 28.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Rangel, "Tract of Time"; Gerrit Huizer and Bruce Mannheim, "Annex: Foundations on the Move," in *The Politics of Anthropology: From Colonialism and Sexism Toward a View from Below*, ed. Gerrit Huizer and Bruce Mannheim (Great Britain: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 481–494.Upon its founding the CIAR/AS was comprised of 110 members who sponsored the cultural activities of the center. As documented by Huizer and Manheim, the Ford Foundation, which had been founded in 1936 and established its Latin American program in 1959, donated over $1 million to David Rockefeller's CIAR/AS to sponsor confidential policy discussions restricted to members and their guests. Until 1974, when the Ford Foundation divested itself completely of the Ford Motor Company shares it held, the Foundation represented the commercial interests of the company internationally.

[50] The Public Affairs division would sponsor conferences on different economic and political aspects important to U.S.- Latin American relations.

[51] Katzew, "A Forum for the Arts: An Introduction to the Americas Society"; Alfred Mac Adam, "The Boom and Beyond: Latin American Literature and the Americas Society," in *A Hemispheric Venture: Thirty-Five Years of Culture at the Americas Society*, ed. Ilona Katzew (New York: The Americas Society, 2000), 179–206. The music department organized concerts in the intimate setting of the CIAR to spread knowledge on musical genres,

In giving culture such a prominent role at his institution, David Rockefeller followed the example of his brother Nelson Rockefeller III. According to David, Nelson had "turned The Museum of Modern Art into a veritable branch of his operation" while serving as the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs between 1940 and 1944 under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[52] This quote makes reference to a series of initiatives advanced by Nelson at MoMA after the end of his tenure as President of the Museum's Board of Trustees (1939-1941). Among these was the establishment of the Inter-American Fund in 1942 for the acquisition of Latin American works of art. An active acquisition program was started where purchases were seen as a way of promoting "good will" in Latin America toward the Allies and the U.S. government.[53] Another initiative was the organization of exhibitions of American art to be circulated around Europe and Latin America.[54] Inspired by this model, David Rockefeller saw great potential in using culture at the CIAR/AS as a means of promoting knowledge and better understanding of Latin America in the U.S., while also securing relations conducive to U.S.-private interests in Latin America.[55] The CIAR/AS gallery was key in this endeavor.

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composers, and musicians from Latin America. The literature department organized readings with writers from the region and sponsored translations of major literary works into English. This program of translations is today recognized for its important role in spurring the Latin American literary boom.

[52] Rockefeller, "Foreword: Creating a Space."

[53] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America." Lincoln Kirstein, the appointed Consultant on Latin-American Art was sent on purchase trips around South America. As Basilio has documented, while on mission for MoMA, Kirstein also made reports to U.S. State Department representatives in the countries he visited regarding the political attitudes of local intellectuals and artists towards the Axis powers.

[54] As it has been documented these shows made Abstract Expressionism into a symbol of the artistic freedom that could only burgeon in non-Communist, democratic countries. According to Eva Cockroft, MoMA organized nineteen of such exhibitions in the years Nelson Rockefeller was at the head of the OCIAA. See Eva Cockroft, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Frascina (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 125–133. See also Max Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," *Art Forum*, May 1973.

[55] Rangel, "Tract of Time," 15. While the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain put into question the CIAR/AS's original anti-communist motivations, the Americas Society found continuous justification

2.3.1 Mission, Scope, and Audience: Presenting Latin America through its Art

The gallery took up operations in 1967, under the directorship of Stanton Loomis Catlin. The late Catlin, a pioneer art historian and curator of Latin American art in the U.S., was instrumental in defining the gallery's mission, still maintained today. In an article for the magazine *Museum News* published in 1970 he defined the gallery's goal as: "[to] establish an accurate and balanced picture of the Hemisphere's creative accomplishments, both historical and contemporary."[56] Aiming at a sense of tradition *and* of contemporaneity, the exhibition program at the CIAR/AS spans from pre-Columbian art to the present and covers all of the Americas, including the Caribbean. In addition, the institution organizes exhibitions on archaeology, ethnography, and popular arts.

Until the end of the 1970s, the program relied on singular and unmatched resources in New York that included the expertise of MoMA staff. Financially, the gallery benefited from the funding structure of the CIAR/AS, set as "a tax-exempt membership corporation financed by foundation support, membership dues, and corporate and individual gifts."[57] Its extraordinary means came from a redirecting of resources by powerful political and cultural stakeholders operating between MoMA and the CIAR/AS.[58] As Latin American exhibitions dwindled at the former, the CIAR/AS emerged as the region's most prominent cultural showcase in New York

for its existence in the promotion of U.S. private investment and economic development in Latin America. According to Gabriela Rangel, since the 2000s, "the institution consolidated its present position as an entity that enables business networks, with a strong corporate bent."

[56] Catlin, "Center for Inter-American Relations: A Cultural Showcase."

[57] This statement used to appear in official publications by the CIAR/AS, such as its literary journal *Review* during the 1970s and early 1980s.

[58] Rangel, "Tract of Time."

and nationally.[59] The Museum lent staff and resources to facilitate exhibition making at the CIAR/AS.[60] Catlin, himself had started his career as a researcher for the exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* before working at MoMA's Traveling Exhibition Department and then at the International Program (1941-1943); René d'Harnoncourt, the museum's Director from 1949 to 1967, designed the floor plan for the CIAR/AS exhibition space.[61] Exhibitions *From Cézanne to Miró* (1968), and *Looking South: Latin American Art in New York Collections* (1972) were curated by Monroe Wheeler from MoMA's International Council, while Riva Castleman, Curator at MoMA's Department of Drawings and Prints, organized *Latin American Prints from the Museum of Modern Art* (1974).[62] The association to MoMA and the cachet provided by its location in an Upper East Side mansion, compensated for the limited size of the gallery, which measured 1,100 square feet.[63] A steady program of exhibitions reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and the academic journal *Latin American Research Review*, among other media, from early on attests to its prominence. According to my research, no other institution from the focus venues in this dissertation received such broad and consistent attention from the press.[64]

[59] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own."

[60] Ibid, 25.; Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America," 59.

[61] Catlin, "Oral History Interview with Stanton L. Catlin."

[62] This is all documented in the credits section of the catalogs to the exhibitions mentioned.

[63] The square footage of the gallery was provided by Gabriela Rangel, Director of Visual Arts at the Americas Society, and corrects the erroneous figure of 4,000 square feet mentioned in Rangel, "Tract of Time."

[64] The CIAR/AS also drew the attention of newspapers directed to New York's Latin American and Latino population, such as *El Diario La Prensa*. During its first decade, its exhibitions were also reviewed by the *Latin American Research Review*. No other venue addressed in this dissertation drew the attention of such a variety of publications as consistently as the CIAR/AS.

The CIAR/AS goal of spreading knowledge about the continent to an audience composed of academics, artists, and business people and the institution's private funding sources, greatly informed its gallery program. Printed on every exhibition catalog, the institution's mission statement emphasized the crucial role that cultural exchange played in building understanding and harmony in the hemisphere.[65] The statement read:

> The Center for Inter-American Relations conducts educational programs in the visual arts, music, literature, and public affairs in order to enlarge our knowledge and appreciation of the cultural heritage as well as the political, economic and social problems of the Western Hemisphere.[66]

From Catlin's years as director (1967-1971) through the period of mid-1972-1979, when an advisory committee took charge of the gallery and shows were offered to guest curators, this printed statement gave each exhibition the CIAR/AS's institutional imprimatur. However, the gallery avoided becoming a center of propaganda by marrying one kind of art to the CIAR/AS's message of hemispheric concord. Its strategy for advancing this message was rather to organize unproblematic exhibitions that said little or nothing about the hemispheric political tensions. This point will be explored further in the "Curatorial Approach" subsection.

2.3.2 Traveling Versus Diasporic Latin Americans at the CIAR/AS

Modern and contemporary art exhibitions during the first decade at the CIAR/AS can be classified in three groups: i.e. individual shows, group shows, and private collection shows. There was a strong emphasis on contemporary art. The CIAR/AS showcased established and emerging artists from Latin American republics who resided in their countries, such as

[65] I am thankful to Gabriela Rangel, current Director of Visual Arts at the Americas Society for pointing this out to me as a central matter in the functionality of the CIAR/AS gallery program.

[66] Monroe Wheeler, *Looking South: Latin American Art in New York Collections* (New York: The Center for Inter-American Relations, 1972).

Argentineans Rómulo Macciò, and Rogelio Polesello, Colombians Edgar Negret, Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar, and Alejandro Obregón, and Peruvian Fernando de Szylszlo, among many others. They also showed in abundance artists from Latin American republics who had moved to New York to be part of the city's international art scene, among them Uruguayan Julio Alpuy, Chilean Juan Downey, Argentine Marta Minujín, and Guatemalan Rodolfo Abularach.

Yet, with the exception of Cuban artists, diasporic populations and U.S. Latino artists were for the most part absent from the exhibition program until the 1980s. Mexican Americans or Chicanos, who constitute the oldest U.S. Latino population were completely absent from the CIAR/AS until the 1980s.[67] Between 1967 and 1979, only three exhibitions included Puerto Rican or Nuyorican artists. The works of Myrna Báez and Lorenzo Homar were among those of eighty other artists in *Latin American Prints from the Museum of Modern Art* (1974). In *Iman: New York* (1976) there were eight Puerto Ricans out of forty-seven participants including Argentineans, Chileans, Colombians, Cubans, Dominicans, Peruvians, Salvadorians, and Uruguayans.[68] Antonio Bechara (a.k.a. Tony Bechara), exhibited a work in his signature style of abstract patterns of tiny squares derived from color theory titled *Enthropy IV*. A pastel on paper titled *The Exterminated* [Fig. 2-9], by Francisco Colón (a.k.a. Papo Colo), depicted a dark, semi-abstract composition where zoomorphic masks seemed to stare bleakly at the viewer. Also in the show was the acrylic on canvas *Petrified Curtain* [Fig. 2-10], by Rafael Colón Morales, an abstract expressionist rendition of a window curtain, where handprints were the only legible element. Marcos Dimas was represented in the show with the ink on paper drawing *A Ritual*

[67] Indych-López, "Between National and Transnational: Aspects of Exhibiting Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art at the Americas Society." As Indych-López documents, the CIAR/AS has mainly showcased the art of Mexican artists according to a monographic or national exhibition model. These exhibitions privileged artists born in Mexico or associated with its visual production. Chicano and Latino artists were mostly absent from the exhibition program, except in *New Forms of Figuration.*

[68] Rubin, *Iman: New York*. None of the works in the exhibition were dated in the catalog.

Assemblage, which depicted a structure resembling a bow with spectral chimeras, half-elephant, half-bats at its center. Edwin Figueroa showed the charcoal drawing *A Grocer's Store*, a picturesque scene of a woman in a neighborhood store carrying a live rooster in her arms.[69] The diversity of styles and inspiration sources in the works of Puerto Ricans mirrored the overall eclecticism of the show. *Variations on Latin American Themes in New York* (1978) also included the work of Wifredo Chiesa, Rafael Colón Morales, Rafael Ferrer, and Edgar Franceschi and nineteen other artists.[70]

The number of Puerto Ricans in exhibitions at the CIAR/As during the institution's first decade was low compared to that of U.S.-residing Cuban artists. While there were three exhibitions that included Puerto Rican artists during the first decade, Cubans residing in the U.S.—among them Hugo Consuegra, Carmen Herrera, Juan González, Luis Cruz-Azaceta, and Agustín Fernández—were showcased in seven exhibitions during that first decade: *Latin America: New Paintings and Sculptures* (1970), *Emilio Sánchez* (1971), *Latin American Prints from the Museum of Modern Art*, *Six Cuban Painters Working in New York* (1975), *Iman: New York*, *Variations on Latin American Themes in New York* (1978), and *Modern Latin American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture* (1979).

Presumably, the following reasons account for the numerical discrepancy. For one, it is clear that the CIAR/AS was not founded to follow the 1960s ideals of countercultural groups for rectifying under-representation of marginal communities, such as the diasporic Puerto Ricans. Another reason for the low number of U.S. Latinos might be the fact that Chicanos and Puerto

[69] See Ibid. Other Puerto Rican artists in that show included Jorge Soto, Carlos Osorio, Erick R. Lluch, Liño Ruiz.

[70] Villanueva, "Introduction Timeline."

Ricans were not a priority within the institution's political agenda.[71] Due to their relationship of dependency towards the United States and lack of political self-determination, there was no need or practical benefit to building an amiable political and economic relationship with them.

In addition, the CIAR/AS might have also tried to avoid engaging with paradigms of community-based art and with cultural identity. These strands of work were very strong among Nuyoricans and Chicanos in the '60s and '70s. Both populations produced activist and artistic movements that denounced their conditions of disempowerment vis-à-vis U.S. Anglo society, and promoted the affirmation of their cultural roots as a tool against assimilation. Integrating these artistic proposals into the CIAR/AS gallery program would have introduced tension and complicated the portrayal of U.S.-Latin American relations, hindering the institution's mission.

The absence of any Chicanos might have also been due to the fact that this population was mainly concentrated in the West Coast and the Mid-West, far from the New York's artist hotbed that nourished the CIAR/AS's roster. However, analyzing the gallery program from a mainly local or New York perspective highlights the difference in representation between Cubans and Puerto Ricans, in relation to the city's demographics at the time. From the 1940s until the 1980s Puerto Ricans represented the majority Latin American and Caribbean group in New York City. According to the 1970 U.S. Census, that year, Puerto Ricans numbered 811,843, in a city that counted 7.8 million residents.[72] In contrast in the same census, Cubans in New York numbered 84,179, out of 439,000 in the whole United States.[73]

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[71] Indych-López, "Between National and Transnational: Aspects of Exhibiting Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art at the Americas Society."

[72] This translated into 10.2% of the city's residents. Ira Rosenwaike, *Population History of New York City* (Syracuse University Press, 1972) 138.

[73] In the 1970s 45% of Cubans in the U.S. lived in Union City, New Jersey. See Yolanda Prieto, *The Cubans of Union City: Immigrants and Exiles in a New Jersey Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009). Edward C. Burks, "Puerto Ricans Say Census Cuts Political Power Here; City's Hispanic Leaders Assail

In terms of the CIAR/AS's institutional mission, possibilities for U.S. investment in the communist island were null. Nonetheless, the U.S. Federal government granted extraordinary support and economic help to Cubans who arrived to its shores since the 1960s as an incentive for defection. Such Federal assistance, combined with the savoir-faire and technical skills brought by this largely upper and middle class population, effectively made Cubans into the most prosperous U.S. Hispanics.[74] The prevalence of Cuban artists over Puerto Ricans at the CIAR/AS might perhaps mirror the preferential treatment they received from U.S. authorities as a diasporic community.[75] It also points to a possible social class bias at the institution.

Cuban exiles who arrived to the U.S. in the early decades after the Revolution were largely from the upper and middle-classes. In contrast, the Puerto Rican population in New York was largely composed of low-skilled workers, who had come between the 1940s and 1960s to fill the demand for cheap labor of the growing U.S. industrial and service sectors.[76] Puerto Rico's deepening economic crisis in the 1940s and '50s and the prospect of better lives motivated their move to the mainland, mostly to New York. Their main enclave was merely thirty blocks north of the CIAR/AS in East Harlem, which they called El Barrio, a word that in Spanish connotes poverty.[77] There they lived in overcrowded tenements in substandard conditions. Due to their

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811,843 Total in 1970 Count as Too Low -- Bureau's Criteria Are Criticized Puerto Ricans Say City Census Reduces Their Political Power," *The New York Times*, October 2, 1972, 77.

[74] Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States*, 168-169.

[75] Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 108-116.

[76] On the social and cultural differences between Hispanic immigrants in New York City as reported in *The New York Times* see Sheila Rule, "Hispanic Americans Live with Diversity of Cultures," *The New York Times* (November 22, 1977): 41. For a deeper analysis see Ramón Grosfoguel and Chloé Georas, "Latino Caribbean Diasporas in New York," in *Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York*, ed. Agustín Laó-Montes and Arlene Dávila (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 97–118.

[77] Other Puerto Rican enclaves in New York during the 1960s and '70s included the Upper West Side, the Lower East Side, the South Bronx, Williamsburg, and Bushwick.

disenfranchisement, their low level of education, and different customs, this tidal wave of immigrants became known in the media as "the Puerto Rican problem."[78] It is plausible that the CIAR/AS, in its mission of marketing Latin America as culturally akin and worthy of investment for U.S. business, avoided giving the "problematic" Puerto Ricans and Nuyoricans a strong presence in their first decade of arts programming.

2.3.3 Curatorial Approach: A Preference for Abstraction

Since the start of the CIAR/AS gallery, modern and contemporary art exhibitions have been a main component of the program. During the first decade they comprised approximately 68% of the shows devoted to Latin American art and ethnography.[79] Compared to other New York institutions exhibiting contemporary art from Latin America, the CIAR/AS is perhaps the one with the clearest aesthetic line, at least until 1980. That year marked a change in directorship and the broadening of themes and artists showcased. Before then, the gallery exhibited a strong commitment towards artists working on abstract modes. Of the 35 exhibitions devoted to modern and contemporary art from Latin America held between 1967 and the end of 1979, 30% featured

[78] Edgardo Meléndez Vélez, "The Puerto Rican Journey Revisited: Politics and the Study of Puerto Rican Migration," *Centro: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies* 17, no. 2 (2005): 193-221. "The Puerto Rican problem" was a phrase coined in early 1947 in the first article of a series on the Puerto Rican migration published by the New York tabloid *PM*, and quickly became the basis for a rabid anti-Puerto Rican campaign in the media, where *New York World Telegram* and *The New York Times* also took part. The article on *PM* inflated more than 50% (from an estimated 17,500 to 50,000) the number of Puerto Ricans who had arrived to New York in the previous six months) and compared these migrants to the Depression "Okies" that roamed the Southwest in the 1930s. It also published the complaints of the city's Welfare and service agencies who said were overwhelmed by the sheer number of immigrants. Although the Puerto Rican government was quick in commissioning a survey from Columbia University to get the facts of the migration straight and counteract the sensationalist media, the campaign had profound and long-lasting negative effects on the U.S. perception of Puerto Ricans.

[79] Villanueva, "Introduction Timeline."The exhibition history published in *A Principality of its Own* reveals that between 1967 and 1979, sixty-one exhibitions took place at the CIAR/AS. Fifty-two of those were devoted to Latin American art and ethnography (of the remainder, eight were devoted to Canadian contemporary art and one to senior citizens and children's art). Among those fifty-two, thirty-seven were devoted to modern and contemporary art from Latin America.

exclusively artists working in non-representational modes. Within this category the variety was broad. There were artists who used geometric or gestural abstraction, such as Fernando de Szyszlo, and art where optical illusionism and perception played an important role, such as in Gego's *Reticulárea*.[80]

The CIAR/AS favored art that departed from a strict representation or literal interpretation of reality that could be easily or unmistakably understood by the viewer.[81] Photography exhibitions also comprised an important part of the exhibition program, as well as happenings and conceptual art events such as Marta Minujín's *Minucode* [Fig. 2-10], and the *Fashion Poetry Show* co-organized by the Venezuelan artist José Guillermo Castillo, who was part of the gallery's advisory board.

In general, the program at the CIAR/AS gallery avoided art that was politically or socially explicit. The allure of abstraction in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth-century partly justified and facilitated this approach.[82] This is not to say that non-

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[80] *Reticulárea*, the signature installation by German émigré to Venezuela Gertrude Goldschmit (Gego), was first exhibited in the United States at the CIAR/AS, in the show *Latin America: New Paintings and Sculpture: Downey, Gego, Morera, and Fernández* (1969).

[81] Group exhibitions exclusively devoted to artists working in abstraction included *Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York* (1967), *Beyond Geometry* (1968), *Eduardo Ramírez* (1968), and *Latin America: New Paintings and Sculpture* (1969).

[82] The exception to this were the happenings *Minucode* (1968), by artist Marta Minujín, and *The Fashion Poetry Event* (1969), organized by Eduardo costa, John Perreault, and Hannah Weiner. For *Minucode*, Minujín organized four cocktail parties for select social and professional groups including business executives, politicians, the art world, and the world of fashion. These events were attended by people from those groups who had answered questionnaires (placed by Minujín) in New York newspapers. The questionnaire asked to classify their professional realm according to the above categories and quantify their involvement with it. A computer sorted out their answers and determined which party they could attend. The crowds at each party and some sub-groups chosen by the artist and put into separate rooms were recorded by a crew of cameramen. The resulting footage was edited and synthesized into one single, non-narrative film. At a second part of the happening, the film was projected for these groups and the general public. The work intended to highlight the importance of mass media in culture. It also intended to display the mechanisms of construction of professional social identities. Finally, it functioned as an institutional critique on the value of the CIAR/AS as a gathering social gathering place for political, artistic and business interests.

The Fashion Poetry Event was an experimental art action that gathered twenty-four visual artists and poets in an artistic, literary, fashion event. Utilizing the paradimg of the fashion-show, artists and poets were asked to

representational art was apolitical, as for many artists the opposition to figuration and social realism was in itself a political choice. In certain countries, the identity-based modernist movements of the first half of the century were followed by a spirit of internationalization and "looking outwards" in the arts. Concrete art movements like Madí, and Arte Concreto Invención, emerged in Argentina, Kinetic art flourished in Venezuela, and Concretismo and Neo-Concretismo in Brazil. Surrealism and Expressionism, as well as Existentialist thought, also inspired the rise of Informalismo in Argentina, a more expressive and gestural brand of abstraction, with a strong emphasis on the materiality of the work of art expressed through richness of texture.

However, the 1960s also saw a rise in politicized art that was socially committed and in many cases socialism-friendly. The U.S.-civil rights movement, the Cuban Revolution, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the international student movements of 1968, and the rising repression of military dictatorships in Guatemala (1955), Brazil (1964), the Dominican Republic (1966), Argentina (1966), and Chile (1973) prompted the emergence of an art of dissent and political commentary that manifested itself with different degrees of explicitness in painting, print-making, and Latin American conceptual art.[83] Some artworks produced then that are now considered iconic include Cildo Meireles's *Insertions into Ideological Circuits* [Fig. 2-12], in which the artist stamped subversive messages in cruzeiro bills and Coca-Cola bottles and put

translate their poetry into a fashion garment, select a model, and display the work on a catwalk at the CIAR/AS's auditorium. The result was a variety of playful and parodying "fashion translations" offering at times cultural critiques. Drawing on the form of "media art" developed by Costa and Roberto Jacoby in the mid-60s, the publicity for the event and the documentation of its happening was distributed through the press completing the work by way of a statement on how mass media validates reality. For a more detailed discussion on both of these complex happenings and their relation to Marshall McLuhan's theory of media see Isabela Villanueva, "Introduction Timeline," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society* (New York (680 Park Ave., New York 10021): The Americas Society, 2006), 274–301.

[83] David Craven, *Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910-1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

them in circulation. Like weapons in an act of urban guerrilla, these circulating objects with messages that read "Yanki go home" or the question "Quem Matou Herzog?" called for the end of U.S. support to the Brazilian military dictatorship and questioned the government's responsibility in the growing number of imprisoned and tortured students and intellectuals.[84]

Another work of the time highly critical of U.S. intervention policies around the world and the Vietnam War is *Imperialist Aggression* [Fig. 2-13], by the Colombian group Taller 4 Rojo composed of Nirma Zárate and Diego Arango. This tryptich of photo serigraphs depicts three states of being of a Vietnamese woman in relation to the U.S. presence in her country, symbolized by a dollar note with corporation logos in lieu of the cameo portrait and a warplane. In one image the woman appears armed with a rifle and defiant, ready to fight her oppressor. The dollar note in the background appears to disintegrate from the bottom. In another image the Vietnamese woman displays a smile of happiness and freedom. A crashed bomber plane lies behind her and the dollar note is almost completely disintegrated. The third image is a war scene. The dollar bill hovers on top, covering the sky. Below it a bomber flies, on the ground, a smoke cloud rises, while a woman and children appear irreparably wounded and distressed. This triptych exemplifies the Third World solidarity movement that emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s in the face of U.S. military interventions and policies that were perceived around the world as forces curtailing democracy. Within this context, it is pertinent to mention that there was a whole contingent of Latin American artists united under the name Museo Latinoamericano, and its splinter group Movimiento por la Independencia Cultural Latino Americana in opposition to the conservative policies embodied by the CIAR/AS and its board of

[84] Sergio Bessa, "Entorno/ Objeto/ Acción: Gráfica Por Otros Medios En El Nuevo Siglo," in *Trienal Poli/Gráfica de San Juan: El Panal* (Puerto Rico: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 2012), 82–103. The question Quem Matou Herzog? or "Who Killed Herzog," referred to the death of journalist Vladimir Herzog in 1975 while he was in police custody under suspicious circumstances.

directors, which included Lincoln Gordon (U.S. ambassador to Brazil 1961-1966), and Dean Rusk, Secretary of State during John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.[85] The quaint presence of socially-engaged art at the CIAR/AS was thus not only the product of institutional avoidance, but also of artists who did not want to be associated with it.

Considering the CIAR/AS's mission of promoting understanding between the U.S. and Latin America, the omission of these tendencies seems problematic, but rather incidental; it was guided by a strategy to avoid the portrayal of the region in a negative light, or to raise thorny issues that were garnering the support of the Latin American Left, such as the backing of most dictatorships by the U.S., or the U.S. control of national economies and lands in Latin America through agricultural and mining corporations.

Exemplary exhibitions organized by the CIAR/AS that privileged non-representational art included *Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York* (1968), *Beyond Geometry* (1968), *Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar* (1968), *Latin American Paintings from the Guggenheim Museum* (1969), *Latin America: New Paintings and Sculpture: Downey, Gego, Morera, and Fernández* (1969), *Julio Alpuy* (1972), *Fernando de Szyszlo*, *Rogelio Polesello* (1973), *Six Cuban Painters Working In New York* (1975), *Edgar Negret* (1976), and *Abstract Currents in Ecuadorian Art* (1977). The roster of artists showcased reveals a broad spectrum of non-representational art that includes abstracted figuration, gestural abstraction, geometric/hard-edge painting, constructivism, and work that experiments with light, movement, and perception. Two

[85] Camnitzer, "El Museo Latinoamericano and MICLA"; Robert D. Mcfadden, "Lincoln Gordon Dies at 96; Educator and Ambassador to Brazil," *The New York Times*, December 21, 2009, sec. US, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/21/us/21GORDON.html (accessed April 2, 2013); Thomas W. Zeiler, *Dean Rusk: Defending the American Mission Abroad* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000) 82-83. Lincoln Gordon, his staff and the Central Intelligence Agency were accused of facilitating the Brazilian Coup while Gordon was serving as U.S. ambassador to Brazil. In 1976, after stepping down from his job, Gordon acknowledged that the Johnson administration was prepared to intervene militarily to prevent a leftist take over of the government. Dean Rusk was a strong supporter of military intervention as a way to prevent Communism. He ordered the U.S. Marine's invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, between the ousting of Juan Bosch, and the election of anti-Communist moderate Joaquín Balaguer.

discourses frame this art production in catalogues and press materials, which are often echoed in exhibition reviews. The first discourse was internationalism, and it valued contemporary Latin American art that engaged with currents practiced internationally. The second was concerned with cultural authenticity, and it emphasized the influence of national histories, indigenous cultures and other geographically-specific sources on contemporary Latin American artists. A constant in both is the absence of social or political readings of the historic present in the contemporary Latin American art production.

A paradigmatic exhibition relying on the internationalist discourse was *Beyond Geometry: An Extension of Visual-Artistic Language in our Time* [Fig. 2-14]. Held from March 21 to May 12, 1968, this show was perhaps the CIAR/AS's clearest validation of Latin American non-representational art, manifested in the recurrence of its featured artists in the CIAR/AS's exhibition program in subsequent years. Co-organized by Catlin and curator and critic Jorge Romero Brest, the show commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Argentine Instituto Torcuato di Tella where Romero Brest directed the Visual Arts Center. Romero Brest was a key Argentine figure of the 1960s. Through his writings and curatorial practice he promoted a strong, internationalist vanguard that embraced youth and novelty as essential to modernity.[86]

In that same spirit, the exhibition Romero Brest and Catlin co-organized repudiated the upholding of stereotypes of Latin American art as regionalist and colorful, as well as the complicity of Latin American artists who perpetuate these visions. [87] The show advanced instead artistic proposals of Argentinean visual artists who worked close to minimalism, op art, and to a

[86] Andrea Giunta, *Vanguardia, Internacionalismo y Política: Arte Argentino En Los Años Sesenta,* Espacios Del Saber (Buenos Aires, Barcelona, México: Paidós, 2001), 36-38.

[87] See Enrique Oteiza's statement in *Beyond Geometry: An Extension of Visual Artistic Language in Our Time* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1968) n.p.

lesser extent with conceptual art. In some ways, *Beyond Geometry* recalled the landmark exhibition of minimalism *Primary Structures*, curated by Kynaston McShine for the Jewish Museum in 1966. Like *Primary Structures,* the CIAR/AS show heralded a new era in artistic production where the hand of the artist was invisible, and the artist aspired to the aesthetics of mechanical production.[88] Examples of works in *Beyond Geometry* included Lía Maisonnave's *Vertical Displacement of Volumes* [Fig. 2-15], a modular installation reminiscent of the work of Robert Morris, composed of four identical highly finished free-standing wooden right triangles measuring close to 7 feet high. Eduardo Mac Entyre showcased two generative paintings [Fig. 2-16], dynamic compositions of colored curved and straight lines made with the help of instruments and repeated regularly to create the impression of networks. Rogelio Polesello's *9 things more* [Fig. 2-17] was comprised of an acrylic transparent frame with four equally-sized concave lenses (two on top and two on the bottom) that multiplied the image of what stood behind them. Despite the willing impersonality of their work, Romero Brest saw these artists as quasi-mystical in their undeniable expansion of the possibilities of artistic language advancing towards unimagined territories.[89]

Reviewing the show Frost Turley stated: "All nine artists have jumped right into the international mainstream, […] leaving behind the more baroque, poetic, intuitive sensibility of their Latin forebears."[90] And the newspaper *Visión*, a publication directed towards New York-Spanish speakers, declared that the exhibition proved that Buenos Aires was as close to the

[88] *Primary Structures* was an exhibition of sculpture only. It introduced Minimalism to the art world. Simplicity of form, regularity, and detachment achieved through industrial finishing and the avoidance of subject matter were characteristic of this new style.

[89] Jorge Romero Brest, "Beyond Geometry: An Extension of Visual Artistic Language in Our Time" in *Beyond Geometry*, n.p.

[90] Louisa Frost Turley, "Review," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 23, 1968, 10. Exhibition Files, Archives of the Americas Society.

galleries of Madison Avenue as the CIAR/AS: "one mere block."[91] In a more nuanced statement expressing disappointment at the homogeneity of the international market, John Canaday wrote: "Although technically immaculate, and altogether admirable when its premises are accepted, nothing in the show is new except the names. This is the fault of the New York market."[92]

Over the following years, the CIAR/AS's gallery continued to promote formalist and perceptual explorations framed in an international discourse. Ary Brizzy was shown with Ricardo Garabito in 1972, while Rogelio Polesello had a solo show in 1973. The exhibitions *Latin American Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of John and Barbara Duncan* (1970) and *Looking South: Latin American Art in New York Collections* (1972) featured work by several artists in *Beyond Geometry*.

Also showcased at the CIAR/AS was art that was formally or thematically related to the pre-Columbian and indigenous heritage of the Americas. Julio Alpuy had a solo exhibition in 1972. An alumnus of the Taller Torres García, Alpuy referenced the cosmologic vision of pre-Columbian cultures through the use of organic materials and forms alluding to life cycles, such as in *Regeneración* [Fig. 2-18]. Carlos Rojas' constructivist iron-rod sculptures that outline geometric figures in space [Fig. 2-19] were shown along with Santiago Cárdenas' realist paintings of everyday objects like hangers and power outlets in 1973. In the catalog, Rojas related his art to "the natural Latin American predilection for geometric or fraction and its

[91] Review for *Visión*, "Sección Arte," April 26, 1968, n.p. Exhibition Files, Archives of the Americas Society.

[92] John Canaday, "The Machine Organisms of Pol Bury; Sculptures in Polished Metal Are at Lefebre Slowly Moving Pieces Utilize Reflections," *The New York Times*, March 30, 1968. http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F10B14F8345D147493C2AA1788D85F4C8685F9&scp=1&sq=beyond+geometry&st=p (accessed March 2, 2012).

inherent spirituality present in pre-Columbian cultures as well as in the work of contemporary tribes like the Shipibo of the Peruvian Amazon."[93]

In contrast, Fernando de Szyszlo's artwork was presented as reconciling an essential Latin American-ness with international trends from the 1950s such as Informalism and Abstract Expressionism. In the catalog of his 1972 exhibition, guest curator Carlos Rodríguez Saavedra asserts the artist's key position in the struggle for purging painting from its descriptive function and identifies his contribution to Peruvian art as the introduction of painting into "the realm of purely plastic problems."[94] The subtle color gradation in paintings like *Paisaje* [Fig. 2-20] may evoke crepuscular light in the Andes. But only the title anchors the painting's subject in reality. The curator's text suggests an evolutionary conception of Latin American art that culminates with the disappearance of subject matter over formal concerns. Szyszlo is this climax achiever.

What exactly were the implications of the embrace of non-representational art from Latin America at the CIAR/AS? The display of a contemporary Latin American art that followed international trends, and that avoided references to current politics and social issues was instrumental to the Center's so-called hemispheric vision. The CIAR/AS envisioned the display of the art production of Latin American artists working in abstract modes as the best way to convey the existence of a cultural and artistic hemispheric language, a common path and purpose towards the future.

The preference for such art had multiple implications. Rather than propitiating an open dialogue, the avoidance of an art that engaged current political and social issues from Latin America or its transnational (Latino) populations during the turbulent '60s and '70s created in

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[93] *Carlos Rojas/ Santiago Cárdenas* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1973), n.p.

[94] Untitled essay by Carlos Rodríguez Saavedra in *Fernando de Szyszlo* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1972), n.p.

the space of the CIAR/AS's gallery a fragile and artificial sense of understanding and harmony between the U.S. and Latin America. The CIAR/AS's refusal to acknowledge tensions between these regions did little to dissolve them, as attested by the infamous censoring of Juan Downey's work *Anaconda: Map of Chile* [Figs. 2-21; 2-22] in the artist's solo exhibition in 1975 by the institution's board.[95] Comprised of a red box with a map of Chile drawn on its inside and a living anaconda crawling sinisterly over it, this work pointed to the role of the U.S. Anaconda Copper Mining Company in Chile's military coup.[96] By ordering the removal of the snake, the CIAR/AS board intended to thwart the symbolic power of the installation, and its critique against the U.S.

To summarize this chapter, among the spaces showcasing Latin American art in New York during the second half of the century, the CIAR/AS had a unique status as an institution founded by David Rockefeller and sanctioned by the federal government to function as a center of cultural diplomacy between the U.S. and Latin America in the years of the Alliance for Progress. The CIAR/AS's Visual Arts Program was envisioned as a key tool for mediating a relationship of understanding and political agreement in the hemisphere that would be conducive to U.S. private investment in Latin America. To this end, the CIAR/AS avoided showing artists whose work was critical of U.S. policy in Latin America. Instead, it promoted its ideology of hemispheric harmony through a strong endorsement of artists working in different strands of abstraction and non-representational art. Nowhere else did artists working in abstract modes find

[95] This is a repressed part of the history of the Center of Inter-American Relations that recently resurfaced as Gabriela Rangel, Visual Arts director of the Americas Society since 2003, did research for the exhibition *Beyond Geography: Forty Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society* (2005). Luis Pérez-Oramas identifies Downey's work as one that undermined the CIAR/AS's political and visual arts strategy of peace Luis Perez-Oramas, "Looking South: Strategic Visions, Tactical Revisions," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. José Luis Falconi and Gabriela Rangel (New York: The Americas Society, 2006), 42–53.

[96] Gary MacEoin, *No Peaceful Way: Chile's Struggle for Dignity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1974), 91-2. The copper company Anaconda represented one of the most important U.S. American investments in Chile. In an effort to counter Salvador Allende's plans to nationalize the copper industry, Anaconda helped finance a campaign of disruption before the election, and with other American companies sabotaged production and massively fired workers from different industries to pressure them into voting for Allende's opponent Jorge Alessandri.

equal support in New York, as attested by their concentration in the exhibition history and the exhibition files of today's Americas Society.[97] Their strong presence at an institution sanctioned by the New York-elite helped expand the idea of Latin American art that prevailed in the United States, dissociating it from figuration and political explicitness, and bringing it closer to international contemporary art practices. Interestingly, MoMA's engagement with Latin American art was moving into this direction before it was abruptly outsourced to the CIAR/AS.[98] In other words, the promotion of abstraction and non-representational modes at the CIAR/AS followed a course for Latin American art that MoMA was already tracing in the 1960s.

With respect to paradigms of Latin American art that became widespread during the Boom, it can be said that despite the early efforts of the CIAR/AS, Latin American abstraction remained largely marginal and unintelligible to the mainstream. Exhibitions such as *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art* included artists who worked within abstract modes. The former featured Joaquín Torres-García; the latter the granite sculptor Jesús Bautista Moroles. However, the larger choice of artists and artworks within both exhibitions and the circumscription to curatorial frameworks such as "the fantastic" and the ethnic-based "Hispanic art" prevented the development of a discourse that analyzed these artistic practices in relation to essentialist notions of cultural identity. This is achieved early on by the CIAR/AS through their adherence to a discourse that values internationalism, and by stating the freedom—as opposed to the obligation—of the artist to incorporate cultural references such as elements from visual art traditions from the Americas.

[97] Most artist files of the Americas Society are housed at MoMA Library since the early 2000s.

[98] Many artists in the CIAR/AS's first decade of exhibitions were supported by MoMA through acquisitions and through the inclusion of their works in contemporary shows. Works by Polesello, MacEntyre and Gego, for example, entered MoMA's collection in the 1960s and were showcased in *The Responsive Eye* (1965).

The CIAR/AS also favored artists from Latin American republics residing in their countries or in New York, over the display of work by diasporic Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, presumably because there was no need to mediate a good political relationship with these colonized subjects. Possibly the institution also wanted to avoid associations with the grassroots community movements that were the ferment of much Chicano and Nuyorican art. As it will be discussed in Chapter Four, the 1980s marked an institutional shift towards representing Latinos.

Within what seems like a strictly prescribed exhibition policy during its first functioning decade, and given the CIAR/AS legitimizing weight in the showcasing of art as a semi-official diplomatic institution with ties to MoMA, it is pertinent to ask how much did the institution contribute to the emergence of a new "brand" of Latin American art? To answer this question, it will be necessary to look at the incipient market for Latin American art, and to compare the dynamics of the CIAR/AS and grassroots spaces that showcased Latin American art with the market. This will be explored in Chapters Four and Five.

CHAPTER THREE. The Path to the Boom: Exhibiting Latin American and Latino Art at Alternative Art Spaces

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the second type of U.S. institutional commitment to Latin American and Latino art I identified in Chapter Two. In contradistinction to the type that employs Latin American art as a tool for political diplomacy to advance the economic and political interests of the United States, as exemplified by the CIAR/AS, the second type has as a main purpose to rectify the under-representation of certain artist communities in the art mainstream, among them Latin Americans and Latinos, and to serve as spaces that nurtured artistic experimentation and risk-taking. Rectifying under-representation is certainly a political task, although in art spaces that emerged during the 1960s and '70s, this agenda was mainly advanced by counter-cultural groups and not through official government policies.

New York's showcasing venues of this kind started appearing in the late 1960s. While Latin America and Caribbean artists had been present in the city since the early decades of the 20th century, there were proportionally few galleries and venues specializing in their work. In the '60s the situation started to change. Increased travel opportunities for Latin American artists to the city fostered the interest of cultural institutions.[1] But progress came mostly through the advocacy of professionals in the arts and cultural activists, who sought to establish an artistic network that reflected New York's cultural diversity.

Chapter Three will present three institutions that emerged in this context: i.e. El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum of the Arts and Cayman Gallery and that, as this dissertation

[1] The Brooklyn Museum and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum were two institutions that provided travel grants in the late 1950s and 1960s to artists from Latin America to come to study and produce work in the United States. See Angel, "The Latin American Presence"; Marimar Benítez, "The Special Case of Puerto Rico," in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 72–105.

argues, nurtured the 1980s Boom of Latin American art. All three of them are the offspring of New York's Alternative Arts movement. Starting in the 1960s and thriving until the late 1980s, this movement enlarged the city's cultural infrastructure through the creation of alternative art spaces, cultural centers, and artists collaboratives, that provided visibility to artists and art communities underrepresented in mainstream museums and the art market, and fomented artistic experimentation. Three main features of these venues announce unprecedented frameworks for the showcasing of Latino and Latin American art. These are (1) using art as a means for community empowerment; (2) claiming a space of action in the New York art scene, either by bringing the visual arts to communities that were culturally underserved, like El Museo del Barrio and the Bronx Museum, or by situating themselves at the center of the contemporary art-scene in SoHo, like Cayman Gallery/MoCHA; and (3) undertaking institutional collaborations among themselves and also with the art mainstream in order to tap into a broader and more refined expertise, and maximize audiences. These institutions' commitment to Latin American and Latino art started advancing a transnational idea of Latin American art that would accept travel and migratory movement as part of artistic practice, blurring the notion of an art production tied to a fixed cultural territory.

In continuing with the analysis started in Chapter Two, Chapter Three surveys the first decade of operation of these alternative spaces. I elucidate the curatorial strategies they employed to further their missions and the particular notions of Latin American and Latino art that may have informed their exhibitions. I add a comparative reflection about the relation of these alternative spaces to the semi-official cultural embassy of the CIAR/AS. How did their exhibition scopes differ? What was the impact of these two types of exhibition spaces vis-à-vis

each other on practices of exhibiting and bringing critical attention towards Latin American and Latino art? These are some of the question this chapter will try to answer.

3.2 The Alternative Arts Movement: A New Showcase for Latino and Latin American Art

Before addressing the focus-venues of this chapter individually, it is useful to elucidate their common context of emergence. Increased opportunities for Latino and Latin American artists in the 1960s New York art-scene were largely the result of the efforts of art professionals who united to denounce the lack of representation of artists from minorities in the mainstream and to demand rectification. The Art Worker's Coalition (AWC) was instrumental in organizing the demands of artists frustrated with the exclusionary practices of an art establishment that privileged white male artists. The coalition was comprised of a large and diverse group of people including visual artists, critics, filmmakers, and museum workers.[2] A main motor for the emergence of the AWC was a general sense of indignation among the New York arts community with the art system's disengagement from politics at a time when the publicized horrors of the Vietnam War had become catalysts for a massive anti-war movement.[3] Between 1969 and 1971, the group protested in front of powerhouse museums such as MoMA, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney demanding their politization, as well as multiracial representation on the

[2] Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups, and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85."

[3] According to Julie Ault, the agenda of the AWC was complex and "included several interrelated objectives that challenged the system of art production and circulation." The Coalition dissolved before its third anniversary. However, it generated many subgroups and offshoots, and a culture of activism in the arts whose legacy is still felt in the existence of art spaces that function outside of the commercial circuit and that favor political art. Among those I would mention Exit Art, Apex Art, Art in General, ABC no Rio, and others. Julie Ault, "For the Record," in *Alternative Art: New York 1965-1985: a Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, ed. Julie Ault, 2002, 5. For a comprehensive, firsthand account of the history and ethos of the AWC, see Lippard, "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York Since 1969."

museums' collections and exhibitions, and on their boards.[4] They also demanded the abolishment of entrance fees into MoMA and the decentralization of culture from Fifth Avenue into marginal areas of Manhattan and New York's other four boroughs. Through their manifestoes, pickets, and radical tactics of intervention the AWC demanded change in the city's cultural landscape.[5] Intending to open gradually the doors of the New York's best-known museums to Black, Latin American and Latino artists, the AWC fostered the erection of new venues to support them through initiatives that included the creation of artist collaboratives, workshops and showcase venues where art experimentation, politics, and community work to co-exist. Between the late '60s to the mid-'80s, this "Do it Yourself" consciousness thrived under the name of the "Alternative Arts movement," becoming an important part of New York's art scene at the time.

El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Cayman Gallery/MoCHA are among the offspring of this movement in regards to the historiography of Latin American and Latino art in the United States. They were three among some fifteen venues based in New York City that prioritized Latin American and Latino art between the late '60s and the late '80s.[6] The still active Museo del Barrio and the Bronx Museum have achieved a solid reputation through

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[4] Lippard, "The Socio Political Implications."

[5] Lippard, "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York Since 1969." Among these radical tactics was the event that set off the founding of the AWC itself: the removal by Greek artist Takis of his artwork from the exhibition Machine at MoMA, after the Museum broke its commitment to commission from him a new work for the exhibition citing budgetary reasons. The work Takis removed was part of MoMA's permanent collection. Even if prompted by personal reasons, the removal became a general statement for artists' control over their artworks, no matter by whom they had been purchased. The AWC organized public hearings and distributed leaflets in front of museums stating their demands.

[6] These include, besides the venues addressed in this chapter, the Bronx Council on the Arts (early 1960s-present), Taller Boricua (1969-present); Longwood Arts Gallery (1981-present); The Nuyorican Poets Café (1974-present); The Alternative Museum (1975-2000; 2000-present as an internet-based museum); En Foco (1974); Intar Gallery (1982 -1999), the Institute of Contemporary Hispanic Art (1973-?); ABC No Rio (1980-present), Art in General (1981-present), P.S. 64 El Bohío, a.k.a. Charas (1977-2001), the archive-based gallery named Political Art Documentation/Distribution PAD/D(1980-1986). The founding histories of some of these places are briefly recounted in Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups , and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85"; Rosati and Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories*.

both exhibitions and public programs aimed towards residents of their working-class, multicultural minority communities (El Barrio, and the Bronx respectively), as well as to larger audiences with a general interest in museums.[7] Through decades of existence and particular mission statements they have brought public attention to artists and art movements that are far from mainstream household names, challenging the idea of a universal modernism and building a more inclusive contemporary art scene. In contrast, the goal of the late Cayman Gallery/Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, was to place under-acknowledged artists from Latin American and Latino background at the center of New York's art-scene. What follows is a detailed account of their foundation and the place of Latino and Latin American art in their exhibition programs.

3.3 El Museo del Barrio: The Nuyorican Alternative Space

El Museo's roots are in the Alternative Arts movement, but its founding aims were similar to those of a cultural embassy. A strong counter-cultural spirit guided the Alternative Arts movement, a will to undo or subvert the established ways of the social and cultural mainstream. In that respect, El Museo did not conjure in its mission the diplomatic function ascribed to the office of an ambassadorship. Its role was not to mediate peace and good relations, but rather to represent and advocate on behalf of a people. This was a grassroots cultural embassy.[8] The distinction is important in the light of Puerto Ricans' political status vis-à-vis the United States and the reasons behind their cultural invisibility. A comparison with the CIAR/AS will make the differences clear.

[7] Providing cultural programs to their local constituency and community was central to the founding of El Museo del Barrio and the Bronx Museum. The means by which this has been achieved and the measure of its success has varied over the decades and directorships, particularly for El Museo del Barrio.

[8] El Museo and the CIAR/AS were like two sides of the same coin: El Museo was the cultural embassy of a people without economic power and political sovereignty, while the CIAR/AS represented the interests of the economically and politically powerful U.S., eager to invest in Latin American nation-states.

El Museo aimed at representing a constituency whose colonial status vis-à-vis the United States deprived them of the "symbolic capital" —i.e. the prestige and cultural authority— possessed by the Latin American republics represented at the CIAR/AS.[9] There was also a fundamental difference in the power structures that conferred these two venues the right to effectively serve as cultural embassies. Due to its pedigree as a Rockefeller institution and to its membership of corporate representatives, the CIAR/AS shared the authority of the U.S. political and economic elite to function as an official mediator between the hemisphere's countries. In contrast, El Museo emerged as a grassroots endeavor for self-representation among the New York-based Puerto Ricans, a population described in the sociological terminology of the 1960s as "underclass," i.e. below working class, due to their persistent poverty, under-employment, and low levels of education.[10]

The creation of El Museo del Barrio constitutes a landmark of New York- Puerto Rican history, or "Nuyorican" history.[11] To understand the impact and significance of El Museo in the context of that history, I will dedicate the following paragraphs to it. The presence of Puerto Ricans in the city dates back to the 19th century. However it was after the annexation of the

[9] The term symbolic capital was coined by Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[10] Mercer L. Sullivan, "Puerto Ricans in Sunset Park, Brooklyn: Poverty Amidst Ethnic and Economic Diversity," in *In the Barrios*: *Latinos and the Underclass Debate*, ed. Joan W. Moore (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993), 1–25.

[11] An extensive history of the founding of El Museo within the cultural spaces born from the Nuyorican movement can be found in Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions." Ramírez places emphasis on the anti-colonial, community-empowerment ferment of the Nuyorican movement, which emerged as grassroots effort to counter the institutionalized oppression and discrimination endured by Puerto Rican migrants in New York on the base of their ethnic and racial background. Her analysis is supported by an insightful and careful weaving of the biographies of figures seminal to the movement, such as Montañez Ortiz, Marcos Dimas, and Marta Moreno Vega, institutional history, Puerto Rican history, and New York social, cultural, and political history. I am indebted to her pioneer efforts in compiling and analyzing the history of El Museo. Rather than focusing only on the Nuyorican roots and imperatives of El Museo, and on recounting its history in elaborate detail, my analysis combines institutional history but places a stronger emphasis on exhibition analysis, in order to foreground the particular curatorial frameworks employed at El Museo towards Latino and Latin American art showcasing.

island as a United States territory in 1898 that Puerto Ricans started arriving in significant numbers to New York in search of employment and opportunities.[12] The Puerto Rican population in the mainland increased dramatically after the mid-1940s. That decade saw the launching of Operation Bootstrap, a plan to replace the island's agrarian economy with an industrial one. Operation Bootstrap was conceived as Puerto Rico's "ticket to modernity."[13] However, abrupt industrialization triggered massive unemployment. Lured by job prospects and recruiters, thousands of Puerto Ricans left for the mainland between the 1940s and the 1960s in what became the first airborne mass migration in history.[14] They settled in New York, but also in other states including New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Illinois where they fulfilled the demands for cheap labor of a booming post-World War II economy.[15] Many Puerto Ricans who were unemployed and under-paid in the island initially found jobs and better wages in the U.S.[16] However, in general, the diaspora's low level of education and meager salaries, and the

[12] Virginia Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 31. The passage of the Jones Act in 1917, which made Puerto Ricans statutory citizens of the U.S became an incentive for emigration to the mainland, as did a few years later the passage of the Johnson Act in 1921, which curtailed European migration by limiting the number of aliens to 3% of the number of foreign-born of that nationality already residing in the U.S. In a revised version of the act passed in1924, the number was further curtailed to 2% of each foreign-born group resident in the U.S. in 1890. In 1929 a third act fixed the quota of immigrants to 150,000. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans were unaffected by these laws. In fact, these laws yielded more work opportunities for them, as they naturally reduced the amount of immigrants competing for jobs.

[13] Ibid, 215-216.

[14] Ibid, 35; 214. During the late 1940s, the United States Employment Service cooperated with the island's Department of Labor to discover where work shortages were developing and how Puerto Ricans could best make a contribution. U.S. industries would also come to the island with job contract offers on the mainland that included transportation, and sometimes subsidies. Agricultural companies also came to the island to recruit workers. These offered seasonal jobs that guaranteed a set number of working hours, transportation, worker's compensation, health insurance, and food. Estimates indicate that at best 10% of Puerto Rican seasonal agricultural workers remained in the U.S. instead of returning to the island.

[15] Ibid. Since the 1920s and through the years of the mass migration (1942-1960), the Puerto Rican workforce in the U.S. was concentrated in blue-collar, low skills, low-paying sectors, especially in light industries, restaurants and hotels for men and in the garment industry for women.

[16] Ibid, 38.

vulnerability of the job sectors they occupied after the '60s kept them locked in a cycle of poverty far from the American Dream.[17]

These precarious conditions were the backdrop of the 1960s Nuyorican Movement. The Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, the anti-Vietnam war protests, and the decolonizing movements in the Third World were its ferment. The Nuyorican movement sought the socio-political and cultural empowerment of the Puerto Rican community in New York. On the political activist front, the radical group the Young Lords appeared. Modeled after the Black Panthers, the Young Lords promoted Puerto Rican independence and fought for eradicating social misery in Puerto Rican communities within the U.S. With its main chapters in Chicago and New York, this was the most influential left-wing organization founded by second-generation Puerto Ricans (i.e. the sons and daughters of those that had immigrated in the 1940s and 1950s).[18] According to writer and Young Lords co-founder Juan Gonzalez, between 1969 and 1972, the organization galvanized thousands of young Latinos into radical politics, leaving a legacy of community leadership after its demise.[19] The New York chapter protested the lack of basic services such as waste collection by blocking the streets in East Harlem with burning garbage. They also seized the First Spanish Methodist Church on 110th Street and Lexington Avenue, renamed it "The People's Church" and distributed from it free-breakfast program for the

[17] Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City.* By the 1960s about half-a-million islanders lived in the U.S., most of them in New York. The increasing de-industrialization of the city during the 1960s left many of them economically vulnerable and out of jobs, particularly those in the garment industries. The concentration of Puerto Ricans in low-wage jobs and their displacement from manufacturing jobs and out of the labor force entirely made this population heavily reliant on welfare. See also Sullivan, "Puerto Ricans in Sunset Park, Brooklyn: Poverty Amidst Ethnic and Economic Diversity."

[18] Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 93.

[19] Ibid, 38, 174. The group's impact transcended the Puerto Rican community. In 1970 it inspired the formation of El Comité among New York-Dominican community to fight gentrification in the Upper West Side.

poor children of East Harlem. In addition, they organized free health clinics, community testing of lead poisoning and tuberculosis, and free lessons on Puerto Rican history.[20]

The social and political activism that led to the creation of the Young Lords also found an outlet in the arts. In the literary field, the 1975-published *Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings*, edited by Miguel Algarín, professor of Literature at Rutgers University, and by award-winning playwright Miguel Piñero, gathered poems by young writers such as Algarín and Piñero themselves, Pedro Pietri, and Sandra María Esteves.[21] Through their use of code-switching or Spanglish, and a repertoire of images that oscillated between the grittiness of the New York they lived in and the idyllic tropical landscapes they longed for, these writers articulated a Nuyorican experience characterized by social alienation, the imperative of daily cultural negotiation, and nostalgia for the homeland. The same year the anthology was published, Algarín founded the Nuyorican Poets Café.[22]

A Nuyorican visual arts movement also emerged. It took art as a means of collective expression and a tool for improving the quality of life in Puerto Rican communities. Like the Nuyorican poets, New York-born and/or raised Puerto Rican artists who came of age in the 1960s aimed at developing a visual vocabulary to affirm their cultural identity and express the complexity of the Puerto Rican diasporic experience. This lexicon emphasized the Taíno and African components of Puerto Rican culture, traditionally downplayed in official narratives of

[20] For a brief history of the Young Lords in the context of 1960s U.S. urban radical movements, and for a description of the actions they called "offensives" and their long-term impact see Johanna Fernandez, "Between Social Service Reform and Revolutionary Politics: The Young Lords, Late Sixties Radicalism, and Community Organizing in New York City," in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*, ed. Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodward, and Matthew Countryman (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 255–286.

[21] Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*.

[22] The Nuyorican Poets Café is located in the Lower East Side, an enclave of the Puerto Rican community re-christened Loisaida in the 1970s and also a center of alternative culture in New York. To this day the Café holds a reputation as a national hotbed of literary talent and has inspired the emergence of similar literary clubs, bars and cafes. See Rosati and Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories*, 252.

the island's history in favor of the Spanish component.[23] It also subverted the artistic conventions that emphasize traditional social hierarchies. These characteristics are present in the art production of El Taller Boricua, a.k.a. Taller Alma Boricua or Puerto Rican Workshop, a community-based art organization founded in 1969 in East Harlem to serve as a workshop and exhibition venue for New York Puerto Rican artists.[24] The painting *Pariah* (1971-1972) [Fig. 3-1], by Marcos Dimas, is emblematic of the Nuyorican Movement, and of the production of Taller Boricua (still co-directed by Dimas and Fernando Salicrup). The three-quarters portrait *Pariah* is an expressionist depiction of a mixed-race subject, with a broad nose and lips, oblique eyes, and splatter-painted curly hair. He wears a necklace made out of seashells. The close cropping and the subject's confident gaze into the viewer space conveys dignity and eradicates his marginality.

In spite of the city's status as a global art center, Nuyorican artists had limited opportunities for artistic exchange and few exhibiting outlets. To change and improve their situation, they engaged in social activism in the arts field in New York. In affiliation with the AWC, Nuyoricans co-founded the Puerto Rican Art Workers Coalition (PRAWC) [Fig. 3-2]. The PRAWC was led by Rafael Montañez Ortiz—an internationally-renowned figure of the Destructivist art movement—and by the members of the nascent Taller Boricua.[25] Together with African-Americans from the AWC, members of the PRAWC demanded that MoMA mount

[23] This was part of a 1960s wave of historical revisionism that took hold in Puerto Rico and in countries that were once colonies. Anthropologist Ricardo Alegría, founding director of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, was the leading voice of this revisionism in the island. Internationally, the translation to English of Franz Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* (1959) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) were fundamental in fostering new historical perspectives that emphasized the contributions of oppressed members of society within the European colonial system.

[24] The artists who founded El Taller included Adrían García, Armando Soto, Marcos Dimas, and Manuel 'Neco' Otero. Other early members included Fernando Salicrup, Rafael Tufiño and Nitza Tufiño. For an extensive study of El Taller Boricua's founding history see Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions." For a study of El Taller's aesthetics see Taína Caragol, "Aesthetics of Exile: The Construction of Nuyorican Identity in the Art Production of El Taller Boricua" in *Centro Journal*, Vol. 17, no.2 (Fall, 2005): 6-21.

[25] Through his artistic trajectory, Rafael Montañez Ortiz has also appeared as Ralph Ortiz and Ralph Montañez Ortiz.

Black and Puerto Rican exhibitions and create a new wing for a Martin Luther King Jr. Study Center. This alliance also asked that the Met hire African-American and Puerto Rican art professionals, exhibit work by women artists, and develop mechanisms to make the museum accessible to underprivileged audiences.[26]

The Alternative Arts movement and the Nuyorican movement shared the belief that cultural institutions were vital to all sectors of society and not a privilege of the wealthy. Along these lines a common Marxist cause was to rescue art from its commodification by the mainstream and to realize its revolutionary potential. El Museo del Barrio emerged out of this consonance. Its founding followed years of protests by Puerto Rican and African-American parents, teachers, and activists from District Four of the Board of Education to de-centralize the public education system and to create curricula that addressed the cultural heritage of their children, who comprised the ethnic majority in Central and East Harlem.[27] The protests led to the 1969 appointment of artist Rafael Montañez Ortiz by the Board of Education.[28] He was charged with the task of creating educational materials on Puerto Rican history and culture for the district's schools. Instead of designing a curriculum, Montañez Ortiz envisioned the creation of "a neighborhood museum of Puerto Rican culture," of which he became the founding director.[29] As a community school district project, El Museo was mainly funded first with monies allocated by New York's Community Education Center, a state-financed agency that sponsored the

[26] A concise account on the participation of Puerto Ricans in the AWC and artistic activism within the Nuyorican movement is provided in Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York."

[27] See Fatima Bercht, "An Introduction to the Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology"; Deborah Cullen, "El del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology" in *Voces y Visiones: Highlights from El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection*.

[28] Ault, "For the Record."

[29] Bercht.

creation of educational enrichment programs for adults and youth in poverty-stricken areas.[30] From 1973 on, funding from private companies and agencies like the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts was sought for special exhibition projects.[31]

3.3.1 Mission, Scope, and Audience. Which museum? *El del Barrio*

In a one-page statement on the recently inaugurated Museo del Barrio published in *Art in America,* Montañez Ortiz summarized the origin and *raison d'être* of the museum he founded:

> The cultural disenfranchisement I experience as a Puerto Rican has prompted me to seek a practical alternative to the orthodox museum, which fails to meet my needs for an authentic ethnic experience. To afford me and others the opportunity to establish living connections with our own culture, I founded Museo del Barrio, a nonprofit educational corporation. By climbing out of the melting pot and recapturing my Puerto Rican past I had the possibility of arriving at an authentic Puerto Rican present. I could then envisage a future that would free me and other Puerto Ricans from the oppressive colonial notions which have left us with counterfeit identities.[32]

El Museo was born out of the need of disenfranchised Puerto Ricans to have an institution that offered them an "authentic ethnic experience." A premise for its founding was the bankruptcy of the "melting pot" as both a metaphor and an ideal for the harmonious integration of immigrants into the social fabric of the United States.[33] For Montañez Ortiz and the Puerto Rican and African-American parents who demanded a culturally specific curriculum from the

[30] Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York."

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ralph Ortiz, "Culture and the People," *Art in America*, May 1971, 59: 27.

[33] The publication of Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of Ne York City*, (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1963) was widely influential in debunking the melting pot as a metaphor to describe a New York where a myriad cultures had voluntarily melted into a homogenous one.

Board of Education, the utopian ideal of a fusion of all cultures, races and ethnicities into one masked the violence of a colonialist imperative to assimilate to Anglo-white hegemonic culture.

Speaking as the museum's founder, but also as an artist and creator, Montañez Ortiz described how in order to conceive of El Museo he had to think out of the box, or in this case "out of the pot"; to resist its dissolving force. He recounts that in his process of emancipation from colonialism, he came up with the idea of a museum that would affirm and celebrate Puerto Rican identity.[34] To use Frantz Fanon's words, El Museo's recovery of Puerto Rico's "pre-colonial past" would heal the psychological and social wounds of colonialism and rehabilitate Puerto Ricans.[35] For Montañez Ortiz, this was the great purpose of El Museo, its spiritual aim. According to Montañez Ortiz:

> All [cultural] expression has its integrity driven as all expression of self is within a TRUTH CONDITION, which ones [sic] organized, potentials to a more or less evolved cognition…. El Museo's challenge was to educate its audience, the same as any mainstream museum would, while "giving integrity" to "a peoples," to "the folk," an underclass less cognitively involved in aesthetic culture, with the intention to move the more icon-indexical driven agraphobic aspect of community culture to embrace the Symbol-Symbol logic in referencing of the more cognitively evolved mainstream-world of aesthetic challenge in art.[36]

As this quote suggests, once that piecing together of the self was achieved, Puerto Ricans would be able to understand and embrace the aesthetic challenge of modern art, without alienation. In its day-to-day functions, El Museo became a repository and showcase of Puerto Rican art and cultural heritage from the island and the mainland. This was unprecedented. The problem of cultural invisibility of Puerto Ricans is a complex one that manifests in their

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[34] Ortiz, "Culture and the People."

[35] Ibid. This rescuing of the past is essential for undoing the disfiguration of the colonized subject's historical past by the colonizer. In this endeavor, rehabilitating the past will "justify the promise of a national culture."

[36] Ralph Montañez Ortiz to Taína Caragol, "On the Origins of El Museo Del Barrio," email, May 10, 2010.

relationship with the United States and also with Latin America and the Caribbean. At a general level, Puerto Ricans were (and still are) often excluded from institutions or exhibitions showcasing the art of Latin America, due to the island's status as a U.S. territory.[37] Their relatively weak representation at the CIAR/AS, discussed in Chapter Two, may attest to this situation. For Puerto Ricans, the creation of an exhibition space of their own—El Museo—would begin to rectify this problem. More importantly still, El Museo del Barrio constituted the first museum to formulate a mission that considered Puerto Ricans as a *transnational* population, thus addressing an internal schism within that culture that is often forgotten.

Culturally, Nuyoricans and U.S.-based Puerto Ricans are more invisible than Puerto Ricans from the island. Prior to the creation of El Museo del Barrio, they were largely without outlets for showcasing their cultural production in the island or the U.S., while Puerto Ricans on the island enjoyed at least insular cultural autonomy. Several reasons accounted for this. As diasporic people, they lived between the cultures of their home and host countries. In the island, they were considered as "watered-down natives," who had absorbed traits of Anglo-American and New York-urban culture. Most importantly, they had relinquished Spanish in favor of English or the code-switching "Spanglish." Thus, their history and cultural contributions were unrepresented by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, the island's government agency that since 1952 had been in charge of shaping and disseminating an official view of Puerto Rican culture.[38]

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[37] Survey exhibitions of Latin American art that have excluded the art of Puerto Rico presumably for its status as a U.S.-territory include Stanton Catlin and Terrence Grieder's *Art in Latin America Since Independence* (Yale University Gallery, 1966), and Dawn Ades' *Latin American Art: the Modern Era* (Hayward Gallery, 1989). *Art of the Fantastic*. The most recently-published Anglophone survey book on the modern art of Latin America, Jacqueline Barnitz *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America* also excludes Puerto Rico. See Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth-century Art of Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001). An exception to this trend is Edward Sullivan's *Latin American Art in the Twentieth Century* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996, revised 2000), which contains a separate chapter on Puerto Rico.

[38] Arlene M. Dávila, *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican Studies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 60.

On the other hand, despite their U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans in the mainland are often considered foreigners. As Spanish speaking Caribbean peoples, not easily fitting the U.S. racial classifications of white and black, they were—and arguably are still—regarded as culturally, ethnically, and racially different to the rest of the country. Unclaimed by Puerto Rican islanders or U.S. Americans as their own people, diasporic Puerto Ricans were left in a kind of cultural limbo, unrepresented in Puerto Rican or U.S. American museums or cultural institutions. El Museo offered a way out of this impasse by embracing Puerto Ricans as a people between two territories and cultures: the island's and the mainland's. For those born outside the island, kinship depended on bloodline and on their will to define themselves as nationals. By including a transnational element in its founding El Museo set a precedent for a paradigm that has become the new normal in times of global nomads, especially artists, who live and work in different art centers of the world, but still make works informed by their national or cultural identity.[39]

The name chosen by this alternative museum announced its location and constituency. The Real Academia Española dictionary provides three definitions for "barrio": i.e. "1. any of the parts in which a big town or its districts are divided; 2. slum; 3. a group of houses or a small village dependent of a larger town of which it constitutes the outskirt."[40] These various meanings hint at the different uses and social and geographic connotations of the word, which sometimes imply marginality. In New York, "El Barrio," capitalized, is the name by which Puerto Rican and Latino residents call the neighborhood of East Harlem, also known as Spanish Harlem. This

[39] Some prominent examples in the contemporary art world are the Mexican Gabriel Orozco, who maintains residencies in Mexico City, New York and Paris, and the collaborative duo Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla (a.k.a. Allora & Calzadilla). Allora is from Philadephia. Calzadilla is Cuban educated in Puerto Rico. The duo lives in Puerto Rico but spends extended periods of time traveling to produce and show their works, which are often performance-based. None of these artists emphasize their national origin as crucial in their art. However culturally-specific references sometimes appear in their work.

[40] "Barrio," *Diccionario de La Lengua Española. Vigesima Segunda Edición.* (Real Academia Española), accessed July 30, 2013, http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=barrio. My translation.

sector of Manhattan, which covers approximately from 96th Street to 142nd Street and from Fifth Avenue to the East River has had a long multicultural, immigrant history. Over the 20th century it was an enclave to Jewish, Eastern Europeans, and Italians. Since the early 1900s it has been a main settlement for Puerto Rican migrants, but it was not until the 1950s that this population became predominant.[41] In the mid-1970s, El Barrio was 65% Puerto Rican, according to *The New York Times*.[42] The nickname El Barrio sheds light on the socio-economic level of the inhabitants of this sector of Upper Manhattan, which has historically been one of the poorest communities in the city.[43] By naming his proposal El Museo del Barrio, Montañez Ortiz designated the museum for the Puerto Ricans of El Barrio.[44] This designation was not only geographical, but also class-based. It referred to all Puerto Ricans of working class origins who lived in the margins of the cultural metropolis and whose ties to their homeland had been fractured by migration.[45]

Since the early '70s this marriage between mission and constituency at El Museo del Barrio has proven a contentious one. Nearly from the start, El Museo's ability to serve as ambassador of Puerto Rican transnational art and to equally represent mainland and island artists,

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[41] Arlene M. Dávila, *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 6.

[42] John Russell, "At Museo del Barrio: A Mission and a Sense of Fun" *The New York Times*, August 15, 1974, 28.

[43] Dávila, *Barrio Dreams*. Historically, annual average incomes and rates of homeownership have been amongst the lowest in the city, while unemployment and the number of people on government assistance among the highest.

[44] Montañez-Ortiz to Caragol, "Email Interview."

[45] Other Puerto Rican enclaves in New York City since the 1940s include the Lower East Side, the Upper West Side (where the famous musical West Side Story takes place), and the South Bronx. Ortiz, "Culture and the People."

has been strongly called into question by Nuyorican artists and residents of El Barrio.[46] Further along, the early imperative to diversify funding sources, the desire of certain directors to expand the cultural universe of Latinos through the showcasing of a greater number of non-Puerto Rican artists, and the need to court mainstream audiences to present a competitive cultural offer in the city, have proven hard to reconcile with El Museo's founding mission.[47] In 1978 Director Jack Agüeros, rejected the self-imposed scope of the museum as a collection of "ghettoes of narrow nationalism," advocating for an institution that represented all Latinos in New York.[48]

To summarize, what makes those historic struggles and arguments particularly interesting is not just the memory of an intense discussion of civil, immigrant, minority rights and realities. The different positions and challenges El Museo faced at its inception, are also paradigmatic precedents for the establishment of Latin American and Latino art during the Boom. Diasporic, multicultural, post-colonial, transnational aspects today are established perspectives in Art History, but at the time they were a novelty challenge that had to be mastered first.

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[46] Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York."

[47] Ibid.

[48] The issue for "de-getthoizing" the museum, resurfaced with intensity in the mid-1990s under the directorship of Susana Torruella Leval, who followed Petra Barreras' (1986-1993) measures to improve the programming and infrastructure of the Museum, and who had to face the new challenges brought by an era where individual patrons started becoming the driving source of museum funding, a role that had been previously assumed by state and city agencies such as the NEA and the New York Foundation for the Arts and matched with some corporate sponsorship. Puerto Ricans residing in El Barrio, including artists felt that El Museo was abandoning its mission of representing them, in order to court possible patrons from Latin America who came from privileged social backgrounds. This malaise climaxed in the organizing of the "We Are Watching You" campaign by Puerto Rican residents of El Barrio, which staged pickets in front of El Museo, protests, and hearings with its staff between 2002 and 2003 to protest the appointment of Julian Zugazagaoitia to the post of Executive Director of El Museo, and the pan-Latin American direction El Museo was taking.

Mexican-born Zugazagoitia was the first non-Puerto Rican to direct El Museo del Barrio. Prior to being appointed director, he had been Executive Assistant to the Director for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. The appointment of a director with no roots in El Barrio or Puerto Rico who had been a high functionary at one of the world's foremost modern and contemporary art museums upset El Museo's traditional constituency, who felt ignored or bypassed by the mainstream. See Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology." For a chronicle of the We are Watching you campaign, see Arlene Dávila, "El Barrio's 'We Are Watching You' Campaign: On the Politics of Inclusion in a Latinized Museum" in *Aztlán*, v.30, no.1 (Spring, 2005): 153-178.

3.3.2 Instituting the Alternative

Notwithstanding its fortieth anniversary in 2009, El Museo has had anything but a streamlined path of institutionalization. The first decade served the development of staff and physical infrastructures, the beginning of a collection, and of exhibition and education programs to further the institution's mission. The second decade is characterized by an erratic path towards institutionalization. The third and fourth marked El Museo's institutional achievements and consolidation, its securing of funding sources, and curatorial prestige, up to the point of being recognized as the leading U.S.'s museum of Latino and Latin American art.[49]

Like many other institutions that emerged out of the Alternative Arts movement, El Museo's survival was until the 1990s a work-in-progress. Contrary to museums whose operations and very existence are secured by collections and funding endowed by philanthropists, El Museo was a self-made initiative by a community who at the time of its founding was largely socially and economically disempowered, surviving with funds coming out of the city's education coffers. The pool of professionals trained in museum work who could help it achieve its mission was limited.[50] The first twenty years of El Museo's history are the epithet of the concept of "the alternative" and its connotations of "outside-the mainstream" and marginality. The erraticism of these early decades hardly foreshadowed El Museo's permanence.

The first decade was marked by the enthusiasm and idealism of empowering a community through the arts, but also by hardship in the face of limited funds, and to some degree by operational dysfunction. From its founding, until 1977, when El Museo found its permanent

[49] "25 Movers Shakers and Makers," *ARTnews* 103, no. 10 (November 2004): 115–141.

[50] The background of its first directors (e.g. artists and art educators, photographers, and a playwright) attests to this fact. During El Museo's first decade few of its functionaries were trained art historians, curators or museum workers. It is safe to assume that the specifics of museum administration and exhibition making were mostly learned along the way as they performed their duties.

home at the old Hecksher Children's Building on Fifth Avenue between 104th and 105th Streets, the museum occupied a variety of spaces that included classrooms in public schools of Harlem and East Harlem, a brownstone on East 116th Street, and a series of storefronts on Third Avenue between 107th and 108th Street.[51] The first two moves, within public schools were triggered by a reorganization of the Education District. Later moves were motivated by the search for spaces apt for exhibition display and whose accessibility would facilitate and embody El Museo's interest of reaching out to an audience who did not frequent museums. A utopian spirit permeated this search for the right space and strategy to impact as many people as possible in its mission to empower the Puerto Rican community through arts and cultural self-knowledge. Towards this aim, El Museo developed initiatives such as the "Mobile Unit," a long van containing exhibitions that was circulated in community festivals and various New York locations starting in 1973 [Fig. 3-3] in an effort to go beyond the building's walls. Equally, in 1974, El Museo submitted an application to the city to expand by leasing the vacant firehouse of former Engine Company 53, at 175 East 104th Street.[52] With the help of other community organizations, including the civic group Hope Community Inc., and Teatro 4, a Barrio-based troupe of socially-engaged theater, they rehabilitated the building and established El Museo's art school by early 1979.[53] In spite of an attempt later that year by the City's real-estate commissioner to auction the building publically, El Museo managed to stay [Fig. 3-4]. It ceased

[51] This forced nomadism during El Museo's first decade is documented in Grace Glueck, "Barrio Museum: Hope Si, Home No," *The New York Times*, July 30, 1970, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F20C16FE355A157493C2AA178CD85F448785F9. See also Will Lissner, "Puerto Rican Art Museum Finally Gets Its Home" in *The New York Times* (July 10, 1971); Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions."

[52] Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology." The rehabilitation of this firehouse has been documented in El Museo's institutional chronology. However, no documentation exists that records the time the art school lasted.

[53] Ibid, 44.

using the firehouse in 1985, unable to afford an overdue necessary extensive renovation of its dilapidated structure. The odyssey of El Museo exemplifies the harsh economic realities faced by institutions with small operating budgets, as much as it emphasizes a *carpe diem* spirit that drove these spaces to undertake projects when resources were available, without necessarily planning for their long-term sustainability.[54]

The frequent turnover in top managerial staff and the turbulent circumstances in which some of them left also suggests an inherent precariousness to El Museo's operations. Several directors and teams of directors led El Museo through its first decade and into the 1980s. Montañez Ortiz did until 1971, when he was voted out and conceded the directorship to Marta Moreno Vega.[55] Moreno Vega officially occupied that post until her resignation on March 15, 1975, although she was on leave of absence since December 1974. Hilda Arroyo Gillis, Carmen Bocachica, and Nitza Tufiño were acting directors from January to April 1975.[56] Then Hiram Maristany, a photographer and member of the Young Lords became acting director until July 1977. Things finally stabilized for almost a decade with the tenure of Jack Agüeros (Director from 1977-1986), a poet and playwright and the former Director of Cayman Gallery. Agüeros' interdisciplinary, internationalist vision undisputedly earned El Museo increasing prestige as a

[54] I found no documentation of the date the Fire House art school ceased operating either on El Museo's institutional archives or in the museum chronology published in the catalog *Voces in visiones*. However, from conversations with museum staff, it seems it did not last more than one or two years.

[55] Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions." According to Ramírez, the New York State Community Education Center, which funded El Museo—under pressure from East Harlem activists who continued to lobby for more community control of educational programs—opened a search for the directorship of El Museo. Montañez Ortiz was forced to reapply. He did so with a project proposal that aimed to develop the institution along the lines of a media and research center, a model he believed corresponded to the times. Marta Moreno Vega, was elected with a proposal that stressed the need for El Museo to exist as a traditional, fixed institution with art and artifacts.

[56] Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology." This "triumfeminate" filed a lawsuit against Moreno Vega fore her dismissal of the Directors of the corporation, as well as violations of her fiduciary duties, to which Moreno Vega answered by filing a lawsuit against them for power usurpation.

cultural institution. However, he was dismissed by the Museum's Board of Trustees amid charges of financial mismanagement, a public scandal that abruptly unsettled the Museum's stability, reputation, and quality programming.[57]

3.3.3 Curatorial Shifts in Focus: From Puerto Rico to Latino America

On the curatorial front, El Museo stands out as an institution that early on seemed to have a clear vision for accomplishing its set goal of representing Puerto Ricans and helping Nuyoricans recover their cultural heritage and identity. This endeavor required an institution that provided more than mere aesthetic pleasure, or a survey of current artistic practices. Rather than endorsing particular art tendencies through its exhibition programs, as did the CIAR/AS, El Museo crafted a program of exhibitions with a decidedly pedagogic approach.

Especially in its early years, the aim of El Museo was to edify visitors in their knowledge of Puerto Rican history and culture, and in their spiritual identity. This was informed by the grassroots origins of the Nuyorican movement, and also by El Museo's early structural obligations, being financed from 1969 to 1973 by The New York Department of Education and

[57] In November 1985 the City's Department of Cultural Affairs, which supported El Museo with two thirds of its $600,000 annual operating budget, froze funding to the institution while the City Department of Investigation examined financial irregularities that pointed to the loss of more than $120,000 in city money over a period of six years. This mismanagement was a serious offset to the institution, all the more, due to its growing presence in New York's cultural landscape during Agüeros' directorship. Between February 26 and March 16, 1986, five articles were published by *The New York Times* reporting on the scandal. The first article mentions that the 11 staff members of the institution, including its Director, had been working without pay for five weeks, due to the city's suspension of funds. The series, authored by Carlyle Douglas, is dramatic in its inclusion of quotes in most articles from the institution's board members or city officials expressing concern or regret over the fate of "one of the city's important cultural assets" as expressed by Bess Myerson, Commissioner of Cultural Affairs at the time, or in the words of Herman Badillo, former Deputy Mayor, "the most important Hispanic cultural institution in the city". See Carlyle Douglas, "Myserson Is Awaiting Ruling on El Museo Before Giving Funds," *The New York Times*, February 27, 1986, sec. B. http://www.nytimes.com/1986/02/27/nyregion/myserson-is-awaiting-ruling-on-el-museo-before-giving-funds.html (accessed April 27, 2012); Carlyle Douglas, "At El Museo Del Barrio, Tangled Ledgers, Open Doors," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1986, sec. 4. http://www.nytimes.com/1986/03/16/weekinreview/at-el-museo-del-barrio-tangled-ledgers-open-doors.html (accessed April 27, 2012).

the Community Education Center.[58] In addition, Montañez Ortiz and Moreno Vega had backgrounds as art educators. The first had a long-standing interest in anthropology, the latter in history and folk culture.[59] Early on Montañez Ortiz defined a curatorial approach where popular culture, folk art, high art, and archaeology combined provided a complex picture of Puerto Rican history, cultural traditions, and art through the present.[60] Expanding this approach, Moreno Vega added emphasis on the contributions of the Taínos and Africans to Puerto Rican cultural heritage. Some early exhibitions that illustrate El Museo's multidisciplinary vision include *Graphic Portfolio of the Centro de Arte Puertorriqueño* (November 1971); *Taíno* (1972); and *The Art of Needlework* (May 1972).[61] *Graphic Portfolio* showcased the first donation to the permanent collection of El Museo del Barrio. It featured the first portfolio of the *Centro de Arte Puertorriqueño* (CAP), a San Juan-based graphic workshop founded by Lorenzo Homar, J.A. Torres Martinó, Carlos Raquel Rivera, Félix Rodríguez Báez, and Rafael Tufiño. Comprising the

[58] "Since we are part of a program of the Department and the Board of Education, the audience that we are mostly concerned with is the school population," said Marimar Benítez. "We will make reproductions of pre-Columbian objects so that children are able to touch and hold them. … We will make arrangements to bring Puerto Rican native plants in order to create a botanic environment and a bohio (a straw hut). We are planning to build a series of maquettes that will represent a coffee hacienda, a sugarcane field, etc. These maquettes will be part of the permanent exhibition. This summer, we hope to have an exhibition on coffee." Antonio Gil de la Madrid, "El Museo del Barrio apuntala cultura Boricua" in *El Diario- La Prensa*, (New York: May 20, 1970). My translation. The Community Education Center was a state-financed agency that sponsored the creation of educational enrichment programs for adult and youth in poverty-stricken areas. See Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York."

[59] Montañez Ortiz has been described as an avid reader, researcher, and writer. Freud and Levi-Strauss were among his preferred writers during the 1950s. In that decade, he also spent many hours at the New York Museum of Natural History, researching the traditional rituals of non-Western cultures, with a particular interest in understanding his own Puerto Rican culture. Besides having an MFA, he had a B.S. in Art Education from Pratt Institute, which he acquired in 1964. Later on, from 1975 to 1982 he pursued a Ed.M and Ed.D at Columbia University's Teacher's College. See *Rafael Montañez Ortiz: Years of the Warrior, 1960. Years of the Psyche, 1988,* (New York: El Museo del Barrio 1988) 10, 55.

[60] This quote reveals such all-encompassing curatorial vision: "As a people, Puerto Ricans have been disenfranchised economically, politically, and culturally," he (Montañez Ortiz) says. "…El Museo is an attempt to begin to come to terms with our cultural disenfranchisement. …But I want it to be more than a stuffy museum—I want it to be a working thing that will give folk culture as much value as fine culture." Glueck, "Barrio Museum."

[61] These exhibitions are all documented in Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology," 42-44.

"Generación del 50," these artists inaugurated a Puerto Rican tradition of socially-committed printmaking.[62] The prints in *La Estampa Puertorriqueña* or "The Puerto Rican Printed Image," their first portfolio published in 1951 reveal the collective's interest in formulating a national art that depicted the island's socio-economic realities and exalted its culture. The portfolio included prints that would become iconic in Puerto Rican art, such as Tufiño's *Cortador de Caña* (Sugar-cane cutter) [Fig. 3-5], a powerful image of physical labor in which a man advances towards the viewer through a cane field with machete swings. The man's face is hidden by his gesture and hat, but his strong machete grip and firm shoeless step reveal his physical and moral strength.

The exhibition *Taíno* was an institutional collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was organized by Moreno Vega and Irving MacManus, Education Assistant for Community Programs at the Met. The show featured artifacts from the pre-Columbian Taíno culture from the collection of the Museum of American Indian. Regarding *The Art of Needlework*, no documentation of the show remains besides its announcement in El Museo's *Quimbamba* newsletter. Presumably this show had a more sociological bend, since it addressed through "needlecrafts by mothers from the community" a traditional female occupation in the island and the mainland, which combined creativity, and dexterity in techniques such as crocheting and embroidery for the production of clothes and house linens.[63]

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[62] For a history of printmaking in Puerto Rico see Teresa Tío, *El cartel de Puerto Rico* (México: Pearson Educación México, 2003). For an overview of cultural production in the island during the 1950s see Marimar Benítez, "La Década de Los Cincuenta: Afirmación y Reacción," in *Puerto Rico: Arte e Identidad*, ed. Hermandad de Artistas Gráficos (Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1998), 115–139.

[63] Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions"; Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology."According to Ramírez, the lacework and crochet showcased in this exhibition came from households of El Barrio. For a history of the needle industry in Puerto Rico and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean see María del Carmen Baerga, ed. *Género y trabajo: la industria de la aguja en Puerto Rico y el Caribe hispánico*, (Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1993). This occupation was important in the local economy between World War One and the 1940s.

The exhibition *The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico* [Fig. 3-6] in 1973 played an important role in consolidating El Museo's status as the cultural embassy of Puerto Ricans. Here again El Museo joined forces with The Metropolitan Museum, and with the island-based Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, the Museo de Arte, Antropología e Historia at the University of Puerto Rico, and the Colección del Arzobispado in San Juan.[64] *The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico* was a major survey of Puerto Rican art from pre-Columbian times to the present. It featured Taíno artifacts [Fig. 3-7], wooden Santos [Fig. 3-8], musical instruments, as well as work by some 150 artists. Artists present went from the canonical 18th to 20th-century figures of José Campeche, Francisco Oller, and Miguel Pou, all founders of the Puerto Rican pictorial tradition, to well-established contemporary figures of Puerto Rican art who were based on the island and the mainland, including Homar, Tufiño, Augusto Marín, Olga Albizu, Nicholasa Mohr, Carlos Osorio, José Morales, Antonio Martorell, and Carlos Raquel Rivera. The show was enhanced with slide projections showing scenic and historic sites of Puerto Rico.

Held from April 30 until July 1st, the exhibition inaugurated El Museo's new location on Third Avenue and 107th Street. Afterwards, it was shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from July 25 to September 16.[65] While helping the Metropolitan's Department of Community Programs to satisfy public demands to reach out to underprivileged-New York audiences, this exhibition was above all a landmark for El Museo. It was intended as an early strong statement

[64] *Department of Community Programs Newsletter* 1, no. 1. Summer 1971. The Department of Community Programs of The Metropolitan Museum of Art also collaborated in a separate effort with El Museo del Barrio to assemble a slide collection of works by Puerto Rican artists in New York collections that could be circulated around New York museums to spread knowledge of Puerto Rican art.

[65] The double showing of this exhibition on the same year at venues some 25 blocks away from each other is today inconceivable, even within the context of institutional collaborations. Today the ease with which New Yorkers and tourists alike navigate Manhattan would not justify the costs of setting up an exhibition twice for practically the same audience. However, in 1973 social inequities within the borough accentuated distances, and established invisible frontiers that were seldom crossed.

of the institution's transnational vision and commitment towards Puerto Ricans. For one it was the first survey ever of Puerto Rican art with such chronological scope and diversity of artworks and artifacts to be held in the mainland or the island.[66] It intended to weave a historical narrative where Puerto Ricans from the island and the mainland could claim the same cultural lineage and tradition, bridging the social, cultural and geographic gap of the diaspora. This lineage was to be presented to the audience of El Barrio, and the wider audience of the Met.[67]

In addition, the research the show required, as well as the educational programs organized around it, demanded the unprecedented engagement of Puerto Rico-based scholars and institutions with the Puerto Rican diaspora, its grassroots cultural agencies (i.e. El Museo) and its cultural production. The collaboration also demanded the engagement of the Metropolitan Museum with Puerto Rican scholars and the cultural production of the island and the mainland. This is highly significant when considering the Metropolitan Museum's place among the world's foremost universal art museums and the potential implication of cultural elitism that goes with that designation. Indeed, the Met's collaborative disposition towards El Museo and other alternative art spaces during the 1970s constituted a deliberate effort to reach out into New York communities beyond its Fifth Avenue audience and to demonstrate cultural inclusiveness.[68]

Analyzed within this mainland-island collaborative context, the commissioned poster by Lorenzo Homar for the exhibition [3-9] takes on added symbolic value as a sort of graphic bridge

[66] Prior to 1973, the exhibition of Puerto Rican art with the largest historical scope was *Dos Siglos de Pintura Puertorriqueña* or "Two Centuries of Puerto Rican Painting," organized by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture in 1970. It was curated by Ricardo Alegría. It featured thirty-five artists, including Campeche, Oller, Homar, Augusto Marín, Ramón Frade, Miguel Pou, Torres Martinó, Olga Albizu, and Myrna Baez, among others.

[67] At El Museo 18,000 visitors saw the exhibition, and at the Met twice that amount. See Metropolitan Museum of Art Press Release, August 1973, quoted in Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York."

[68] The will to collaborate with new alternative museums was the result of pressures for inclusiveness and decentralization exerted by the Art Workers Coalition. For a report on *The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico* in the context of other institutional collaborations of that year involving the Met see Thomas Hoving, "Report of the Director," *Annual Report of the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* no. 104 (July 1, 1973): 8–14.

between the Puerto Rican experience of the mainland and the island. Homar was at the time not only the most renowned graphic artist of Puerto Rico. Born in Puerto Rico, and raised in New York, he had relocated to the island in the 1940s and trained the group of printmakers that would become known as the "Generación del 50." He had also created the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture official seal in 1956 [Fig. 3-10], which consisted of a *tondo* with a Spaniard at the center flanked by a Taíno Indian to his left and a free African slave to his right. Homar was a master of calligraphy in printmaking. His poster for *The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico* consists of two blocks of text—one above the other—advertising the exhibition at its two museum sites. The text includes the exhibition title, its dates at each museum, opening hours, and logos. The title of the show is translated bilingually side by side, but the rest of the text is mostly in English with random insertions in Spanish. The linguistic code-switching is not accidental, but a willing affirmation of the diasporic experience and its trademark use of Spanglish within the island's culture, for once represented in the art mainstream.[69]

A catalog and a brochure were published for the show. Works reproduced are varied, but in general they have been selected to show a complex and evolving artistic tradition that reflects different artistic preoccupations from the representation of local social realities and cultural identity to purely formal and aesthetic inquiry; a tradition that in some artists is expressed through the representation of local issues, while in others, is aligned with international concerns and artistic developments. A sample of works include iconic images of Puerto Rican art history such as Campeche's portrait *Governor D. Miguel Antonio Ustáriz* [Fig. 3-11], which depicts the island's Spanish governor of the time in an interior setting adorned in rococo fashion. In his left

[69] Tufiño was also commissioned a poster. In his, the Spanish and English texts were clearly separated. It was rather a bilingual poster than a poster in Spanglish. Yasmín Ramírez has noted the resemblance of varying type sizes of Homar's poster to the aesthetics of graffiti. See Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions."

hand, he holds a plan of San Juan that rests on an elaborate gold wooden table, while in the background, through a window opening we can see the paving of a street in the colonial capital. The rarely-seen Francisco Oller's *L'étudiant* (The Student) [Fig. 3-12], then in the collection of the Louvre was also on view in the show and reproduced in its catalog. This small, intimate painting depicts a student immersed in his books next to a woman equally concentrated in sewing. This quiet scene is a careful study on the objects, furniture, and patterns (e.g. wall-paper, curtains) that filled interior domestic spaces in Europe in the second half of the 19th century. For certain, the presence of this work in the show not only revealed the technical rigor of Oller; it must have also stood for his cosmopolitanism, and his ties to the Parisian and Spanish 19th-century vanguards. Other works, such as José R. Oliver's *Delirious Fever* (1963)[Fig. 3-13], and José Morales *Gron Schizofreni* (n.d.) [3-14] convey a contemporary urban sensibility. In Oliver's oil on panel, skyscrapers and nocturnal lights invade the space in a rhythmic composition that suggests the city's fast pace. Morales *Green Schizophrenia*, as translated in English, is a grid-composition enclosing several resting heads, including a central one that is blind-folded, underneath which a pair of tied hands seem to beg to an invisible torturer. The disquieting scene suggests psychological warfare.

The show's reception in the media was tepid. Critic John Canaday underlined its importance as an institutional collaboration that brought pride to a New York community.[70] Peter Schjeldahl was slightly more enthusiastic.[71] He praised El Museo for its endeavor and admired

[70] John Canaday, "Puerto Rican Art Show Proves Its Rich Heritage," *The New York Times*, July 25, 1973, 36.

[71] Peter Schjeldahl, "Surprise From Puerto' Rico," *The New York Times*, August 5, 1973, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F10E1EFE3859147A93C7A91783D85F478785F9&scp=2&sq=%22the%20art%20heritage%20of%20Puerto%20Rico%22&st=cse (accessed October 30, 1912).

the pre-Columbian and colonial art traditions of Puerto Rico, but discredited most contemporary Puerto Rican painting.

Despite this ambitious and well-meaning endeavor, *The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico* inaugurated a tradition of criticism and demands for transnational accountability by Nuyorican artists to El Museo del Barrio. As documented by Yasmín Ramírez, the disparity in representation between island and mainland artists generated protests amongst Nuyoricans who felt that the very mission of representation and advocacy of El Museo towards the diaspora had been ignored in this important show.[72] Of all contemporary artists included, only 10% were based in the U.S.[73] None of the founding members of El Taller were represented. Neither was Montañez Ortiz, the founding-director of El Museo, whose ties to the artists of Judson Church, Fluxus and the International Destructivist Art had earned him recognition in New York and beyond. Schjeldahl also lamented the absence of conceptual artist and painter Rafael Ferrer, who had gained recognition in the late '60s and early '70s through his ephemeral installations mocking Minimalist dogma at Leo Castelli Gallery, the Whitney Museum and MoMA."[74]

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[72] Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions"; Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York." In her dissertation Ramírez goes into the details on the curatorial criteria for the contemporary artists in the exhibition. According to her, Marta Moreno Vega was bypassed by Thomas Hoving and the Met's contemporary art curator Henry Geldzahler, for lacking a degree in art history and legitimate curatorial expertise. Geldzahler chose artists aligned with the art trends he favored, i.e. minimalism, pop, and abstract idioms. Geldzhaler did not conduct studio visits to the artists of El Taller Boricua. The ensuing protests carried on for a whole year. They took the form of letters to El Museo signed by the members of el Taller Boricua and by the Colectiva de Artistas Puertorriqueños (CAP), an ad-hoc committee set in 1974 composed of 35 members including those from Taller Boricua and other Puerto Rican collectives, demanding accountability from El Museo and open dialogue with community artists on its programming.

[73] The U.S.-based Puerto Rican artists were Olga Albizu, Nicolasa Mohr, José Morales and Carlos Osorio. Artists like Rafael Tufiño and Antonio Martorell were mainly based in the island, but traveled and exhibited frequently in the U.S. and worked alongside the Puerto Rican diasporic community.

[74] Schjeldahl, "Surprise From Puerto' Rico." In 1969 Leo Castelli Gallery showcased three leaf installations by Ferrer. That same year the Whitney Museum of American Art showcased an ice piece of his and the work *Hay, Grease, Steel* (composed of those three materials) as part of its influential exhibition *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*. In 1970 Ferrer's melting installation *50 Cakes of Ice*, was showcased at MoMA's sculpture garden as part of the exhibition *Information*. For an elucidating account of Ferrer's artistic trajectory see Deborah

Perhaps in an effort to address the difficulties of operating like a cultural embassy, the poet, playwright, and novelist Jack Agüeros focused his tenure on modifying the scope of El Museo's programs. He gradually steered away from anthropological and historic exhibitions in favor of a stronger visual arts component that embraced multiple media, styles, and also cultures. Exhibition rosters during his directorship continued to emphasize Puerto Rican roots, while charting new roads that link island and mainland artists to Latin Americans and U.S. Latinos.[75]

Exhibitions such as *Resurgimiento*, *1978* (1978) [Fig. 3-15] attested to Agüeros' pan-Latino outlook, a vision he formulated in his days as a founding member of Cayman Gallery (1973-1977) and president of the board of Friends of Puerto Rico, Inc.[76] Curated by Petra Barreras, *Resurgimiento 1978*, gathered contemporary artists from Puerto Rico and countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Spain. The diverse range of artworks was comprised of figurative and abstract paintings and sculptures that followed or derived from tendencies such as modern primitivism, realism, geometric abstraction, pop art, and surrealism. Works included Walter Terrazas *Extended Signs* (1977) [Fig. 3-16], a planar painting with geometric designs organized in a checkered-like grid. Also in the show was Peter Schira's *Heracles* (1977) [Fig. 3-17], a monochrome, abstractly-shaped canvas, similar to the shaped canvases of the Argentine constructivist movement Madí. Carlos Cevallos' *Danza Espiritual* (Spiritual Dance) (1978) [Fig. 3-18] depicted in a naïf style a circle of people dancing. The different patterns of their clothes,

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Cullen, *Rafael Ferrer*, A Ver: Revisioning Art History v. 7 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2012).

[75] Ramírez, "Nuyorican Vanguards, Political Actions, Poetic Visions"; Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology." According to Ramírez, Agüeros also changed the logo of El Museo from the Taíno fertility goddess Atabex to the neoclassical façade of the building, once at the Heckscher.

[76] This vision and how it was manifest at MoCHA will be discussed later on in this chapter.

juxtaposed with their physical proximity emphasized communal union and acceptance. In contrast, Colo (a.k.a. Francisco Colón or Papo Colo) threatens the viewer with his assemblage *Artifact to Keep Secrets* (1977) [Fig. 3-19], a key-locked box with a metal blade rising dangerously from a central opening in its surface. Other artists in the show included Tony Bechara, Eloy Blanco, Rafael Colón Morales, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Claudio Juárez, Rafael Ferrer, Fanny Sanin, Jorge Soto, Francisco Toledo, and Ricardo Torres Villalobos.[77]

The general theme of "resurging" referred to a "new beginning" of Latin Americans in New York, not as disempowered peoples, but as beings whose cultural contributions to the United States mattered.[78] *Resurgimiento* inaugurated El Museo's galleries at the Heckscher Building. According to Agüeros: "We selected this word for our inaugural exhibition at our new Fifth Avenue location because it both forecasts and summarizes the Latin presence in North America; it presages the role of El Museo in the cultural life of the Latin community […]."[79]

As an opening statement the resurging can be interpreted in terms of a new beginning for the institution. It shifted the focus away from anthropological and historical exhibitions that supported a Puerto Rican nationalist discourse that failed to fully come to terms with the diaspora, to exhibitions with a stronger fine arts focus that integrated Puerto Rico into Latin American art history, and Latin America into the Western World.[80] Transnational integration

[77] Puerto Ricans constituted about half of the 35 artists in the show.

[78] In a review of the show, Jack Agüeros is quoted as saying: "[The exhibition] both forecasts and summarizes the Latin American presence in North America: it presages the role of El Barrio in the cultural life of the Latin community." Vivien Raynor, "Art: Resurgence in El Barrio" in *The New York Times*, April 28, 1978.

[79] Jack Agüeros, "Foreword," in *Resurgimiento, 1978* (New York: El Museo del Barrio, 1978), n.p.

[80] In regards to the integration of Latin America into the Western world, one of Agüeros's most publicized supported initiatives at El Museo was the Latin American Popular Theater held in years 1976, 1980, and 1982 that gathered Spanish, Latin American, and U.S. Latino troupes to present their work.

was the direction that El Museo would most decisively follow during the '80s and reinforce in the '90s, as it restored itself after the near-financial collapse that ended Agüeros' term there.

As for Agüeros's approach to art made by Puerto Ricans, his vision is apparent in *Bridge Between Islands, Retrospective Works by Six Puerto Rican Artists in New York* (February 27-April 1st 1979) [Fig. 3-20]. The show was a collaborative venture with the Henry Street Settlement and the Bronx Museum of the Arts. However, it easily encapsulated Agüeros' discourse on Puerto Rican art in New York, a discourse that emphasized cultural permeability and rich artistic exchange made possible through life in the metropolis.[81]

This exhibition featured a diverse array of works by Olga Albizu, Tony Bechara, Eloy Blanco, Marcos Dimas, Evelyn López de Guzmán, and Jorge Soto, made since the 1960s. The catalog essay underscored the independent spirit driving the artistic practice of New York-based Puerto Rican artists.[82] Dimas was represented by his iconic Afro-Taíno painting *Pariah* [Fig. 3-1], as well as by earlier paintings such as *Domestic Utensils* (1970) [Fig. 3-21], whose depictions of common domestic objects in non-descript settings, conveyed a sense of danger. Jorge Soto showcased ink drawings and paintings. His *Ay Bendito* (1973) depicted a central Madonna with baby Jesus, flanked by ethereal beings, and a second closely-cropped Madonna figure on the foreground left. His *Second Version of Campeche* (1978) [Fig. 3-22] stood for the underlying political vein in his work. The painting reinterpreted Campeche's *Portrait of Governor D. Miguel Antonio Ustariz*, with a postcolonial twist that suggested the crudeness of colonial power. As members of the community-based collaborative Taller Boricua, the political, decolonizing

[81] The first venue of the show was the Henry Street Settlement- Louis Abrons Arts for Living Center (November 3- December 1st, 1978), the second was the Bronx Museum of the Arts (January 6- February 18, 1979), and the last El Museo del Barrio.

[82] Renata Karlin, Luis Cancel, and Jack Agüeros, *Bridge Between Islands: Retrospective Works by Six Puerto Rican Artists in New York* (New York: Henry Street Settlement, El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1978), 1-2.

undertones of Dimas and Soto's artistic proposal vis-à-vis the work of Blanco, Albizu, Bechara and Guzmán are not surprising. Blanco, however, shared an affinity for primitivism and ritual as sources for artistic freedom and communication. This is evident in his enigmatically-titled *Dream of Constantine* (1969) [Fig. 3-23], where schematic stick figures float on the canvas's surface in a dynamic composition reminiscent of Kandinsky's early painterly symphonies and improvisations on the apocalypse.[83]

Albizu, Bechara and López de Guzmán present a range of systematic approaches to abstraction. In New York, Albizu studied with Hans Hoffman and became one of the first recognized Puerto Rican practitioners of abstraction. Her compositions [Fig. 3-24] are made entirely of superposed and adjacent roughly-square masses of oil painting, most of them in brilliant colors. Their proximity and juxtaposition creates an effect of colors and masses competing for visual attention. Bechara's *Tyger, Tyger* [Fig. 3-25], is painted in the artist's signature style of perceptual painting, in which grids of tiny adjacent squares are colored to create dynamic surface patterns. *Untitled* (1972) [Fig. 3-26], by López de Guzmán exemplifies her intricate geometric compositions subdivided in planes with different colors that fill the picture plane. In her hard-edge compositions she strives to find balance in asymmetry.

Within this extraordinary range of artwork, richness of color was the only element that reviewer Grace Glueck could associate with the artists' Caribbean origins.[84] Otherwise, Glueck felt the impact of the New York art mainstream in the work of these artists: "from Expressionism to hard-edge, seasoned by the influence of such artists as Frank Stella, Hans Hoffman, Robert

[83] For a detailed analysis of Kandinsky's early *Improvisations* and their spiritual undertones see Rose-Carol Washton Long, *Kandinsky, the Development of an Abstract Style* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1980).

[84] Grace Glueck, "Art: Puerto Rican Show in the Bronx," *The New York Times* (New York, January 26, 1979), sec. The Weekend, C14. http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0617F83D5D12728DDDAF0A94D9405B898BF1D3 (accessed January 30, 2012). Glueck reviewed the version of the show at the Bronx Museum.

Rauschenberg, and even computer generated patterns."[85] For the rest, they all pursued individual formal and thematic concerns. Their choices were informed as much by their Puerto Rican cultural background as by their life in New York City, the cultural and artistic exchange it facilitated, and the freedom of expression it allowed. Perhaps for the first time in an exhibition, contact with international artists and art-trends was presented as a positive shaping force for the artistic proposals and free artistic development of these Puerto Ricans.

3.4 The Bronx Museum of the Arts: Emerging and Becoming

In 1971 another institution for a culturally underserved New York community was created: the Bronx Museum of the Arts. Like El Museo del Barrio, the Bronx Museum disclosed in its name its roots and target audience. Its challenges were different from El Museo's. Instead of choosing to cater and represent one main culture, the Bronx Museum was aimed at the diverse populations that inhabited the borough, whose cultural make-up included Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, African-Americans, Cambodians, Puerto Ricans, Italians, and Yugoslavians, among other nationalities. Despite the museum's founding purpose, a systematic attempt at portraying the borough's cultural diversity did not take shape until the late '70s.

It is within the emergence of a clear curatorial scope that the Bronx Museum became an important showcase of Latin American and Latino art in New York. Artists from these communities became a priority in the museum's program starting in 1978. That year, after the dismissal of the institution's fifth director, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) took over the Museum in an emergency move and hired Luis Cancel to lead it.[86] With his appointment, the

[85] Ibid.

[86] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol, April 15, 2009.

DCA hoped to eradicate a cycle of problems like conflicting relations between directors and the museum board, and financial woes that had plagued the museum since its inception.[87]

The museum was established through the efforts of Irma Fleck, the child of a Polish Jewish family who fled to New York in the 1930s and settled in the South Bronx. Coming from an exiled family of physicians, Fleck was deeply committed to building community and fostering its wellbeing. In an effort to battle the social decay the borough was enduring from the 1950s on, Fleck networked with politicians and people from the artistic and cultural sector, and raised money to start a series of initiatives of which the Bronx Museum was the one of which she was proudest.[88] The declared aim of the museum was to bring top-quality art to a borough that was culturally underserved.[89] The Bronx Museum was established as an independent entity with shared board members from the Bronx Council on the Arts. The BCA lent crucial support the first few years for the organization of exhibitions.[90] But the vital collaborator for the establishment of the Bronx Museum was the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which through its Department of Community Programs shared important resources with the Bronx, including staff expertise, exhibition furniture, art loans, and capital to launch the exhibition program.

During its first decade the Bronx Museum was located in the rotunda of the borough's County Courthouse on the Grand Concourse and 159th Street. Staff of the Metropolitan

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[87] "Head and Staff in the Bronx Museum Dismissed," *The New York Times*, July 2, 1974.

[88] Martin, "Irma Fleck, 84, Who Battled Decay in the Bronx, Is Dead - New York Times."

[89] Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups, and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85." See also Grace Gluek, "Bronx Museum of Art Makes Debut" *The New York Times*, May 13, 1971, 50. http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FA0D1FFC355F127A93C1A8178ED85F458785F9 (accessed January 30, 2012).

[90] Grace Glueck, "Bronx Museum, in Fight, Vows to Keep Operating," *The New York Times*, July 5, 1974, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0F14FB3E5E1A7493C7A9178CD85F408785F9 (accessed June 1st, 2012).

Museum's Design Department in consultation with the BCA, led the transformation of the 98' long- 68' wide rotunda space into an exhibition hall.[91] As Cancel describes:

> That gallery was really quite handsome. … I would say it measured at least 3,500 to 4,000 square feet. ... It had a high visibility for its location. … The building was frequented by thousands of people daily, because that's where you get your passports, get married, go to landlord tenant courts, criminal courts, among other functions.[92]

The first show, which ran for a month from May 12, 1971 was titled *Paintings from the Metropolitan*. It comprised a selection of twenty-eight landscapes and seascapes, nudes, portraits, still-lives, and genre paintings by artists such as Monet, Van Gogh, Courbet, Benjamin West, Milton Avery, Winslow Homer, Romare Bearden, and Edward Hopper.[93] Grace Glueck reviewed the exhibition for *The New York Times*, celebrating the extraordinary collaboration and highlighting its benefits for both institutions [Fig. 3-27]. The Met issued also a press release where Executive Director, Thomas Hoving, described the significance of this collaboration:

> The exhibition at the Bronx County Court House is the beginning of the realization of two earnestly sought-after goals: that of the Metropolitan to extend further its reach when it can throughout the City of New York, and that of The Bronx Council on the Arts to bring cultural events of the highest quality to its own home ground. The Museum could accomplish this only with the cooperation of a local group that can support its ideals with which forms a solid basis for join programs in the future.[94]

The partnership between the Bronx Museum and the Met continued until 1975, and yielded two more exhibitions from Met loans, i.e. *Games!!! Juegos!* held from February 1st to

[91] These facts are reported in the press release for the Bronx Museum's first exhibition. See "Paintings from the Metropolitan to open at Bronx Court House May 12," Press release, May 10, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives. No exhibition shots were found in The Metropolitan Museum Art Archives or have been identified and made accessible at the archives of the Bronx Museum.

[92] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[93] "Paintings from the Metropolitan to open at Bronx Court House May 12," Press release.

[94] Ibid.

March 6, 1972, and *Paris: Places and People*, inaugurated on March 7, 1974.[95] *Games* addressed ideas and representations of play and entertainment from antiquity to the present. The press release issued by the Metropolitan described this show as one that expanded on ways of engaging different communities, particularly youth.[96] College students from the Metropolitan Museum's 1971 Summer Training Program developed the show's idea, selected the works, and made a preliminary design for the installation. Objects and works in the show included an Egyptian game board of the 20th Dynasty; a Japanese hand scroll titled *Acrobats*, Thomas Eakins' painting *The Chess Players*, miniature furniture, and chess sets.[97]

Paris: Places and People was a show on the love of the late investment banker Robert Lehman (from the Lehman Brothers firm) for the city of Paris. In 1967 Lehman had been named Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Met. Upon his death, his private collection of Western European art—considered one of the greatest to be ever assembled in the United States—was transferred to the Met.[98] This exhibition at the Bronx showed some of its remarkable holdings, including Fouquet's *Book of Hours of Etienne Chevalier* and views of Paris and portraits of Parisians by Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, and others.

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[95] Unlike the first exhibition, whose main financial support came from the Met, the two subsequent ones were funded by funders such as the New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA), the National Endowment for the Arts and the Robert Lehman Foundation. The duration of the exhibition is not documented either at the archives of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, or in press reviews.

After this period of close collaboration between the Bronx Museum and the Met, there was from May 7 to July 14, 1983 a fourth exhibition of works from the Metropolitan, titled *Ceremonies and Spirits: Art of the Pacific Islands, Africa, and the Americas from the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*.

[96] "Metropolitan Museum Exhibition to Open at Bronx Museum on February 1st, 1972," Press release, January 28, 2012, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

[97] Ibid.

[98] It is important to note that a year later, the Metropolitan opened the Robert Lehman Wing to house this collection. The Bronx exhibition must have served as a preview for this important event. Douglas Dillon, "Report of the President," *Annual Report of the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* no. 105 (July 1, 1974): 4–7.

These exhibitions tried to provide Bronx residents with a cultural offer close to the standards of Manhattan mainstream museum visitors. Through them the artifacts and artworks of the universal museum were taken outside it to be seen by people from another borough.[99] But while the collaboration lasted, the Bronx Museum seemed more a northern outpost of the Met than a museum on its own right. Missing were a sense of institutional identity and direction.[100]

This is what Cancel brought when he was hired. He devised a program that would sensibly balance the showcasing of twentieth-century art historical achievements, and the representation of artistic expressions and proposals bred in the Bronx or related to its diverse communities. By this, he gave the museum its own stamp, and transformed it into a valuable player in New York's cultural landscape. As a by-product, he also turned it into an important showcase of Latino and Latin American art.

3.4.1 Creating an Institution through a Curatorial Scope

Presumably it was Cancel's background as a Bronx native, his deep concern with the deteriorating social conditions of the borough and its public perception, and his faith and enthusiasm in the power of art to effect positive change that led the hiring committee to choose him over other candidates who applied for the job. Prior to being appointed Director at the Bronx Museum, the Hunts Point-raised Cancel had co-founded Cayman Gallery in SoHo with Jack Agüeros, educator Nilda Peraza and artist Juan Maldonado. At Cayman he had been acting as

[99] Grace Glueck, "Bronx Museum of Art Makes Debut," *The New York Times*, May 13, 1971. The Queens Museum also benefitted from these loans and exhibition-making support from the Met. As reported by Glueck: "The museum's stepped-up community program is in part an attempt to answer criticism by groups that feel it has not done enough to decentralize its facilities. It is mandated by a trustees' report issued more than a year ago, which instructed the staff to prepare an "exploratory" program for extension of the museum's resources and services."

[100] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol. According to Cancel, this was at the source of some of the conflicts that led to the dismissal of the previous directors. In his own words most directors before him came into their jobs with a "downtown mentality of setting up a mini-Met kind of international institution in the Bronx," while the board members—who mostly came from Riverdale—wanted "a very Bronx-focused institution."

director for two years. From early on, Cayman committed to project the art of Latin Americans and Latinos outside the marginal New York communities they inhabited and into the center of the city's art scene. Cancel was connected to El Taller Boricua and El Museo through friendship and the common cause of empowering communities through art and culture.[101] These early experiences and relationships with institutions with such different aims provided him with valuable multiple perspectives for approaching the task of directing the Bronx Museum. Like his colleague Jack Agüeros, a characteristic of Cancel's developing practice as a gallery director and curator at Cayman and later at the Bronx was his interest in bridging the local and the international, the community and the cosmopolis.[102]

The administrative fiasco that threatened the museum's very existence, after its fifth-director was dismissed in 1976 required some serious re-thinking of its institutional aims and the strategies to achieve them. A common purpose had to be found that could be embraced by the museum and its board. This purpose also had to be able to galvanize the support of a local Bronx audience, while being pertinent to New York City as a whole. What Cancel proposed still as a candidate to the post, and according to him, what convinced the committee to hire him, was a plan that would reconcile the seemingly opposing visions of an international museum and a

[101] As discussed earlier, these were main principles of the Nuyorican arts and cultural movement.

[102] My use of cosmopolis here is inspired by the definition provided by postcolonial theorists Carol Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, and Homi Babha of the condition of cosmpolitanism in current global times as opposed to what it constituted in the early 20th century. According to them: "The cosmpololitanism of our times does not spring from the capitalized "virtues" of Rationality, Universality, and Progress; nor is it embodied in the myth of the nation writ large in the figure of the citizen of the world. Cosmopolitans today are the victims of modernity, failed by capitalism's upward mobility, and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belonging. Refugees, peoples of the diaspora, and migrants and exiles represent the spirit of the cosmopolitan community." (emphasis added). Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, and Homi K. Bhabha, eds., *Cosmopolitanism* (Duke University Press Books, 2002), 6. Cosmopolitanism stands against the nationalism practiced early on at El Museo del Barrio. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism, as defined by Breckenridge, Pollock and Bhabha also stands against the traditional idea of a socially privileged, highly educated, well-traveled cosmopolitan art scene that was supported by the mainstream art circuit and against which the Alternative Arts movement was organized.

community-based one.[103] At the interview, he presented a two-year plan of exhibitions that became his programming template through his thirteen years of tenure. This template was the basis for the institution's formulation of a mission, collection, and exhibition scope.[104] As expressed by Cancel, under his plan: "one third [of exhibitions] should be focused in a Bronx theme, another third should be focused in a sort of 'chapters in art history,' and the final third should be dedicated to something that was very timely, … very sort of 'popular.'"[105]

In addition, in 1982 the Museum created a network of satellite galleries in a variety of semi-private and public borough facilities, including Hostos Community College on 500 Grand Concourse, Jerry Clifford Community Gallery and the Lower Gallery, both on 1040 Grand Concourse, the Beth Abraham Hospital Gallery at 612 Allerton Avenue, two Con Edison buildings (on 55 Westchester Square and 310 Kingsbridge Road) and Krasdale Food Headquarters in Hunts Point Food Center Drive.[106] The purpose of these galleries was to create awareness about the main hub in the Museum and to reach out to a variety of audiences and through solo exhibitions of Bronx-based artists.[107] In order for an artist to have a show at the museum, he/she needed to have had a satellite gallery show.

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[103] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[104] The process of formulation of a mission is not documented in the institution's archives. As of today, the museum's mission is "to collect, conserve, interpret, and exhibit twentieth- and twenty-first-century works by artists of Latin American, Asian, and African descent and artists with strong ties to the Bronx." See the website for the Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art, a project conducted by MoMA Library and financed by the Metropolitan New York Library Council, accessed on February 24, 2012 http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/latino_survey/bronx_museum. According to Cancel, the museum's collecting policy was created around 1984, once the Bronx Museum had acquired its building on Grand Concourse and had storage space to start a collection.

[105] Cancel adds: "And that formula was basically something that I followed over the course of the next thirteen years, and I always made my curators make their exhibitions fit into the various slots that we just described." Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[106] Holly Block, interview by Taína B. Caragol, June 4, 2012.

[107] Ibid.

Going back to the main exhibition space or hub, some early shows that took place following Cancel's proposed programming template included the previously discussed *Bridge Between Islands: Retrospective Works by Six Puerto Rican Artists in New York*; *3 Sculptors: Barbara Chase-Riboud, Melvin Edwards, Richard Hunt*, which spotlight the work of contemporary black sculptors of renown; *Devastation/Resurrection: The South Bronx*, a show that presented the history of the Bronx through historical and current photographs, interviews, and real and imaginary architectural plans. All these were held in 1979. *Marking Black* held in 1980, dealt with artists who used the color black as a main compositional element.[108] This short list provides an idea of the context in which Latino and Latin American artists appeared in the Bronx Museum exhibition program. The program aimed simultaneously at showcasing artists from the cultural communities that inhabited the borough and also—in the longer term and taking into account the dual focus on the "canonic" and current art historical shows—to signal their pertinence in the New York cultural landscape. The exhibition *Bridge Between Islands* (already discussed in the section on El Museo) is a case in point of a show that attempted to give

[108] Interestingly, the institutional direction provided by Cancel seems to be noted shortly after his appointment by the mainstream press, even if sometimes with a condescending undertone. At the end of her review of the Chase-Riboud, Edwards, and Hunt exhibition, Vivien Raynor states: "Situated on the Floor of the Bronx County Courthouse, the museum is a grant-funded enterprise that brings appropriate art to the neighborhood. It remains only to congratulate its staff on its choice of artists and the successful installation of their work. … But to see art of this standard in such a context is to see it through the eyes of the people it is aimed at: not as the solace and stimulus it is in well-appointed galleries but as a career opportunity beckoning like a siren." Vivien Raynor, "Art: The Sculptures Of a Perfectionist," *The New York Times*, June 8, 1979, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F60B12F83E5D12728DDDA10894DE405B898BF1D3 (accessed June 5, 2012).

In a more nuanced assessment, Paul Goldeberger says in his review of Devastation/Resurrection that this exhibition has the potential of counter-acting the negative symbolic identity of the South Bronx: to transform it from a symbol of utter catastrophe, into that of an area with a complex social fabric where community groups are working to restore housing and social services. However, by the end of his article, Goldberger questions the Bronx Museum as the ideal site for this exhibition to take place, instead of Manhattan, where it would get a wider audience and have more chances of affecting change in the public perception of the borough. Paul Goldberger, "Exhibit on South Bronx Weaves a Complex Web; An Appraisal," *The New York Times* (New York, November 30, 1979), sec. Metropolitan Report. http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F70C13FC3F5C12728DDDA90B94D9415B898BF1D3 (accessed June 12, 2012).

visibility to a group of mid-career New York-based Puerto Rican artists working in both abstract and figurative modes, whose work had been little seen outside the Puerto Rican community.

Among the early shows, *Marking Black* [Fig. 3-29] presents another modality of exhibiting artists whose visibility had in part been compromised by the racial and cultural exclusiveness of the New York art scene at that time. This modality was the thematic group exhibition. In *Marking Black*, curated by the late Jeanette Ingberman, and Madeleine Burnside, the theme was the use of the color black as a subject in itself. Ingberman and Burnside surveyed the history of 20th century art, looking at the color's symbolic possibilities: from its associations to depression and death, to its power to invoke calmness and meditation, to communication, as it becomes the color of print on a page.[109] In a gesture that betrays an interest to take part in the art historical debates of their times, Ingberman and Burnside referred to the use of black from Modernism to Postmodernism, identifying this color as an essential element that remained when painting was stripped down to its core elements by Malevich, and half a century later, in the work of Ad Reinhard, as a sign of the end of painting.[110] Within this context, the curators went on to examine recently-made work by a dozen artists who used "the black mark" as a subject. These included Larry Bell, Colo (a.k.a. Francisco Colón), Lauren Ewing, Michael Gitlin, Mehlli Gobhai, Marcia Hafif, Moshe Kupferman, Joshua Neustein, Sean Scully, Richard Serra, Nahum Tevet, Randall Timons, Kay Walkingstick, and John Willenbecher. As Judith Lopes Carsozo affirmed in her positive review of the show for *Artforum*, the curatorial constriction effectively opened up the possibilities for studying the symbolism and motivations of the black mark in the

[109] Jeanette Ingberman and Madeleine Burnside, *Marking Black* (New York: The Bronx Museum, 1980) n.p.

[110] Ibid.

work of contemporary artists.[111] In Walkingstick's *Variations of David's Favorite* (1979) [Fig. 3-29], the medium of encaustic painting allowed for the creation of incisions on the monochrome canvas surface, like paths in darkness. In Timmons *Blackseries #50* (1970) [Fig. 3-30], black seems to evoke outer-space, where abstract figures delineated in white float, perhaps like satellites. In his series of *Wounds* (1979) [Fig. 3-31], Colo paints slashed canvases black and repairs them but leaving white traces of their scars in a gesture that suggests spiritual penance.

The roster comprised artists of various generations and at different points in their careers. Some of them were well-known names, while others were little known outside their countries or communities in New York. The show featured American artists living in the East and the West Coast (Serra and Bell, respectively), one artist from India (Gobhai), the descendant of an American Indian—Walkingstick—, Israelis Kupferman, Neustein, Tevet, and Gitlin, the London-based American Sean Scully, and Puerto Rican Colo.[112] Despite the cultural diversity in the roster, individual cultural backgrounds were not mentioned in the catalog. This was not a multicultural show for its own sake, but one where national origin ceased to matter in order to find common uses of color across a wide, international, contemporary landscape, and to explore their implications thematically and historically. Interestingly, Ingberman met Colo over the selection process for *Marking Black*. In 1982, she left her job as a curator at the Bronx Museum to found Exit Art with Colo. The approach present in *Marking Black*, a multiculturalism that was

[111] Judith Lopes Cardozo, "Marking Black: Bronx Museum of the Arts," *Artforum* 18 (April 1980): 83–84. Lopes Cardozo declares her skepticism at exhibitions that "use a single feature as a basis for cohesion," as they seldom go beyond the recognition of preordained connections. Howerver, *Marking Black* distinctively achieves a continuous suggestiveness and depth of meaning that goes from the search for symbolism, to highlighting different formal approaches through the use of a single color.

[112] The Americans Richard Serra, John Willenbecher and Larry Bell were the best-known artists in this exhibition. For the rest, the artists were littleknown in the Bronx or New York. Moshe Kupferman, Joshua Neustein, and Nahum Tevet, had all been included in the exhibition *Seven Israeli Artists* at the Brooklyn Museum in 1979, where Ingberman and Burnside must have come into contact with them. The work of Colo, a.k.a. Papo Colo, or Francisco Colón had also been showcased at the CIAR/AS and El Museo del Barrio.

not a simple ode to cohabitation, but a real attempt at representing artists regardless of their national symbolic capital, became a hallmark of Exit Art and provided a new framework for showcasing artists whose cultural background was a barrier for being noticed in the art world.

As for the Bronx Museum, Cancel's steering of the institution at the turn of the decade and the vision of his curators in mixing local and international artistic proposals in their shows, set the tone for the museum's diverse programming during the 1980s. This decade would be characterized by an increase in solo exhibitions of contemporary artists with ties to the Bronx, and by the organization of the museum's first large scale survey: *The Latin American Spirit*.

3.5 Cayman Gallery: Becoming Something New[113]

Aspiring neither to be an official nor a grassroots cultural embassy, nor even a museum for the culturally underserved, Cayman, the last institution to be discussed in this chapter, set out to be the first non-commercial gallery in downtown-New York exclusively devoted to the showcasing of Latino and Latin American artists. Cayman Gallery was born shortly after the CIAR/AS, El Museo, and the Bronx Museum as the product of a "coup" led by young Puerto Rican cultural activists against the advisory board of one the longest-standing Puerto Rican institutions in New York.[114] This old-time institution was Friends of Puerto Rico, Inc. (aka Society of Friends of Puerto Rico), a nonprofit group established in 1956 by art patron Amalia

[113] I have made several parts of this section on Cayman Gallery public through the catalog essay "The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (1985-1990)" in *Manifesta 8: Europe in the 21st century* (Silvana: Roma, 2010), n.p.; and through a paper titled "In Search of a Lost Space: Cayman Gallery/ The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (1973-1991)," presented at El Museo del Barrio's symposium *Nexus New York*, January 2010. Yasmín Ramírez also addresses briefly Cayman/MoCHA in her doctoral dissertation on Nuyorican vanguards, but she does not analyze their exhibitions.

[114] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol, April 15, 2009. The description of these events as a "coup" comes from Cancel.

Guerrero to raise awareness about Puerto Rican cultural achievements in the mainland.[115] After its founding, FoPR organized art exhibitions, concerts, theater and dance classes [Fig. 3-32].[116] Through the 1960s, it also provided residencies and workshop space to mid-career artists who worked between Puerto Rico and New York, including Rafael Tufiño, Carlos Osorio, and Juan Maldonado. From reports on the mainstream press, the FoPR played a role not unlike that of the CIAR/AS, but geared towards U.S.-Puerto Rico relations.[117] While in operation, FoPR organized events at luxurious New York-hotels to honor politicians, federal government functionaries, and journalists who had advanced the cause of promoting amity between Puerto Ricans and U.S.-Americans. At these events, they would confer yearly a "One America" award, for outstanding service to the hemisphere, named after the Puerto Rican 19th century philosopher and educator Eugenio María de Hostos. Senator Robert F. Kennedy received the award in 1966, Luis Muñoz Marín, Governor of Puerto Rico from 1941 to 1964, received it in 1968.[118]

In spite of its important role in achieving early visibility for Puerto Rican culture, by the early '70s consensus amongst a younger generation of Puerto Ricans active in the arts was that

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[115] Mrs. Guerrero was a singer, dancer, and author born in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico. She was married to Mariano Guerrero, a vice-president of a chemical company. "Amalia Guerrero," *The New York Times*, October 1, 1971, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0814FB385C1A7493C3A9178BD95F458785F9 (accessed November 11, 12).

[116] Cancel, interview by Taína Caragol; Susana Torruella-Leval interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, April 7, 2009. Confusion has veiled the starting date of Cayman.

[117] The status of Mrs. Guerrero in New York's high cultural spheres is also attested by Governor Rockefeller's appointing her as one of seven members to the State Park Commission for the City of New York, charged with the task of recommending new park sites in the city and to authorize acquisition of property. See n.a., "State Park Unit for City Chosen" in *The New York Times*, Dec. 3, 1967. See also n.a., "Culture Group to Give a Dinner at the Waldorf" in *The New York Times*, February 8, 1962.

[118] "City Housing Project Is Named After Puerto Rican Philosopher; Apartment Tower Is First Here That Will Honor Native of the Island", *The New York Times*, April 21, 1967. http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F10E10F83B55157484DDA80A94DC405B878AF1D3 (accessed November 11, 2012); Invitation - The Society of Friends of Puerto Rico cordially invites you to its Sixth Annual Gala, November 14, 1968. Hostos Community College. Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College/CUNY. The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA) Collection, 1971-1990. Box 8. http://iarchives.nysed.gov/dmsBlue/viewImageData.jsp?id=159754 (accessed November 11, 2012).

the institution had become an elite social club.[119] In line with the revolutionary sensibility of the times, and the fight to make cultural institutions pertinent for artists from populations marginalized from the high spheres of New York's cultural arena, a group of young employees and volunteers of Friends of Puerto Rico, all artists and grassroots art organizers, advocated for a change in direction. What ensued was an internal struggle with the long-standing members of the advisory board that led to the dissolving of FoPR as the cultural organization it had been known, and the creation of Cayman Gallery in 1973.[120] The secessionist group constituted a new board and Jack Agüeros was named its chairman.[121]

Jack Agüeros, educator Nilda Peraza, and artists Luis Cancel and Juan Maldonado (in-residence at FoPR at the time of its closing) were part of that founding group of Cayman.[122] In this new project, two conditions marked a decisive change of direction from the previous organization: a cultural scope broadened to include the arts of all Latinos and Latin Americans,

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[119] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol; Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol; Nilda Peraza, interview by Taína Caragol, skype, recorded in MP3, September 7, 2009. The institution was indeed known by the New York arts and cultural establishment, as attested by a testimony from Torruella Leval, who was brought to FoPR by Elaine Johnson, Curator at MoMA's Prints Department, while working for her as an intern. Torruella Leval was later recruited by Nilda Peraza to write catalog essays for Cayman. Peraza became director of Cayman in the late 1970s. In the mid-1980s, Torruella Leval became MoCHA's first curator.

[120] Luis Cancel, interview by Yasmín Ramírez, VHS, February 8, 2001, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College; Torruella Leval, interview. There have been discrepancies on Cayman's year of foundation. In her chronology of alternative art spaces in New York, Julie Ault lists Cayman as appearing in 1977, however my research in Cayman Gallery/MoCHA's archives at Hostos Community College reveals the gallery was in place by 1974 and possibly earlier. To the date no "first dated document" of the gallery has been found. The earliest documents in Cayman/MoCHA Archive at Hostos Community College date from 1976. They comprise the catalog of Domingo García's exhibition *De Puerto Rico Vengo*, and a clipping from *The New York Times*, announcing a benefit exhibition and art sale to honor Orlando Letelier. Cayman/MoCHA's Artist File collection contains materials from as early as 1972. The archive also contains documents produced by MoCHA that cite the years "1973 to 1984" and also "1974 to 1984" as Cayman's years of operation before becoming MoCHA.

[121] The name FoPR remained as a corporate identity, presumably for practical reasons of not having to create a new non-for-profit.

[122] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol; Ibid. According to Luis Cancel, first director of the gallery, the change of name did not happen concurrent to the move. The new venue operated for some months under the name Friends of Puerto Rico. In an interview Peraza also includes the artists Rafael Colón Morales, George Aguirre, and Ismael Betancourt as part of Cayman gallery's founding group.

and a change of address to 381 West Broadway [Fig. 3-34] that, even if made imminent by the loss of the FoPR four-story building on 432 Third Avenue at the intersection with 30th Street, would become a fundamental part of Cayman's particular contribution as a showcase of those artists in New York.[123] Both conditions, i.e. the curatorial scope and the imperative to make a place for Latin American and Latino artists in downtown New York would prevail through Cayman's life span, and later on, as it underwent yet another change in name to The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA).[124]

3.5.1 A Lonesome Alligator: Cayman's Vision and Operation

Rooted in the alternative art space movement, Cayman aimed at showcasing the work of artists from the Hispanophone Caribbean and Latin America residing in the U.S. and their own countries, who were largely absent from the city's museum and commercial circuits. However, unlike other art venues that grew out of this movement, including El Museo del Barrio and The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Cayman did not establish itself in a culturally underserved area of New York. Its strategy was different. Cayman conceived of its role and contribution not within the city's geographic and cultural margins, but at its very center.[125] It reversed the question of cultural scarcity, and identified the need for a non-profit venue showing artists of Latin

[123] FoPR acquired this building, formerly the Madison Square Church House in 1968, with renovation plans that included a library, a theater, and art gallery. By the early 1970s they functioned as a base for the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, and classes in the visual arts, silk-screening, music and choir, as well as a workshop for artists-in-residence. According to Luis Cancel, over the course of the coup, when Guerrero lost control of the institution, she stopped paying property taxes, and the building went into tax arrears with the City, who then sold it at auction. Agüeros moved the gallery temporarily to West 14th Street, and shortly after to 381 West Broadway. Interview with Luis Cancel by Taína B. Caragol. See also Thomas Ennis, "Reality News: Old Madison Square Church Sold" in *The New York Times*, May 6, 1968, 76. http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40814F73F5F127A93C4A9178ED85F4C8685F9 (accessed May 30th, 2012).

[124] The history of MoCHA will only be surveyed in the 5th chapter of this dissertation.

[125] Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups , and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85."

American and Latino background in the heart of New York's downtown art-scene.[126] The aim was not only to establish a place that would serve as a launching pad for artists beyond the Puerto Rican or New York-Latin American geographic enclaves, but to facilitate the interaction of Latino and Latin American artists with a wider community through location.[127]

SoHo was the neighborhood of choice. Cheap rents, large industrial spaces in disuse, and galleries that included Leo Castelli's downtown space, Holly Solomon, and Nancy Hoffman were attracting artists. By this time the mere presence of a few spaces dedicated to Latin American and Latino art in New York was beginning to grow into a small circuit frequented by a regular public interested in the field. Cayman was part of that circuit.[128] Former Cayman staff attests to frequent visits by employees and public from surrounding galleries and art spaces.[129] In the middle of this neighborhood, Cayman became the de facto venue for Latin American and Latino artists. In spite of calling itself a gallery, Cayman functioned as something between a non-commercial art space and a community center. Within its 500 square feet it organized over 500 events during its first decade, including exhibitions, artist talks, film screenings, concerts, and occasional events in display of solidarity with political causes and human rights.[130]

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[126] Ibid. The cultural activists and artists who founded Cayman were against the cultural ghettoization of Latin Americans and Puerto Ricans. For them, it was essential to make their mark in the mainstream art-scene.

[127] Peraza, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[128] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[129] Susana Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, April 7, 2009; Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[130] One of the first events held at Cayman was an art show and sale in the memory of Orlando Letelier, who had served as a diplomat during the presidency of Augusto Pinochet and who lived in exile in Washington D.C. where he was assassinated in mysterious circumstances in September 1975. Grace Glueck, "Art People. True to Yale and England," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1977, sec. c, 21. http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F10E1FF93C5D127588DDA00A94DC405B878BF1D3 (accessed May 25, 2012).

With regards to the broadening scope from Puerto Rican to Latino and Latin American art, Nilda Peraza, attests that in addition to serving ideological, inclusive purposes, having this broader scope also facilitated fundraising. Cayman and later MoCHA would subsist on a mix of funding that included grants from the New York Council for the Arts (NYSCA), the NEA, donations of private funders, and by a lot of voluntary work. There was sufficient money to mount the exhibitions, although employees often worked for art's sake.

3.5.2 Curatorial Scope: Random or Calculated?

Compared with the art spaces discussed in the previous chapter and this, it is rather difficult to make a distinction in mission or curatorial practice at Cayman between the 1970s and 1980s . Unlike all the other previous venues, Cayman was the only one to maintain its founding mission and curatorial scope through its existence, and through its transformation into the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA), which existed until 1991. This distinction is also hard to make due to the fact that after a short period of establishment in the mid-1970s, and the departures of Agüeros and of Luis Cancel, Cayman remained under the leadership of the same person—Nilda Peraza—until it closed. It also counted other long-time collaborators who helped give it direction, namely Susana Torruella Leval, who was recruited as a writer and curator by Peraza in the late 1970s, and was the founding curator at MoCHA.

A look at Cayman/MoCHA's exhibition history reveals, therefore, no shifts in mission or curatorial vision comparable to the visible change in direction of El Museo under Agüeros, or to the Bronx Museum's once Cancel became Director. Neither is it possible to see a broadening of the curatorial scope that ensued at the CIAR/AS in the 1980s, when the Cold War became less of

a prescient global political issue and under the gallery directorship of John Stringer.[131] What we see is an unfolding and increasingly ambitious trajectory.

From early on at Cayman the roster of artists was eclectic and oscillated between veteran figures from Latin America residing in their countries and in New York (among them Antonio Frasconi, Juan Melé, and Omar Rayo), a considerable number of young, emerging artists who would rise to fame between the late '80s and '90s (such as Luis Cruz Azaceta, Andrés Serrano, and Alfredo Jaar), and many other artists who are virtually unknown today. Through its decade of existence Cayman organized individual shows, group shows with no apparent gathering principle but a common Latin American origin, thematic exhibitions, and from the 1980s on, a medium-based periodic show: a Latin American biennial of graphics modeled after the Bienal de Grabado de San Juan.

Documentation of the exhibitions that took place at Cayman offers limited clues for a full analysis of the curatorial concept behind most shows.[132] From an analysis of what *is* present, however, it is possible to infer the aims and program strategies of the institution beyond its mission statement. Judging by the diversity of types of exhibitions and aesthetic proposals showcased at Cayman, it is evident that the institution made a strong effort to record and respond urgently to the city's effervescent, yet little visible, Latin American and Latino art scene. Another aim evident in the exhibition program was to spread knowledge about well-established Latin American artists under-documented or valued in the U.S. Finally, from the 1980s on, and with the establishment of the graphics biennial, slide library, and open artist files, it can be said

[131] These changes at the CIAR/AS will be looked at in detail in Chapter Five.

[132] From what is present at Cayman/MoCHA's institutional archives at Hostos Community College, very few exhibitions seem to have been documented with installation shots. Exhibition files contains few clippings before 1980s. In addition, many catalogs comprise only a curatorial statement of only one or two paragraphs, a checklist and, if lucky, one artwork reproduced. This leaves us in many cases the only option of relying on descriptions of the artworks that appear either on the curatorial or artists' statements included in the catalogs.

that the institution put a stronger effort into serving as connector between the mainstream New York art scene and what they saw as a community of artists that produced its work between Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.S. and Europe.[133]

In order to provide a snapshot that captures this diversity of aims, I will describe a few exhibitions held at Cayman based on their catalogs. One of the first surviving catalogs is of a 1977 show titled *Latin American Primitives* [Fig. 3-34].[134] It showcased the work of self-taught contemporary artists, whom according to essayist Laura Marquez: "tell us about folklore from their un-complicated vision of the world."[135] Artists included Manuel Hernández Acevedo, Pedro Villarini, Lorenzo Pacheco, and Radamés Santos, all from Puerto Rico, Argentineans Juan Buján and Paul Vergeli, Cuban Ramón del Toro, Mexican Carlos Navedo, and Nicaraguan Rosa Navarro de González. As suggested in the show's title, the artists in this show lacked formal training or purposefully avoided academic conventions such as linear perspective. They were, however, all devoted to realistic representation. Most paintings in the show comprised city or rural vistas, while a few showed scenes of work or leisure. Hérnandez Acevedo's *Plaza San José* (n.d.) [Fig. 3-35] depicted a view of the San José square in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. This is a joyful everyday scene: a girl jumps rope and passers-by walk, including a priest from the church. Depth and distance are conveyed in the painting through the cobblestones of the adjacent Calle Cristo, which decrease in size and increase in number towards the upper part of the picture plane. In *Danza Flamenca* [Fig. 3-36] Navarro de González depicts three couples of *bailaores* dancing

[133] By the early 1980s Cayman was described in an article as a gallery exhibiting emerging and established artists, providing artists with information about grants and acting as a liaison between artists and any gallery or institution interested in exhibiting Latin American Art. *Cartelera* (Association of Hispanic Arts: New York): 8, April 1982, Cayman/MoCHA Archives, Hostos Community College.

[134] Nilda Peraza, *Latin American Primitives* (New York: Cayman Gallery, n.d.). The catalog is undated, but a later exhibition of participating artist Juan Buján at Cayman cites *Latin American Primitives* as taking place in 1977. This case illustrates one of the obstacles for reconstructing the gallery's exhibition chronology.

[135] Laura Marquez, in *Latin American Primitives* (New York: Cayman Gallery, n.d.).

to two flamenco musicians. As in the work of many naïf artists, emphasis is placed on the representation of patterns. In this work the dress ruffles of the *bailaoras* are depicted with special care. Depth is again conveyed through distortions of the tiled floor. In del Toro's lively *El Vendedor de pájaros* (The Bird Seller) [Fig. 3-37] a street vendor of birds announces his products in singing. Birds of different species are present all around the seller's active body.

Another early group show at Cayman was *Magnet- Geometry: An Exhibition of Geometric Works by Five Latin American Artists*, held in 1978. This was the third iteration of an exhibition curated by art patron and curator Ida Rubin. The first was held at Galería Bonino in 1964, and the second at the CIAR/AS in 1978.[136] This new version included the work of Salvadorian artist Mario Bencastro, Brazilian Lydia Okumura, Colombian Fanny Sanin, Bolivian Walter Terrazas, and Dominican Bismarck Victoria. In the catalog's foreword, Nilda Peraza attests to this show being Cayman's first intent to present the "innovative brilliance" of five Latin American Artists. … who "have brought the collective presentation of an idea to the geometric art, by allowing the viewer to compare the treatment of a style through different media."[137] According to Rubin the Latin American origin of artists is incidental, as their work is truly international. [138] Through their individual handling of color, scale, line, form and texture,

[136] This series of exhibitions had as a gathering principle to exhibit the work of Latin American artists "who have been lured from their homelands to reside in this beautiful and terrible city" as expressed by John Canaday, art critic for *The New York Times* in 1964, quoted by Sasson in his obituary of Rubin for *Art Nexus*. Sasson explains that the 1964 version of the show included twenty-eight artists, the second at the CIAR/AS, forty-seven, and the last at Cayman, five. The last show was dedicated to one style or mode of art, i.e. geometric abstraction. Nilda Peraza, *Latin American Primitives* (New York: Cayman Gallery, n.d.). http://ehis.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/ehost/resultsadvanced?sid=d0f7dc27-1125-4291-baef-722ec20e8e22%40sessionmgr115&vid=2&hid=124&bquery=TI+%28%22ida+rubin%22%29&bdata=JmRiPWFmdCZ0eXBlPTEmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl (accessed November 11, 2012).

[137] Nilda Peraza, "Prologue," in *Magnet Geometry: An Exhibition of Works by Five Latin American Artists*, by Ida Rubin (New York: Cayman Gallery, 1978).

[138] Ida Rubin, *Magnet Geometry: An Exhibition of Geometric Works by Five Latin American Artists.* (New York: Cayman Gallery, 1978).

they present a diversity of approaches to geometric abstraction in media that include print, painting, relief, sculpture, and environmental installations.[139]

The solo show *Lithographs, Woodcuts and Relief Casts by Antonio Frasconi*, held in 1977 stands as an example of exhibitions that aimed to provide overdue exposure in the U.S. to veteran Latin American artists.[140] Its catalog comprises only eight pages. Two of them contain an essay by Susana Torruella, while the other six reproduce some of the works that were on view at the show. The essay emphasizes Frasconi's synthesis of tradition and innovation in his artistic practice. While he embraces the ancient technique of the woodcut, he creates through dark, deep tones exceptional painterly effects and an intense atmosphere. Carrying-on the Social Realist Mexican tradition, themes of oppression and social and political justice prevail in Frasconi's work. A rhetoric of Pan-American social and political unity underlies his work, offering a stark contrast to the apolitical hemispheric unity promoted at the CIAR/AS. The catalog communicates these aspects of his work effectively through the choice of works reproduced: the front cover illustrates a detail of a portrait reproduced in the back cover of Puerto Rican nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos [Fig. 3-38]. Also reproduced are images of labor: crop pickers and fishermen at work, and a portrait of agrarian leader César Chavez [Fig. 3-39], who led in 1966 the historic march of grape workers from Delano to the California State Capitol in Sacramento that is today considered the onset of the Chicano Movement.[141]

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[139] Ibid. In 2011, when I started doing research on *Magnet Geometry*, the catalog was in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art Library. No other library in the U.S. appears to have it. In January 2013, when I returned to MoMA Library to photograph the catalog and reproduce some of its works in this dissertation, the item was no longer there.

[140] Susana Torruella Leval, *Lithographs, Woodcuts, and Relief Casts by Antonio Frasconi* (New York: Cayman Gallery, 1977).

[141] Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "The Chicano Movement/ The Movement of Chicano Art," in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America,* ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Insitute of International Visual Arts and The MIT Press, 1995), 165–182.

Also in the area of printmaking, but posing an entirely different challenge to Cayman was the *Bienal de Arte Gráfico Latinoamericano en Nueva York* also known as *Latin American Graphic Arts Biennial* [Fig. 3-40]. First held in 1980, the biennial was amongst Cayman's most impressive undertakings. Periodic, large-scale shows require tremendous institutional commitment. Recurrence in time must be balanced with a strong curatorial concept for each edition in order to avoid repetitiveness and obsolescence. An effective communications strategy is paramount to keep generating excitement over the years. The biennial, which was held four times until 1986, gathered mainly the work of Latin American artists, most of them residing in New York and other parts of the U.S. Occasionally, it included artists from Spain.[142] As for the medium of choice, printmaking had enjoyed wide support through the region since the late 19th century, particularly at moments of political strife, when artists took advantage of the nature of this medium of multiples to spread messages against oppressive regimes.[143] Hence printmaking offered possibilities for serving as the metaphor for a common culture and artistic tradition, as well as community activism.

According to *Cartelera*, the goal of the first biennial was to show Latin American unity through the symbolic representation of the region's artists residing in the U.S.[144] Twenty-nine artists represented seventeen Latin American countries and Spain.[145] Each biennial paid homage

[142] Works were chosen by the gallery's selection committee, comprised for the first edition by artists Laura Márquez, and Nitza Tufiño; dean of the Music and Art Department of the Bronx College, Peter Schira; art historian and critic Ramiro Fernández; and curator Susana Torruella Leval. Robert Blackburn, founding director of the renowned Printmaking Workshop on 55 West 17th Street that was a hub of artistic experimentation, and Marius Sznajderman, director of Galería Venezuela, also collaborated. *Cartelera*, no. 8.

[143] Dawn Ades, "Posada and the Popular Graphic Tradition," in *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era*, ed. Dawn Ades (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 111–123; Dawn Ades, "The Taller de Gráfica Popular," in *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era*, ed. Dawn Ades (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 181–194; Teresa Tió, *El Cartel En Puerto Rico* (Mexico: Pearson Educación, 2003).

[144] *Cartelera 8*, n.p, Cayman/MoCHA Archives, Hostos Community College.

to a distinguished Latin American printmaker through a small solo exhibition. The first one honored was Puerto Rican José Alicea, who had been also honored by the Bienal de Grabado Latinoamericano de San Juan in 1979.[146] The focus exhibition dedicated to Alicea highlighted his individual contributions to the medium's tradition in Latin America.[147] The roster for the second edition, held between April and May 1982 was reduced to twenty artists from ten countries.[148] However, Cayman stepped up its showcasing effort by traveling a selection of works from the first and second biennials to Altos de Chavón in the Dominican Republic.[149] For the third edition Cayman collaborated with other Latin American New York-art venues in an effort to organize concurrent satellite exhibitions. One of these was the show held at INTAR gallery between April and May 1984 of recent intaglios by Chilean Sergio González Tornero.[150]

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[145] These were Rafa and Ramon Benito (Spain), Emma Alvarez Pieniro and Paula Ocampo (Argentina), Rudy Ayoroa (Bolivia), Sain Clair Cemin (Brazil), Sergio Gonzalez Tornero (Chile), Armando Londoño, Omar Rayo and Helio Salcedo (Colombia), Hugo Consuegra and Ricardo Prieto (Cuba), Manuel Ugarte (Ecuador), Mario Bencastro (El Salvador), Rodolfo Abularach (Guatemala), Jose Luis Ortiz, M. Ponce de León (Mexico), Laura Márquez and Lotte Shulz (Paraguay), Claudio Juárez (Peru), Rebeca Castrillo, Carlos Sueños (Puerto Rico), Félix Berroa and Bismark Victoria (Dominican Republic), Antonio Frasconi and Naul Ojeda (Uruguay), Rafael Bogarin and Juan Carlos Requesens (Venezuela). Primera Bienal de Arte Gráfico Latinoamericano en Nueva York, (Cayman: New York, 1980).

[146] *Primera Bienal de Arte Gráfico Latinoamericano en Nueva York* (Cayman: New York, 1980).

[147] The exhibition files of Cayman at Hostos Community College did not contain any reviews for the first or second or third editions of the biennial.

[148] Artists of the Segunda Bienal included Omar Rayo, Armando Londoño and Helio Salcedo (Colombia), Antonio Frasconi and Naul Ojeda (Uruguay), Daniel Serra Badué and Hugo Consuegra (Cuba), Liliana Porter and Raul Conti (Argentina), Rodolfo Abularach (Guatemala), Claudio Juárez (Peru), Juan Gómez Quiroz and Juan Downey (Chile), Ada Varcarcel (Dominican Republic), Michel Ponce de León and José Luis Ortiz (Mexico), Julio Tauceda (Honduras), Roberto Barreto, Lidia Okmura and Saint Claire Cemin (Brazil).

[149] "Inician Muestra Altos Chavón Selección Grabados Bienal NY," *El Caribe*, May 12, 1982, 4-C. It is important to note that the next year, in 1983, the school of art and design of Altos de Chavón—one of the most prestigious in the Caribbean—was founded. The showcasing of this selection of works there was perhaps an initiative to foster an atmosphere of inter-American artistic exchange in the light of the birth of this new art school.

[150] González Tornero had been awarded the UNESCO prize at the International Biennial in Crakow, Poland in 1966. In 1993 he was awarded the First Prize at the *Tenth Biennial of Prints from Latin America and the Caribbean in San Juan*, Puerto Rico. http://www.artefoundation.com/artists/gonzalez_tornero.html Accesed on February 16, 2012.

Three of these satellite-shows accompanied the fourth edition of the biennial in 1986, organized by MoCHA. These were *Maestros Grabadores* at Hostos Community Colllege Art Gallery, in the Bronx, "Mujeres en la Gráfica Latinoamericana," at Arch Gallery, 644 Broadway, and "Gráfica de Puerto Rico," at the Oller-Campeche Gallery, Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, 304 Park Avenue.[151] According to clippings found in the institutional files, this was the only biennial edition to award any prizes. These were given to Antonio Martorell, Liliana Porter, Ricardo Benaim, Nurck Savret, Eugenio Dittborn, and Elba Damast. [152] Unlike the first three biennials, participation in this fourth and last one was by invitation and not through an open call. The abrupt end of a biennial that showcased the work of so many artists who are widely known today in Latin American art was, presumably, due to the logistical challenge it posed for the small staff of the institution, which most of the time numbered a maximum of five people.[153]

Compared to the CIAR/AS and El Museo del Barrio, Cayman's mission of "fill[ing] the gap between museums and commercial galleries, and support[ing] the growth of Hispanic artists from all disciplines" left them ample room for crafting an exhibition program that was truly open to all artistic trends and media practiced by artists of Latin American background.[154] Their inclusiveness and their eclectic roster of artists may suggest randomness and lack of aesthetic direction. However, in hindsight, and looking at all the artists whose work Cayman/MoCHA showcased and are now part of international museum collections, it is palpable that the institution had a fundamental role in spreading knowledge of the field of Latin American art.

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[151] Cayman/MoCHA Archives, Hostos Community College, *Cuarta Bienal de Grabado*, folder 1 of 2.

[152] n.a., "Gente en Primer Plano: Galardón a Antonio Martorell," *El Nuevo Día*, martes 7 de octubre de 1986, n.p. *Cuarta Bienal de Grabado*, Folder 1 of 2, Cayman/MoCHA Archives, Hostos Community College.

[153] Peraza, interview by Taína Caragol, September 7, 2009.

[154] Such was the mission as stated in *Cartelera* no.8, (April 1982), n.p. Archives of The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, Hostos Community College.

Cayman/MoCHA played a key role in shaping art professionals who would be active showcasing Latin American and Latino art at other New York institutions. These included Jack Agüeros, Luis Cancel, and Susana Torruella Leval who fostered, through their tenures at El Museo and the Bronx Museum, the de-ghettoizing of Latino and Latin American art.[155]

As the 1980s approached, institutions such as the CIAR/AS and El Museo started to loosen their strict or clearly identifiable institutional agendas, in favor of curatorial practices that were more inclusive of artists and artistic proposals they previously avoided. The CIAR/AS, for example, shifted away from abstraction and conceptual art practices, to show more artists working on figuration. They also included more artists with a Latino background. El Museo became increasingly directed towards Latin Americans and Latinos. These changes seem to have come as the result of the general exchange of ideas brought by the relative increase of New York-showcasing venues committed to Latino and Latin American artists, and through the common realization that maintaining a context as broad as possible for exhibiting these artists could counter pigeonholing.

[155] Torruella Leval became Chief Curator at El Museo in 1990 and Executive Director in 1993. She is widely credited with turning El Museo del Barrio from a Puerto Rican Museum to a Latin American art museum in the 1990s. See Denny Lee, "Neighborhood Report: East Harlem; A 'Museo' Moves Away From Its Barrio Identity," *The New York Times*, July 21, 2002, sec. N.Y. / Region, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/21/nyregion/neighborhood-report-east-harlem-a-museo-moves-away-from-its-barrio-identity.html.

CHAPTER FOUR. The 1980s: Signs of a Boom. Breaking into the Art Market and the Art-scene·

4.1 Introduction. The 1980s: A Decade Where the Alternative Arts Movement and the Art Market Converged

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, the late 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of the CIAR/AS, El Museo del Barrio, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Cayman Gallery, all venues that supported the showcasing of Latin American art. They were all founded in less than a decade, with intervals of two to three years between the inception of one and the next. However, each one emerged individually with no explicit agenda to constitute a circuit of Latin American and Latino showcases. Initially, the imperative of exhibiting Latin American art was only clear in the mission statements of the CIAR/AS and Cayman. El Museo's showcasing responsibilities were narrowed to Puerto Rican culture. The Bronx Museum's founding mission did not focus on whose art it would showcase, but on which audience it would serve.

By the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the distinct missions and curatorial scopes of each institution started to converge, and their commitment to showcasing the art of Latin Americans and Latinos became a shared cause between them. This became explicit through reworked missions, or simply through reformulated exhibition programs. At El Museo del Barrio, this shift came with Jack Agüeros' appointment as Executive Director in 1977 and his belief that keeping a monocultural focus would limit the pertinence of Puerto Rican art and also of his institution.[1] That year also marked a shift in mission and curatorial scope at the Bronx

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· The parts of this chapter pertaining specifically to Latin American art auctions were made public in a paper titled: "The Boom and the Brand: the Emergence and Rise of the Latin American Auction House Market", that I presented at the panel *New York and the Idea of Latin American Art*, co-chaired by Dr. Mary Miller and Dr. Jennifer Josten, 99th CAA Annual Conference, New York, February, 2011. I am thankful to the organizers of this panel for their assistance in refining my analysis of the beginnings of the Latin American art market and the Boom.

[1] In the case of El Museo, I am still interpreting the initial commitment to represent Puerto Rican art and culture as a commitment to Latin American art, but limited to one culture within the panoply of cultures that

Museum, where Director Luis Cancel made the museum's location a main object of its programming. Artists with cultural ties to the Bronx came to represent 1/3 of the exhibition programming, while the other 2/3 would be devoted to "chapters in art history" and contemporary art or themes of popular interest. The new programming precept of ties to the Bronx automatically raised the visibility of Latin Americans and Latinos. During what is considered the Boom of Latin American and Latino art nationwide in the mid-1980s, artists from these backgrounds were also showcased as part of themes with currency and popular appeal, and as examples of an art canon that was gaining recognition across the country.

Within New York, a fascinating confluence of disparate players in the arts evolved into a system of commercial and non-commercial circulation between the late 1970s and the 1980s. The commercial and non-commercial components of the system fueled each other, and were also helped by social, economic, and political factors. The reputation of the CIAR/AS gallery as a well-established art showcase with strong ties to the mainstream grew parallel with the institutional solidification and expanding trajectory of El Museo, Cayman/MoCHA, and the Bronx Museum as venues bringing attention to artists mostly unknown to the art mainstream. In addition to these four focus venues, a few other grassroots spaces emerged in the city where Latin American and Latino art was coming into focus and establishing a notable presence. Some of them included The Alternative Museum, founded in 1976, as well as Exit Art, and INTAR Gallery, both founded in 1982. As alternative art spaces devoted to rectifying the under-representation of minorities and fostering artistic experimentation, the work of these three venues gained pertinence through the decade. Their cause was helped by the dramatic demographic growth of the U.S. Latino population, and the center-stage that political relations between the

comprise that geopolitical region. Jack Agüeros broadens that scope to be all-inclusive within the region and in the U.S., as he also made explicit his will to include other diasporic U.S. Latino populations.

U.S. and Central America took in the media and the public sphere.[2] Early in the decade artistic experimentation received the support of funding agencies.[3]

Gradually, the alternative venues started consolidating in a circuit for viewing Latin American and Latino art in New York. Structurally, the circuit was comprised of one "establishment" venue addressed to an elite of businessmen and diplomats—the CIAR/AS—and by a group of grassroots art spaces—El Museo, the Bronx Museum and Cayman/MoCHA. Initially at odds in the ways they framed Latin American art and the audiences they addressed, these spaces as a group amplified the presence and outreach of Latin Americans and Latinos in New York's art-scene across different demographies, and across the country. During the 1980s their exhibition programs continued individual courses while sometimes overlapping in artists

[2] In regards to U.S. demography, up until the 1970s Europeans comprised the majority of immigrants to the U.S. In that decade, major migratory movements emerged from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. In the 1970s Asians comprised 35% of documented immigrants to the U.S., while Latin Americans accounted for 44%. These groups still dominate international migration to the United States. In addition the average number of immigrant arrivals increased from 180,000 in the 1940s to 434,000 in the 1970s. These changes were reflected in the 1980s census, when for the first time ever, Europeans were no longer the majority of the foreign-born U.S. population having declined from 62% in 1970 to 39% in 1980. In 1980, Latin Americans officially accounted for a third of the foreign-born, an increase from the 19% found in 1970. If Puerto Ricans—who are U.S. citizens and thus not counted as immigrants—were included in this estimate, predominantly Spanish-speaking migrants made up one-half to two-thirds of all immigrants between 1960 and 1980, accounting for 3.5 million persons coming to the United States in these two decades. In terms of their share of the national population, the total Latino population in the U.S. in 1980 was about 14.8 million, an increase of 60% from the 9.1 million Latinos found in 1970. This demographic transformation made Latinos a main subject in political debate and increased their visibility in the media. Through the decade this constituency was perceived by many as a threat to white American culture. Language became a battleground for the defense of—depending on one's perspective—American national purity or of the rights of a people born in what the U.S. had historically called its "backyard" in Manifest Destiny. In the late 1980s states with high density of Latinos, such as Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey tried to pass legislation to declare English their official language. Bilingual school programs also came under attack. For specific data on the history of the Hispanic population in the U.S. during the 20th century and particularly in the 1980s see Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States*. For an analysis of the debates surrounding the representation of Latinos in the media in the 1980s and of the battle over language see Ibid. For an example of coverage on the legislation over language see "Hispanic People Attack English-Language Bills - New York Times," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1987, http://www.nytimes.com/1987/08/02/nyregion/hispanic-people-attack-english-language-bills.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed June 25, 2012).

Besides the expanding Latino demography, Latin America, and particularly Central America took center-stage in the U.S. media in the mid-1980s as the U.S. secret operation authorized by Reagan under which arms were being illegally sold to Iran and the proceedings used to finance the Contra rebels fighting to overthrow Sandinista government in Nicaragua was unmasked. This came to be known as the Iran-Contra Affair. For a recount of U.S.'s support to the Contras see Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Sixth Edition.

[3] Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces."

and themes. Cayman's 1985 self-recasting from a public gallery into The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art attests to a sense of confidence attained by these spaces in the '80s as showcases of art productions that were gaining national visibility and popularity.

This visibility and popularity was not limited to non-commercial exhibiting. Parallel to the evolution of a Latin American art showcasing circuit, a market emerged. The first documented auction devoted to this geographic region was held in 1979 as a benefit for the CIAR/AS.[4] The evening's success inaugurated Latin American art as a market and collecting category.[5] As its base of buyers diversified and profits increased, Latin American art became in the '80s a distinct sector of an art market that was becoming a multi-million industry.

Chapter Four and Chapter Five explore the 1980s as a turning point in the emergence of a New York system of commercial and non-commercial circulation of the art of Latinos and Latin Americans. The confluence of Latin American art's breaking into the art market and of a developing non-commercial New York circuit of venues devoted to the art of Latinos and Latin Americans, are key events that led to the national visibility of this art in mainstream art spaces. When considered side by side within the time span of the late 1970s and the 1980s, the emergence of the market and a non-commercial circuit may be equally important but possess different qualities. The market-entry seems fulminating and certain, due to its concrete results in sales and the quick appearance of Latin American art departments at the main auction houses Christie's and Sotheby's. In contrast, the surfacing of an informal non-commercial circuit, was characterized by a more organic process of development and gradual visibility in the New York

[4] Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age." It is possible that prior Latin American auctions took place, but the October 1979 auction organized by Sotheby Park Bernet is the first Latin American auction recorded in history.

[5] It can be argued that MoMA had already inaugurated Latin American art as a collecting category. However the auction market did so in the sphere of private collecting.

art-scene and mainstream media. In order to address properly the particularities of these two components, the discussion of these phenomena is divided into two chapters. Chapter Four addresses the market break-through and rise. Chapter Five, analyzes the shaping of the non-commercial circuit and its implications in the exhibition programs of the various institutions that took part in it. Both shed light on the interaction between the showcasing circuit and the market.

Without examining yet the dynamics between exhibition venues and the market, the presence attained by the art of Latin America in alternative art spaces and auction houses by the mid-1980s exemplifies two extremes of a spectrum of possibilities for the circulation of art that flourished and thrived during that decade, i.e. the community showcase and the auction house. It is, in great part, from these two extremes that Latin American art will be re-defined in the U.S., and re-emerge into the country's broader art scene. This chapter starts with a brief historical context that summarizes the cultural politics of the 1980s—the general social, political and cultural context of commercial and non-commercial circulation of art in that decade—and the place of Latin Americans, Latinos and their art within them.

Chapter Four adds to the panorama provided by Chapters Two and Three of Latin American art visibility in New York in the late '70s and early '80s, through a survey of the conditions and events that led to the creation of a corresponding a market category. Product image and distinctiveness is essential to successful marketing. I elucidate how Latin American art was marketed, i.e. into what kind of product it was made, and point to the implications of this branding for artists who did not seem to fit in.

In the light of the commercial paradigm, Chapter Five traces changes in institutional missions and curatorial trends at this dissertation's focus venues denoting evolving concepts of Latin American and Latino art. It also addresses the materialization of a collective consciousness

amongst these spaces as venues with the common purpose of bringing visibility to Latin American and Latino art. I analyze this collaborative energy and momentum in staging thematic exhibitions as partly facilitated by the broader interest in Latin American art generated through auction and mainstream art show reviews. On the other hand, I also emphasize this development as a creative response from the institutions to the aesthetically reductive effect of the market.

4.2 The 1980s: A Decade of Extremes in the New York Art-Scene

The 1980s polarizing forces in the art establishment epitomized a decade of political and cultural extremes that reached its climax with the oft-cited Culture Wars in the late '80s. This was not a war of weapons, but one of ideologies. It was ignited in the summer of 1989. Artistic freedom and Christian moral values were set against each other when it was revealed that the NEA had partly funded the exhibition of Andrés Serrano's *Piss Christ* [Fig. 4-1], a photograph showing a crucifix submerged in a jar with the artist's urine.[6] Shortly after, it also became known that the NEA was funding the traveling exhibition *The Perfect Moment* of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe, which included a number of homoerotic and sadomasochist images.[7] Mapplethorpe's show had originated at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Pennsylvania and was traveling thorough the country. Serrano's photo was exhibited at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.[8] Known for his hard-edge conservatism

[6] Samuel Lipman, "The State of National Cultural Policy," in *Culture and Democracy*, ed. Andrew Buchwalter (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), 47.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Serrano's photograph was a winner of that year of the Awards in the Visual Arts Competition at the showcasing venue. In denouncing the work of Serrano, Helms was advised by the conservative Christian American Family Association. On the ties of conservative politicians to the Christian Right during the Culture Wars see Cynthia Koch, "The Contest for American Culture: a Leadership Case Study of the NEA and the NEH Funding Crisis," *Public Talk. The Online Journal of Discourse Leadership*, no. 2 (Fall 1998), http://www.upenn.edu/pnc/ptkoch.html (accessed June 11, 2012).

and vehement opposition to measures protecting civil rights, gay rights, or foreign aid, Republican Senator Jessie Helms of North Carolina, accompanied by Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York, took their offense at these images to Congress, questioning the social value of government subsidized-art, and defending for government the right to censor art that could be deemed blasphemous or obscene.[9] A heated debate ensued where politicians, artists, lobbyists, art funding agencies, and other parties exchanged views on the subject over the course of almost two years in Congress, on TV and in editorials of major newspapers.[10] In the end, the controversy led to dramatic cuts in funds for the NEA once Republicans swept Congress in 1994.[11] The point of contention of the Culture Wars was not only public funding for the arts. Cultural difference, individual lifestyles and freedom of expression (including artistic freedom) came under attack by politically empowered conservatives who invoked a discourse on social normativity heavily anchored on Catholic tradition (heterosexuality and patriarchy as its pillars) and the ideal of a white Anglo-American culture.[12]

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[9] Tom Wicker, "In the Nation; Art And Indecency," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1989, sec. Opinion, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/28/opinion/in-the-nation-art-and-indecency.html (accessed on May 8, 2011).

[10] For an extensive collection of these exposés see Richard Bolton, *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the Arts* (New Press, 1992). The debate over Serrano and Mapplethorpe's works lasted about two years, however, the fundamentals of the debate as of morality and freedom of expression through art were debated for almost a decade. See Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces."

[11] "A Look Back on Financing," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2009, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2009/07/22/arts/23nea_graphics.html (accessed on May 8, 2012). See also Robin Pogrebin and Jo Craven Mcginty, "For New Leader of the Arts Endowment, Lessons From a Shaky Past," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2009, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/23/arts/23funding.html (accessed May 8, 2012). It took one year to enact this reduction. In 1996, the NEA's annual funding was cut by 40%, from $162.3 million to $99.5. In addition, its funding for individual artists was almost eliminated.

[12] Andrew Buchwalter, "Introduction," in *Culture and Democracy*, ed. Andrew Buchwalter (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), 1–23. Buchwalter surveys with detail the controversy of the Culture Wars and subsequent cases of admonishment towards artists or institutions seeking funding for art forms considered indecent by members of Congress. The malaise that the government body felt towards contemporary art was mainly directed towards art that expressed dissent towards dominant structures in society often sustained by conservatives and religious fundamentalists. A revealing part of his essay includes quotes by those who stood at the opposing camps of the controversy. From the part of the religious right, these quotes express preoccupation at the rise of a contemporary American culture seeking to remove the influence of Christianity in society. Hilton Kramer rejects the

The subject of the Culture Wars will be pertinent throughout this chapter in several ways. For one, a work by Latino Andrés Serrano was a centerpiece of the debate. The controversy catapulted him into stardom. But his talent had already been recognized by MoCHA [Fig. 4-2], where he was granted one of his first solo exhibitions in 1985, as a promising New York-based photographer of Afro-Cuban and Honduran background whose use of Christian imagery challenged traditional religious representations of the sacred.[13] No installation shots or a published catalog remain of his exhibition at MoCHA titled *The Unknown Christ* (1986). However his Artist File contains a curatorial text written for the show by Susana Torruella Leval and a letter from Serrano [Fig. 4-2] thanking her for the important exposure the show gave him, which led to other exhibitions.

The Culture Wars are also important to our discussion because they constituted a public manifestation of a GOP Republican party-led battle that started early in the decade to cripple the National Endowment for the Arts.[14] Since its creation in 1965, as a federal independent agency

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politization of the arts, in the form of the politics of race, gender, and multiculturalism as what seems to him to have become the main criterion for valuing a work of art.

As a way of pointing to the complexity of the public discourse galvanized by the Culture Wars, the debate over NEA funding coincided with the debates over language legislation, which were characterized by a rhetoric that strongly disapproved of Latino's defense of their right to use Spanish in certain official, government matters, and of the right for bilingual education for their children, as initiatives that undermined American culture. It also coincided with a strong wave of homophobia that emerged in the advent of the AIDS epidemic.

[13] The fact that MoCHA was one of the first venues to give a solo show to Serrano not only demonstrates a sensibility towards work addressing contemporary issues, but also a great deal of institutional courage for not shying away from presenting potentially controversial work. An article published in *The New Manhattan Review* on the new-born MoCHA and Cayman as its predecessor describes a work by Serrano that hung in its galleries in February 1986 as a large-scale color photograph showing carcasses in connection with human beings and traditional Christian symbols. In the words of Susana Torruella Leval, who organized Serrano's exhibition at MoCHA, his work explored a taboo subject of religion: Christ's humanity. According to her, she had to battle with a Manhattan photography laboratory, which refused to print this and a series of images by Serrano that technicians considered sacrilegious. Barbara Belejack, "MoCHA: Where Latin Art Gets Respect," *The New Manhattan Review,* February 6, 1986, 22-25.

[14] Livingston Biddle, *Our Government and the Arts (National Endowment for the Arts) A Perspective from the Inside* (New York: American Council for the Arts, 1988). The National Endowment for the Humanities, created in 1965 as a federal independent agency to support research and public programs in the humanities, was also dragged into the Culture Wars controversy and suffered budget cuts. According to Brian Wallis, since the early '80s conservatives sought to abolish the NEA, which they viewed as "a liberal luxury and a symbol of the 'excess of

to support excellence in the arts, the NEA had been a major instigator through its arts program for artistic experimentation and cultural diversity in the art scene.[15] The agency had helped the emergence of alternative art spaces across the country, and had provided substantial funding for exhibitions of artists from different ethnic and cultural communities who were under-represented in U.S. museums.[16] For instance, *Art of the Fantastic* at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the publication of its catalog received major funding from the NEA and NEH.[17] With the explosion of the Culture Wars, the public questioning of the NEA's criteria to fund art projects and the constant threat of reduction of its allocation increased pressure on cultural institutions to find alternative funding sources.[18] As such, the Culture Wars can be taken as a watershed in funding patterns at cultural institutions. The 1980s marked the need for institutions to rely more heavily on funding from sources other than Federal state agencies to make public programs and exhibitions happen. Corporate philanthropy, which was on the rise since the early years of the

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democracy' that had been allowed to flourish in the radical sixties." As soon as he got elected, Reagan named a taskforce to re-organize the NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The real purpose of the taskforce was to slowly defund the agencies. On the principles that supported Reagan's dramatic cuts to the NEA see Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces." The issue of the Reagan administration's aim to defund the NEA through its appointed taskforce was first disclosed by Livingston Biddle—chairman of the NEA during the Carter administration and during the first ten months of the Reagan administration— in his 1988 book Our Government and the Arts. Ironically, some of the members of the taskforce persuaded the President to keep the agency alive.

[15] All the alternative art spaces discussed in Chapter Three received important NEA funding, as documented in exhibition catalogs.

[16] Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces," 163. In 1972 the NEA started providing substantial support to alternative art spaces. As Wallis affirms: "In 1978, the NEA established a separate granting category for "artist spaces," and as funding in this category increased, alternative spaces expanded, continuing their practice of fostering bold challenges to the social and political conventions of the art world."

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid. Threats of under-funding were real to the NEA and to museums alike, as documented by Brian Wallis. Pressured by the government, the NEA withheld $25,000 from the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia for having organized the Mapplethorpe exhibition. It also eliminated funding for the Southeast Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for having promoted the work of Andrés Serrano. The heated debate and these punitive measures led to a culture of self-censorship among many institutions and artists alike. The Corcoran, for example, withdrew its participation from the Mapplethorpe exhibition tour for fear of loosing funding.

decade, became even more important then.[19] As ventures outside the market promising few returns, alternative art spaces suffered a major blow.[20] The most radical reaffirmed their stance against the cultural mainstream and commerce, while others opted to negotiate with these two forces.[21] These attitudes would in many cases determine the survival of alternative art spaces. Ironically, those that still stand were pushed towards institutionalization, relinquishing progressively their counter-cultural ethos.[22] The rising importance of museums as blockbuster machines in the late 1980s and early 1990s is related to these changes in funding.[23]

By the end of the decade, the increasingly prominent role of individual philanthropists and corporate funders at museums coincided with the upward transfer of wealth in the U.S. as well as in Latin America. This was facilitated by a wave of neoliberal policies in Mexico and South America that de-regulated production and commerce, and reduced social programs in the name of "less government."[24] The intensified presence of big companies and rich individuals as

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[19] Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces." Stronger reliance on private and corporate funding implied a decrease in autonomy for institutions that had to accommodate the particular aims and agendas of funders into the curatorial and educational programming of exhibitions. For a study on changes in funding sources at museums and their implications on programming see Victoria D. Alexander, *Museums and Money: The Impact of Funding on Exhibitions, Scholarship, and Management* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

[20] For details on the effects of NEA cuts in New York alternative art spaces see Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces."

[21] Ibid. The exhibition *¡Mira!* which traveled to El Museo del Barrio on its three iterations (83, 85 and 89) can be considered one of these compromises with corporations ready to use art to reach out to particular constituencies. In this case, the sponsoring company was Canadian liquor company Hiram Walker. AT&T also provided support for *Hispanic Art in the United States.* The example of *¡Mira!* will be elaborated in Chapter Five.

[22] Ramírez, "The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico and the Legacy of Activism Among Puerto Rican Artists in New York." This has been the case of El Museo del Barrio, according to Ramírez, since its participation in the institutional collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum for the organization of The Art Heritage of Puerto Rico (1973). Marta Moreno Vega, then director of El Museo, realized that the funding possibilities for the institution from federal agencies and foundations were contingent on a professionalization of this grassroots museum. She and subsequent directors would work towards this aim, adopting increasingly the structure of a mainstream museum and limiting the participation of the community and artists of El Barrio in decision-making.

[23] Tom Csaszar, "The Spectacular Record-breaking, Sold-out, Smash-hit Blocbuster Supershow!," *New Art Examiner* 24 (January 1997): 22–27.

exhibition underwriters reflected their stakes at using culture as an instrument to reach a broader consumer base. A case in point was the heavily-criticized blockbuster show *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1990 and funded mainly by the late Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, then president of the giant Mexican audiovisual conglomerate Televisa.[25] Many of the negative criticisms at the Boom of Latin American art were directed at the way demographic and economic interests affected the representation of Latino and Latin American art. As museums attempted to attract a growing U.S. Latino demographic, and as corporate sponsors catered their products and services to that demographic through exhibition sponsoring, Latin American and Latino art were simplified and stereotyped in an attempt to instrumentalize them for a marketing spin.[26]

As a turnaround in funding pressures for cultural institutions, the Culture Wars point us yet to other important economic phenomena of the decade that also had an impact on the valuation of art, on the circulation of artistic production, and on cultural representation. Central

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[24] Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Sixth Edition, 59.These reforms became known as the Washington Consensus. They almost always included opening up economies to foreign trade and investment, reducing the role of government, promoting new exports, and taking steps against economic inflation. They were pushed by international authorities including U.S. government, private banks, and the International Monetary Fund in exchange for relief from debt burdens mainly acquired between 1970 and 1980, when Latin America's external debt rose from $27 billion to $231 billion.

[25] This exhibition was heavily criticized by experts in Latin American art and culture for functioning as a large-scale, but shallow cultural gesture brokered by U.S. and Mexican political and economic power-players to usher-in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In regards to Azcárraga's sponsorship of the exhibition, Shifra Goldman noted that in a decade marked by the growing role of individual patrons and corporate sponsors as exhibition underwriters, and by increasingly transnational circulation of market produce and money, the easily-packaged ideas of Mexican, or for that matter, Latin American art, ultimately served the interests of power elites from the First and Third World, "whose objective is the control of resources and cultural configurations, across national boundaries." Goldman, "Metropolitan Splendors. The Buying and Selling of Mexico"; Yúdice, "Transnational Brokering of Art."

[26] On the commercialization of Latin American culture by the U.S. mainstream see Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth"; Ramírez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art"; Yúdice, "Transnational Brokering of Art."As we saw in Chapter One, this trend generated responses from showcasing venues that had a history of engagement of Latin American and Latino art, instead of an overnight interest in it.

to Reagan's neoconservative government was the reduction of government funds for social programs and the granting of incentives to companies in charge of production and distribution of goods. While inflation and unemployment were at their highest since World War II when Reagan took office, wealth and excess spending became a powerful symbol of progress and success during his administration.[27] The First Family itself promoted a fusion of private and public life in which spending did not have to be concealed. Reagan's first electoral victory was celebrated with ten inaugural balls—an unprecedented amount in U.S. history. Their total cost ascended to $16.3 million.[28] First Lady, Nancy Reagan, wore a $100,000 gown to the balls. These figures, considered extravagant, were widely reported by the press.[29]

Opposite to the anti-commercial alternative arts movement, the circulation of art in the traditional art system (i.e. museums, galleries, auction houses, specialized magazines) reflected the impact of this new approach to money. The July 1988 special issue of *Art in America* [Fig. 4-3], subtitled "Art and Money," documents a newly-acquired familiarity—and yet a general sense of discomfort—from art critics, historians and even from many contemporary artists, at the facts of current-day transactions in the art market. In the magazine's opening section titled "Issues and

[27] Edward Cowan, "The Problems Facing Reagan In Trying to Reduce Inflation; News Analysis Chances of a Turnaround A Most Formidable Task," *The New York Times*, November 6, 1980, sec. Business and Finance, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F20716FE3A5C11728DDDAF0894D9415B8084F1D3 (accessed June 12, 2012); Nate Silver, "On the Maddeningly Inexact Relationship Between Unemployment and Re-Election," *The New York Times*, June 2, 2011, sec. Politics; Five Thirty-Eight; Nate Silver's Political Calculus, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/06/02/on-the-maddeningly-inexact-relationship-between-unemployment-and-re-election/ (accessed July 8, 2012). When Reagan took office, unemployment was at 7.5% and inflation was at 11%, reaching double-digit figures for the first time since the Depression.

[28] According to Gleaves Whitney, director of Grand Valley State University's Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies, the total cost of events surrounding Reagan's first inauguration (in addition to the ball, this includes dinners and concerts) was $19.4 million, while his predecessor Jimmy Carter only spent $3.5 million in overall inauguration costs. Gleaves Whitney, "Cost of Inaugurations", January 21, 2005, http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ask_gleaves/46/ (accessed June 19, 2012).

[29] Ibid.

Commentary," Douglas Davis lays out the shift in values—symbolic and monetary—at the heart of this magazine issue under the title "The Billion Dollar Picture?"

> Consider the following: in the 1980s, the price of art has risen in value to the point where it almost rivals the price of life itself—if not death. Jackson Pollock's *Search*, is four to five times as costly as an artificial heart, the installation of which might prolong life at least a few months, and at best several years. In the future, when the artificial heart is perfected and offers virtually endless life, the Jackson Pollock will still cost more.[30]

At Sotheby's New York Contemporary sale in May 1988, Pollock's *Search* (1955), a "not particularly accomplished painting,"—in the words of Douglas—had fetched $4.8 million, breaking the record for postwar painting.[31] This happened less than a year after Black Monday in October of 1987, the day the world's stock markets crashed. The reaction of the art market to this event signaled a new trend in which certain fields of art where increasingly seen as virtually risk-free investments in times of economic uncertainty.[32] A year earlier, the international art world had been unsettled as the record of the highest price ever paid for a work of art was shattered twice at consecutive Impressionist auctions in London and in New York. On March 31, at Christie's London, Vincent van Gogh's *Fourteen Flowers in a Vase,* 1888, sold for the

[30] Douglas Davis, "The Billion Dollar Picture?," *Art in America*, July 1988, 21-23.

[31] That same Pollock had sold at auction the year before also for a record price of $2.57 million. Rita Reif, "Pollock Work Brings a Record Price," *The New York Times,* May 3, 1988, Late City Final Edition, sec. Cultural Desk, Section C, 16. http://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/03/arts/pollock-work-brings-a-record-price.html (accessed May 2, 2012). Record prices have become a familiar event since the 1980s. To put things in perspective, the current record for Postwar and contemporary art was achieved at Christie's May 2012 auction with Mark Rothko's *Orange, Red, Yellow*, 1961, fetching $87 million. Carol Vogel, "Rothko Painting ($87 Million) and Other Art Bring Record Sales at Christie's," *The New York Times*, May 9, 2012, sec. Metropolitan Desk, 18. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/09/arts/design/rothko-painting-sells-for-record-nearly-87-million-at-christies.html?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1352721676-XTb1fH9HiuUDWpdSATPjZw (May 15, 2012).

[32] As another measure of art's newly acquired value for the financial sector, in the late 1980s some banks started accepting art works as collaterals for loans. Deborah Stratford, "Capital Markets: Behind Closed Doors? - Banks' Interest in Art Is Slowly Starting to Go Beyond the Cosmetic.," *The Banker*, April 1, 1990, n.p. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 15, 2012).

staggering sum of $39.9 million.[33] At Christie's November auction, his *Irises*, 1889, sold for $53.9 million.[34] Multimillion benchmarks in the art market were established at dizzying speed until the end of the decade, breaking records for individual artists, in collecting categories (i.e. Impressionism, Modern (defined as 1900-1945), and Contemporary art (defined mainly as Post-World War II) and on overall sale results.[35] The market was mainly driven by Japanese bidders, although European and U.S. collectors were also an important force.[36]

Parallel to the market boom for Euro-American works, Latin American art as a collective marketing category grouping the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to Portuguese-speaking Brazil was established and grew at a respectable pace for its scale. In 1981, the founding year for Latin American art departments at Sotheby's

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[33] Francis X. Clines, "Van Gogh Sets Auction Record: 39.9 million," *The New York Times,* March 31, 1987, http://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/31/arts/van-gogh-sets-auction-record-39.9-million.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed May 14, 2012).

[34] Carol Zemel, "What Becomes a Legend Most," *Art in America*, July 1988. Rita Reif, "A $27 Million Loan by Sotheby's Helped Alan Bond to Buy *Irises*" *The New York Times*, October 18, 1989, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/18/arts/a-27-million-loan-by-sotheby-s-helped-alan-bond-to-buy-irises.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed June 25, 2012). Two years after the sale, in 1989, it was proven that Sotheby's had "assisted" the sale of Irises by loaning, approximately half the price of the purchase-- $27 million—to the winning bidder, the Australian financer Alan Bond. The news drew wide criticism amongst art dealers and specialists who saw the record as a manipulated benchmark, a month after the crash of the stock market.

[35] See "Portrait of the 1980's; What the Rich and Famous Did to Be So Noticed," *The New York Times*, December 24, 1989, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/24/weekinreview/portrait-of-the-1980-s-what-the-rich-and-famous-did-to-be-so-noticed.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed May 15, 2012). In November 1988 Picasso's record was broken three times. On Nov. 10, the artist's cubist work *La Cage d' Oiseaux* sold at Sotheby's in New York for $ 15.4 million, doubling the previous record of $ 7.6 million set a year ago. Then, on Nov. 14, *Maternité'* brought $ 24.75 million at Christie's, again in New York. On November 28th at Christie's in London, Picasso's *Acrobat and Young Harlequin* sold at for $ 38.45 million. See Heidi Berry, "Discerning Tastes; An Art Market That Won't Dare to Buy Dull," *The Washington Post*, December 1, 1988, Final Edition, sec. Home; Collector Notes, T11. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 15, 2012). In 1989 records were broken by Cezanne ($17.3 million), Manet ($26.4 million) and again Picasso ($51.3 million).
On November 18, 1989 Christie's set a record for a single art auction - $ 232.4 million. Two days later, Sotheby's topped Christie's single night sale record with a total of $269.5 million. Christie's record was set in spite of 30% failure of the 97 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works to meet the minimum reserves. See Michelle Osborn, "Art Prices at Peak?; Costly Art May Be Losing Its Bloom," *USA Today*, November 20, 1989, Final Edition, sec. Money, 1B. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 5, 2012).

[36] Reif, "Pollock Work Brings a Record Price."

and Christie's, profits detailed $2 and $2.5 million respectively."[37] Prices for artists such as Rufino Tamayo, Fernando Botero, Wifredo Lam, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo rose steadily through the decade, sustained the first years by a base of nationalist collectors supporting the art of their own countries.[38] In less than a decade, the November 1990 auction at Sotheby's set a new record for Latin American art with a sale of 226 lots that totaled $12.4 million.[39] As figures for Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary art started stagnating, the continuing growth of the Latin American market was attributed to international museum surveys and to a diversified clientele looking for art not yet overpriced.[40]

Critics of the Boom were early to recognize the importance of the auction house market in heightening Latin American art's visibility.[41] However, again, they expressed reservations about its impact in creating easily packaged notions of Latin American art.[42] They also doubted the sustainability of the market and its long-term impact in the valuation of Latin American and

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[37] On the rise of the Latin American art market during the 1990s see Lorenza Muñoz, "The Market for Latin American Art Takes Off: Sales Boom Is Linked to International Awareness of Works," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1999, http://articles.latimes.com/1999/may/31/entertainment/ca-42706 (Accessed May 1st, 2012).

[38] Rita Reif, "Auctions: Latin Records Likely," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1990, sec. Section C; Weekend Desk. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 1st, 2012).

[39] Ninety-one lots went unsold. The record did not, however, achieve the estimate returns of the sale, which were set between $13 million to $16.4 million. Rita Reif, "Auctions," *The New York Times*, November 23, 1990, sec. C; Weekend Desk, 17. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 1st, 2012).

[40] The Latin American market was one of the few to remain strong during the 1990s slowdown of the U.S. economy and instability of the Japanese stock market. The diversified base of buyers included Japanese, Europeans, and Americans. Peter C. Elsworth, "The Art Boom: Is It Over, or Is This Just a Correction?," *The New York Times*, December 16, 1990, sec. Business, http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/16/business/the-art-boom-is-it-over-or-is-this-just-a-correction.html (accessed May 16, 2012).

[41] Goldman, "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin America."

[42] Goldman, "Latin American Arts' U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth"; Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic,'" 67. Ramírez attributes the implication of primitivism in "the fantastic" paradigm upheld in *Art of the Fantastic*, to "the present exhaustion of the moderninst tradition and the art market's transformation of the art object into the ultimate financial instrument. Like the primitive and naïve artists of high modernism, Latin American/Latino artists have emerged as substitutes for the role of pure artistic agent who reclaims value for a debased Western art."

Latino art in the art mainstream.[43] Beyond these expressions, little has been written about the role of this highly complex business where many agents (i.e. the seller on consignment, the buyer, and the auction house/mediator) and variables (e.g. the artists' market value, availability and demand of goods, provenance, national and foreign investment, currency strength) lead the way into defining a product, in this case, a regionally-named art category that would group the art of many countries. The following sections in this chapter explore how Latin American and Latino art in New York were redefined in the public eye in the 1980s, between the poles of an elite able to amass art for their private collections and raise the value of certain artists, and its opposite, an emerging circuit of non-commercial venues committed to showcasing diverse aspects of Latin American and Latino art.

4.3 Breaking into the Market: the Nature of Auction's Anointment

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the total of tonight's auction has exceeded one million dollars." Such were the words of the auctioneer of Sotheby Parke Bernet on the night of Wednesday, October 17, 1979, at what has been recorded as the first Latin American art sale ever.[44] The 137-lots auction totaled $1,091,350. The audience broke into applause. In an article titled "Auction Season Moves into High Gear," published in *The New York Times* [Fig. 4-4], Edward Lee Cave, senior vice president of Sotheby's, described the event in the following words: "The standing-

[43] Goldman, "Latin American Art U.S. Explosion: Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth," 324.

[44] Mary-Anne Martin, interview by Taína B. Caragol, May 13, 2010. Sotheby Parke Bernet, a.k.a. Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., was the name used by the current auction house Sotheby's until the early 1980s. The name reflected Sotheby's New York acquisition in 1967 of Parke Bernet Galleries, the largest fine art auction house in the United States until then. Sotheby's is originally an English auction house established in the 18th century. Today it is a multinational corporation with headquarters in New York. The full name Sotheby Parke Bernet appears in auction catalogs and occasionally in the press, which most often shortens the name to Sotheby's. See http://www.sothebys.com/en/inside/locations-worldwide/new-york/overview.html (accessed November 12, 2012).

room-only audience witnessed the birth of a new market."[45] Having proved to be worth the risk, Sotheby's immediately started bi-annual sales and in 1980 it created a Latin American Art Department.[46] So did Christie's a year later.[47]

The market had its ups and downs through its first decade. But overall, it remained one of promise, as signaled by another watershed event in 1991, when Frida Kahlo's *Diego and I* (1949) [Fig. 4-5] became the first Latin American artwork to sell for over one million-dollars.[48] By that time, the mounting frequency of international exhibitions of Latin American art, the interest in it from the curatorial and academic sectors, and its market presence had facilitated the relative consolidation of a mainstream interest in the field. As this dissertation argues, New York was a main center of that growing consolidation. In the city's local art system—i.e. its museums, alternative art spaces, auction houses and galleries, and in academic institutions—Latin American art was becoming increasingly a presence.[49] This "becoming a presence" was beneficial for the field in so far as it gradually helped the cultural diversification of New York's

[45] To put the final figure in context, auction sales of Impressionist and Modern Art for the 1978-1979 auction season (September-June) at the same house registered $22.3 million. Rita Reif, "Auctions: Sales Rebound for Modern Art," *The New York Times*, July 13, 1979, sec. 3. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed January 10, 2011).

[46] Ron Scherer, "Sotheby Hones the Fine Art of Selling Fine Art," *Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)*, October 22, 1980, sec. Financial. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 1st, 2012); Rita Reif, "Record Art Sales and Hint of Dip," *The New York Times*, August 22, 1980, sec. C; Weekend Desk. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed June 27, 2012).

[47] Rita Reif, "Auctions; Sales Focus on Latin America," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1981, sec. C; Weekend Desk. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May 1st, 2012).

[48] Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age." The painting was bought by Mary-Anne Martin herself, who had left Sotheby's shortly after founding its Latin American art Department in order to become a private dealer of Latin American art.

[49] This has been confirmed by interviewees such as Susana Torruella Leval, Edward Sullivan, Julia Herzberg, Mary-Anne Martin, and Luis Cancel, who were part of this moment in different capacities, as curators, graduate students working on Latin American art subjects, professors introducing the first courses on modern and Latin American art, auction house specialists, and museum directors.

art scene, and also critical discourse on modern and contemporary art.[50] On the other hand, visibility under the specific rubric "Latin American art" reinforced a canon of modern Latin American art, thereby branding the field aesthetically and stylistically. The auction house market had a major role in that process.

The rising auction market for Latin American art benefitted from the numerous shows in New York and across the country as much as it fueled exhibition activity. This does not seem atypical. Since the 19th century, auction sales have played a main role in the system of institutions that legitimize artists and art fields.[51] Their legitimizing power was, however, the ratifying type.[52] This points to a particularity of the Latin American art market, which started through the secondary market (i.e. auction houses), before it gained a foothold in the primary market (i.e. galleries and dealers). The following paragraphs address this phenomenon.

In the ladder of institutions that legitimize art, since the 19th century, the primary market—galleries and dealers—have preceded auction houses in signaling the pertinence of an artist's work. [53] As direct mediators between artists and collectors, a dealer's decision to

[50] Chapter Six argues that the broader visibility gained by Latin American art through debates between its showcasing and the mainstream revealed a critical mass of people interested in the subject, and invigorated the platforms for intellectual exchange by scholars of Latino and Latin American art.

[51] Public art auctions originated in the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century and spread to England, France and Germany between the turn of that century and the next. By the nineteenth century, they were part of a set system that became fundamental not only to popularize the appreciation of art as a new form of urban cultured leisure, but also to establish and drive up its economic value. This infrastructure was comprised of individual and collective exhibitions, well-advertised *vernissages*, illustrated catalogs, and newspaper art criticism. For a background on the emergence of art auctions and their place within art's legitimizing infrastructure between the 18th and 19th centuries, see Jeremy Tanner, "Introduction: Sociology and Art History" in Jeremy Tanner ed., *The Sociology of Art: a Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Carol Gibson-Wood, "Picture Consumption in London at the End of the Seventeenth Century," *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 3 (2002): 491–500; Nicholas Green, "Dealing in Temperaments: Economic Transformation of the Artistic Field in France During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Critical Readings in Impressionism and pos-Impressionism: An Anthology*, ed. Mary Tompkins Lewis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 31–47.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Green, "Dealing in Temperaments: Economic Transformation of the Artistic Field in France During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century"; Peter Watson, *From Manet to Manhattan: The Rise of the Modern Art*

represent an artist confers a first degree of approval to the artist's work, and a belief that it can attract admirers and buyers.[54] These individual entrepreneurs select artists based on a variety of criteria.[55] They market their art withholding 40% to 50% of the sales price for each work. A market (i.e. a constituency of possible buyers) for the artists they represent might not be readily available, but their job is to build one by making artists known and desirable through exhibitions, publications, and networking.[56]

In contrast, the auction house, as part of the "secondary market," has two degrees of separation from artists.[57] Works sold are not fresh from the studio. They come with provenance, i.e. a history of belonging, which can highly influence the final price of the work. The auction house market presupposes, therefore, a primary market. In the secondary market artists earn no

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Market (Random House, 1992).There are some important distinctions to make here. Galleries and dealers constitute mainly a primary market, nonetheless, some of them also do business in the secondary market, i.e. they sell work that has belonged to collectors. For the sake of clarity, I will only address galleries and dealers here as participants in the primary market. Another distinction is that not all dealers are gallery owners, however all gallery owners are dealers. For the sake of readability, I will henceforth subsume gallery owners under dealers in this explanation.

On another note, this statement is only about the market as a legitimizing institution. Academia also constitutes one. Its role as a first or second legitimizing step vis-à-vis the market is not always constant and needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Academic validation does not always translate into market validation, and vice-versa.

[54] The measure of this first commercial legitimization of the artist will depend on a variety of conditions including the prestige of the gallery, and the roster of artists it represents, the city where it is based and on its base of clients, which might include well-known private collectors and museums.

[55] The criteria can be as diverse as belonging to a certain movement, generation, country or culture, or following a stylistic trend.

[56] Since the 1990s international art fairs have become major platforms of legitimization where galleries wanting to compete in the global art market must exhibit their artists. A gallery's presence in prestigious art fairs such as Art Miami Basel, FIAC, or Arco, secures visibility amongst art aficionados, collections, and international curators, increasing the possibility for artists to be included in museum exhibitions, biennials, and public, and private art collections. Art fairs have become essential institutions of the globalized art world and *de facto* multipliers of followers for certain artists.

[57] The auction house is not the only outlet of the secondary market. Galleries and dealers that sell work on consignment or bought from previous collectors also constitute the secondary market.

sales percentage. The benefit they see is the reward of their works achieving high prices.[58] The fundamental differences between the primary and the secondary market have implications on the kind of legitimization each provides. The legitimization auction houses confer is a second-degree approval on the value of a work of art not just as a statement by the artist, but as a collectible.

Auction houses are often businesses that sell a variety of goods, among which art is one. Their scale varies from local mid-size to large international. Unlike gallery transactions, auction sales are public affairs. In art auctions, sales of multiple consigned lots organized under a selling category (usually matching an art historical period) are marketed to a room of buyers who compete for objects in ascending bids from an established minimum price.

Every lot has a high and a low estimate. These are determined based on a variety of factors that include the artist's previous auction records or value in the primary market, size, quality and condition of the artwork, and provenance (i.e. who has owned the work and where it has been exhibited).[59] Due to their event nature, auctions provide only a few hours in which to sell an artwork.[60] To entice purchases, a catalog of the lots is circulated months in advance, and a preview exhibition is organized a few days before the sale. However, whether lots will sell and for how much, remains largely contingent. Unsold lots return to their owners, meaning financial losses for an institution that invested hours in research to find quality consignments and covered traveling, insurance, shipping expenses, and in some cases guarantor fees, in addition to other

[58] This is also a complex subject, as sometimes the prices of works for living artists rise to unsustainable heights in the auction house market prompting their devaluation. For this reason, the auction house market has dealt mostly with artists who are no longer living. Ana Sokoloff, interview by Taína Caragol, MP3, February 26, 2010.

[59] According to Mary-Anne Martin, auction estimates represent a range, indicating for the benefit of prospective buyers, the minimum and maximum amount that a lot is expected to fetch. These prices are often exceeded and just as often not realized at all. They are educated "guesstimates." In the case of the first Latin American sale they were truly "guesstimates," as there were no previous sales records to consult. Martin to Caragol, "Answers Re Latin American Auctions."

[60] Though many private sales of unsold lots happen afterward.

substantial costs like the production and circulation of the auction catalog. For that reason, auction houses try to minimize risk. The art they sell generally has an assured market, established by the primary market, and through museum exhibitions and scholarly research.

The million-dollar sale at the end of that fall evening in 1979 was surprising because Latin American art as a category was, indeed, completely new to the market. Until that moment, artists from Latin America in New York remained mostly outside the commercial art circuit, with the exception of a few such as Rufino Tamayo, Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam, Sebastián Matta, and Frida Kahlo, who had been shown by dealers such as Julien Levy and Pierre Matisse in the '30s.[61] Since then, they appeared sporadically in Modern and contemporary auctions, but the sums they fetched were commonly drowned by those of more established European or U.S.-American artists.[62] Between the '60s and early '80s a handful of galleries of Latin American art were established but these did not amount to the critical mass that warrants a regional auction house market.[63] So whence the surprising meteoric rise of the Latin American secondary market?

[61] Martin, interview by Taína Caragol; Susan Theran, *Leonard's Price Index of Latin American Art at Auction* (Newton, Mass.: Auction Index, Inc., 1999). Leonard's Price Index lists many of the sale records for these artists prior to the creation of a Latin American art market in the 1979. The cover lot for the Americas Society's benefit auction sale—Wifredo Lam's *Eggue Orissi,L'herbe des dieux* 1943, had been initially sold by Pierre Matisse Gallery in 1965, New York. See Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc, *Modern Latin American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture.* (New York [N.Y.]: Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., 1979).

[62] Martin, interview.

[63] Established in the 1960s and still working today, Bonino Gallery (also with sites in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro), had from early on an international roster that included Nam June Paik, Armando Morales, Marcelo Bonevardi, Edgar Negret, Mary Bauermeister. From the 1960s to approximately 1970 Galería Zegrí (first located on 10 E 8th Street and later in 152 E 79th Street) represented a number of Latin American contemporary artists, including Mario Carreño, Fernando Maza, and Omar Rayo. Malborough Gallery renowned today for its high-end-produced exhibitions of internationally-established Latin American artists, was responsible for establishing a market for many of them in the 1970s, including Fernando Botero, and Claudio Bravo. Rafael Ferrer was one of a few Latin American artists represented by a major dealer of American art, Leo Castelli.

4.3.1 An Unexpected Million? The CIAR/AS and The First Latin American Art Auction

The earliest-recorded auction of Latin American art in 1979 was not an ordinary one. It was a benefit auction for the CIAR/AS [Fig. 4-5], the most prominent showcase of Latin American art in New York in the 1970s. As discussed in Chapter Two, the institution had been conceived in 1965 as a cultural embassy to spread knowledge in the U.S. about the Hemisphere, and to secure favorable conditions for U.S. private investment, particularly in Latin America. That night, the list of lots read like a catalog of artists that had been showcased by its gallery. According to Beverly Adams: "Of the eighty-seven total artists exhibited and sold at the auction, sixty-one had already shown their works at the Center [CIAR/AS], and several of the twenty-six remaining who had not would do so later."[64] It included young, emerging, mid-career, and veteran artists, some better known that others. Among them were Ary Brizzi, Julio Alpuy, Ricardo Garabito, Eduardo MacEntyre, Rogelio Polesello, Carlos Rojas, Fernando de Szylszlo, and Omar Rayo. A team of people from the CIAR/AS and Sotheby Parke Bernet coordinated the sale. At Sotheby's, Mary-Anne Martin, chief of the house's Painting Department was in charge. On the side of the CIAR/AS, Lisa Palmer functioned as Auction Coordinator, and Barbara Duncan, a member and collaborator of the institution served as the Chairwoman of the Art Selection Committee.[65] According to Martin, Duncan amassed most of the lots in Latin America

[64] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own," 32.

[65] See Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc, *Modern Latin American paintings, drawings, and sculpture* (New York: Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., 1979).Palmer's and Duncan's roles at the benefit are specified in its catalog. In a way Duncan epitomized a sector of connoisseurs and Latin American art enthusiasts who were regulars at the institution. She had become interested in Latin American art through the business dealings of her husband John C. Duncan. From 1947 to 1955 they spent several years in Lima, Peru. There and in trips around the region, she began collecting works. Back in New York she earned an MA in art history at New York University where she wrote two theses: one on colonial Peruvian art and one on the work of Joaquín Torres García. She was a life-long supporter of the CIAR/AS, where she curated exhibitions and lent works from her collection. See Holland Cotter, "Barbara Duncan, 82, an Art Historian," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2003, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/04/arts/barbara-duncan-82-an-art-historian.html. See also Stanton Catlin and Barbara Duncan, *Latin American Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of John and Barbara Duncan* (New York: The Center for Inter-American Relations, 1970).

from collectors and artists.[66] Some works had prestigious provenance, such as Rufino Tamayo's *The Smoker*, 1939, and Mario Carreño's *The Palm Grove*, 1947, both from the collection of David Rockefeller.[67] To make the sale stronger, Sotheby's brought from U.S. consigners some important works by well-known masters who had already a market presence, including Rivera, Lam, and Matta.[68] These lots would guarantee a minimum substantial benefit. The house also peppered the auction with works by living and dead contemporary artists with little or no market presence, but with solid oeuvres and careers. These included Leonora Carrington, Maria Martins, Jesús Rafael Soto, and Armando Reverón.[69] The majority of lots, however, were by artists who had never been at auction. This presented a challenge for the auctioneers, who had nearly no basis on which to estimate the sales value of the works. The star lot, Diego Rivera's *Potrait of Modesta,* 1939 [Fig. 4-6], the artist's niece as a child sold for $130,000, a record price for the artist and for Latin American art.[70] Other sales that broke previous records for their creators included that of Lam's painting *Eggue Orisi, L'herbe des dieux*, which sold for $104,500. This painting had been reproduced in the cover of the auction catalog [Fig. 4-7]. The work had been painted on the same year as *The Jungle* and it had a similar composition with a foreground covered with foliage and obstructing cane stalks, and personifications of African deities appearing through the flora. This painting had been part of a touring exhibition that originated at

[66] Martin, interview.

[67] Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc, *Modern Latin American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture.*

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Rita Reif, "Auction Season Moves Into High Gear; Portrait Brings $100,000," *The New York Times*, October 21, 1979, 60. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed May, 15, 2012).

MoMA titled *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage* (1968).[71] Botero's *Young Girl With Bouquet* [Fig. 4-8], a rosy portrait of a girl holding a bouquet of flowers, also set a record for the artist selling for $53,900.[72] Sixty percent of the buyers present at the auction were Latin American, and the rest were from the United States and Europe. However, significantly, U.S. buyers bought 55% of the lots, Latin Americans 40% and Europeans the remaining 5%.[73]

Despite being conceived as a one-shot affair, the CIAR/AS's benefit inaugurated Latin American art as a sales/collecting category. The title of the sale, *Modern Latin American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture*, was loosely descriptive. According to Martin, it only intended to designate the geographic origin or long-term residence of artists in the lots and to attract buyers interested in that region.[74] It was also tied to the exhibition program at the CIAR/AS.[75] The diversity in media among the lots mirrored the institution's exhibition practice in modern and contemporary art. As documented in the sales catalog, optical art, constructivism, gestural abstraction, figuration, and conceptual art shared the floor that night.[76] Among first-timers at auction no substantial difference in sales-value favored any style. For example, Rogelio Polesello's geometric painting *Triangle*, 1974, [Fig. 4-9] sold for $2,200, Eduardo MacEntyre *Tension over the Earth*, 1976, [Fig. 4-10], composed following his principle of generative art

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[71] Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc, *Modern Latin American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture.*

[72] Theran, *Leonard's Price Index of Latin American Art At Auction*.

[73] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own," 33.

[74] Martin, interview by Taína Caragol.

[75] In the catalog, a letter addressed to Ms. Martin and signed by Roger D. Stone, President of the Americas Society, Sharon Schultz, Acting Director of Visual Arts, and Lisa Palmer, preceded the list of lots. The letter detailed the aim of the sale—planned since two years—as to furthering the objective of: "increasing knowledge in the U.S. of the Art of Latin America and at supporting their own exhibition programs." See Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc, *Modern Latin American paintings, drawings, and sculpture.*

[76] Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc, *Modern Latin American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture.* Figurative lots belonged mostly to canonic modern artists, like at the CIAR/AS exhibition program. The exception was Botero, whose importance was rising as a contemporary figurative artist.

with an intricate net of lines made through the repetition of forms in consecutive and opposed directions sold for $3,850.[77] Armando Morales's *Manikins* [Fig. 4-11], 1976, a mixed media on canvas with headless manikins and cut-out lines recalling Francis Picabia's sexual machines, went for $6,050.[78] In the end most lots sold for under $10,000.[79]

This first auction catalog conveys the impression of a Latin American art with an established modern art tradition derived from Western culture and incorporating references to indigenous cultures and local subjects. Like its European and U.S. American counterparts, Latin American contemporary art is arguably impossible to pin down. To speak of it as a category without being reductive or myopic requires inclusiveness as a grouping principle. No other way can one bring under the same rubric José Luis Cuevas' Kafkaesque drawing *Meat Market in Hamburg* (1973) [Fig. 4-12], depicting human faces in apparent metamorphosis, and a collaborative work *Venus and Her Mirror* (1978) [Fig. 4-13], by Claudio Bravo and Juan Downey fusing painting and video in the image of a reclining odalisque, her back facing us, with a *putto* holding a TV in lieu of a mirror, projecting in an infinite *mise-en-abîme*, the image of the odalisque watching herself on TV. The arbitrariness of this comparison could go for any number of postwar lots in the sale. As a communications device, the catalog tacitly conveyed the idea of a Latin American art indifferent to political strife, particularly in countries that were undergoing dictatorial regimes, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the rumors of support from the U.S. No U.S. Latino artists were included at the sale. Replicating the gallery's scope and omissions and including so many lots by artists who had been shown there put the institution's imprimatur on

[77] Theran, *Leonard's Price Index of Latin American Art At Auction*. Interestingly Polesello and MacEntyre's works were both acrylic on canvas and had identical dimensions, which suggest they were perhaps made in collaboration.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Reif, "Auction Season Moves Into High Gear; Portrait Brings $100,000."

the sale and encouraged purchases, helping the night's outcome.[80] But going back to the debut, how unexpected was that evening's sales total?

4.3.2 Sowing Seeds on Fertile Ground: Cultivating a Market for Latin American Art

The sale's estimate spread between $777,000 and $1,069,500.[81] The final sale surpassed the high estimate by some $20,000. Perhaps the million-dollar mark was unexpected, but substantial profit was anticipated. Politicians, diplomats, and business people, in addition to art lovers constituted CIAR/AS's habitués. This constituency guaranteed in no small way the success of the sale, bringing people with buying power who were familiar with modern and contemporary art from Latin America, for whom collecting was or would become a status symbol, a way of stating their cultural capital. According to *The New York Times*, collectors and dealers from throughout South America and from all over the United States attended the first auction.[82] "David Rockefeller came and stayed to the very end—and he bought," said Mr. Cave.[83] The institution's founder set a good example, and his celebrity presence certainly contributed to the feverish atmosphere.

The first auction of Latin American Art in New York evokes in many respects a public relations event. To secure profitability, the waters had been tested in another respect as well. An important sector of the intended buyers had been identified—and cultivated—through a series of

[80] I would speculate that the sales' success, in turn, strengthened the prestige of the CIAR/AS program, perhaps widening its audience. To my knowledge, no research has been conducted on this subject.

[81] Martin, interview.

[82] Rita Reif, "Auction Season Moves Into High Gear; Portrait Brings $100,000," *The New York Times*, October 21, 1979.

[83] Ibid.

successful auctions of Mexican Art that Ms. Martin organized annually since 1977.[84] In her trips to Mexico for Sotheby's, Martin had recognized a collecting constituency with buying power and national pride, one that sought to expand their collections of works by Mexican modern artists. In the U.S., Mexican art had been strongly supported and collected during the first half of the 20th century, as explained in Chapter Two. New York had been a main center of this support. Mexican artists like Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco had entered the canon of Modern art through their inclusion in exhibitions and collections at major museums like MoMA. However, with the rise of Abstract Expressionism, Mexican art in general had fallen out of fashion. For an auctioneer this spells potential: people and institutions holding on to paintings that once had value and might have it again. Private and institutional collectors needed only to be identified and enticed to become consignors.

Auctions are places where possessions change hands. The public nature of these economic transactions, when successful, leads to a gradual increase of the market value of works by particular artists, in tandem with their desirability and their interest for curators and scholars. While for some this was the perfect opportunity to get rid of works in storage, for others it was the time to acquire and repatriate them, while hoping to securely invest their money in art at a time of sudden economic growth and inflation in Mexico.[85] Mexican auctions that took place between 1977 and 1978 effectively established a base of buyers, many of whom came from that country.[86] Major consignments came from U.S. museums, individuals, and corporations.[87] The

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[84] Martin, interview.

[85] Alan Riding, "Inflation Gives a Big Push to Art in Mexico," *The New York Times*, July 27, 1981, sec. C; Cultural Desk, 13. http://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/27/arts/inflation-gives-big-push-to-art-in-mexico.html (accessed February 5, 2011).

[86] In the 1977 Mexican auction, Mexican collectors bought 40% of lots. Rita Reif, "Auctions," *The New York Times*, March 1978, sec. C21, http://www.nytimes.com/1991/09/13/arts/auctions.html?scp=13&sq=%22mary-anne+martin%22&st=nyt (accessed February 5, 2011).

last of these auctions, held in May 1979, totaled $1.3 million.[88] When Mexican art was folded into the Latin American art sale later that year, the strong support of Mexican buyers buoyed the overall sales category. According to Mary-Anne Martin, at the first Latin American sale, Mexicans made up to 40% of all buyers at Sotheby's.[89] 60% of all buyers at Christie's in 1981 were from Latin America, according to Lisa Palmer, now Chief of this house's Latin American Department.[90] Even after the fall of the Mexican Peso in 1982, until its rebound in 1990, major Mexican masters were able to maintain their dollar-nominated prices and keep Latin American auctions afloat, thanks to the undiminished buying power of the wealthiest collectors.[91] U.S. American buyers at auction also favored Mexican artists, whose work and trajectories were better known than those of other Latin American artists.[92]

Besides the availability of capital amongst Mexico's social and business elite, other factors sustained the success of Mexican art at auction through the decade. These included the

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[87] Ibid. An article announcing the second auction mentions consignments from Alice Bache from the stockbroker family, the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Los Angeles County Museum, Arthur Murray, the dancer, and the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporations.

[88] Rita Reif, "Auctions: Sales Rebound for Modern Art," *The New York Times*, July 13, 1979, sec. 3, 20. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed January 10, 2011).

[89] Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age."

[90] According to Palmer, in Latin American auctions held at Christie's at the turn of the 1990s, Latin American collectors comprised 44% of all buyers, while the rest were North Americans, Europeans, and Japanese. Reif, "Auctions: Latin Records Likely."

[91] The Mexican peso fell in 1982 as a result of a decade of unsustainable foreign money borrowing. For a recount of the conditions that led to the fall see Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Sixth Edition, 280-283. However, prices for Rivera and Tamayo stood exceptionally healthy, leading the rise of the Latin American market. For records on these artists see Theran, *Leonard's price index of Latin American art at auction.*
The devaluation of the peso drove banks out of the auction sales rooms. In the late 1970s and the early 1980s Mexican banks were main buyers of Mexican art at auction. Banco Nacional de Mexico and Multibanco Comermex built highly-regarded art collections. In September 1982, as banks were nationalized in response to the crisis, their collections were absorbed by the Government's Institute of Fine Arts, and banks left the auction market. The gallery art market in Mexico also suffered from the devaluation, as middle-class collectors suddenly could not afford the prices for artists whose works were quoted in dollars. See By Alan Riding, Special to *The New York Times*, "Economy Deals Blow to Mexican Art," *The New York Times*, October 1982, sec. C; Cultural Desk, 21.

[92] Martin, "The Latin American Auction Market Comes of Age."

retrospective exhibition of Rufino Tamayo organized by the Guggenheim Museum in 1979, and the well-publicized opening of a museum in Mexico bearing his name in 1981, the traveling exhibition of Frida Kahlo and Tina Modotti at the Grey Art Gallery of New York University in 1982 and the publication of Hayden Herrera's best-selling biography on Kahlo in 1983. The CIAR/AS itself had several exhibitions of Mexican art, including *Manuel Álvarez Bravo* (1979), *Rufino Tamayo: Works on Paper* (1979), *Carlos Mérida* (1981), *Marius de Zayas* (1982), and *Aspects of Contemporary Mexican Painting* (1990).[93] The latter was held in the context of a flurry of exhibitions on the art of that country generated around the blockbuster show *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries,* which opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that same year.

In addition to Martin's recognition and early cultivation of an untapped Mexican market, another crucial condition for the establishment of the Latin American secondary market was the rise of the auction market itself. Auction reports in newspapers prior to 1970 are concentrated over May, June, and November. By the end of the '70s they start to appear three to four times a week, marking a change in consumption patterns and the increasingly important role of the auction house for private wealth management.[94] Besides Jewelry and Art sales reports—traditionally the most lucrative—many more objects were marketed and reported on, e.g. antique postcards, Persian rugs, American quilts, Native American pottery. New York was the center-stage of these developments. The secondary *art* market itself became highly profitable, to the point of rivaling the primary market.[95] In 1980 New York replaced London as the capital of the

[93] Anna Indych-López, "Between National and Transnational: Aspects of Exhibiting Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art at the Americas Society," in *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society*, ed. José Luis Falconi and Gabriela Rangel (New York: Americas Society, 2006), 84–99.

[94] This information is derived from an analysis of auction reports during the 1960s and 1970s in the digital archives of *The New York Times*, accessible at http://www.nytimes.com.

[95] Rita Reif, "How Auction Sales Are Transforming the Art world," *The New York Times*, July 27, 1980, sec. Section 2; Arts and Leisure Desk, 1. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/

art and antiques market.[96] This was a major event, as until the 1970s, auction houses were not considered respectable places to buy art in the U.S., according to Rita Reif, who as an auctions reporter started describing the new dynamics of the emerging industry.[97] The creation of specialty markets—among them Latin American art—was instrumental to broaden a base of buyers and enhance the status of auctions as trade platforms.

The new Latin American art market brought this art into focus in the mainstream media, among collectors, and—eventually—in academia.[98] Auction house previews became important venues for getting acquainted with the work of Modern Latin American masters. With their customary specialized essays on particular artists, auction catalogs started to nourish the meager Anglophone bibliography of Latin American art at the time.[99] According to Edward Sullivan, the first professor at New York University to teach a course on the Modern Art of Latin America, auction catalogs and previews became early on teaching tools for him, convinced of their usefulness in expanding the scope of his students' familiarity with the art of this extensive

(accessed January 10, 2011). According to Reif: "New York's two leading houses sold more painting and sculpture--$147.9 million-worth to be exact—during the season that has just ended than ever before in history. That large dollar figure reflects much more than mere inflation. It is about double the total for the 1978-1979 season and is expected to exceed for the first time the figures for the London Houses. It is also about half the amount sold by all of New York's art dealers put together. … Sotheby Parke Bernett and Christie's alone did about half as much business as several hundred art dealers, and if this trend continues at anything like the present furious pace, the auction houses will soon dominate, and transform, the art market."

[96] Rita Reif, "Art Auctions: 'Half Theater, Half Casino'," *The New York Times*, September 27, 1981, sec. 2. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed January 3, 2011). That year art auctions in New York brought $394 million in sales, compared to London's $324.7 million.

[97] Along with her auction reporting, in the late 1970s Reif started publishing articles that analyzed changes in art market dynamics and the rise in popularity of buying at auction.

[98] According to Mary-Anne Martin, she was the first one to persuade Edward Sullivan to teach a course on Latin American art at the IFA. Martin, interview.

[99] *The Art at Auction: The Year at Sotheby's 1980-1981* catalog, contains the first general essay on Latin American painting in an auction house catalog.

region, and stimulating research interests among them.[100] But as a Latin American art collecting category emerged, how did the market inform public perceptions about it?

4.3.3 Latin American Art: An Emerging Brand

A requisite of effective marketing is good branding. Sales revenues are highly dependent on a clear and enticing image of the product to be sold. The auction house market is no exception. In his analysis of the auction house market for Contemporary art, economist Don Thomson explains:

> Branding adds personality, distinctiveness, and value to a product or service. It also offers risk avoidance and trust. … Branding is the end result of the experiences a company creates with its customers and the media over a long period of time—and of the clever marketing and public relations that go into creating and reinforcing those experiences.[101]

Branding determines sales, as it provides a sense of self-assuredness for collectors willing to spend large amounts of money for goods whose assigned symbolic value for humanity is to be determined as an equivalent in monetary value through the hectic and contingent process of public bidding.[102] As Thompson suggests, branding takes shape through multiple vectors. Perpetual rivals Christie's and Sotheby's—the world's foremost auction houses—are themselves a brand. In Thompson's words: "They connote status, quality, and celebrity bidders with impressive wealth. Their branded identities distinguish these auction houses, and the art they sell, from their competitors."[103] Buyers at auction do not only want to acquire a work of art. They also

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[100] Sullivan, interview.

[101] Don Thompson, *The $12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 12.

[102] For an incisive analysis of market price and symbolic value as contradictory forces determining the meaning and importance of a work of art see Isabelle Graw, *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture,* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010).

[103] Thompson, *The $12 Million Stuffed Shark*, 13.

want to share in the social standing and glamour the purchase will provide.[104] As Thompson argues, powerhouse museums such as MoMA and the Metropolitan Museum are also brands.[105] So are showcasing venues of smaller size but with important trajectories and reputations in specific art fields, such as the CIAR/AS. These institutions constitute what art historian and theoretician Isabelle Graw calls "the market of knowledge."[106] Although they do not take part in the commercialization of artwork, their endorsement of artists or art categories provides branding and marketability. In auction catalogs, each lot has a record of exhibitions next to it, attesting to the important value of the market of knowledge for commercial marketing. The reiterated success of the branded artists or artistic categories in the commercial market and the market of knowledge helps shaping the image of the field, building a "character of distinctiveness," to extrapolate Thompson's words. Individual patronage and collecting also play a role in branding, particularly when important public figures or celebrities are involved. Provenance, i.e. the record of ownership of a work of art, is thus not only a proof of authenticity; it can significantly raise market value. Consumers from the commercial and the knowledge market are active participants in this process, which in the case of Latin American art was triggered at the CIAR/AS benefit and continued through the 1980s. Their interests and buying trends can directly impact the supply's value and availability.

A clear example of these dynamics that is pertinent to the branding of Latin American art is the so-called "Fridamanía" set off by the publication of the artist's biography and the

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Isabelle Graw, *High Price*, 11. Other institutions, organisms or events that conform the "market of knowledge" as defined by Graw include large-scale exhibitions, symposia, magazines, art academies, and publications.

exhibition of her work at the Grey Art Gallery.[107] Soon after these two events, in 1985 the Mexican government decreed Kahlo's work cultural patrimony, declaring illegal the export of her works into the international market, and effectively limiting the offer to works that came from collections outside of Mexico. This propelled prices upward.[108] Works by the artist started appearing regularly at auction and commanding some of the highest prices amongst Latin American artists. As she became a cult figure of the 1980s, embodying important principles for diverse communities, including the affirmation of cultural difference, sexual freedom, and feminism, her works also gained visibility in exhibitions. Frida Kahlo became overnight a star worthy of blockbuster crowds. The pop singer Madonna started collecting her work.[109] The surrealist sensibility in Kahlo's self-portraits, coupled with her use of an iconography of the tropics (with monkeys, parrots, and *strelitzie reginae* or bird of paradise flowers) and her folk *Tehuana* dress, branded her own artwork, and arguably Mexican, and Latin American art.[110]

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[107] Hayden Herrera, "Art View; Why Frida Kahlo Speaks to the 90's," *The New York Times*, October 28, 1990, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/28/arts/art-view-why-frida-kahlo-speaks-to-the-90-s.html?scp=24&sq=%22mary-anne+martin%22&st=nyt (accessed February 5, 2012). Haydén Herrera's *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* sold almost 100,000 copies and triggered American and international fascination with this artist married several times to Diego Rivera.

[108] Rita Reif, "Auctions," *The New York Times*, September, 13, 1991, sec. Section C, 15. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/, accessed February 11, 2013.

[109] Herrera, "Art View; Why Frida Kahlo Speaks to the 90's." the late 1980s, Madonna bought from a private collector Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Monkey* (1940), for over one million dollars. In 1989, when Kahlo's oil on metal *Two Nudes in a Jungle* (1939) went for $506,000, dealer Mary-Anne Martin was the buyer and Madonna the under-bidder.

[110] The repercussions of Fridamanía have endured until the present, to the point that art patrons and curators of Latin American art felt the need in the 1990s to stress abstraction in Latin America (particularly constructivism and geometric abstraction) as a way to counter the "exoticizing" associations that Latin American art acquired by way of Kahlo. Venezuelan collector and international patron of Latin American art Patricia Phelps de Cisneros has provocatively declared herself as the "founder of a virtual club called the anti-Frida Kahlo Club." Working to combat what she calls "the Chiquita Banana" image by touring her exceptional collection of Latin American geometric abstraction around the Americas and supporting this tradition in main museums such as MoMA. If her effort is surely laudable, its rhetoric of opposition to figuration, color and drama in painting has very much prompted a polarization of the Latin American art field. On Phelps de Cisneros' chosen mission of changing U.S. conceptions of Latin American art see Celia Sredni de Birbragher, "Patricia Phelps De Cisneros," *Art Nexus*, July 2000, 80-86. For an overview of the field's polarization and its agents in museums see Arthur Lubow, "After Frida," *The New*

The stylistic diversity at the CIAR/AS 1979 benefit remained through Latin American art auctions during the 1980s. Catalogs attest of recurring sales of lots by Jesús Rafael Soto, Rogelio Polesello, Armando Reverón, Joaquín Torres García and Candido Portinari, for instance. Between the first sale and its consecutives, there was a remarkable broadening base of foundational figures of Modern Latin American art whose exposure in the U.S. had not matched that of their best-known Mexican counterparts or their peers aligned with Surrealism. Among them were Pedro Figari, Xul Solar, and Emilio Pettoruti who first appeared at Sotheby's November auction of 1980.[111] Among these, Pettoruti broke the record previously set by Rivera in 1979 with his cubist composition *Quintet* [Fig. 4-14] selling for $190,000.[112] Other modern and contemporary figures whose works were marketed in the first auctions included Amelia Peláez at Sotheby's May auction of 1981, Emiliano di Cavalcanti at Christies in May 1981, Tarsila do Amaral at Christie's May auction in 1986, the Lithuanian Jewish exile in Brazil, Lasar Segall, at the November sale at Philips New York in 1985, and Francisco Oller at Sotheby's in May 1988.[113] At the same time, through the '80s many auctions included works by young

York Times, March 23, 2008, sec. Magazine, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/23/magazine/23ramirez-t.html (June 27, 2012).

[111] Edward J. Sullivan and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Argentina), *Emilio Pettoruti (1892-1971)* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Pettoruti : Asociación Amigos del Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes : Marca Editoria : Distributed by Asuntoimpreso, 2004); Sullivan, "Art Worlds of Nueva York." Pettoruti had a successful solo exhibition at the National Academy of Design in 1943, and in that decade his works entered the collections of MoMA and the San Francisco Museum of Art. He was also included in Stanton L. Catlin's *Latin American Art Since Independence*, and *Artists of the Western Hemipshere: Precursosrs of Modernism 1860-1930* (CIAR/AS, 1967). He had attained recognition, but was not a mainstream figure in the way of Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam, or Roberto Matta, for example.

[112] Reut, "Cubist Work Sells for $190,000," *The Globe and Mail*, November 8, 1980. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed June 20, 2012).

[113] Theran, *Leonard's Price Index of Latin American Art At Auction*.

contemporary artists known mainly to their countries and with trajectories still in the making.[114] This practice, less common but still ongoing, accounts for numerous living artists who have made their debut and farewell in one or two auctions since 1979.[115]

Because of this diversity, within the frequency of auction activity, there were relatively few artists who "made the news." A survey of articles on the Latin American art market during the 1980s in media including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *The Financial Post* (Canada), *The Mail* (Canada), and *The Independent* (London), reveals an unsurprising focus on artists who fetched the highest prices at evening sales and on those who broke auction records. Excluding the phenomenon of Kahlo's marketing success and embrace by popular culture, Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, Wifredo Lam, Roberto Matta and Fernando Botero were the most successful Latin American artists at auction during the establishment of this regional market. Among them Rivera held most often the Latin American artwork record price.[116] Close to the end of the decade, in November 1989, Botero took the title from him when his *Protestant Family*, 1969, sold for $715,000. Six months later it was then seized by Remedios Varo, when *Toward the Tower*, 1961 [Fig. 4-15], fetched $825,000 at

[114] According to Ana Sokoloff, (President, Christie's Latin American art Department, 1996 -2004) this phenomenon often makes Latin American sales uneven in the quality of works. Sokoloff, interview.

[115] Ary Brizzi was one who was present at the first sale and never reappeared at auction. Ricardo Garabito appeared at the first sale, and did not reappear until 2008; Ricardo Yrarrazaval, appeared at auction in 1979 and in 1983 to never again reappear. Theran, *Leonard's price index of Latin American art at auction.*

[116] Reif, "Auctions: Sales Rebound for Modern Art"; Reif, "Auction Season Moves Into High Gear; Portrait Brings $100,000"; Rita Reif, "Elusive Old Masters," *The New York Times*, June 1, 1984, sec. Section C; Weekend Desk; Reif, "Auctions"; "Briefly: Diego Rivera Work Sets World Record," *The Globe and Mail* (Canada, May 22, 1987), n.p. http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (June 20, 2012). Rivera broke the record price for Latin American art in 1979 with his painting *Modesta*, which sold for $130,000. In 1980 the record was rewritten with the sale of Petorutti's *Quintet*, for $190,000. In May 1981 it quickly belonged again to Rivera, when his *The Flowered Barge* (1931), sold for $220,000; and was rewritten in December of that year when Tamayo's *The Smile* (1946) sold for $250,000. In November 1983, Rivera's cubist portrait *Ramón Gómez de la Serna* (1915) sold for $308,000 at Christie's. A year later, the record was re-written at Sotheby's with the sale of Rivera's *Flower Vendor* (1941), for $429,000. In 1987, *Girl with Sunflowers* (1941) by Rivera re-wrote again the highest price paid for a Latin American artwork, sold at Christie's for $495,000. That record was broken in November 1989 with the sale of Botero's *Protestant Family*.

Christie's May auction. Three days later Varo's record was in turn beaten by Frida Kahlo with *Diego and I*, 1949 [Fig. 4-5] reaching $1.4 million at Sotheby's.[117] Emilio Pettoruti and Joaquín Torres García were also mentioned in auction house articles several times throughout the decade. These were the faces of Latin American art at auction during the 1980s. From the ample diffusion received by the auction house market around the world in that decade, it is safe to say that these artists—especially those who owned the records most often—largely embodied the idea of Latin American art, particularly for people with sparse knowledge of the field, whose main exposure to this art was through the mainstream press.

4.3.4 Branding and the Canon

Works by all of these leading artists appeared in the 1987 exhibition *Art of the Fantastic*.[118] That Rivera, Tamayo, Lam, and Matta were the most successful artists at auction is not surprising. Not only were they all highly regarded in their countries, but their trajectories exceeded national boundaries. They had all lived outside their countries for extended periods of time. They had been inspired by international art trends and had engaged with artistic circles of international renown. They had received public commissions and their work was part of major permanent collections such as MoMA's. Furthermore, from1950 to 1964, MoMA maintained a gallery with works devoted to Latin American artists. It exhibited mainly the work of Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros and Tamayo.[119]

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[117] Reif, "Auctions"; John Windsor, "Art Market: Mexican Portrait Sold for Record Pounds 870,000," *The Independent* (London, May 5, 1990).

[118] Holliday T. Day and Museum of Art Indianapolis, *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America, 1920-1987*, 1st ed. (Indianapolis: Bloomington, Ind: Indianapolis Museum of Art; Distributed by Indiana University Press, 1987).

[119] Basilio, "Reflecting on a History of Collecting and Exhibition Work by Artists from Latin America."

Due to Rivera's social and political flexibility (or opportunism), compared to the other two muralists, to the artist's common practice of portrait drawing and painting, and to his cultivation of a benign indigenism in genre scenes, Rivera's work was the most marketable among the "Tres Grandes." Works by Matta and Lam were always on display in the Surrealist galleries of the Museum.[120] The market success of these artists clearly corresponded to their importance within the canon of Modern art, but also to what was available for consignments at New York auction houses. According to Mary-Anne Martin: "An auction is very much like a grab-bag. It is not a curated exhibition; the lots for sale are those you were able to get as consignments."[121] In that sense, the market, while reflecting the canon, is a helpful prism for looking at the history canonization itself, and to that of Latin America art collecting.

Botero's success was different. Unlike the rest, he was only at mid-career when his work started being auctioned.[122] Trained in the Academia San Fernando in Madrid, his trajectory in the U.S. started in 1957 with a solo exhibition at the Pan American Union. Following that first show, the CIAR/AS gave him another solo exhibition in 1969, and the Hirshorn Museum of Art organized a mid-career touring retrospective in 1979. By that time his humorous plump and rosy portraits of the Colombian social and ecclesiastical elite and his art historical *reprises* also with rotund characters in a style that blended Spanish colonial, Renaissance, Baroque art, and Pop art had earned him international acclaim. Starting in the early 1980s, his ubiquitous public commissions in world capitals and his (still enduring) commercial popularity made Botero the first contemporary Latin American market phenomenon.[123] His commercial success at Latin

[120] Ibid.

[121] Martin, interview.

[122] Botero was born in 1932, while Rivera, Tamayo, Lam and Matta were born between 1886 and 1911.

American auctions and his showcasing history at the CIAR/AS and the Pan American Union, and in shows like *Art of the Fantastic,* in addition to frequent allusions in his works to Columbian social structures contributed to his "Latin American" branding.

In hindsight, among all 1980s sales record breakers, Remedios Varo seems the artist less likely to become one. The Spanish companion of Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret from 1937 to 1947, Varo was popular among a circle of European expatriates, such as Leonora Carrington and Max Ernst, and Wolfgang Paalen, who had arrived in Mexico fleeing World War Two. She was also supported by Mexican friends of that circle, including Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Her enigmatic paintings of ethereal and silent figures in sparse surroundings, often absorbed in meditative actions follow a surrealist tradition. In the mid-1950s her career took-off and she became a full-time artist.[124] She won the first prize at the Primer Salón de la Plástica Femenina, and she participated in important gallery and large-scale exhibitions.[125] However her career was cut short by her death in 1963, her work having been exhibited sparsely outside of Mexico.

Varo is, thus, different from the other Latin American record breakers of the decade. Unlike for Rivera, Tamayo, and Matta, the case of her success in the market does not reflect the desirability or collectible character of artists accepted into the Modern art canon. Neither does it illustrate the kind of circular validation caused by institutional showcasing in the world's artistic centers and market demand itself, such as for Botero. Varo's market grew speedily but organically during the 1980s, nurtured by Mexican buyers whose increasing bids through the

[123] By Rita Reif, "Auctions," *The New York Times*, May 16, 1986, sec. Section C; Weekend Desk, 22. In the late 1970s he had five galleries representing him in Europe and one in the United States—Malborough Gallery. Dealer Mary Anne Martin declared in the mid-1980s that owning a work by Botero had become a status symbol.

[124] Estrella de Diego, "Notas Biográficas," in *Remedios Varo* (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, Instituto de Cultura, 2007), 118–121.

[125] Estrella de Diego, *Remedios Varo* (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, Instituto de Cultura, 2007).

years helped bring U.S. and international visibility to the artist.[126] Perhaps the unforeseen market rise of Kahlo after 1982 stimulated scholarly interest in Varo, leading to a number of international publications and exhibitions on the artist from the mid-1980s until the present. Until 1982, Kahlo had a similar process of heightened visibility. But it precipitously changed course in the late '80s towards a broad mass appeal and quick canonization by the art mainstream assisted by publications, exhibitions, films, Mexican government rulings, and other factors discussed. Another factor that helped the market rise of Varo and Kahlo was the impact of the feminist movement in art history scholarship, which was greatly motivated by Linda Nochlin's 1971 publication of her seminal essay "Why have there been no great women artists?"[127]

It can thus be stated that the market for Latin American art was fundamental to the Boom of Latin American art. The commercialization of art by artists from Latin America under the regionally-defined category "Latin American art" helped the expansion of the auction house market for art. It also revived and amplified a nation-wide and decades-dormant interest in art by Latin Americans.[128] Although the Latin American art auction trade brought only a fraction of the revenues generated during the decade by popular categories such as Impressionism and Modern and Contemporary art, its steady rise in prices created a buzz in the U.S. as well as in Latin

[126] Organically here refers to a growth rhythm that is not artificially accelerated through speculation or greater production, such as the Rivera and the Botero markets.

[127] Nochlin's essay was the centerpiece of Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker, eds., *Art and Sexual Politics; Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, Art News Series (New York: Collier Books, 1973). With regards to the impact of the feminist impulse in important New York showcases of Latin American and Latino art, it can be said that the '80s saw an extraordinary number of exhibitions on women artists. All the institutions within this dissertation's described New York circuit of Latin American art held group exhibitions of women contemporary artists. *Women of the Americas: Emerging Perspectives* took place at the Americas Society in 1982; *Latin American Women Artists: 50th Anniversary Celebration 1936-1986* took place at the Bronx Museum in 1986. In 1987 MoCHA held *Connections Project: Conexus*, a project that gathered the art of women from Brazil and the U.S. El Museo del Barrio held *Growing Beyond: Women Artists from Puerto Rico*, in 1988.

[128] It is interesting to think here of recycling as a metaphor for this reawakening, as this renewed keenness towards the art of Latin America was fed through the commercialization of works that were in U.S. collections, especially during the years of the Mexican auctions.

America. The zeitgeist of flashy opulence of the Reagan years helped the commodification of art, and encouraged its viewing as financial investment. This, together with the genuine interest of some in the field, helped the evolution of a collecting constituency for the art of Latin America.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Latin American experts at Christie's and Sotheby's coincided in the fact that the early nationalism in consumer practices of collectors who bought at auction was disappearing.[129] Suddenly, a collector from Argentina, for example, would buy artwork by Mexicans, or Brazilians, and vice-versa. Collectors from Europe, the U.S., and Asia also grew in constituency by the late 1980s. This happened as a flurry of large-scale exhibitions of Latin American art were being seen or planned in the U.S. and Europe, and as these collectors were priced-out of Impressionist and Modern art auctions.

The Latin American art market cemented the reputations of artists who were already part of the canon of Latin American art, i.e. Rivera, Tamayo, Lam, and Matta. These artists were not achieving their maximum bids when marketed in Modern art auctions prior to 1979. Their grouping under a Latin American category was a cornerstone of the emerging market and its brand. Kahlo and Varo were among the very few artists who broadened that brand during the 1980s. Their inclusion in exhibitions such as *Art of the Fantastic*, *Art of Latin America: The Modern Era* (Hayward Gallery, London, 1989), and *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* (MoMA, 1993) reveals their integration into the Latin American art canon.[130] The commercial success of the aforementioned artists reinforced a paradigm of Latin American art that was mainly tied to representational art and sometimes informed by Surrealism. Mexico's

[129] Helen-Louise Seggerman, "The Market: Taking Off," *Artnews*, October 1991.

[130] Their visibility within the Latin American market and canon prompted as well a revision of the surrealist canon, by authors such as Whitney Chadwick, Mary Ann Caws and others, who examine the role of these artists and of women within the surrealist movement.

place within the canon of Latin American art as constructed in the United States was re-confirmed. Latin American art that diverged from these trends did not appear with force until the late 1990s.[131] U.S. Latino art remained outside the secondary market, perceived as unable to generate demand, and as external to the geographic limits of the Latin American market. If the market brought back to the national imaginary the names of the successful artists at auction, by omission, it also helped the ghettoization of unsuccesfull ones, notably Latinos.

[131] Ana Sokoloff was key in bringing constructivist Latin American art works to the auction house market and fostering their boom in the 2000s. Sokoloff, interview by Taína Caragol.

5. CHAPTER FIVE. A Circuit Takes Shape: The Common Goal of Making Latino and Latin American Art Visible in New York

5.1 Introduction. New York's Showcasing Venues for Latino and Latin American Artists and Their Interactions with the Art Market

As seen in Chapter Four, the market, with its internal dynamics of supply and demand and its presence in the press throughout the 1980s, was an important shaping force for the re-emerging "idea" of Latin American art in New York and the U.S. cultural landscape. It was not, however, the only one. As mentioned in the introduction to the previous chapter, the early 1980s saw the emergence of a growing circuit of venues engaging with Latin American art. That circuit was comprised of spaces that had been founded between the late 1960s and mid 1970s, and a few new ones that emerged at the beginning of the new decade. Suddenly these venues seemed to be functioning with an awareness of each other. The distinct institutional agendas that made for idiosyncratic programming during the 1970s did not disappear, but differences seemed to ease up in order to find points of encounter and shared interests. This rapprochement did not happen overnight. It brewed throughout the decade with fermenting agents that included a growing U.S. Latino demographic, the art market itself as a branding force and media presence, and the Culture Wars.

This chapter discusses commonalities in the exhibition programs of this dissertation's focus venues and institutional collaborations that took place at these different spaces during the decade. In doing so, it emphasizes their individual contexts of emergence, and their reverberations in the New York and U.S. cultural scene. Recurring themes and exhibition modalities are analyzed, in order to understand how reiterated visibility functioned as a support

strategy within a circuit, i.e. a way of gathering public attention and stimulating debate and criticism by repeatedly raising specific themes within Latin American and Latino art.

It is extraordinary that this circuit was comprised of venues that fell within the two seemingly incompatible U.S. typologies of Latin American art showcases described in Chapter Two: i.e. the cultural embassy, represented here by the CIAR/AS, and the grassroots alternative art space, represented by El Museo del Barrio, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Cayman Gallery/MoCHA. As discussed earlier, the first model has been characterized by being a semi-official operation where cultural interests are aligned with government interests; and the second by a counter-cultural ethos that uncovers and recovers artistic practices neglected by mainstream culture. Both types of institutions thrived in regards to the presence of art by Latin Americans and Latinos in New York during the 1980s. The CIAR/AS kept its title as a main U.S. showcase for artists from Latin America. Its "accidental" launch of the region's auction house market can be read as a sign of its ties to a U.S. and Latin American economic and cultural elite.

Alternative art spaces, including El Museo, the Bronx Museum, and Cayman/MoCHA flourished as well, initially helped by sufficient government support that had started in the mid-1970s but came under threat in the 1980s. Even as funding diminished, the Alternative Arts movement (and its spaces) survived and expanded, nurtured by a belief in the value of artistic experimentation. The realization that the movement had succeeded in broadening cultural diversity in the New York art-scene and in creating a system of showcasing outlets that were unrelated to the market and mainstream museums served also as ongoing inspiration. Cheap rents at the previously industrial neighborhood of SoHo also helped, making large spaces available to artistic experimentation and showcasing. Furthermore, by the mid-to-late 1980s Ronald Reagan's sweeping conservative reforms (including budget cuts to the arts) and an increasingly

conservative public discourse prevalent in the media, provided the Alternative Arts movement a *raison d'être*, a target against which to direct its counter-cultural politics.

The ways in which these two types of venues interacted with the market of Latin American art differed, of course. The CIAR/AS can be duly credited with launching the secondary market and supporting it through its first decade. At the beginning of the decade Latin American art collecting was mainly geared towards the acquisition of works that had been validated within national art histories. Due to its reputation within the art establishment, and possibly also to its ties to MoMA, the CIAR/AS had unique, easy access to such works of art from important private collections in the U.S. and Latin America.[1] Compared to the other venues of the circuit, the large number of art historical exhibitions of Modern art from Latin America attests to the easy access to these types of collections and traveling exhibitions. The CIAR/AS played a fundamental role in exposing under-recognized artists from national canons in Latin America to international audiences in New York, therein broadening their market. Shows of Modern artists at the institution during the 1980s included the already mentioned Carlos Mérida and Marius de Zayas exhibitions, *Printed Matta: Highlights from Four Decades of Printmaking by Roberto Matta* (1983), *Intimate Recollections of the Rio de la Plata: Paintings by Pedro Figari 1861-1938* (1986), and *Emiliano di Cavalcanti* (1987).[2] The organization of these shows

[1] Villanueva, "Introduction Timeline." Through its history the CIAR/AS has organized numerous exhibitions from collections of private individuals and museums including *Latin American Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of John and Barbara Duncan* (1970), *Latin American Prints from the Museum of Modern Art*, *Prints from the Rayo Museum: Omar Rayo 1960-1975*, *Mexican Folk Art from the Collection of Nelson Rockefeller* (1984), and *Southern Splendor: Masterworks of Colonial Silver from the Museo Isaac Fernández Blanco, Buenos Aires* (1987), among others.

[2] *Marius de Zayas* was a traveling exhibition that originated at the Lawrence Spencer Museum of Art in Kansas and traveled to the Philadephia Museum of Art before arriving at the CIAR/AS. The exhibition on Pedro Figari included 78 paintings burrowed from various private collections from South America and the U.S. The di Cavalcanti exhibition was comprised of works from the Museum de Arte Contemporânea of the Universidades de São Paulo. Douglas Hyland et al., *Marius de Zayas, Conjurer of Souls* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1981); Emiliano Di Cavalcanti et al., *Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, 1897-1976: Works on Paper: Americas Society, New York, June 4 to August 9, 1987, Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, Caracas, Venezuela,*

did not stand under a clear commercial pretext. It was tied, instead, to the CIAR/AS's mission of exhibiting the art history of the Americas and educating U.S. Americans on the cultural achievements of the hemisphere. The 1987 exhibition *The First America: Selections from the Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Latin American Art* [5-1] also reaffirmed the institution's status as a place promoting a comprehensive, regional perspective in Latin American art collecting. The show included works by numerous historical artists—e.g. Agustín Casasola, Wifredo Lam, Candido Portinari, Joaquín Torres García, David Alfaro Siqueiros—and many contemporary ones—e.g. Edgar Negret, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Marisol Escobar. John Stringer's catalog essay emphasizes the depth of criteria and quality in the collection, which includes some of the region's most significant artists and spans multiple countries, periods, and styles.[3] The particularity that defined the CIAR/AS vis-à-vis the three other focus institutions in this dissertation was its support of the market as related to the showcasing of canonical Latin American artists, combined with a sustained endorsement of contemporary artistic practices.

At El Museo, the Bronx Museum of the Arts and Cayman/MoCHA, the 1980s exhibition programming consisted almost exclusively of contemporary art.[4] Accordingly, this involved a different relationship to the art market. These venues profited in ways incalculable from the

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September 6to August 20, 1987, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Colombia, October 15 to November 22, 1987 (New York: The Society, 1987); Marianne Elrick-Manley and Center for Inter-American Relations, *Intimate Recollections of the Rio de La Plata: Paintingsby Pedro Figari, 1861-1938* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1986).

[3] John Stringer et al., *The First America: Selections from the Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Latin American Art* (Providence, R.I. : Cambridge, Mass.: Rhode Island School of Design ; New England Foundation for the Arts, 1987).

[4] This might have not only been due to different institutional missions, but to the difficulty and costs of organizing art historical shows, which usually require the hiring of outside experts on given artists or subjects to be exhibited, and paying large sums of money in loan fees, insurance, and shipping. Due to the lesser availability of private funding at El Museo, Cayman/MoCHA and the Bronx Museum, these museums probably decided to keep a contemporary focus, saving the effort of fundraising for particularly important shows within their missions.

mediatic exposure provided by auctions.[5] However, their impact in the secondary market itself was limited, since living contemporary artists brought more modest revenues into this market.[6]

Art historical shows were also important at the alternative spaces, but rather than shining the spotlight on individual artistic practices for U.S. American international audiences, exhibitions such as *Francisco Oller: A Realist Impressionist* (El Museo del Barrio, 1984), *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States 1920-1970* (Bronx Museum, 1988), and *Taller Alma Boricua: Reflecting on Twenty Years of the Puerto Rican Workshop: 1969-1989* (El Museo del Barrio, 1989) were organized in an effort to establish art historical genealogies and traditions that involved the museums' main target audiences.[7] The *Taller Alma Boricua* [Fig. 5-2] exhibition, in particular, recognized the work of artists active at a sister institution of El Museo in El Barrio, and the historical value of their commitment to provide a community space for the reaffirmation of Puerto Rican diasporic culture. Featuring an essay by renowned artist and cultural activist Lucy Lippard, and a chronology compiled by artist Diógenes Ballester, the catalog of *Taller Alma Boricua* remains a key publication in the history of New York's

[5] Torruella Leval, interview; Cancel, interview, April 15, 2009. There is no hard data on this subject, only the testimony of two of my interviewees.

[6] Sokoloff, interview. In the 1970s an interesting change in the auction house market materialized and living artists started to acquire value when marketed in Contemporary art auctions. Only artists with great success in the primary market would be accepted into Contemporary art auctions, which were mostly comprised of U.S. American artists and a few European ones. Contemporary artists would still not be marketed with much impetus in Latin American art auctions. Highly successful living artists from Latin America with an international following, among them Félix González-Torres, Ana Mendieta, and Gabriel Orozco, started to be marketed at Contemporary art auctions in the late '90s

[7] Other exhibitions of art historical subjects organized at El Museo during that decade included *Louis Agassiz Fuerte: Vaulted Birds* (1983), which presented works by the late 19th/early 20th century American ornithologist and artist traveler; *Taíno Artifacts from the Collection* (1986), an exhibition on Pre-Columbian artifacts from Puerto Rico, and *Emblems of His City: José Campeche and San Juan* (1988), which comprised paintings by the 18th century master, as well as period maps, documents, maquettes, costumes, books and other artifacts. See Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology."

Alternative Art movement and of the Nuyorican movement.[8] The intent of these historical exhibitions had as much to do with creating a record or chronicling their own artistic activity for themselves as for larger non-Latino or Latin American audiences.

Originating in Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico, *Francisco Oller: A Realist Impressionist* was a landmark survey of the career of this19th century master from the island who synthesized in his paintings the tenets of European currents he had absorbed while training at the Academia San Fernando in Madrid, and also in Paris with masters like Thomas Couture and Gustave Courbet, while working within the Impressionist circle.[9] Oller is credited with introducing Impressionism to the Caribbean and Latin American. The show fell in line with El Museo's initial aim of showcasing Puerto Rico's art historical tradition for Puerto Rican and New York audiences. The painter's depictions of natural landmarks such as *The Ponce Cotton-silk Tree* [Fig. 5-3], must have struck an emotional cord for some diasporic Puerto Ricans who would have recognized them through memory or oral history.[10] The Oller exhibition did bring market attention to a canonic Puerto Rican artist. However, the circulation of his works has been limited.[11] As for *Taller Boricua* and *The Latin American Spirit*, their impact within the secondary

[8] Museo del Barrio, *Taller Alma Boricua: Taller Boricua 20th Anniversary Exhibit. Reflecting on Twenty Years of the Puerto Rican Workshop, 1969-1989* (New York: El Museo, 1990).

[9] Haydee Venegas and Marimar Benítez, *Francisco Oller: Un Realista Del Impresionismo* (Ponce, P.R: The Museum, 1983).

[10] This iconic 500-year old tree stood intact until July 2011, when a main part of its canopy detached and fell. 65% of the tree died. Biologists paid by the municipality worked to recover the remaining 35% which was still alive. Jason Rodríguez Grafal, "En Intensivo La Venerada Ceiba De Ponce," *La Perla Del Sur*, n.d., http://www.periodicolaperla.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2849:en-intensivo-la-ceiba-de-ponce&catid=135:actualidad-del-sur&Itemid=423 (accessed June 19, 2012).

[11] Rene Taylor, "Introduction," in *Francisco Oller: Un Realista Del Impresionismo* (Ponce, P.R: Museo de Arte de Ponce, 1983), 1–7. After the artist's demise, many of his works did not survive the inclement tropical weather. The ones that remain are mainly in public and private collections in Puerto Rico and are unlikely to emerge on the market.

market was rather negligible. To this day U.S. Latino artists have remained largely outside the auction house circuit and few galleries represent them.[12]

5.2 The Circuit's Contours: A Common Purpose towards the Art of Latinos and Latin Americans

The long-standing presence and institutional lead of certain individuals was crucial to the circuit's growth and self-awareness, as it fostered the development of coherent exhibition programs within each institution, and nurtured dialogues across city venues with common goals. Except for El Museo del Barrio, which underwent a period of severe fiscal and management crisis in the mid-80s, climaxing with the dismissal of Jack Agüeros by the museum's Board of Trustees in March 1986, the remaining institutions of the circuit had extended periods of stability in their upper management. John Stringer was the CIAR/AS's gallery director and curator from late 1979 until late 1987.[13] Nilda Peraza led Cayman's transformation into MoCHA.[14] Susana Torruella Leval, became MoCHa's first curator until 1987.[15] The Dutch, New York-based Carla Stellweg, who was trained as an art historian, critic, and museographer in Mexico, took over Torruella Leval's post in late 1987 until 1988.[16] Art Historian Julia Herzberg was also curator at MoCHA from 1987 until the museum's demise in 1990.[17] Luis Cancel directed the Bronx

[12] In 2005, the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, CUNY, in partnership with Notre Dame University's Institute for Latino Studies and the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA organized a conference titled *Latino Art Now!*, around the issue of under-representation of Latino artists in the market and in American and Latin American art histories.

[13] Indych-López, "Between National and Transnational: Aspects of Exhibiting Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art at the Americas Society."

[14] Peraza, interview by Taína B.Caragol.

[15] Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[16] Carla Stellweg, interview by Taína B. Caragol, July 30, 2009.

Museum until 1991, when he was appointed Commissioner of Cultural Affairs by Mayor Dinkins. Under his direction, Philip Verre was Chief Curator and Holly Block curator of Satellite Galleries.[18] At El Museo leadership was quickly re-established with help from the City. In October 1986 Petra Barreras del Río was named director. [19] Artist Rafael Colón Morales curated most exhibitions under her directorship.[20] Three other alternative art spaces founded between the late 1970s and early 1980s also became part of the circuit: The Alternative Museum, founded in 1976 by Geno Rodríguez, Exit Art, founded in 1982 by artist Jeanette Ingberman and artist Papo Colo, and INTAR Gallery, led by Inverna Lockpez.[21]

It was through the showcasing of work by contemporary artists of Latin American and Latino background, and through the recurrent exploration of certain subjects in these art productions that the contours of the circuit became visible. The venues, did not, however, collapse their agendas into one. They maintained the integrity of their missions and curatorial scopes while conforming a support network for numerous artists who from the late 1970s until the early 1990s, exhibited their work often at several circuit venues. This resulted in increased institutional visibility for the artists. For instance, Liliana Porter, whose work combines

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[17] Julia P. Herzberg, interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, September 14, 2009.

[18] Block, interview by Taína Caragol. Block worked at the Bronx Museum from 1985 to 1989. Since 2006 she is Executive Director of the Bronx Museum.

[19] Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology," 59-62. A Puerto Rican art historian, Petra Barreras worked as Grants Manager at the New York State Council on the Arts before being appointed to Executive Director of El Museo del Barrio.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Founded in 1966, INTAR Theater (International Art Relations, Inc.) supports the work of Latino playwrights and actors. Between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, INTAR also had a robust gallery program of Latino and Latin American art. Due to research and time constrains, these three venues have not been addressed in depth in this dissertation. A broader analysis that considers their role within the circuit of Latin American and Latino art awaits the light of day. Obstacles for its undertaking include the loss of the INTAR Gallery archive to a flood in the early 2000s. While Exit Art and The Alternative Museum have closed, their archives remain, Exit's at the Downtown Collection at Fales Library and Special Collections at New York University, and The Alternative Museum's at the house of Geno Rodríguez.

traditional media like painting, sculpture, and printmaking with a constant reflection in the act of visual representation, exhibited an installation (together with Juan Camilo Uribe) at the CIAR/AS in 1980. There she was also part of the group show *Women of the Americas: Emerging Perspectives*, and *Recent Editions* (both 1982). Her work was also included in *Latin American Women Artists* at the Bronx Museum (1982). She participated in the 2nd (1982) and 3rd (1984) *Latin American Graphic Art Biennials* at Cayman, and at MoCHA's *Contemporary Printmakers from Latin America* (1986) and *Connections/Connexus* project. By the end of the decade, she was featured at the Bronx Museum exhibits *The Latin American Spirit*, and *Ideas and Images from Argentina* (1989) [Fig. 5-4], and at MoCHA's *The Decade Show*. In 1992, Porter had a solo exhibition at the Bronx Museum titled *Fragments of the Journey*.[22]

Edgar Franceschi, whose paintings often took the form of pastiches of classical references and contemporary ones, was featured at the CIAR/AS group exhibitions *Variations on Latin American Themes in New York* (1978), and *New Forms of Figuration* (1985). He had solo exhibitions at MoCHA in 1986 and El Museo 1988; Tony Bechara whose work was also shown at the CIAR/AS in *Iman: New York* (1976) had solo exhibitions at Cayman in 1980 and El Museo in 1985. At the CIAR/AS, Raquel Rabinovich, an artist working in painting, sculpture, installation and earth art whose work deals with the concept of "the invisible," was part of the group exhibitions *New Spaces: Sculptures by Castles, Rabinovich and Regazzoni* [Fig. 5-5] in 1983, and *Beyond the Surface: Creus, Rabinovich, Sutil*, in 1990. She also had an individual show at the Bronx Museum of the Arts in 1987. Francisca Sutil, who creates abstract compositions with an emphasis on color, was also in *Beyond the Surface*. In addition she was

[22] Porter was also part of MoCHA's advisory board and wrote a catalog essay for the exhibition *From the Zoo to a Carnival: Strolling with Solari*, held at MoCHA in 1988.

exhibited at Cayman in 1983 in the group exhibition *Chile-Chile*, at El Museo in *Two by New* in 1986, and in *Abstract Visions*, at MoCHA, in 1988.

The reiterated presence of these artists at these New York spaces, which were becoming increasingly familiar to local audiences and the media, helped raise awareness about the cultural contributions of Latin Americans and Latinos to the city and the country. It also helped to expand the geographic limits of Latin American art itself, as travel, itinerancy and prolonged stays abroad came to be perceived as intrinsic to artistic practice. In this regard, except for *The Latin American Spirit*, it is interesting to note the absence of exhibition titles within the circuit that explicitly refer to travel or displacement. Exhibition titles such as *Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York* or *Six Cuban Painters Working in New York*, or *Variations on Latin American Themes in New York*, designating exhibitions held at the CIAR/AS in the 1970s are not in use anymore in the 1980s. The notion of a transnational Latin American art started to take hold. Emerging from a field of traveling artists, Latin American art could be produced and shown beyond the territory of Latin America.

These institutions also became social gathering places. Show openings and public programs such as conferences or film screenings would attract, in addition to each venue's amateur audiences, a local scene of art professionals engaged with Latin American and Latino art.[23] The circuit cradled a community of people working in Latin American and Latino art, giving rise to a shared purpose of making this art visible and integrating it to international discourses on modern and contemporary art.

The following paragraphs will interweave individual overviews of the venues' exhibition programs during the 1980s and some of their intersection points, with the aim of understanding

[23] Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol; Sullivan, interview by Taína B. Caragol; Julia P. Herzberg, interview by Taína B. Caragol, MP3, September 14, 2009.

the way they complemented each other, while giving visibility to a local Latin American and Latino art scene. The CIAR/AS's *New Forms of Figuration* (1985), The Bronx Museum of the Arts' *Latin American Spirit* (1987), and MoCHA, The Studio Museum and the New Museum's *Decade Show* (1990), all exhibitions discussed in depth in Chapter One as counter-paradigms to stereotypical shows of Latin American and Latino art organized by mainstream museums will remain superficially discussed here.

5.3 The CIAR/AS: National Canons, Hemispheric Attitudes, Diversified Art Trends

In addition to mounting exhibitions of under-acknowledged Latin American artists who belonged to national canons, the CIAR/AS continued at the forefront of contemporary art showcasing, with a more varied roster of artists than ever before, and a diversification of endorsed art trends. Shows like *Realism and Latin American Paintings: 1970s* (1980) curated by Lawrence Alloway and featuring the work of diverse artists such as Claudio Bravo, Julio Larraz, Emilio Sánchez, Oscar Muñoz, and Antonio Seguí, and *New Forms of Figuration* (1984), addressed in Chapter One and curated by John Stringer, betray a new interest in representational contemporary art that was not visible in the 1970s. In spite of coinciding with the international rise of Neo-Expressionism in the art world and the recovery of the human figure, the incorporation of figuration as a strong element within the CIAR/AS's exhibition program effectively broadened the institution's paradigm of contemporary art in Latin America.

Another notable trait of the CIAR/AS 1980s program was its advancement of a hemispheric perspective that considered art horizontally through the Americas, instead of the transfer of artistic and aesthetic ideas from North to South America. This was done through

shows that included artists from Latin American countries, the U.S., and Latino artists.[24] The inclusion of diasporic Latin American artists in the CIAR/AS exhibition program during the 1980s reveals potentially a more comprehensive idea of "Latinamerican-ness." In her brief historical overview of the institution's forty-year history of engagement with Latin American art, Beverly Adams documented the 1980s new concern with Latino artists as an imperative coming directly to the institution from the National Endowment for the Arts—in the wake of multiculturalism—to engage with the growing Hispanic population and "inform them as to their heritage."[25] According to Adams, the institution was pressed to embrace this new task, otherwise they might not be able to compete for funding and visibility on the larger playing field of venues exhibiting Latin American and Latino art during the 1980s and 1990s.[26]

Adams suggests that the incorporation of Latinos into the CIAR/AS's exhibition scope embodied a fundamental change—forced upon the institution—of art historical perspective into "the national and international categories of Latino and Latin American art."[27] She makes a compelling argument through her mention of the fiscal crisis undergone by the CIAR/AS gallery in the late 1970s, which prompted a revision of its identity and goals.[28] However, this view

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[24] *New Forms of Figuration* was one of several exhibitions during the decade that advanced a hemispheric view upon art, much in the same way that of the CIAR/AS first exhibition *Artists of the Western Hemisphere: Precursors of Modernism*, organized by Stanton Catlin in 1967. Another was *Women of the Americas: Emerging Perspectives,* which featured the work of Lynda Benglis, Lygia Clark, Nancy Graves, Beatriz González, Ana Mercedes Hoyos, Ana Mendieta, Lydia Okumura, and Cecilia Vicuña, among others.

[25] Adams, "Latin American Art at the Americas Society: A Principality of Its Own," 35.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid. Adams quotes the address of Frank Hodsoll, chair of the National Endowment for the Arts to the CIAR/AS in a special visit in September 1984. She also quotes a CIAR report generated by a Visual Arts Advisory Committee organized in 1984 to establish "Cultural Priorities of the Center for Inter-American Relations." It is clear from both of these documents that addressing "Hispanics" was, indeed a new priority. But based on Stringer's collaborations with MoCHA and his participation in exhibitions like *Aquí: 27 Latin American artists that Live and Work in the United States,* organized by the Fisher Gallery, University of Southern California in 1984, I resist the fact that the CIAR/AS embraced this task only as an administrative imperative, and not out of Stringer's own

prevents the possibility that Director John Stringer would also find it natural to—within the hemispheric mandate of the institution—represent also artists from Latin American background born and/or raised in the United States. *New Forms of Figuration* makes a case for this argument, as it stands out as one of the most culturally inclusive exhibitions in the history of the CIAR/AS, featuring artists from the U.S., Canada, and Latin America, including diasporic Chicano, Puerto Rican and Cuban artists, like Almaraz, Franceschi, and Azaceta, and at least one U.S. artist residing in Peru, i.e. Herskowitz. Travel, displacement, bi-culturalism were embedded into the exhibition. The hemispheric perspective of this show revealed a desire to propose new discourses on modern and contemporary art beyond the national or narrowly-defined regional.[29]

5.4 El Museo del Barrio: The Puerto Rican and Latino Contemporary Showcase

Compared to the CIAR/AS, El Museo's focus remained committed to stricter cultural boundaries in its framing of Latin American art.[30] Its 1980s exhibition programs are characterized by their emphasis on Puerto Rican contemporary artistic practices from the diaspora and the island (in that order of importance), by the occasional historic show on Puerto Rican art (as already seen), and by the periodic organization of individual and group exhibitions

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conviction that Latino art and Latin American art were not fundamentally distinct categories never to be mixed. According to Susana Torruella Leval, Stringer was the only CIAR/AS gallery director that would regularly come to see exhibitions organized at Cayman/MoCHA. Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[29] John Stringer's cultural background as an Australian may have influenced this transnational outlook, which became characteristic of his tenure at the Americas Society. Before being director of the Gallery at the Americas Society, Stringer worked for five years (1975-1980) as Assistant Director to the International Program, at MoMA. Patrick McCaughey, "Text reminiscing on the late John Stringer" (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia, n.d.), https://mca.bluecentral.com/default.asp?page_id=81&content_id=3571 (accessed June 14, 2012).

[30] Understandably the founding mission of the CIAR/AS allowed for a more international discourse relying on the idea of hemispheric unity. However, one could argue that since El Museo's foremost aim was to safeguard and showcase the art of Puerto Ricans from the diaspora and the mainland, it could have also organized exhibitions that addressed artistic exchanges between diasporic Puerto Ricans and New York's international art-scene. The first exhibition to do so was *Nexus: New York,* curated by Deborah Cullen, former Director of Curatorial Programs at El Museo, in 2010. This show studied the presence of Latin American artists in New York's international art scene prior to World War Two.

of Latin American and Latino artists. The roster of Puerto Rican artists provides a vast panorama of current artistic practices at the time. Individual and group exhibitions of contemporary artists include but are not limited to: *Marcos Dimas: The Voyager* (1981) [Fig. 5-6], *Myrna Báez: diez años de gráfica y pintura, 1971-1981* (1982), *Children of the Darkness: Rafael Colón Morales, Paintings 1972-1982* (1982), *Rafael Ferrer: Impassioned Rhythms* (1983), *Tony Bechara, Recent Paintings 1980-1985* (1985), *Carlos Osorio: Nueva York-Puerto Rico- Paintings 1956-1984* (1987) [Fig. 5-7], *Rafael Montañez-Ortiz: Years of the Warrior 1960- Years of the Psyche 1988* (1988), and *Growing Beyond: Women Artists from Puerto Rico* (1988) [Fig. 5-8], which included the work of the 1983-founded Asociación de Mujeres Artistas de Puerto Rico comprised of Myrna Arocho, Myrna Báez, Toni Hambleton, María de Mater O'Neill, Marta Pérez, Noemí Ruiz, among others.[31] If the cultural focus remained Puerto Rican, the wide array of artistic proposals presented a picture of this art characterized by its diversity of styles and media, its engagement with current international trends, and occasionally by references to the island's cultural heritage and history. A sample of this diversity includes Dimas' drawings, paintings, and assemblages combining references to Taíno iconography and indigenous rituals, with Surrealism [Fig. 5-9], Carlos Osorio's abstract renderings of everyday objects, landscapes and nudes informed by cubism and German expressionism, and Myrna Báez's silent portraits of herself and others, which are formal studies on the transparency of color, as they are odes to solitude [Fig. 5-10].

[31] Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology," 54-62.

5.5 The Bronx Museum of the Arts: Highlighting the Art of New York Puerto Ricans and other Latino Artists

The Bronx Museum continued to organize its exhibition program based on its three-thirds formula. It also increased outreach and community engagement through its satellite programs [Fig. 5-11].[32] In addition, in 1980 the museum clearly stated its purpose of serving as a launching exhibition platform for artists, through its innovative series of workshops AIM (Artists in the Marketplace) [Fig. 5-12], which offered a select group of emerging artists a 15-session seminar designed to provide them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in the competitive marketplace. Artists were selected from specific target areas and audiences through the New York metropolitan area. They had to demonstrate sustained quality in the range of works they had exhibited and diversity of media.[33]

Following the museum's self-set imperative of showcasing artists from communities with strong ties to the Bronx, Puerto Rican artists became an important presence. The Bronx Museum increased, thus, the spectrum of contemporary Puerto Rican practices shown by El Museo, while reinforcing the importance of certain artists within the diasporic community through reiterative intra-circuit institutional support. Such was the case for *José Morales* (1985) and *Marcos Dimas* (1986).[34] Other shows devoted to artists from Latin America included *Invisible Cities by Raquel Rabinovich* (1987), and *Rainbow of Culture: Photographs by Charles Byasini-Rivera* (1988). The 1980s exhibition histories at the Bronx Museum and El Museo del Barrio display a common interest in photographic practices within the Latin American/Latino community. A proof of this

[32] See Chapter Three.

[33] Bronx Museum of the Arts, *Satellite Gallery Program,* 1981-1982 (Bronx, N.Y: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1982).

[34] Dimas and Morales had solo shows at El Museo in 1982 and 1979 respectively. Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology."

was the organization by the Bronx Museum of the show *A Decade of En Foco*, co-curated by Charles Biasiny-Rivera (Director of En Foco), and Holly Block.[35] The exhibition highlighted 102 photographs by 57 artists with Puerto Rican and Latin American and African-American background belonging to this Bronx-based collective of photographers. Mainly two photographic trends were represented in this show: a social realist one that reflected on Latino and Latin American traditions and economic realities, as in Phil Dante's *Puerto Rican Migrant Worker, NY State* [Fig. 5-13], and another with a political critical bend, as in Coreen Simpson's *Man from Another Plantation* [Fig. 5-14]. After being presented at its organizing venue in the fall of 1986, the show was on view at El Museo del Barrio from March 1987. Another photo exhibition at the Bronx that highlighted the work of Latin American artists was the traveling *Images of Silence: Photography from Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s*. This exhibition, which originated at the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America of the Organization of American States, presented a broader cultural scope of Latin American photographers, yet most photographs echoed the aesthetics of the En Foco show.[36]

5.6 MoCHA: Making Latino and Latin American Art Reverberate Through New York

In March 1985 Cayman transitioned with much fanfare into the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art. A journal issued in 1986 on the occasion of the first anniversary of the institution, recalls a crowded opening ceremony a year earlier with 1,000 guests, where congratulatory remarks sent by President Ronald Reagan and Mayor Edward Koch were read.[37]

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[35] Charles Biasini and Holly Block, *A Decade of En Foco: A Photographic Exhibition* (Bronx, N.Y: Bronx Museum of the Arts and En Foco, 1986).

[36] See Museum of Modern Art of Latin America, *Images of Silence: Photography from Latin America and the Caribbean in the 80s* (Washington, D.C: Organization of American States, 1989).

[37] *Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art* (New York: MoCHA, 1986).

The Museum's life was cut short by mismanagement and eviction from its premises in late 1990. However, during its five-year existence, MoCHA played a fundamental, binding role within the circuit of venues showcasing Latin American and Latino art. It did so by bringing downtown mainstream attention to this art, by exhibiting its heterogeneity and by inviting institutional collaborations that would promote a dialogue and a sense of community within the venues that prioritized Latin American and Latino art in the city. While other venues in the circuit engaged in collaborations only sporadically, institutional collaboration was ingrained in MoCHA's *modus operandi*. Within five years, MoCHA frequently organized shows and public events in collaboration with institutions within the circuit of Latino and Latin American art, harvesting the power of collective thinking, and acting as a force that would make the art of Latin Americans and Latinos reverberate through the city and beyond. Collaborating institutions included Hostos Community College, INTAR Gallery, the Bronx Council on the Arts, the Center for Cuban Studies, the Campeche Gallery of the Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Arch Gallery (a Latin American commercial gallery), and the already mentioned New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Studio Museum in Harlem.[38] MoCHA also invited curators based at other venues within the circuit to contribute catalog essays, and it engaged young scholars, critics and curators soliciting exhibition proposals or assistance with programs.[39]

[38] Matthew Flaherty, archivist at Hostos Community College and cataloguer of the Cayman/MoCHA archive also noted this collaborative aspect of exhibition making at the institution and offered the theory that besides being a tool to amplify audiences and strengthen curatorial arguments or proposals, it might have also been a strategy to overcome the institution's own limited resources to make programs happen. Administrative archival holdings such as letters from collecting agencies for rent and utilities evidence a growing threat of insolvency by the end of the decade, which culminated with MoCHA's eviction from its rented locale. I am thankful to Matthew for his interpretation.

[39] John Stringer wrote catalog essays for the exhibitions *Abstract Visions* (1988), and *Gladys Triana: Movement and Fragmentation* (1990). It is possible that MoCHA might have tried unsuccessfully to collaborate with the CIAR/AS on the exhibition *Abstract Visions*, before welcoming Stringer's contribution as an individual writer. After all, the CIAR/AS was still the most established Latin American art venue in New York, in terms of its trajectory, founding history, gallery infrastructure, and resources. By the time of the Gladys Triana exhibition, John Stringer had left the CIAR/AS.

MoCHA's mission remained the same as Cayman's: to provide visibility for Latin American and Hispanic artists. The move to 581 Broadway was motivated by annual rent increases at Cayman's 381 West Broadway location.[40] Cayman's recasting into a museum capitalized on its growing reputation and larger space. The new, more institutional name reflected the increasingly ambitious programming Cayman had been undertaking since the beginning of the decade, which MoCHA would sustain.[41]

The term Hispanic, in MoCHA, was used in the broadest sense to refer to U.S. Latinos and also to "Iberoamerican" artists.[42] The museum relied heavily on solo shows as a key tool in its function of being a vitrine to Latino art in the mainstream. The solo exhibition provided an outlet for artistic experimentation and exposure that could not be matched by the group show. In an artist trajectory as recorded on a *curriculum vita*, it was also an important sign of institutional endorsement.[43] The first anniversary journal states an attendance of 10,000 people during the inauguration year, and the organization of 25 exhibitions: seventeen solo shows, six group shows and two collaborations.[44] According to Torruella Leval: "These [shows] offered the New York public to view the work of over two hundred Latin American artists."[45] No other institution in

[40] Paul Gardner, "Soho: Downtown Boomtown," *ARTnews*, March 1987, 128-133. By 1987, SoHo had the densest concentration of galleries in the world. Galleries from uptown were moving downtown or trying to set up shops in a neighborhood that had become to symbolize New York's art scene. West Broadway was SoHo's busiest strip. According to Nilda Peraza, Cayman's move to 584 Broadway promised a lower rent and a larger space. Peraza, interview by Taína Caragol, September 7, 2009.

[41] As explained in Chapter Three, the increasingly complex program at Cayman included their Graphics Biennial, and thematic shows on aspects of Latino and Latin American art, which often relied on collaboration.

[42] Some exhibitions also included artists from Spain. According to Nilda Peraza, the choice of the term Hispanic over Latino responded to frequency of use in the public sphere. At the time Cayman changed its name, she does not recall the term Hispanic as one loaded with colonialist associations. Peraza, interview by Taína B. Caragol.

[43] Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol. The space layout at MoCHA, divided into four galleries also allowed for multiple solo shows happening simultaneously.

[44] *Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art* (New York: MoCHA, 1986).

the circuit matched these numbers and the accompanying diversity in artistic proposals.[46] Artists who had individual exhibitions at MoCHA included Julio Alpuy (1985), a disciple of Joaquín Torres García's Escuela del Sur; Andrés Serrano (1986), who would become known in the late '80s for his provocative photographs of religious tableaux; photo-realist painter of Mexican-Los Angeles urban scenes John Valadez (1986), Omar Rayo (1987) [Fig. 5-15], a master of abstraction in print and painting whose compositions play with optical illusion; Raúl Acero (1987) whose rustic and simple sculptures were inspired by the art of ancient cultures, and Gladys Triana (1990) [Fig. 5-16], whose large-scale collages of body fragments symbolized movement and fragmentation caused by exile.[47] Cayman/MoCHA was the first venue to organize solo shows for numerous artists who had been showcased within the circuit. Among these were Marcos Dimas (1978), Freddy Rodríguez (1978) and (1982), Luis Cruz Azaceta (1978), Pedro Luján (1979), and Papo Colo (1980).

MoCHA's short institutional trajectory is also characterized by the organization of a substantial amount of thematic group exhibitions that balanced its surveying of contemporary artistic practices with more in-depth exploration of specific aspects of Latino and Latin American art. Among of these were *Orisha/Santos: An Artistic Interpretation of the Seven African Powers* (1985) [Fig. 5-17], *Caribbean Art /African Currents* (1986), *Signs of Transition: '80s Art from Cuba* (1988), and *Rooted Visions: Mexican Art Today* (1988). MoCHA's

[45] Ibid. According to documents in the Cayman/MoCHA Archive at Hostos Community College, this attendance numbers quadrupled during year 1987-1988.

[46] At the CIAR/AS and El Museo the average number of exhibitions organized per year was five, including group and solo shows. At the Bronx Museum the number was higher because of the satellite galleries. See Appendix 1 and 2 of this dissertation and Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology"; Villanueva, "Introduction Timeline." The importance of MoCHA within the circuit as a platform providing solo exhibitions to a broad variety of Latin American and Latino artists was also due to its cultural focus and institutional mission.

[47] Papo Colo also had solo shows at The Alternative Museum 1980, and Exit Art in 1986. Luján had a solo show at Exit Art in 1986.

exhibition program was the most eclectic of the circuit. It exhibited a broad variety of living artists from different generations working in all possible media and styles. Furthermore, the museum's program reflected better than any other circuit venue the growing diversity of the Hispanic population in the U.S., showcasing artists not only from historic diasporic populations, i.e. Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, but also recent arrivals from the Dominican Republic, Chile, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and others.

Finally, Cayman/MoCHA was also among the earliest U.S. showcases of a small number of artists who became renowned internationally in the contemporary art scene. These included Serrano himself; Félix González, a.k.a. Felix Gonzalez Torres, who had a solo show in Cayman in 1983; Eugenio Dittborn and Alfredo Jaar, both present in the show *Chile-Chile* (1983); Juan Sánchez and Pepón Osorio, whose work was part of *Caribbean Art/African Currents* (1986); and Gabriel Orozco, whose work was on view in the exhibition *Installations: Current Trends*, the very last show held at MoCHA in 1990.[48]

This eclecticism made MoCHA into a highly important venue within the Latin American and Latino art circuit in New York. Its apparent randomness was the result of a purposeful attempt at recording and responding urgently to the city's effervescent Latin American and Latino art scene.[49] In the end, what has remained of Cayman/MoCHA is an exhibition history that is impressive for its mix of unknown names, well-known 20th century art historical figures (such as Frasconi, Alpuy and Juan Melé), and the punctuating presence of artists such as Gonzalez Torres, Serrano, and Orozco who between the 1990s and the early 2000s were embraced into the global contemporary art canon. No other venue within the circuit boasts in its

[48] As Félix González started becoming a household name in contemporary art, he started using his second last name, i.e. Torres, and dropped the diacritics in Félix and González. The Felix Gonzalez Torres foundation maintains the spelling of his name without diacritics.

[49] Torruella Leval, interview by Taína Caragol.

exhibition history the role of serving as an early exhibition platform to artists who achieved in art the equivalent of pop music stars "cross-over status," by shedding the stigma of excentricity (i.e. outside the center) that often accompanies non-European or U.S. American artists, to become household names in the contemporary art-world.

5.7 Shared Trends: the National, the International and the Personal

When comparing the exhibition histories within the circuit, it is possible to observe some shared trends in exhibition modalities as well as in the thematic scope of curatorial proposals. These curatorial trends used the momentum provided by the media exposure that the Latin American art market category and the mainstream art shows were receiving to foster focused research and deepen knowledge about Latin American and Latino art in the city and beyond.[50] The 1980s saw an increase in exhibitions devoted to art framed nationally and culturally. Examples of these include *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Themes in the Survival of a People* (El Museo, 1983), *Colombian Artists in New York: A Selection of Contemporary Paintings and Photographs* (MoCHA, 1985), *Art and Reality: Contemporary Art of Nicaragua* (MoCHA, 1986), *Chicano Expressions: A New View in American Art* (INTAR Gallery, 1986), *Puerto Rican Painting: Between Past and Present* (El Museo, 1987), *Signs of Transition: 80's Art from Cuba* (MoCHA 1988), *Rooted Visions: Mexican Art Today* (MoCHA, 1988), *Three Venezuelans in Two Dimensions: Miguel Von Dangel, Ernesto León and Carlos Zerpa* (CIAR/AS, 1988), *New*

[50] This is particularly evident in the argumentative tenor that shows like *The Latin American Spirit* in relation to the theses of *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States*, and its surfacing in quotes by Cancel published in reviews of the Bronx museum shows. The benefit of auction house press reports for alternative art spaces is harder to evidence. Arguably, the development of thematic exhibitions with curatorial premises that relied more on historical and theoretical research was in part the consequence of a field of exhibitions and research that was gradually growing and establishing itself in the cultural landscape of the United States through the market and through exhibitions in the art mainstream. The relationship of Latin American art in the alternative arts sector and the mainstream art sector acquired a more symbiotic quality at this time. The former contested notions of Latin American and Latino art proposed by the latter, but still both sectors sustained each other through the building of public interest in Latin American and Latino art and debate over its showcasing.

Image Painting, Argentina in the Eighties: Rafael Bueno, Guillermo Kuitca, Alfredo Prior (CIAR/AS, 1989), *Ideas and Images from Argentina* (Bronx Museum, 1989), and *Aspects of Contemporary Mexican Painting* (CIAR/AS, 1990). The insistence on national cultural curatorial frameworks was a response, perhaps, to a natural need from curators and audiences alike to explore artistic practices through a lens different from the solo exhibition. The national framework allowed drawing links between the work of multiple artists, in the hope of gaining a broader understanding about specific local art-scenes and their way of reflecting or responding to determined social contexts. Like a photographer shifts a lens to frame an image, the expansiveness of the cultural framework as a field was narrowed through tight chronological scopes, in an effort to limit false generalizations. These exhibitions served as well to dispute the idea of a homogenous Latin American art. They disturbed the principle of unity implied in the marketing and collecting Latin American art category, presenting a mosaic of art expressions whose sum challenged the idea of an easily definable regional whole.

While certainly in full swing, the process of redefining Latin American and Latino art as a category was not always unified and linear—the contingent emergence of a category rarely is. It followed different institutional paths that were affected by factors such as the media presence of the Latin American art market category, and by new political and media discourses about Latinos as a growing demography on its way to become the largest U.S. minority. They were also informed by the rise of multiculturalism in cultural institutions as an ideology of equal representation in an increasingly diverse country, and by the embrace of identity politics in academic discourse and in art as an expressive practice (argumentative or aesthetic) to defend the

rights of minorities subsumed within a hegemonic culture.[51] Finally, the redefining of Latin American and Latino art was affected by the circuit's own exchange and maturing of ideas.

A good example of this convoluted path is *¡Mira! The Canadian Club Hispanic Art Tour*. This series of three exhibitions illustrates the sometimes messy process of evolving curatorial concepts and hints at the forces at play in shaping the notion of Latino/Hispanic/ and/or Latin American art during the 1980s.[52] The show toured museums around the U.S. in three iterations: i.e. 1984, 1985, and 1989. This series gathered a growing sample through the years, of artists from Latin American background born and raised in the U.S. and artists born in Latin America residing in the United States. In the first iteration, Hispanic was, thus, quite an open category itself, which included artists trained in the U.S., in Latin America, and in Europe, from different Latin American cultural backgrounds and living in the U.S.

The *¡Mira!* series provides a good opportunity to contemplate a relative novelty in the exhibition circuit: the issue of funding. Sponsored by Hiram Walker Incorporated, distillers of Canadian Club Whiskey, the series *¡Mira!* exemplifies a growing trend of corporate exhibition financing in the 1980s. The sponsor's prominence in the exhibition title and its "foreword voice" in the catalog imply it as a stakeholder in the show, an essential voice in defining the exhibition.

Exhibition funding has since become a modality of corporate marketing and philanthropy—and a common sight in art galleries and museums— as a way for corporations of improving their reputations and increasing publicity.[53] Due to their mass appeal, traditionally the

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[51] Gómez-Peña, "The Multicultural Paradigm: An Open Letter to the National Arts Community." Gómez-Peña's open letter is a revealing text that explores the intersections between these different factors, particularly in their relation to Latino art and border culture.

[52] *¡Mira!* Means "Look!" The use of a title in Spanish for a show touring U.S. museum connoted cultural difference vis-à-vis Anglo- Americans.

[53] This trend is well and alive and has expanded from the United States to countries such as France and England, where museums are traditionally mostly state-sponsored. In order to understand the implications of the

favorite vehicles for corporate sponsorship are exhibitions intended to travel, and whose premise is country-specific or thematically-defined.[54] Blockbuster exhibitions that are easily accessible to audiences without a broad knowledge of Art History are also appealing to sponsors as they assure a larger publicity impact. As part of their marketing efforts, corporations direct funding towards exhibitions whose visitors form a potentially interesting target audience for marketing their products and services. As the show takes place, a reciprocal branding effect occurs where the products of the sponsor become associated to the art showcased and vice-versa. This is particularly the case when the sponsor is disclosed in the exhibition title.

In this context, it is interesting to consider the implications of *¡Mira!* as a show where art and alcohol become matching commodities.[55] In *¡Mira!* the social aspect of public celebration and partying, e.g. at an opening reception, has been extended to Latino art, mediated by the cliché of Hispanics as prone to partying, dancing, and music.[56] It is particularly interesting to see a Canadian liquor maker from the chilly North of America tap into the hot brand of Latin

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corporate sponsorship of culture, it is helpful to understand the reaction to its internationalization in Europe, where it has been interpreted as a trend that is diluting exhibition content and pushing museums to adopt the ways of profit-making institutions. See Georgina Oliver, "Corporate Sponsorship: a Sea Change for French Museums.," *Museum International* 51, no. 202 (June 1999): 24–28; Martin Bailey, "UK Exhibition Sponsorship Limping.," *Art Newspaper* 18 (January 2009): 6–6.

[54] Victoria D. Alexander, "Pictures at an Exhibition: Conflicting Pressures in Museums and the Display of Art," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 4 (January 1, 1996): 797–839. In addressing the subject of institutional funding, Alexander posits that the availability of corporate funding, exerts pressure over museums as passive recipients of these resources to make the kind of exhibitions those funders prefer, instead of exhibitions that require extensive research and are geared towards a select knowledgeable audience.

[55] Interestingly, based on empirical evidence that cannot be quantified here, food companies like Goya or Frito Lay tend to direct their sponsorship towards popular culture, rather than exhibitions. These two companies are two of the most visible sponsors of New York's Puerto Rican Parade. Joseph and Carmen Ana Unanue, owner of Goya Foods are renowned art patrons. Mrs. Unanue is *President Emerita* of El Museo del Barrio's Board of Trustees. However, her sponsorship at El Museo bears her name and not her company's.

[56] This association of Hispanic art to partying upholds its currency. The company Rums of Puerto Rico is a main supporter of Puerto Rican and Latino art events in New York at institutions like El Museo del Barrio and the alternative art space Clemente Soto Velez in the Lower East Side. The company Red Bull (also associated to partying by newer generations due to Red Bull's energizing qualities) is also becoming a frequent presence at exhibitions. No hard data supports these observations. They are based on my experience attending art openings in New York over the past decade.

America. Otherwise the sponsor's statements in the second and third catalogs of *¡Mira!* where Canadian Club expressed the show's aim as wanting to recognize and preserve the important artistic achievements and contributions of Hispanic artists to the U.S, seem rather arbitrary.[57]

Regarding exhibition format, the first two iterations of *¡Mira!* followed the tradition of the national salon or biennial. An open call was sent to "Hispanic" artists to submit works, and an appointed jury of museum directors specializing in art and artists with a Latino and Latin American background, chose the selection of works to be showcased. Within that selection, prizes were awarded for the artistic and aesthetic merit of artworks.[58] The third and final iteration of *¡Mira!* was curated "from scratch" by Susana Torruella Leval, Ricardo Pau-Llosa, independent curator and Associate Professor at Miami-Dade College) and Inverna Lockpez, an artist herself and the Director of INTAR Gallery and an artist herself. Prizes were eliminated.

Analyzed over the entire series, the choice of artists and artworks showcased and the discourse framing the exhibitions, points to a developing awareness by the curators of the risks of reductionism inherent to culturally or geographically-defined art categories, such as Latino/Hispanic art. The first two iterations of *¡Mira!* [Fig. 5-18] display the curators' interest in giving visual coherence to the emerging curatorial and research field of Hispanic/Latino art –

[57] Jack Agüeros, John Mahey, and Edmundo Rodríguez, *¡Mira!: The Canadian Club Hispanic Tour 1984* (New York: Museo del Barrio, 1984); Susana Torruella Leval, Ricardo Pau-Llosa, and Inverna Lockpez, *¡Mira!: The Canadian Club Hispanic Art Tour III, 1988-1989* (Chicago: Terra Museum of American Art, 1988).

[58] At the first *¡Mira!* the jury was comprised by Jack Agüeros, El Museo del Barrio; John A. Mahey, San Antonio Museum of Art; and Edmundo M. Rodríguez, Plaza de la Raza. Artists included Francisco Alvarado-Juárez, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Nivia González, Luis LeRoy, Esperanza Martínez, Freddy Rodríguez, and Jesse Treviño, among others. Jack Agüeros, El Museo del Barrio; Jim Lichon, Hyde Park Art Center; and Sister Karen Boccalero, Self-Help Graphics, served as jury for the second iteration, which featured the work of Julio Alpuy, Francisco Alvarado-Juárez, Felix Cordero, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Ramon Delgadillo, Marcos Dimas, Liliana Durán, East Los Streetscapers, Diane Gamboa, Nivia González, Benito Huerta Lozano, Julio Larraz, Louis Leroy, Eduardo Lozano, Cesar Martínez, Yolanda Mesa, Alberto Mijangos, Anthony Ortega, Gamaliel Ramírez, and Juan Sánchez, among others.

with sometimes overreaching, essentialist zealotry. For one, abstraction was almost obliterated as an art modality practiced by Hispanics.[59]

The first *¡Mira!,* comprised fifty-five works, of which only four were abstract. Representational works ranged in style from Luis Stand's *El Espíritu Santo no. 3*, 1983—a painting of a war missile made in a pop style—to Daniel Galvaez's photorealist portrait *Home Girl #1* 1983 [Fig. 5-19], and Nivia González Agüeros dreamy depiction of a feminine encounter *Tres niñas,* 1981 [Fig. 5-20]. Abstract works included Juan Melé's *Invention #145* [Fig. 5-21], a constructive composition with rectangular shapes made-up of patterns of superposed parallel lines in different directions, creating a kinetic effect.

In an article announcing the show Agüeros declared the following: "Abstract is cerebral. But we are emotional and proud of it. We love our families and to be around our kids. You see that in the art. Most of it is figurative."[60] Participating artist Daniel Serra-Badue added: "The Latin American artist doesn't find abstraction congenial to what he has to say. … Fantasy expressed through Surrealism is the main current."[61]

At the second *¡Mira!* figuration and bold color were also main strands. In the catalog, only two out of only thirty-one works reproduced were not representational. These were Alberto Mijango's *Flag Series*, 1985, and Fanny Sanín *Acrylic no. 2,* 1981 [5-22].[62] Had Agüeros' and Badue's statements and the choice of works at the first two *¡Mira!* not been out-sized by shows

[59] Agüeros, Mahey, and Rodríguez, *Mira!*; Torruella Leval, Pau-Llosa, and Lockpez, *Mira!*.

[60] James Brooke, "Busy Weekend for Latin Lively Arts," *The New York Times*, August 3, 1984, sec. C; Weekend Desk. It is ironic that Jack Agüeros, who advocated for a broad contextual framework for considering Puerto Rican art expressed himself in such limiting ways in regards to Hispanic art and its expressive possibilities.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Quirarte et al., *Mira!*; Vivien Raynor, "Art: 'Mira!,' Exhibition at El Museo del Barrio," *The New York Times*, January 3, 1986, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/1986/01/03/arts/art-imira-exhibition-at-el-museo-del-barrio.html (Accessed May 4, 2012).

of greater media importance (such as *Art of the Fantastic*, *Hispanic Art in the United States* and *The Latin American Spirit*), they too would have become main targets of criticisms, as exhibitions that displayed the internalization by Latinos of Euro and North-American stereotypical projections on their own culture. One could perhaps partly relate their essentialist vein to the method of curatorial selection based on an open call directed to a particular demography. In fact, in his catalog statement on behalf of El Museo, Agüeros admitted that the national call for entries had perhaps predisposed the kind of work that would be submitted.[63]

In 1983, the year of the first *¡Mira!,* the human figure in painting and Neo-Expressionism were experiencing international appeal, not least among Latino artists. In addition, the migration influx from Latin America was becoming a main subject in the media. Emphasis was placed on cultural difference among migrants and U.S. Anglo-Americans. Finally, as discussed in Chapter One, there certainly was the palpable influence of Magic Realism in Latin American literature on the region's cultural production and its interpretations. Agüeros' and Serra-Badue's statements seem oblivious to these conditions in their lack of nuance.[64] Instead, their remarks and the accompanying predominance of figuration and art that draws on Surrealism at the first two exhibitions could have well inspired the much criticized 1987 shows *Art of the Fantastic*, and *Hispanic Art in the United States*. At the same time, the simple nature that Agüeros and Badue's remarks assign to the art of Hispanics served perhaps also the sponsors, insofar as family values, happiness, and emotional exuberance are more marketing-friendly than brainy abstraction.

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[63] Jack Agüeros, "Statement," in *¡Mira! The Canadian Club Hispanic Art Tour 1984* (El Museo del Barrio, 1984), n.p.

[64] It is also possible that the corporate sponsorship of this exhibition led curators to characterize Hispanic art in a certain way, for purposes of creating among the increasingly diverse Hispanic constituency an image they could identify with in order to facilitate marketing to this constituency. On the corporate manufacturing of Latinos see Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.*

In the third and last iteration of *¡Mira!* [Fig. 5-23], however, the shift from a juried, open call exhibition, to a curated show by invitation suggests a process of reflection and self-criticism from the curators towards the exhibition series. The shift reflected the desire of a team of curators wanting full control in the construction and shaping of their argument. The show featured twenty-six artists, none of whom had appeared in the first two shows. The curators defined three curatorial objectives for the show. As paraphrased by *Los Angeles Times* reporter Zan Dubin the show intended to:

> (1) spotlight the diversity of styles and subject matter in an area of contemporary art often viewed in terms of clichés and narrow thematic presuppositions; (2) identify preoccupations and themes among these artists and to utilize the affinities as the criteria with which to evaluate the works; and (3) demonstrate what the idiosyncratic artistic expressions of Hispanics contribute to modernist and postmodernist aesthetics.[65]

Unlike the first two shows, which focused on painting and sculpture, this final *¡Mira!* also included drawing, photography, assemblages, and installation. Abstraction and work deploying conceptual strategies was abundant. Among these was a Catalina Parra's painting *How Much Can You Take*, 1987, a tri-partite horizontal composition of torn photorealist images of faceless black people that suggested violence against people of color. Featured in the show was also Amalia Mesa-Bains's *Grotto of the Virgins*, 1987 [Fig. 5-24], a site specific work combining feminism and spirituality that consisted of an entryway made with mosaics simulating a cave opening that led to three chapels, each of which honored a different woman. Also on view was Rimer Cardillo's mezzotint print *Ritual Box*, 1984 [Fig. 5-25], depicting a box with two pinned butterflies and incongruous elements such as screws and nuts on top of them, threatening

[65] Zan Dubin, "'*Mira!*': Latino Artistry," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1988, http://articles.latimes.com/1988-03-27/entertainment/ca-184_1_latino-art (accessed June 15, 2012). The exhibition catalog contains no essay with these three aims, but they can be abstracted from the essays by the three curators. See Terra Museum of American Art, *Mira!: The Canadian Club Hispanic Art Tour III, 1988-1989* (Chicago: Terra Museum of American Art, 1988).

to destroy their fragile beauty. Other artists in the show included Rodolfo Abularach, Carlos Alfonzo, Tony Bechara,María Brito-Avellana, Mario Becomo, Huberto Calzada, Rimer Cardillo, Mel Casas, Pérez Celis, Edgar Franceschi, Roberto Gil de Montes, Jorge Tacla, Patssi Valdez, and Liliana Porter.[66] Interestingly, Susana Torruella Leval's description of this art departs dramatically from Agüeros' statement for the second *¡Mira!* exhibition. In her exhibition essay Torruella Leval addresses the association of Latin American and Latino artists to "the fantastic" not in terms that could be confused with an inherent non-Western irrationality, but as the product of a "highly distinctive sense of reality" that is relative and fed by "the daily witnessing of the unexpected in all aspects of life—social, political, spiritual, even climatic."[67] Far from lingering in this thinly veiled sociological version of Latino and Latin American Otherness, she goes into lengths at describing the way in which various historical and cultural strands can be found in the work of many Latinos and Latin Americans (e.g. pre-Columbian past, the process of identity formation and its relation to political sovereignty or lack of, the experience of migration). Ultimately, according to her, the viewer of the third installment of *¡Mira!* should be prepared to be confronted with "a restless, unwieldy mass of images" that resist familiar art historical categories and easy generalizations, and "reflect the complex and diverse worlds that make up Latin America."[68]

In a similar vein, Pau-Llosa warned exhibition viewers and catalog readers from interpreting "Hispanic" art essentially as a testimony of the immigrant experience, for this would occlude the eclecticism of Latin American thinking, as well as the rich bi-cultural experience of

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[66] Torruella Leval, Pau-Llosa, and Lockpez, *Mira!*

[67] Susana Torruella Leval, "Identity and Change: The Latin American Challenge," in *¡Mira! The Canadian Club Hispanic Art Tour III*, 1989, 5–8.

[68] Ibid.

"Latin" artists born in the U.S.[69] As for Lockpez, her short essay stressed the fact that the works in the show were mostly produced in the U.S., by artists from two communities: those of Hispanic origin, and Latin Americans who had chosen to live in the U.S.[70] This distinction within the scope of the term "Hispanic" is a direct response to the homogenizing effect of *Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters and Sculptors.* Continuing with her reply to the curators of this show, Lockpez emphasized the importance of the colonial experience in the formulation of a political strand of Latin American art that goes beyond the agit-prop into work that sustains a spiritual search, a quest for existential meaning.[71]

In three iterations *¡Mira!* went from a show presenting Hispanics as a culturally distinct, homogenous group, to a show stressing cultural diversity and the intrinsic arbitrariness of "Hispanic," "Latino" or "Latin American art" as categories. The paradigm of Latin American or Latino art was no longer embodied by a preference for figuration. The implication of its easy relation to "the emotional" as opposed to the "rational" was now unacceptable.

The fact that no more editions of *¡Mira!* were organized was perhaps an open declaration—and a consequence—of their obsolescence. In a way, the last *¡Mira!* was not only the result of a thinking process on geographic or ethnic art categories triggered by the show itself. The final exhibition was also the result of the evolving engagement of Lockpez, Torruella Leval, and Pau-Llosa's with Latin American and Latino artists. In addition, much in the way of

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[69] Ricardo Pau-Llosa, "Latin American Aesthetics in North America: The 'Hispanic' Artist and the Value of Legacy," in *¡Mira! The Canadian Club Hispanic Art Tour III*, ed. Susana Torruella Leval, Ricardo Pau-Llosa, and Inverna Lockpez (Chicago, Ill: Terra Museum of American Art, 1988), 9–12.

[70] Inverna Lockpez, "The Conquered Land Changed the Conquerors," in *¡Mira!: The Hispanic Arts Club III*, ed. Susana Torruella Leval, Ricardo Pau-Llosa, and Inverna Lockpez (Chicago, Ill: Terra Museum of American Art, 1988), 12.

[71] Ibid. Lockpez highlighting of political art as a main strand of contemporary Hispanic/Latino and Latin American art betrays no only a response to the apolitical stance of the curators of *Hispanic Art in the United States*, but also her own personal preference for this type of art. Compared to the essays by Pau-Llosa and Torruella Leval, Lockpez' essay is certainly the most limiting in the subject-matter that Latin American and Latino art might cover.

The Latin American Spirit, the third *¡Mira!* was an answer to stereotypes upheld in exhibitions like *Art of the Fantastic,* and *Hispanic Art in the United States,* which were being generated at mainstream museums whose curators had perhaps not carried out this thinking process and had taken the first two *¡Mira!* as the definitive word on Latino and Latin American art.

Other exhibitions subsequent to *¡Mira!* continued the mission of expanding on notions of Latin American and Latino art. The circuit and the individuals who led it came from different institutions and were united in this endeavor of epistemic expansion. *Abstract Visions* [Fig. 5-26], which opened at MoCHA in late 1987 epitomizes this sense of purpose. Initially, this exhibition was a request from Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University to MoCHA for a show on Hispanic artists to MoCHA. Torruella Leval, then Chief Curator at MoCHA, started research in 1986, focusing on contemporary artists who continued Latin American abstract traditions that were strong in the 1940s.[72] By the time the show took place, Torruella Leval was no longer at MoCHA. Carla Stellweg held the post of Chief Curator, and Yeshiva University was no longer part of the plan. The show became integrated into MoCHA's official *in situ* program. With regards to the shows objective, Stellweg declared in her introduction to the catalog:

> The recent emphasis that most art by Latin Americans or Hispanics is depending solely on the indigenous and colonial past, with correlative examples of a predominantly fantastic and naively exotic art, induces us to consider the relevance of presenting the divergent approaches to abstraction which also share a long tradition in our cultures. … The twenty-four artists included represent the various concerns of today's abstract art.[73]

John Stringer wrote the main essay in what appears to have been one of his last collaborations while still at the CIAR/AS. He starts with a simplified history of predominant artistic trends in 20th century Latin America, where he credits the humanist rationalism of Torres

[72] The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, *Abstract Visions,* Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, November 24, 1987-January 17, 1988 (New York: The Museum, 1987).

[73] Carla Stellweg's untitled text in The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, *Abstract Visions,* (New York: The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, 1987).

García as the stem of Latin American abstraction, and mentions other emerging constructivist currents of the '50s and '60s that relinquished symbolism.[74] Then he proceeds to address the group of contemporary artists in the show, in whose work correspondences will be hard-pressed to find, due to the cultural distances produced by factors as diverse as topography, geology, history, native heritage and adopted traditions within the vast territory they come from—Latin America—and one may add, the particularities of their own artistic trajectories and their travel routes.[75] He then addresses concisely the work of each artist, highlighting different elements and qualities within their work. Mario Bencomo interrogates abstraction through subtle figurative references like his *Windy Sunset for Van Gogh*, 1986 [Fig. 5-27], where swirling and carefully painted blue dabs evoke Van Gogh's iconic energetic brushstrokes in *Starry Night*, 1889. Benito Huerta's paintings attest to an interest in decorative pattern achieved through intricate abstract nets drawn on canvas [Fig. 5-28]. For Stringer, Elba Damast's *No One Owns the House's Image*, 1987 conveys an illusion of space and a mood of "reckless inhibition."[76] On the other hand Francisca Sutil's *Leader*, 1986 [Fig. 5-29] conveys a sense of calm order in her geometric compositions synthesizing medium and form in shapes made out of color paper pulp. Stringer rejects an overall conclusion on the nature of Latin American contemporary abstract practice. He declares: "As a totality, the exhibition seeks a direction, but ultimately it reveals the dynamic and diverse wealth of contemporary artistic talent."[77]

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[74] John Stringer, "Introduction," in *Abstract Visions* (New York: The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, 1987).

[75] Stringer himself avows that most of the artists in the show are resident in the U.S.

[76] John Stringer, "Introduction," in *Abstract Visions* (New York: The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, 1987).

[77] Ibid.

Parallel to the explicit heterogeneity of Latino and Latin American art and the embrace of art forms associated to the Euro-American Modern and contemporary canon (e.g. abstraction, conceptual art) of the third *¡Mira!* and *Abstract Visions*, there was also a strong art trend informed by identity politics among Latin Americans and Latinos during this decade. The same conditions that led to the Culture Wars, i.e. an increasingly conservative and normative discourse based on Christian moral values, and a monolithic and purist conception of Anglo-American art, nurtured a movement to make art that asserted cultural difference (culture being defined here in terms of gender, national, regional, ethnic and racial background, or of religious or sexual orientation). In the polarized climate of the Culture Wars, Latino and Latin American artists had to choose sides as well. *The Decade Show* was the main survey of this trend of pluralism, multiculturalism, and identity politics in art, presenting works conceived to combat white-Anglo cultural hegemony. However, even if this was MoCHA's last undertaking, and its most visible, it should by no means be taken as the institution's final word on Latin American and Latino art. Within the context of their exhibition history, identity politics was only one of many concerns expressed by Latinos and Latin Americans in their art.

By the end of the decade, heterogeneity seemed to be the main principle underlying contemporary Latin American and Latino art at the circuit venues. Latin American and Latino art persisted as categories, but more importantly, the definitions and visual associations imposed by secondary market activity (in conjunction with the media) became more complex, as they were constantly challenged in exhibitions organized by the circuit. The breakdown of barriers between Latin American and Latino artists was paramount in this process, as itinerancy and perhaps even displacement were embraced as crucial to these artists' trajectories. This chapter emphasized that shared purpose, and the ways in which our focus venues engaged with and challenged the

mainstream showcasing and marketing of Latino and Latin American art. Their common embrace of an agenda of making Latino and Latin American artists visible in the city's cultural arena constituted a landmark development in the field that fostered national interest in this art while broadening its critical discourse.

CHAPTER SIX. Conclusion: Recapitulating and Rethinking the Boom from a Current Standpoint

6.1 Introduction

Through the course of five chapters, this dissertation has proposed a new reading of the phenomenon known as "the Boom of Latin American and Latino art" in the U.S. and internationally. The re-reading has shifted the focus of discussion away from what the field's literature has identified as the Boom's main feature, i.e. the art mainstream's sudden interest in the art of Latinos and Latin Americans principally between 1987 and 1993, and homogenizing and exotic projections of it. Instead, I have proposed an analysis of the role that established and alternative institutions operating at a small scale and committed to the art of Latin Americans and Latinos had as early platforms in helping to shape ideas of Latin American and Latino art. This analysis has taken a localized perspective from New York, due to the city's status as a cultural capital, and as an epicenter of Latino and Latin American artistic activity.

In the course of this final chapter, and through the epilogue, I will recapitulate my findings, and offer a panorama of developments in the field of Latin American and Latino art occurring since the mid-1990s that reveal a growing mainstream institutional and academic footing of the field in comparison to the years of the Boom. This panorama does not intend to be a critical survey, as it reflects on an ongoing phenomenon. However, I want to suggest that this broader presence in the cultural field is in part due to the early work of the focus institutions of this dissertation in helping to draw the contours of a Latin American and Latino art discourse. At the same time, I reflect on the long-term cost of mainstream legitimization of Latin American art for the alternative circuit.

6.2 Recapitulating

This dissertation has elucidated the pre-Boom founding histories, missions, and unfolding exhibition trajectories of four focus institutions: the CIAR/AS, El Museo del Barrio, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Cayman/MoCHA. Founded between 1969 and 1973, these institutions had all been established and were operating in a Latin American and Latino art circuit long before the Boom's climactic years. Signature Boom exhibitions such as *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States* acknowledge some of those institutions' staff members in their catalogs for their collaboration and curatorial advice, attesting to their role as harbingers of the late-'80s mainstream interest in the artwork of Latinos and Latin Americans. The shift of focus towards these non-mainstream New York-venues, has thus necessitated a broader chronological scope than the one delimiting most Boom discussions. In addition to uncovering their role in nurturing wide interest in Latino and Latin American art, this dissertation has highlighted these venue's importance in countering essentialist notions of this art through their exhibitions.

The focus institutions of this dissertation were created to fill a palpable void of art by Latinos and Latin Americans in the mainstream art circuit. Barely a decade into their existence, in 1979, they witnessed the emergence of the Latin American art auction market. This event was another pre-Boom landmark for Latin American art, marking the beginning of an era characterized by the sudden validation of this art as worthy of collecting and display within private and public settings. As a main art legitimizer, the auction house market translated the art historical value of Latin American art into monetary denomination, while the commodity value increased the art historical standing of Latin American art within the mainstream too. The branding power of supply and demand also helped establish or reinforce a canon of Latin American art through record prices and the styles and aesthetics common to the most marketable

works, namely those of Rivera, Tamayo, Lam, and Matta, with some new added figures including Kahlo and Remedios Varo.

Among our focus institutions, the CIAR/AS was instrumental to the entry of Latin American art to the marketplace. The emergence of the market itself generated interest in the endeavors of showcasing venues devoted to the art of Latinos and Latin Americans. This dissertation has also shed light on the dynamics between the auction house market and the New York venues showcasing the art of Latinos and Latin Americans, especially as to the subject of defining art categories through the market and exhibition programs.

This dissertation's methodological question has yielded several results; the first concerning our understanding and the validity of a claim about the Boom. When thinking about the international visibility of Latin American and Latino art, the mid-to-late 1980s certainly deserves to be thought of as booming period. It was characterized by the unprecedented number of large-scale traveling exhibitions of Latin American and Latino art organized by the international mainstream. Large-scale, highly publicized exhibitions of *national* focus were also organized at the time, such as *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* (Metropolitan Museum, 1990). But the center stage belonged to regional, comprehensive Latin American art shows.

Designed as surveys, these shows shared an attempt at anthologizing the region's art, and at trying to weave an extensive, mostly linear, art historical narrative. Designated themes and aesthetics in *Art of the Fantastic* and *Hispanic Art in the United States* served as traits or identifiers of the vast Latin American and Latino art categories over prolonged periods of time and throughout the region. They included an identification of Latin American art with fantasy, color and viscerality, and the favoring of traditional media such as painting and sculpture and art modalities like figuration, at the expense of conceptual art and performance.

Not all survey exhibitions of Latin American art during the Boom recurred to these problematic tropes, but the curatorial models they adhered to conjured other problems. This phenomenon was not limited to the U.S. On the other side of the Atlantic, Dawn Ades' exhibition *Latin American Art: The Modern Era*, held at the Hayward Gallery, London in 1989, presented a chronological overview of Latin American art.[1] In Ades' historical overview Mexico shone not only as the cradle of the most influential mural movement in the Americas, but also as a seminal country for the development of a Latin American graphic tradition. José Guadalupe Posada and the Taller de Gráfica Popular were deservedly featured as pillars of this medium. Abstract art and the Constructivist tradition were also highlighted in the work of Uruguayan Joaquín Torres García, the Argentine movements Madí and Arte Concreto Invención, the Brazilian Neoconstructivists and the Venezuelan Cinéticos. On the other hand, the contributions of the French and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, traditionally considered as part of Latin America, were almost completely absent from the exhibition and the catalog.[2] So was a panoply of conceptual artistic practices that criticized the dictatorial regimes in countries like Chile, Brazil, and Argentina between the late 1960s and early 1980s. While the show managed to stay clear of the most clichéd reductions, *Latin American Art: The Modern Era* still could not escape the necessary evil of the survey show: selection and emphasis of some foci at the expense of others.

[1] Ades exhibition was inspired by Stanton Loomis Catlin and Terence Grieder *Latin American Art Since Independence* (Yale Art Gallery, 1966), which she had seen while on honeymoon in the United States. As a specialist in the art of Latin America herself, she understood the dangers of exclusion intrinsic to the survey exhibition, and thus, stated in her introduction her aim to show an overview, and not a final history of Latin American art. However, the linear chronological structure of the show and its expansive geographic character, involuntarily highlighted the absence of artists, countries, and movements in her recount. For an analysis of the historical implications of Ades' exhibition and some responses it generated see Caragol and Whitelegg, "The Archival Avant-Garde: Latin American Art and the UK."

[2] An exception to this is the 19th century Cuban artist Victor Patricio Landaluze. But the graphic tradition of Puerto Rico, for example, which served as a basis for the creation of the Bienal de San Juan del Grabado Latinoamericano y Caribeño in 1971 was absent from the exhibition or its catalog.

With regards to U.S. Latino art, it can be said that even if its national and international exposure did not match that of Latin American art in mainstream art spaces, it still was not spared some of the same pitfalls in curatorial practice. The mass appeal that Latin American and Latino art were having in mainstream art spaces and their commercial potential at a time of demographic growth proved contagious to the point where small, alternative museums such as El Museo del Barrio tried in some cases to engage in exhibitions that proposed similarly simplistic categorizations of Latin American and Latino art. Sometimes those alternative venues became accomplices to a process of reinforcing stereotypes and limiting artistic expression. As discussed in Chapter Five, the first two iterations of the series *¡Mira!*, followed those lines, possibly informing the curatorial premise of *Art of the Fantastic.*

Regarding the conceptual differentiation between Latino and Latin American art, most large-scale survey exhibitions at mainstream art spaces maintained implicit or explicit epistemologic divisions between the two. Both usually resulted in the ghettoization of Latino art. Exhibitions like *Art of the Fantastic* and, the British-made *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era* gave space rather to artists born and residing in Latin America than to those from diasporic or colonial communities (e.g. Chicanos, U.S. Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans).[3] By force of the curators' choice of works, this exhibition set creative boundaries that favored gestural, figurative, Neoexpressionist painting over other modes of expression within the Latino art community. The inclusion of artisans, such as Felipe Archuleta, and others diagnosed as mentally-ill, like Martín Ramírez, was arbitrary and in spite of the merit of their work, seemed to cast Hispanic art into the terrain of folkloric, naïf, and "outsider art."

[3] The Hayward Gallery's *Latin American Art: The Modern Era*, eschewed the subject of 19th and 20th century Latin American diasporas and colonial populations, by defining Latin American art as the cultural production of a geopolitical territory composed of republics independent since 1820s, and by avoiding the inclusion of any artists of Latino background in the U.S.

From these examples it can be concluded that the Boom's overall failure when conceived as a mainstream-made episode of Latin American and Latino art, was its attempt to define these two art productions as art historical categories, through highly visible exhibitions that seemed to be conceived as a "one-shot affair"—at least for some time—for each institution. The institutions that organized *Art of the Fantastic, Hispanic Art in the United States*, did not exhibit a long-term commitment to the art of Latinos and Latin Americans and the scholarship of field experts. This would have allowed for the regular showcasing of multiple artistic proposals over time, avoiding cultural reductionism. Instead, in order to introduce mass audiences to Latin American art, these exhibitions relied on stressing uniformity through presenting a vast but streamlined artistic production. This curatorial choice ipso facto curtailed the diversity of Latin American and Latino artistic expression and its historical complexity. In addition, this endeavor was mostly undertaken without the close collaboration of field experts. Consequentially, the latter interpreted the mainstream insistence in defining the art of Latinos and Latin Americans as a neocolonial gesture to be resisted.

On the other hand, the mainstream blockbuster exhibitions of the Boom were far from constituting the only voice on Latin American art during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The traditional Boom may have been spurred by commercial, political, and art historical interests of the mainstream in the cultural production of Latinos and Latin Americans. However, there were other equally important incentives for the commitment to Latin American and Latino art at small-scale venues in New York, including specialized galleries like the CIAR/AS, and alternative art spaces like El Museo, the Bronx Museum, and Cayman/MoCHA. Between the late '60s and early '80s their concern was to provide Latin American and Latino art with a presence in the city's art scene. Their objectives ranged from hemispheric diplomacy to local politics,

from international commerce to cultural affirmation in marginalized neighborhoods in town. With the backdrop location of New York City, these venues preceded and helped the mainstream interest in Latin American and Latino art. They promoted, through their diverging missions, audiences, and idiosyncracies, a composite vision of what Latin American and Latino art can be. Through their exhibitions, multiple aspects of this art came into focus, defying the idea of a one-and-only paradigm of Latin America and Latino art.

Their early exhibition trajectories can be broadly summarized as follows: South American abstraction and perceptual art produced after World War II was shown at the CIAR/AS during its first decade of exhibitions, as this cultural embassy attempted to project an image of Latin American art akin to the U.S. post-war vanguards. A community-based El Museo exhibited art by Puerto Rican artists from the island and the mainland, emphasizing during its first years a strong and independent artistic tradition with Pre-Columbian roots and a number of remarkable artists since the 18th century including José Campeche, Francisco Oller, and Lorenzo Homar. Once the Bronx Museum had found a clear exhibition scope in the late 1970s, modern Latin American artists and contemporary ones residing in that borough became the subject of solo exhibitions or were included in group shows that emphasized the city's international art scene and gave Latin Americans and Latinos a place in modern art history. On the other hand, Cayman/MoCHA served from early on as a launch pad for Latino, Latin American and Caribbean emerging, mid-career, and established contemporary artists in different stages of their careers. The program emphasized the heterogeneity of their art. No cultures or styles were privileged over others, resulting in a highly eclectic curatorial practice that emphasized international mobility and transnationalism as common traits among their artists, and that claimed for them a central space in the city's cultural scene, metaphorically and geographically.

During their first decade, these exhibition venues started gaining visibility and building their reputations as important showcases of Latino and Latin American art in New York. The institutional idiosyncracies and sometimes narrowly-defined exhibition scopes started to expand in the second decade, as these spaces recognized in one another their importance as venues committed to showcasing artists under-represented in the New York mainstream. During the height of the mainstream Boom, the institutions of our circuit often upstaged their programming through ambitious exhibition projects, such as *The Latin American Spirit,* and *The Decade Show*, and intra-circuit collaborations that reverberated through the city. The circuit prompted a sustainable dialogue that problematized the perpetuation of stereotypes of Latin American and Latino art and culture, and defended a politics of representation based on the "first person." Today, this dialogue is well established in art historical, sociological, and anthropological disciplines dealing with identity politics, urban demography, and culture.

The literature of the Boom and its emphasis on shows produced by the mainstream between 1987 and 1993, has had the unintended consequence of delaying the public valuation and proper documentation of the histories of small exhibition galleries and alternative art spaces like the ones addressed in this dissertation which were active before, during and after the Boom. During and after the recession of the early '90s (which probably contributed also to the contraction of the mainstream Boom)—and in the negative economic aftermath of the Culture Wars—alternative venues came under distress, and along with them their archival holdings, threatening to obliterate their institutional histories.[4]

[4] The urgency of MoMA Library's Survey and similar efforts was evident in the poor state of many of the archives documented and their vulnerability in the absence of in-house archival expertise. Of the forty institutional archives I visited between 2003 and 2006 as Coordinator of the Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American art, which included those the four focus institutions in this dissertation, as others such as Intar, En Foco, Taller Boricua, Exit Art, Art in General, the Bronx Council on the Arts, the Cuban Art Center/Cuban Art Space, the Emilio Sánchez Foundation, approximately 50% were found to be in conditions less than safe for the preservation of records. Confidentiality agreements between MoMA Library and these institutions do not allow disclosure of

This trend started to be overturned only in the early 2000s. Then a number of archival initiatives based in museums and in academia and funded by private foundations and public agencies started to document the institutional histories of cultural spaces devoted to Latin American and Latino art in different parts of the country.[5] This dissertation is indebted to those initiatives, especially to The Museum of Modern Art's Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art. The wealth of information collected in this project from interviews with staff and from archival records largely unknown or inaccessible, pointed to the need to revise the recent history of Latin American and Latino art in New York. Access to those lost and forgotten documents is what made this dissertation possible in the first place, and along with it the new historiographic approach to Latin American and Latino art it proposes.

Through a research methodology that delved into institutional archives, bibliographic research, and interviews with former staff members, auction house professionals, and artists active in the 1980s, this dissertation has proposed a de-dusted look at the Boom of Latin American and Latino art. These until recently neglected material traces—exhibition files,

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particular problems at institutions, but existing conditions included archives stored in flooded basements or building areas, and the storage of flammable negatives and photographs in overheated attics. One institution that pioneered the showcasing of U.S. Latino artists from the early 1980s had lost two decades of exhibition files in a flood. Many directors interviewed as part of the survey expressed regret at having to constantly sacrifice funding for archival preservation to programming. At only a handful of the institutions visited by MoMA's Survey archival preservation had been made into a priority, among them at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Exit Art, El Museo del Barrio, and the Emilio Sánchez Foundation.

A main function of the survey was to promote archival preservation and accessibility. At the end of the survey's three-year run at least two institutions, i.e. The Bronx Museum and Taller Boricua had hired professional archivists to care for their records and facilitate accessibility. Another outstanding outcome was the processing and accessibility of the archives of Cayman Gallery/MoCHA, whose records had been taken to Hostos Community College upon eviction, but remained in closed storage for fifteen years. By making this case known to New York's archivist community, Hostos Community College received a grant from the New York State Archives in 2006 for processing and accessibility. The value of these records was internationally recognized when in 2010 the curators of 8th edition of the Manifiesta Biennial in Murcia, Spain included them as documentation of a seminal alternative art space of its time for under-represented artists. See *Manifesta 8: Sedes*: *La Bienal Europea De Arte Contemporáneo, Región De Murica, España En Diálogo Con El Norte De Africa = Venues: The European Biennial for Contemporary Art, Region of Murcia, Spain in Dialogue With Northern Africa* (Cinisello Balsamo, Milano: Silvana Editorale, 2010).

[5] Caragol, "Archives of Reality."

catalogs, invitations, posters, correspondence between artists and curators, and individual memories recounted in oral histories—are the historical records of New York's circuit of Latino and Latin American art between the 1970s and 1980s—precisely the elements of the Boom that had been covered by layers of dust after its bust. This dissertation has hopefully also challenged some of the traditionally accepted parameters of the Boom of Latin American and Latino Art.

6.3 After the Boom's Bust: Reflections on the Limits of a Historical Concept

Informed by the recapitulation of the main results of this dissertation, I propose to revisit the term "boom" one more time, for a reflection on its limits as a historical concept. In addition to all other meanings, the word "boom" is always a qualification of an event as large and powerful. As such, a boom can surely be a measuring tool, or a recording device, for certain phenomena. As a noun "boom" connotes growth, expansion, increase, rapid development, or an upsurge in interest and popularity.[6] The word is commonly used to describe the dynamics intrinsic to fields like economy, demography, urbanism, and real estate. It is also encountered in more informal contexts to describe the rise in esteem of a field of cultural production, such as literature or the visual arts.

Boom is also the onomatopoeia of an explosion. The word evokes not only a bursting sound, but also a graphic representation of dramatic accretion and acceleration.[7] As a metaphor for rapid movement, a boom anticipates a bust, i.e. a contraction of something back to a normal level following an expansion accompanied by the full dissipation of sound-waves. Bust as a noun

[6] "Boom," *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster's, 2002).

[7] Interestingly, the power of the explosive onomatopoeia sometimes overshadows the meaning of gradual but certain build-up in boom, bringing attention only to its peaking moment.

is used to denote "business depression; a punch; arrest."[8] The word 'bubble' comes to mind in this respect too. Finally, as a verb, "bust" is defined as: "*a:* to break or smash especially with force; also: to make inoperative, *b*: to bring and end to."[9] With the semantics of boom and bust in mind, it can be argued that Shifra Goldman's naming of the "Boom of Latin American art" and the semantic framework it proposed had a profound impact on the way that the 1980s history of Latin American and Latino art has been conceived and written about until today.[10]

Defined as a bubble of heightened interest of the mainstream in Latin American and Latino art, the 1980s Boom, could easily be understood to be a fleeting moment of superficial interest spurred mainly by factors external to art, such as the demographic increase of the U.S.-Latino population, its emergence as a market, and the imminent Columbus Quincentennial. In academic Latin American art discussions, the Boom is generally understood to start around 1982 and peak between 1987 and 1989. A "bust" of the Boom is rarely invoked, but those familiar with the history of international exhibitions of Latin American and Latino art in mainstream museums would see it coming circa 1993. Signs of a halt became visible in the market that year, when for the first time half the lots of Christie's spring Latin American art auction did not sell.[11]

Another reason for placing the closing bracket of the Boom in 1993 was the advent of MoMA's *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, which interim became the last in a row of surveys of considerable historic span organized by powerhouse museums, until the early

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[8] "Bust."

[9] Ibid.

[10] In this sense, it is important to underline that in her description of the new-heightened mainstream visibility of Latino and Latin American art, Goldman does not capitalize the term "boom." I have chosen to capitalize it in the title of this dissertation and throughout it, in order to highlight its status as a trope of the historiography of Latin American art frequently encountered in academic discussions and writings within the field of Latin American and Latino art history.

[11] "Latin American Art Boom Comes to a Halt at Christie's."

years of the 21st century.[12] This exhibition, which included over 300 works of art from MoMA's collection and private and public loans, was one of the largest traveling shows of Latin American art of its time. Waldo Rasmussen, its curator, had proposed this show to MoMA in the early 1980s, but the project was aborted for difficulties in securing loans and funding. A decade later, it was enabled by the international appeal of Latin American art.

Framing the history of exhibitions of Latin American and Latino art within the brackets of the Boom, reveals the frustration of a group of scholars committed to the fields of Latin American and Latino art, who until in the 1990s had a marginal presence in academia and museums. Goldman who had coined this historical concept in her 1989 article "The Booming (Spirit) of Latin American Art," rethought the conditions upon which she had chosen that term in her lesser-known "The Latin American-ization of the United States" published in *Art Nexus* a decade later. With a careful and nuanced tone that contrasts with her Marxist combativeness of the 1980s, she writes:

> The 1980s provided an even greater surprise as major mainstream institutions in the U.S. (followed by European and Japanese museums) began to mount blockbuster exhibitions of the "art boom", comparing it, in a prestigious art magazine, with the Latin American literary boom of the 1960s. The term "art boom" caught on, and is still widely used. …
>
> Those of us functioning as knowledgeable critics and art historians in the United States felt ourselves called upon to criticize many of the offerings and point out their failings, and we are still playing that role. Nevertheless, the public came to these exhibitions, and others like them, in the thousands, and were often astonished at the quality of the work. Private galleries, attuned to the art market and to the great interest in Latin American art, began to proliferate, and their presence spurred a new class of

[12] Waldo Rasmussen, "Introduction" in Rasmussen ed., *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, First ed. (Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 16. Waldo Rasmussen was not a formal curator at MoMA, but the Director of its International Program since 1969. In this post, he had had extensive contact with the art of Latin America. Rasmussen had seen Stanton Catlin's *Art of Latin America Since Independence*, and was strongly influenced by it. He wanted to organize an exhibition that would represent still a wider range of the visual arts in Latin America from the 19th and 20th centuries, including photography, painting and sculpture. Between 1992-3, versions of *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* traveled to Estación Plaza de Armas, Seville; the Musée Nacional d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompido u, and the Hôtel des Arts, Paris; and the Museum Ludwig at Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, Cologne. The tour concluded at MoMA. The next large-scale survey of art from Latin America was the exhibition *Brazil: Body and Soul*, held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 2001.

> collectors. Thus we can say that the United States was beginning to be re-Latin-Americanized in this arena, thirty years after the Mexicans had been written out of North American art history books.[13]

Originally, as a historical concept that emphasized a quick beginning and an end, the Boom could hardly have anticipated any long-term reverberations or impact. From her new standpoint, close to the end of the century, Goldman reconsiders the Boom in light of what now seems to have been its long-term benefits, i.e. a continuous growth of Latin American and Latino art as curatorial and research fields in the late 1990s in academia and museums. It seems as if we have found out in hindsight, that the universe of Latino and Latin American Art is expanding.

[13] Goldman, "The Latin American-ization of the United States."

EPILOGUE

Fast Forward to 2000s: Reconsidering the Boom and Bust. Bust?

An analysis of the developments and achievements in the fields of Latin American and Latino art in the last fifteen to twenty years prompts the question of whether the Boom is—indeed—the most appropriate term to describe the increased mainstream visibility of the 1980s. If by the mid-'90s, the trend of blockbuster survey shows at mainstream institutions seemed exhausted, it was already impossible to deny the role these shows had in the course of a decade familiarizing mass audiences, amateurs and art professionals with the cultural production of Latinos and Latin Americans. A measure of that interest was the growing diversity of modern artists from Latin America in the art market (primary and secondary), an expanded interest from international museums in contemporary Latino and Latin American artists, and the gradual establishment of a Latin American and Latino field of research in U.S. academia. The feasibility of *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* at MoMA a decade after the exhibition was conceived is a telling example, and so are these show's circumventions of common errors in previous mainstream-made Latin American surveys. The latter demonstrate the mainstream's understanding and acceptance of the need to incorporate experts of Latino and Latin American art in any pertinent undertaking.[1] Another sign of the increased establishment of Latin American art was the rising number since the late 1980s of exhibitions at MoMA that featured the work of Latin American and Latino artists.[2]

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[1] Edward Leffingwell, "Latin Soliloquies," *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Traveling Exhibit* 81 (December 1993): 72–83. The exhibition avoided the most common errors of the Boom by incorporating the curatorial advice and scholarship of experts such as Torruella Leval, Fatima Bercht, and Edward Sullivan, among others. The show portrayed Latin American artists as participants in the formulation of Modern art. It also avoided the geographic circumscription of Latin American art as a category.

[2] The 1990s at MoMA marked a strong re-engagement with modern and contemporary artists from Latin America. The 1971-established "Projects" series commissioning work from contemporary artists showcased Cildo Meireles (1990), Guillermo Kuitca (1991), Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1992), and Gabriel Orozco (1993). Other

It is fair to assume that the mainstream projection of Latin American and Latino art during the Boom and its criticism heightened the visibility of some specialized and alternative showcases, and helped their increased attendance in the '90s.[3] The trend has continued: in a 2005 article for *The Art Newspaper*, Julian Zugazagoitia, Director of El Museo from 2002 to 2008, affirmed: "Our attendance has more than doubled over the past three years."[4]

Latin American and Latino Art: The Circulation of Knowledge

The Boom uncovered a market of people interested in the art of Latin Americans and Latinos. Academic presses and corporate publishing houses commissioned projects on the field for a wide Anglophone readership. The handsome *Latin American Art in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Edward Sullivan and published by Phaidon Press in 1996, facilitated access to salient events, movements and figures of twentieth-century Latin American art through a collection of essays written by local experts from Mexico and every country of South America, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, the Central American region, and Chicanos in the U.S.[5] Later, in

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exhibitions included the work of modern and contemporary Latin American artists and architects, among them *Roberto Burle Marx: The Unnatural Art of the Garden* (1991), and *Art of the Forties* (1991), which included the work of José Clemente Orozco, Wifredo Lam, Frida Kahlo, Matta, Siqueiros, Tamayo, and Joaquín Torres-García. Other shows that included Latin American artists and architects were *Preview: The Tokyo Forum by Rafael Viñoly* (1992), *New Photography 10: Shimon Attie, Abelardo Morell, Jorge Ribalta, Michal Rovner* (1995), and *Manuel Álvarez Bravo* (1997). In the 1980s five exhibitions incorporated work by Latin Americans or Latinos. These were *Video from Latin America* (1981), *Catalina Parra* (1982), *Emilio Ambasz/Steven Holl* (1989), and the group shows *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, which featured the work of Rafael Ferrer, and *Committed to Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art* (1988), were the works of Antonio Frasconi, Rupert García, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Camnitzer, Juan Sánchez, Marisol, Josely Carvalho, Alfredo Jaar, and Luis Jiménez were featured. See MoMA's exhibition history http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives_exhibition_history_list (accessed September 12, 2013).

[3] Cancel, interview by Taína B. Caragol; Torruella Leval, interview by Taína B. Caragol. Both interviewees coincided in the fact that the Boom enhanced attention to institutions such as El Museo del Barrio and the Bronx Museum as platforms for the showcasing of Latino and Latin American art.

[4] Julián Zugazagoitia quoted in Charmaine Picard, "Latin American Art Goes Global," *The Art Newspaper*, December 2, 2005.

[5] Edward Sullivan, ed. *Latin American Art in the Twentieth Century* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996).

2001, Jacqueline Barnitz's *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America* provided an approach to this history that was organized thematically with an emphasis on art historical paths common to various countries, and on artistic movements that had an impact over the region.[6] These volumes together with the catalogs of *Latin American Art: The Modern Era*, *The Latin American Spirit,* and *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* (MoMA), and specialized or critical texts such as Oriana Baddeley and Valerie Fraser's *Drawing the Line: Contemporary Art and Cultural Identity in Latin America*, Shifra Goldman's *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States*, and Coco Fusco's *English is Broken Here*, among others, started to conform an Anglophone body of literature on Latino and Latin American art that documented and reflected upon a wide array of artistic practices spread over almost two centuries in North and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.[7] The catalogs to the exhibitions *Latin American Art: The Modern Era*, and the later *Inverted Utopias*: *Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (2004) included foundational texts and manifestos authored by historic art collectives such as the Martinfierristas, and Madí, translated into English or in bilingual (Spanish and English) versions. This effort at circulating primary sources attested to an awareness of lacunae in knowledge in the growing fields of Latino and Latin American art curating and research. It is worth noting that *Latin American Art: The Modern Era*, was translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Shorter versions of *Latin American Artists of the*

[6] Barnitz, *Twentieth-century Art of Latin America*. Just as Jacqueline Barnitz's survey text was a welcomed addition to the Anglophone bibliography of Latin American art, with extensive coverage of the art of countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela. Its complete neglect of the art of colonial and diasporic populations (i.e. Puerto Ricans from the island or the mainland, Chicanos, Cuban-Americans, and Dominicans) seems puzzling.

[7] Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York City: New Press, 1995); Shifra M. Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas* (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Oriana Baddeley, *Drawing the Line: Art and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Latin America, Critical Studies in Latin American Culture* (London; New York: Verso, 1989). Other texts were published which in spite of not addressing the art of Latin Americans, contributed significantly to historicizing the way Latin America has been envisioned by non-Latin American cultures. See, for example, Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*.

Twentieth Century were translated into French and Spanish. *The Latin American Spirit* was translated into Spanish.

Tied to this publication peak, the Boom mobilized a group of art historians, critics, and curators specialized in Latin American and Latino art and culture who, as described by Goldman, felt compelled to criticize the aesthetic and cultural biases of some of its blockbuster shows. Thus, the Boom generated a space for a vigorous and continuous discussion with multiple interlocutors that interrogated Latino and Latin American art categorizations, and debated non-ghettoizing ways of showcasing the work of artists from these communities. This is not to say that up until the Boom cultural criticism by Latino and Latin American specialists was dormant or dead. Latin America has a rich 20th century tradition of art and literary magazines. *Orígenes* (La Habana: 1944-1956), *Amaru* (Lima: 1967-1971), *Artes Visuales* (Mexico City, 1973-1981), *Crisis* (Buenos Aires: 1973-1987), *Arte en Colombia*/ *Art Nexus* (Bogotá: 1976-present), and *Poliester: Pintura y no Pintura* (Mexico City: 1992-2000), are only a few of the periodicals that served as platforms for the exchange of aesthetic ideas and topics related to art, architecture, and film in the second half of the century. However, with a few exceptions it is fair to say that these debates were until the beginning of the 1990s mainly circumscribed to their publication cities, or at best to small networks of countries within Latin America and the Caribbean.[8] This was also the case for periodicals published by diasporic populations, such as the Chicano journal *Regeneración* (Los Angeles: 1971-1974). By bringing Latin American and Latino art into international focus, the Boom opened up new spaces and possibilities for cultural exchange,

[8] Carla Stellweg e-mail to Taína Caragol, "Revista Artes Plásticas", September 15, 2012. Some magazines were better known than others across the Americas and internationally. *Artes Visuales*, edited by Carla Stellweg, for example, had a print run of 5,000 copies by issue and was circulated to university libraries and bookstores in the Americas and Europe.

allowing for a wider circulation of ideas beyond the confines of Latin America, "Latino/America," and the Caribbean that enabled a broader international dialogue on art.[9]

The out-of-print critical anthology *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, edited by Gerardo Mosquera, and co-published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and England's Institute of International Visual Arts in 1995 is a landmark of this development.[10] This volume gathered essays by some of the most important contemporary critics of Latin American, Latino and Caribbean art, including Nelly Richard, Luis Camnitzer, Néstor García-Canclini, Ticio Escobar, and Mosquera himself. As a totality, the collection intended to revise the prevalent 1960s social theories of Latin American art popularized by Marta Traba in her book *La pintura nueva en latinoamérica*, published in Bogotá in 1961.[11] Many of the writers whose texts were reproduced in *Beyond the Fantastic,* and others such as Coco Fusco and Guy Brett also contributed regularly to the English journal *Third Text*. In this journal that became a platform for the interdisciplinary discussion of art and visual culture by curators, art historians, and postcolonial theorists, the aforementioned authors addressed subjects as diverse as the Afro-Cuban art of Wifredo Lam, the Havana Biennial, Art from Chile during the dictatorship, and the Sub-Comandante Marcos as a performer/activist.

The diversification of critical platforms on the art of Latin Americans and Latinos coincided with the so-called globalization of the art-world. The mushrooming of peripheral biennials since the 1980s in cities like Havana, Dakar, Cuenca, Johannesburg, Taipei and others brought the attention of world centers to artists with practices previously invisible to them. This,

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[9] The term "Latino America" has been used by scholars such as Agustín Laó-Montes to designate the cultural field occupied by U.S. Latinos in America, differentiating it from Latin America and from America.

[10] Gerardo Mosquera, *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, (London and Cambridge, Massachusetts: InIVA and MIT Press 1996).

[11] Ibid.

in turn, legitimized and increased the presence of non-Western artists at main biennials and periodic art shows such as Venice and Documenta, and expanded their market.[12]

A Call for New Curatorial Models for Latin America and Latino Art

In addition, the Boom galvanized a re-thinking of curatorial practices amongst specialists in Latin American and Latino art. Mari Carmen Ramírez's essay "Beyond 'the Fantastic': Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art" can be considered a call to action for curators to develop curatorial models that debunk the neocolonial mindset prevalent in Boom shows. Her essay employed the exhortative rhetoric of the manifesto, calling for shows that engaged the specificities of Latin American and Latino art without projecting them as exotic.[13] This required "shifting the vertical axis of neo-colonialism to a horizontal one based on intercultural dialogue and exchange."[14]

Once she articulated the need for new curatorial models, Ramírez, then curator of Latin American art at the museum of the University of Texas, Austin, took the lead in organizing exhibitions that tackled the pitfalls of the mainstream showcasing of Latino and Latin American art, while exposing still marginal or under-recognized aspects of the art of Latin Americans. In *Re-aligning Vision: Alternative Currents in South American Drawing* (co-curated with Edith A.

[12] For an analysis on the dynamics between biennials and the art market see Marcus Verhagen, "Biennale Inc.," *Art Monthly*, no. 287 (June 2005): 1–4.

[13] Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic'." One of the most powerful passages of this essay reads: "The elaboration of an effective agenda for the 1990s, however, requires that we step beyond denunciation of the neo-colonial politics at work in the Latin American/Latino exhibition boom and focus more precisely on the ideological and conceptual premises that guided the organization of these art shows. At the heart of this phenomenon lies who articulates the identity of these groups." Ramírez's unequivocal and assertive tone through her essay and her use of the word "agenda" followed by the first person plural in sentences like the one just quoted engages the reader as a potential ally in her quest to promote new ways of showcasing the art of Latinos and Latin Americans. Ramírez exhortation to propose alternative frameworks for the theorizing and showcasing of Latin American and Latino art was embraced as the new motto of the 1980s/90s critics, scholars and curators of the field.

[14] Gerardo Mosquera quoted by Mari Carmen Ramírez in Ramírez, "Beyond 'The Fantastic'."

Gibson), and C*antos Paralelos: Visual Parody in Contemporary Argentinean Art*, held in 1997 and 1998, respectively, Ramírez rehearsed in medium-scale shows her idea of a "constellation."[15] As described by Ramírez:

> This curatorial model [the constellation] condenses, rather than illustrates, specific themes or historic sensibilities by means of "luminous points"—that is key developments or singular visions that expose the relationships between the artists, their works and the specific context in which they were produced."[16]

Re-aligning Vision featured 135 drawings and 5 installations produced between 1960 and 1980—a period of known as "the drawing boom"—by 46 artists from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Venezuela and expatriate communities of artists in New York and Paris. *Cantos Paralelos* gathered the heterogeneous work of nine Argentinean artists active between 1960 and 1990 whose sole unifying trait was the use of irony as a critical resource. These two exhibitions showcased works that Ramírez described as "marginal to mainstream canons" either by their medium (drawing, as opposed to painting and sculpture) or because they did not belong in the Western art canon or the recently-constructed canons of Latin American art showcased in survey shows.[17] In contradistinction to the survey model, Ramírez's constellation model took as premise the impossibility of presenting any history in its totality.[18] Instead it proposed a synecdochical approach, whereby the works selected would stimulate simultaneous readings

[15] France Morin, Apinan Poshyananda, Mari Carmen Ramírez, Caroline Turner, Igor Zabel and Valerie Cassel, "Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Contemporary Art Exhibitions," *Art Journal* 59, no. 1 (April 1, 2000): 4–21.

[16] Ibid, 15.

[17] Ibid.

[18] The inherent character of history as a constructed narrative prevents the possibility of presenting history as a totality. So do the spatial limitations of any exhibition space, which require selecting and editing the narrative one wants to present.

from comparative or contrasting perspectives that could make graspable historical, cultural and formal traits.[19]

It was in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, held at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston in 2004, that Ramírez and co-curator Héctor Olea, deployed the full possibilities of the constellation model.[20] The show focused on two historical moments of "heightened aesthetic inquiry" in the art of Latin America: the 1920s and 1930s and the 1950s and 1960s.[21] Through an exploration of artistic practices developed in those two periods, the curators aimed at showing the myriad ways in which artists from Latin America had absorbed and transformed the utopian impulses of the European avant-garde in order to respond to their immediate contexts. The constellation model here consisted of a series of thematic nuclei not necessarily related to each other, structured around pairs of words that expressed tension or contradiction, i.e. Universal and Vernacular, Play and Grief, Progression and Rupture, Vibrational and Stationary, Touch and Gaze, and Cryptic and Committed. Within each nucleus, the juxtaposition of carefully chosen artworks would reveal the aesthetic radicality of artists, while conveying a sense of urgency in their gesture, a will to respond to their contexts and to challenge their conditions. A symposium and a 600-page catalogue accompanied this ground-shaking event, conceived as a *tabula rasa*—a new beginning—for the showcasing the art of Latin America. The venue of *Inverted Utopias*—the same that had co-organized *Hispanic Art in*

[19] Morin et al., "Beyond Boundaries."

[20] *Inverted Utopias* was in some ways a modified version of *Heterotopías: medio siglo sin lugar, 1918-1998* held at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía from December 2000 to February 2001. The title in Spain referenced Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopy.

[21] Anna Indych-López, Review of 'Inverted Utopias' by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea.," Caa.reviews (October 5, 2005), http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/759, accessed 09/14/2012. I have borrowed the phrase "heightened aesthetic inquiry" from Indych-López's incisive review of the exhibition and its catalog.

the United States—was perfect to symbolize that change in perspective and institutional practices towards Latin American art.

Ramírez and Olea intended to challenge "Latin American art's no-place in history," and the implications of that marginality in Modern art itself.[22] A premise outlined by the curators was the impossibility of writing a uniform, all-encompassing linear history of Latin American Modern art. Artistic and cultural developments in this territory occupying over twenty countries happened not in synchronicity, but at different paces and historical moments.[23] According to the curators, avant-garde artistic practices developed mainly in countries "open" to international exchange and to the influence of the European historical avant-gardes.[24] For this reason, the exhibition focused mainly on Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, and Uruguay.[25] This selection hints at some of the exhibition problematic aspects. One was the uncritical recycling of Traba's 1970s' paradigm of Latin American art, which by itself had established a hierarchy of values when considering the art of Latin America and the Caribbean. Another point of contention was, once again, the representation of Latin American countries in the show, which included some 300 works of art. Within such a vast amount of works in a show that aimed at highlighting Latin America's understudied art movements, the absence or scarce presence of U.S. Latino artists and of artists from regions such as Central America, and countries such as Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, is hard to justify. Another problem was the

[22] Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea, "Prologue" in Inverted Utopias: Avant-garde Art in Latin America (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2004) XV.

[23] Mari Carmen Ramírez, "A Highly Topical Utopia: Some Outstanding Features of the Avant-Garde in Latin America," in Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2004), 1–15.

[24] The paradigm of open and close countries within Latin America was established by Argentinean critic Marta Traba in her 1973 book *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas*. Through a sweeping gesture of exposing the art of these countries in the 1920s and 1930s and 1960s to 1970s, Ramírez and Olea intended to discredit the claim that the art of these countries was derivative of that of Europe.

[25] Ramírez, "A Highly Topical Utopia: Some Outstanding Features of the Avant-Garde in Latin America."

contradiction of the will to eradicate the reliance on Euro and U.S.-centric interpretive paradigms for Latin American art while relying on the "Avant-Garde" as the motif that makes Latin American art legible to Modernism.[26] In other words, Ramírez and Olea's framework invoked the avant-garde as a neutral term, a lingua franca of 20th century art throughout the Western World. This view precluded an analysis of the Avant-Garde as a Euro-U.S. construct, leaving unquestioned its function at the service of a teleological narrative of Modern art.

Even with its few pitfalls, *Inverted Utopias* was a milestone in the showcasing of Latin American art in the U.S. and internationally. It offered audiences a breadth of artists and movements little or never-before seen in North America, including Antonio Berni, Armando Reverón, Xul Solar, Julio Tomás Martínez, Deborah Arango, Madí, El Techo de la Ballena, Venezuelan Cinetismo, Tucumán Arde, Luis Benedit, León Ferrari, Lygia Clark, and more. The diversity of artistic proposals and the dynamic structural organization did away with tired ways of examining Latin American art through clichéd and/or stereotypical perspectives or forced linear narratives. Eventually, it also reinvigorated the field by pointing to understudied artists and research topics.[27] The Museum of Fine Arts Houston was awarded the first prize from the International Association of Art Critics/ USA for this exhibition.[28]

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[26] See Caragol and Whitelegg, "The Archival Avant-Garde: Latin American Art and the UK."

[27] Following *Inverted Utopias*, some artists and movements that had been in the shadow for decades saw a surge in academic scholarship and exhibitions. These included Armando Reverón, Lygia Clark, Carlos Cruz Diez, and Argentine Conceptual art from the 1960s and '70s. Armando Reverón and Carlos Cruz Diez had their first monographic exhibitions in the U.S. respectively in 2007 at MoMA and in 2008 at the Americas Society. A happy coincidence for the growth in scholarship of Argentine conceptual art, besides *Inverted Utopias*, was the appearance of the anthology of manifestoes and critical texts *Listen, here now!*, edited by Inés Katzenstein and published by MoMA's International Program in late 2004.

[28] "MFAH Wins Award for 'Inverted Utopias'," *Houston Chronicle*, December 15, 2004, http://www.chron.com/entertainment/article/MFAH-wins-award-for-Inverted-Utopias-1486626.php#src=fb (accessed September 17, 2012).

The New Millennium: Latin American and Latino Art and the Modern Canon

Since the turn of the 21st century Latin American art has been—again—increasingly present in the art mainstream, a proof of this was the large and impressive *Brazil: Body and Soul*, (Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2001) which highlighted the Baroque and Modern art of Brazil, and featured also indigenous artifacts.[29] However, as a highly publicized event, *Inverted Utopias* can be considered the splash that ushered a new era for Latin American art internationally. In November 2004, a few months after the show closed with an impressive record of 75,000 visitors, The Museum of Modern Art reopened its premises in Manhattan.[30] Great expectations surrounded the re-inauguration. They were generated not only by Yoshio Taniguchi's architectural expansion of the gallery space, but also by the re-hanging of the museum's permanent collection.[31] Widely considered as the canon of Modern art, MoMA's re-installed permanent collection could follow two paths. It could reveal itself as an ossified structure, vindicating the Euro-U.S. hegemony over 20th century Western culture. Alternatively, MoMA's permanent collection could offer new art historical readings of Modern art that reflected transnational artistic dialogues and collaborations beyond Europe and the U.S., or that questioned notions inherent to Modern art (such as the myth of originality) by unsettling

[29] Sullivan, Edward J. ed., *Brazil: Body & Soul* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2001).

[30] Since 2002 the Museum had moved all its operations to an old, revamped staple factory in Queens, while the Manhattan facilities underwent renovation. After 2004, MoMA's galleries moved back to Manhattan, as well as the main office of its Library and Archives. The Queens building remains a storage and off-site library and archives facility.

[31] The main reason for the museum's 858 million-dollar expansion project was not just to confirm the institution's hegemony as the cultural bastion of modernism, but to make room for a reconsideration of the Museum's narrative of modernism. This was to be achieved by almost doubling the exhibition space of the old building, designed in several stages by Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone (1939), Philip Johnson—who designed the sculpture garden—and Cesar Pelli who expanded the galleries and entrance in 1984, and by means of connecting the Painting and Sculpture galleries in ways that facilitated different trajectories through Modern art. As a curatorial strategy, the galleries would also be regularly reinstalled upon their reopening. For a background on the expansion project and a review of its architectural outcome and the reinstallation of the permanent collection see Editorial, "A Masterpiece in Manhattan: The Museum of Modern Art, New York," *The Burlington Magazine* 147, no. 1222 (January 1, 2005): 3–4. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20073809 (accessed September 18, 2012).

established chronologies in formal advancements, or by exposing coincidences in time of similar artistic quests in the center and margins of the art-world.[32] Before the museum's opening, the redesign of its galleries, as advertised in the press was supposed to facilitate a loosening of the linear narrative of Modern art as constructed by MoMA through increased circulation routes within the architectural space.[33]

At the exhibition *MoMA at El Museo*, audiences received a taste of the role that Latin American and Latino art could play in this 21st century re-hanging at MoMA. This show of MoMA's reputable but seldom seen Latin American collection, took place at El Museo del Barrio a few months before MoMA's reopening.[34] Co-curated by staff from MoMA and the hosting museum, the show, *Latin American and Caribbean Art: MoMA at El Museo*, and its catalog examined the way MoMA's collection had been built: the motivations behind collecting efforts at different points in history; the curators who championed acquisitions and scholarship; the artistic trends supported or disregarded by the museum; the periods when Latin American art

[32] Alan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art: The Past's Future," *Journal of Design History* 5, no. 3 (January 1, 1992): 207–215. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1315838 (accessed September 18, 2012). Since its 1929 founding, MoMA aimed at being the world's foremost museum of Modern art. This was to be achieved through exhibitions of "modern art masters" as well as through the eventual amassing of a collection representative of Modern art. According to Allan Wallach, during its early years, exhibitions at MoMA showed a degree of exploration of what Modern meant. Until 1953, the Museum de-accessioned any works of art that were more than 50 years old. Works considered to have gone from "modern" to "classical," such as Picasso's *Woman in White*, were sold to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 1956 MoMA announced its intention to exhibit a permanent collection of masterworks. The decision was followed by an architectural expansion by Philip Johnson conceived to maximize gallery space. The installation once the expansion was finished in 1964 functioned very much as a formulation of what is known today as the canon of Modern art: a genealogy of styles that go from Post-Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism passing through Fauvism, Cubism, Italian Futurism, Russian Constructivism and Suprematism, Dada, German Expressionism, Bauhaus, Surrealism. The basis of this narrative of art history is contained within the chart of the development of abstract art diagramed by Alfred H. Barr that served as the cover of the exhibition 1936-exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*. However, the linearity of Johnson's design constricted the entangled character of Barr's diagram. According to Wallach the collection was reinstalled without significant changes in 1964 and 1973.

[33] "The MoMA Expansion: a Conversation with Terence Riley," *Symposium* no. 84 (Spring98 1998): 3–30. http://ehis.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=5&sid=80ba4aa5-093b-4329-b6dd-2681e8efe672%40sessionmgr4&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aft&AN=505738597 (accessed November 26, 2012).

[34] MoMA's collection of Latin American art had not been seen since 1967.

was a priority at the institution and those when it was not. The show constituted a brilliant profile of the exclusively geography-based collection at MoMA. It embodied a genuine, self-critical reflection exposing the merits and dangers of collecting the art of a so-called marginal region, and of constructing categories. In addition, it brought to light an important number of works that had not been exhibited at MoMA for decades: among them Rafael Montañez Ortiz *Archaeological Find No. 3,* 1961, and Antonio Berni's *New Chicago Athletic Club*, 1937. Thirty-five thousand visitors saw this show.[35]

MoMA at El Museo was not without controversy. The show generated different emotions among diverse audiences, including scholars of Latin American and Latino art, and also among the Puerto Rican community that claimed symbolic ownership of El Museo del Barrio. MoMA's invitation to El Museo to participate in a collaborative endeavor to showcase MoMA's Latin American art collection, signaled El Museo's achieved status as one of the United States' premier showcases of Latino and Latin American art. At the same time, due to MoMA's failure for decades to integrate the works of its Latin American Collection into the narrative of Modern art, this exhibition at El Museo—a venue frequented mainly by a Latin American audience—had the potential of institutionally reinforcing the non-belonging of Latin American art into the Modern art canon.[36] The re-hanging of MoMA's permanent collection at its reopening would test the Museum's attitude towards the art of Latin America in this new century.

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[35] Sarah Bayliss, "Mr. Zugazagoitia's Neighborhood," *ARTnews* 103, no. 10 (November 2004): 119–119.

[36] Ana Tiscornia, "El MoMA at El Museo Del Barrio," *Art Nexus* 3, no. 53 (July 2004): 92–95. Tiscornia's review eloquently summarizes the sociopolitical and cultural issues underlying the institutional collaboration. These were also discussed in the exhibition's symposium, held on April 24, 2004. There, invited speaker Cuauhtémoc Medina, then Advising Curator of Latin American art at Tate Modern and Researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Autónoma de México, used the provocative metaphor of the "one night stand"—a one-time sexual encounter—to reference the non-committed approach of many mainstream museums to Latin American art. With this metaphor, Medina suggested that MoMA's intentions with this exhibition remained unclear.

The first re-hanging of the collection in November 2004 displayed over thirty artists from Latin America: far more than had ever been at once in the permanent collection.[37] In the fifth-floor galleries, devoted to Modern Art from 1880 to 1940, the dialogue between European, American, and Latin American modernism in its foundational stage was a tangible possibility, manifest in the gallery that combined German "New Objectivity" with Social Realism from Mexico and the United States. This gallery displayed Diego Rivera's portable fresco *Agrarian Leader Zapata* (1931), alongside Max Beckmann's *Departure Triptych* (1932), Siqueiros' *Collective Suicide* (1936), and several panels from Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration of the Negro* series (1940-1941), among other works. A gallery devoted to Neoplasticist experiments acknowledged the leading role of Joaquín Torres García alongside Theo van Doesburg and Mondrian through the inclusion of several grid compositions by him. Within the galleries devoted to Cubism, Rivera's cubist portrait of Jacques Lipchitz (1914) was also displayed, alongside cubist explorations by Duchamp and Malevich.

José Clemente Orozco's six-panel mural painting *Dive, Bomber and Tank* [Fig. 7-1] placed outside the fifth floor galleries, marked the transition between the pre-war and postwar

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Within her reference to the power politics and cultural issues at play in this off-site exhibition of MoMA's Latin American collection, Tiscornia fails to mention the frictions generated by the social differences between diasporic Puerto Ricans, who founded El Museo to secure their cultural representation and the Latin American elite artists that MoMA was seen to promote. In many ways, *MoMA at El Museo* was the climax of a malaise in the community of El Barrio that had started in the mid-1990s, when under the directorship of Susana Torruella Leval, El Museo officially changed its mission to represent Latin Americans at large, Latinos and Puerto Ricans. Diasporic Puerto Ricans felt that they were falling off the priority list in the institution's exhibition programs, in favor of upper class Latin Americans. This issue was exacerbated in 2003 with the appointment of Julian Zugazagoitia to Executive Director of that institution. These tensions were evident at the symposium of *MoMA at El Museo*, when in the Questions and Answers period artist and activist Yasmín Hernández charged Fatima Bercht, Chief Curator of El Museo, for complying with the mainstream's "one night stand," drawing applauses as well as strange stares from the audience. On the Puerto Rican community response to El Museo's embraced Latin American- mainstream direction see Dávila, "El Barrio's 'We Are Watching You' Campaign: On the Politics of Inclusion in a Latinized Museum."

[37] Francine Birbragher, "Latin American Inclusions in the MoMA Collection: An Interview with Luis Pérez Oramas," *Art Nexus* 4, no. 58 (September 2005): 77–83. They were distributed within all departments of the Museum: i.e. Painting and Sculpture, Photography, Drawings, Prints and Illustrated Books, Film, and Architecture and Design. Only between 10 to 15 % of MoMA's permanent collection is exhibited at once since the reopening.

Modern art periods contained within the fifth and the fourth floor galleries respectively.[38] Roberto Matta's *Here, Sir, Fire, Eat!* [Fig. 7-2] and Wifredo Lam's *The Jungle* (1943) were prominently displayed in the first gallery alongside the surrealist paintings and sculptures of Jackson Pollock, Louise Bourgeois, and Max Ernst. In an adjacent gallery that showcased artists exploring the formal possibilities of the human figure—two consciously primitivizing works were juxtaposed: Armando Reverón's painting *Woman of the River* (1939), and Picasso's sculpture *Pregnant Woman* (1950). Another gallery showing an amalgam of abstract artistic practices where color was a main formal element included Alejandro Otero's *Colorythms* (1955), alongside artists like Mark Rothko and Elsworth Kelly. Staging the experiments undertaken by 1950s artists to overcome the limitations of figuration and the two-dimensional plane were the works of Jesús Rafael Soto, German resident of Mexico Mathias Goeritz, and Frank Stella. Soto's wall relief *Untitled*, 1959-1960 which creates vibrational effects through the superposition of wires on a background covered with incised gesso, Goeritz *Message Number 7B Ecclesiastes VII: 6* [Fig. 7-3], a wooden plank pierced from its back with dozens of nails whose ends point towards the viewer, faced Frank Stella's *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor* a painting composed of two identical vertical sets of concentric, inverted U-shapes painted in black enamel that seem to radiate from a central white line. Another gallery explored the formal confines of sculpture through a collapsible "bicho" by Lygia Clark, titled *Sundial* (1960), and Hélio Oiticica's shaped canvas *Neoconcrete relief* (1960), and his *Box Bolide 12, Archaeologic* [Fig. 7-4], alongside Eva Hesse's soft translucent cylinders *Repetition Nineteen* [Fig. 7-5], and Robert Smithson's *Corner Mirror with Coral* (1969).

[38] Ibid. MoMA had commissioned this mural, which Orozco painted on-site, for its exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* in 1940. After the exhibition, the mural spent six decades in storage until it was reinstalled in 2000.

As art history came closer to the present, insertions of Latin Americans and even Latinos into MoMA's canon of Modern art came more naturally. The first installation of the contemporary galleries on the second floor, titled *World Views: Contemporary Art from the Collection*, portrayed a culturally diverse artistic landscape, where no single city or geographic region was acknowledged as the main center of art making. It was in this section that Latin American art was most organically integrated into the collection; the only place where it truly overcame the minority status still palpable in the fifth and fourth floors. Conceptual art proposals by artists such as Felix González Torres, Vija Celmins, James Turell, and Janet Cardiff, established a dialogue on the sublime and the phenomenological in art.

In an institutional effort to continue the process of rethinking the canon, MoMA has kept re-installing sections of its permanent collection several times a year. Some re-installations have been more successful than others at promoting a view of Modern art that transcends the Europe-U.S. poles. Overall, it is undeniable that at MoMA the art of Latin America has gone from backstage in the early and mid-1980s to becoming an institutional priority. This new status is due in great part to patron Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. Since MoMA's reopening, Phelps de Cisneros has made significant donations and promised gifts of artworks by Latin Americans to the museum, many of which have been prominently displayed as part of the permanent collection.[39] She has also supported research on Latin American art by providing significant funds for the position of Latin American Bibliographer. In addition, she has established a travel fund for curators to research the art of Latin America *in situ*, and in 2005 she established the Fund for the

[39] The role of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros as one of MoMA's most prominent trustees is attested by the museum's naming of a gallery after her in the new tower designed by Yoshio Taniguchi. Phelps de Cisneros also has a private art collection with an important component of geometric abstract works from South America. This collection has toured several museums in the United States, including the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, the Jack S. Blanton Museum at University of Texas, Austin, and the Grey Art Gallery, at New York University. In February 2013 it was shown for the first time in Europe at the Museo Reina Sofía, in Madrid.

Acquisition of a Latin American and Caribbean Works of Art at the Museum. Through her efforts, she has not only served as a link between MoMA and international patrons of Latin American art, but has also gained supporters for the cause within MoMA's board of trustees.[40]

MoMA Trustee Estrellita Brodsky has also become a main patron of Latin American art. In 2006 she permanently endowed the newly created position of Curator of Latin American Art, occupied by Luis Enrique Pérez Oramas.[41] MoMA's support of the art of Latin America has also taken the form of acquisitions-focused exhibitions, e.g. *New Perspectives in Latin American Art 1930-2006: A Decade of Acquisitions* (2006) and *Stop, Repair, Prepare: Variations on 'Ode to Joy' for a Prepared Piano* (2010), which featured a performance piece with an altered piano by the Puerto Rico-residing Cuban-American duo Allora & Calzadilla. The museum has recently held exhibitions focused on particular artists, including *Armando Reverón* (2007), *Tangled Alphabets: Mira Schendel and Leon Ferrari* (2009) and *Diego Rivera: Murals from The Museum of Modern Art* (2011).[42]

MoMA has not been the only mainstream museum to make room within its infrastructure for Latin American art. In 2001 the Museum of Fine Arts Houston appointed Mari Carmen

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[40] Thanks to Phelps de Cisneros the position of Latin American Bibliographer was reinstituted in 2000 at MoMA after an almost twenty-year hiatus. Over the course of that decade, additional funding towards this position and Latin American library acquisitions came from new patrons and outside agencies, such as the Metropolitan New York Library Council. Since 2010 this post has been converted in a part-time permanent post, completely financed through Phelps de Cisneros. From 2003 to 2007 I served as MoMA's Latin American Bibliographer.

[41] Luis Enrique Pérez Oramas was hired as Adjunct curator of MoMA's Drawings Department in 2001. Brodsky is also an art collector. In 2009 she earned a Ph.D. from New York University with a dissertation on postwar Latin American artists in Paris. Her husband, Daniel Brodsky, a real estate developer, is chairman of the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 2011. On Brodsky's profile as a supporter of Latin American art see Kate Taylor, "A Budding Ambassador for Latin American Art," *The New York Times*, November 15, 2008, sec. Arts / Art & Design, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/15/arts/design/15brod.html (accessed October 3, 2012).

[42] Two more exhibitions are forthcoming in 2013: one on the influence of Brazilian artist Lygia Clark and another on modern architecture in Latin American from the 1920s to the 1970s. See Robin Pogrebin, "Latin American Art, Rediscovered Again," *The New York Times*, October 21, 2011, sec. Arts / Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/23/arts/artsspecial/latin-american-art-rediscovered-again.html (accessed August 29, 2012). Since its re-opening, MoMA has also integrated artists from Latin America in numerous exhibitions organized under different media.

Ramírez as its first Wortham Curator of Latin American Art, and created the International Center for the Art of the Americas (ICAA), to develop research, exhibitions, and publications on the art of the hemisphere, with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean. *Gego: Between Transparency and the Invisible* (2005), *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* (2007), and *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Color in Space and Time* (2011) are some of the exhibitions that have superseded *Inverted Utopias* at the MFAH. In addition, in February 2012 the ICAA launched a database of digitized records from all over the hemisphere documenting the art of Latinos and Latin Americans.[43] By 2011, the MFAH had devoted $50 million in just one decade to exhibitions, research and acquisitions of Latin American and Latino art.[44]

Coinciding with the rise of Latin American art at MoMA and the MFAH, the 2000s have brought the Latino population into focus in the U.S. In 2005 the Census Bureau reported that Latinos now numbered 43.1 million, constituting the country's largest minority group.[45] If the rapid growth of this population was a main factor spurring the 1980s Boom of Latin American and Latino art, in the new millennium this demographic development seems of less significance for the achieved status of this field in art history. Modern and contemporary U.S. Latino artists continue to be largely under-represented vis-à-vis Latin Americans in mainstream art collections

[43] The ICAA started its "Documents of Latino and Latin American Art" project in 2003, aiming to facilitate free worldwide access to primary sources of Latino and Latin American art, thus providing the tools for art historical research and interpretation in the field. Through the support of private individuals and foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers and the Mellon Foundation the ICAA set-up groups in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and others and provided them with equipment to identify, digitize and index the documents of local archives that would be available in the database. As this is a living archive, there is an implicit commitment from the MFAH to continue investing money and resources on this project. The database is accessible at http://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/.

[44] Julia Halperin, "MFA Houston Announces Massive Project to Put Latin American Art History Online | Artinfo," *Artinfo*, June 29, 2011, http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/37989/mfa-houston-announces-massive-project-to-put-latin-american-art-history-online (accessed October 2, 2012).

[45] Bergad and Klein, *Hispanics in the United States,* 63. From a population of slightly more than 14.8 million in 1980, Hispanics nearly tripled to more than 43.1 million in 2005.

and exhibitions.[46] Regarding MoMA and the MFAH, interviews and articles to the Latin American curators Luis Enrique Pérez Oramas and Mari Carmen Ramírez on their curatorial practices within their institutions, betray different motivations and approaches behind their endeavors. At MoMA, Pérez-Oramas frames the collecting and display of Latin American art as an imperative for revising the history of Modern art as Europe and U.S.-made.[47] Modern art history as a construct will be the great beneficiary in this effort, as it overcomes possible obsolescence in the face of new research that disturbs its accepted genealogies.[48] In contrast to MoMA, the MFAH, *does* mention demographics as an important factor in their endeavor to expose the public to artists and movements largely under-documented. The MFAH aims at exposing the public to under-acknowledged artists and movements from Latin America and to American art, and by that to challenge prevailing paradigms of Latin American art as exotic and colorful.[49] Despite accounting demographics into their justification, the MFAH has so far not devoted one exhibition to a Latino artist since hiring Ramírez.

At the present, the main factor spurring mainstream institutional interest in Latin American art is the drive of patrons, and the resources they make available. Phelps de Cisneros and Brodsky are the most visible supporters of a network promoting Latin American art at various institutions internationally, including the MFAH, Tate Modern, and to a lesser degree,

[46] The only U.S.-born artist of Latin American origin regularly displayed as part of MoMA's permanent collection is Rafael Montañez Ortiz. As already discussed, one of the main criticisms of Latin American and Latino art specialists to the Boom was the disjointedness evident in the will of mainstream museums to attract U.S. Latino audiences through the representation of artists from Latin American origin. Two decades after this criticism, it is hard to imagine that the current strong footing of Latin American art in the art mainstream has anything to do with attracting untapped Latino audiences, as the under-representation of Latino artists seems chronic, despite the fact that Latinos have *de facto* become the largest U.S. minority.

[47] Birbragher, "Latin American Inclusions in the MoMA Collection: An Interview with Luis Pérez Oramas."

[48] Ibid.

[49] Lubow, "After Frida."

the Americas Society, El Museo del Barrio, and Hunter College.[50] Phelps de Cisneros's championing of Latin American geometric abstraction has had a strong impact across the field, as attests a current rise in exhibitions and research on constructivism in the Americas.[51]

Latin American art has also solidified its place in the primary and secondary markets, becoming an important presence in art fairs such as Art Basel, Miami Basel, Frieze (London), and Arco (Madrid). In 2007 the Latin American art fair Pinta had its first edition in Manhattan. In 2010 the fair expanded to be also held annually in London.[52] But even if the availability of capital and powerful stewards has been crucial for institutional support, it is hard to imagine the current place of Latin American art in the art mainstream as unrelated to the Boom.

The current visibility of Latin American art is the result of a cumulative process, ongoing since the 1970s, of exposure and legitimization of this art in mainstream circuits. The roster of artists most visible in the mainstream attests to this by way of what could be called "a reactionary" impulse to counter the prevailing paradigms of Latin American art proposed during the Boom. Artists working within trends like constructivism, geometric abstraction, kinetic art, and conceptual art have become the new stand banners of modern and contemporary art in Latin

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[50] In 2011 Hunter College, CUNY, inaugurated a professorship in Modern Latin American art endowed by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. Dr. Harper Montgomery currently holds this post. See "Harper Montgomery, one of the Nation's Leading Experts in Latin American Art, to Join Hunter College" in *Art Daily*, http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=46145#.UKqMcIWr-b8 (accessed November 19, 2012)

[51] Some but not all of these exhibitions have been linked to her own collection. Recent exhibitions of Latin American abstraction include *Geometric Abstraction: Latin American Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection* (Fogg Art Museum, 2001); *Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South America and North America, 1920s-1950s* (Newark Museum, 2010); *Cold America: Geometric Abstraction in Latin America (1934-1973)* (Fundación Juan March, Madrid, 2011); *Concrete Invention: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* (Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2013).

[52] Pinta's founders are Mauro Herlitzka, Alejandro Zaia and Diego Costa Peuser. Herlitzka is also a member of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, of MoMA's Latin American and Caribbean Fund, and of the Latin American Acquisition Fund at Tate. This information is available in his biography published on Pinta's website, accessible at "PINTA - The Modern & Contemporary Latin American Art Show", n.d., http://www.pintaart.com/london/index.php?s=about&ss=herlitzka (accessed on October 15, 2012).

America. The attention given to Joaquín Torres García, Jesús Rafael Soto, Carlos Cruz Diez, Alejandro Otero, Gertrude Goldschmidt (Gego), Victor Grippo, Lygia Clark, Mira Schendel, and Hélio Oiticica at mainstream museums point to an agenda of expansion of the canon of Latin American art.[53] Adding under-acknowledged movements and artists to a reduced canon is one strategy for this endeavor, which requires demystifying the exotic and colorful aura that has enveloped the art of Latin America and was so evident in *Art of the Fantastic*, and *Hispanic Art in the United States*. This endeavor also demands making room for an analysis that fights the stasis implicit in continuing to uphold paradigms of Latin American art as associated to Mexican Muralism, the Latin American movement *par excellence* of the 1930s. The emphasis on abstract artwork regulated by the rigor of geometry and by mental processes championed at MoMA, but also at the MFAH, and Tate Modern, must be seen as part of this agenda embraced by curators, collectors, and patrons "to free Latin American art of having to show its passport."[54] Institutional support to the art of Latin America has in turn increased its marketability and value in the secondary market and helped the expanding representation of Latin American galleries the art fair circuit.[55] A proof of this is the fact that in 2005 Art Basel/Miami Beach had no fewer than 17

[53] Within this roster, Oiticica is probably the artist with the most visibility. In addition to being featured prominently in *Inverted Utopias*, in MoMA's permanent collection since the museum's reopening, and in the exhibition *Tropicalia: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture* (Bronx Museum: 2006), Hélio Oiticica has been the subject of several exhibitions including *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2007) which traveled to Tate Modern in 2008 and was presented in conjunction with *Oiticica in London*, organized by Tate Modern to feature their newly-acquired work by the artist, the environment *Tropicália*, 1969.

[54] I have borrowed this expression from Gerardo Mosquera who used it in his essay "El arte latinoamericano deja de serlo" reproduced in the catalog of 1996 art fair Arco-Madrid. For an English translation of this text see Mosquera, "Latin American Art Ceases to Be Latin American." On the other hand, the emphasis on geometric abstraction must not be seen as the only way out of regional aesthetic expectations, as this polarization runs the risk of replacing one paradigm by its opposite.

[55] Picard, "Latin American Art Goes Global." According to Carmen Melián, director of Latin American Art at Sotheby's, by 2005 U.S., European, and South East Asian collectors made-up 50% of the market, while the other half remained Latin American. While decidedly canonic artists like Diego Rivera, Roberto Matta, and Rufino Tamayo kept most of the Latin American auction records by selling for over $2 million in the early 2000s, the increasing interest in geometric abstraction and conceptual art is palpable.

galleries from Latin America out of a total of 195, and several of the European and North American stands also prominently displayed the art of the region.[56] El Museo del Barrio was also one among a number of museums that had a booth at this fair's edition.[57] The emergence of the specialized art fair Pinta in New York and London is related to this phenomenon. This state of affairs suggests that the 1980s Boom of Latin American art never busted, but instead gave way to the sustainable presence of Latin American art in the mainstream that is currently apparent.

Where the Future Meets the Past. Searching, Reading, and Interpreting the Archives of New York's Latin American and Latino Art Circuit

The sustainability of Latin American art in the mainstream is also in no small way the result of the institutional legitimacy achieved by venues like El Museo del Barrio, the Bronx Museum, the CIAR/AS, and—until 2012—Exit Art. *The Decade Show*, as a widely publicized collaborative project, and the rise of some of the artists showcased at MoCHA early on (e.g. González-Torres, Serrano, Orozco) anticipated the mainstream recognition of this venue's efforts, quickly truncated by eviction in 1990. INTAR's exhibitions became sparser in the mid-1990s and stopped before the end of the decade. The Alternative Museum closed its doors in 2000 to become a web-based project, reducing its visibility and the frequency of its exhibitions.[58] The survival of the remaining institutions within the alternative/specialized circuit of Latin

[56] Ibid. See also Arian Campo-Flores, "Beach Bacchanal; From a Rain Forest Lounge to Exhibits in Hotel Bathrooms, the Art Basel Fair Is Adding a Miami Twist to European High Culture," *Newsweek* (December 2, 2005): Arts and Enterntainment; Pg. 0 (http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/ (accessed November 19, 2012).

[57] Roberta Smith, "A Carnival of Art, Money, Surf and Sand," *The New York Times*, December 3, 2005, sec. Arts / Art & Design, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/03/arts/design/03base.html (accessed November 19, 2012).

[58] The Alternative Museum website is accessible at http://alternativemuseum.org. The most recent dated exhibition project on their website is from 2006.

American art in New York and their commitment to their programs earned them the respect of age in the 1990s, while prompting the implementation of strategies that furthered institutional stability at alternative venues.

Having waged the Culture Wars, and in the face of a decade with thinner budgets for culture and the increased marketability of contemporary art, Exit Art became recognized as a main space in the anti-establishment trench of the art world. Through its solo and group shows Exit embodied a challenge to artistic conventions, and to dominant aesthetic, cultural, and political values. Mirroring its growing reputation and expansion, Exit moved to 548 on Broadway in 1992 and a decade later to 475 Tenth Avenue (between 36th and 37th Streets), where the space had small-museum dimensions of approximately 17,000 square feet.[59] Through its last decade, Latino artists continued to be a main feature of Exit. In addition to routinely giving Latino artists slots within extra-large thematic group shows (ranging from 30 to 45 artists per show in the 2000s), Exit also organized exhibitions such as the *L-Factor* (2003), which dealt with the "Latinization" of the U.S. It also curated the first retrospective of Puerto Rican sculptor Charles Juhasz-Alvarado (2008), and traveled it to Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in San Juan, Puerto Rico.[60] The shows *The End* (2000) and *Every Exit is an Entrance: Thirty Years at Exit Art* (2012), which marked the 18th and 30th anniversary of the alternative art space, functioned as institutional retrospectives. They were largely made up of archival materials including sketches, installation shots, and letters between artists and curators. While Exit no longer exists as of May

[59] C. Carr, "Every Exit Is an Entrance," *The Village Voice*, March 12, 2003.This included the ground floor and a basement where two theaters: one for performance and one for movies where opened. These theaters did not start operations until circa 2009.

[60] Margalit Fox, "Jeanette Ingberman, Founder of Exit Art, Dies at 59," *The New York Times*, August 26, 2011, sec. Arts, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/27/arts/jeanette-ingberman-founder-of-exit-art-dies-at-59.html (accessed August 26, 2011); Carr, "Every Exit Is an Entrance." During its last decades, group shows at Exit Art averaged 25 artists. For a full list of shows see online archive at http://www.exitart.org.

31, 2012, the year 2013 will see the publication of an anthology of memories on the institution, authored by artists and art professionals.

In the 1990s, the CIAR/AS, El Museo del Barrio and The Bronx Museum also achieved higher respectability and renown within the mainstream. This was foreseeable for an institution with the Rockefeller cachet and the resources of the CIAR/AS. Through the 1990s, under various directors, it maintained a program that built upon the broad contemporary art scope furthered by Stringer, while cementing its reputation as a venue advancing research on colonial and Modern art and also showcasing the art of indigenous populations. Although small in scale, shows like *Aspects of Contemporary Mexican Painting* (1990), *Modern and Contemporary Art from the Dominican Republic* (1996), *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Painting from Panama 1968-1998* (1998), were important for expanding notions of Latin American art through the showcasing of under-exposed countries or artistic productions. In 2000 and 2005, the 35th and 40th anniversaries of the CIAR/AS and its gallery program prompted publications historicizing the institution and its legacy for arts in the hemisphere.[61] An exhibition on the 40th anniversary of the CIAR/AS titled *Beyond Geography: Forty Years of Latin American Art at the Americas Society*, preceded the publication of the anniversary anthology *A Principality of its Own,* edited by Gabriela Rangel and José Falconi. Comprised of archival materials related to some exhibitions at the Americas Society, this brilliant show celebrated the center's commitment to work that challenged artistic conventions, while exposing the conflicts caused by the center's brand of cultural diplomacy and free artistic expression. Finally, the show also hinted at the minority status of Latinos in its

[61] Ilona Katzew, *A Hemispheric Venture: Thirty-Five Years of Culture at the Americas Society, 1965-2000* (New York: Americas Society, 2000); Americas Society, Fundación Cisneros, and David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, *A Principality of Its Own: 40 Years of Visual Arts at the Americas Society* (New York, NY : [Cambridge, Mass.]: Americas Society ; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006). Katzew's publication was more celebratory than critical, while Rangel and Falconi's was an institutional critique.

exhibition program. Recently MoMA patrons Phelps de Cisneros and Estrellita Brodsky have been visible in the CIAR/AS's program as sponsors or curators respectively.[62] This and the supportive role the institution has played as a conference host for the Pinta art fair, confirm even today the status of the Americas Society as a mainstream center of legitimization of Latin American art and its market. At the same time, the nonprofit character of the Americas Society's gallery and the vision of its current director have made possible the unprecedented showcasing of the work of numerous artists under-acknowledged in the U.S., whose work bridges art and social critique and action.[63]

El Museo's third decade was marked by a number of initiatives for institutional growth. They included the hiring of Susana Torruella Leval as Chief Curator, the drafting of the first long-range strategic plan for institutional stabilization, the hiring of the first full-time registrar, the diversification of the Board of Trustees to include "non-Latinos and Latinos of all national backgrounds," and the installation of climate-control systems.[64] In addition, El Museo renovated its galleries and inaugurated them in 1994 with a three-part exhibition series to celebrate its 25th anniversary. The show invited artists such as Adál, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Diógenes Ballester, Luis Camnitzer, Papo Colo, Jack Delano, Marcos Dimas, Juan Downey, Leandro Katz, Amalia Mesa-Bains, José Morales, Pepón Osorio, Liliana Porter, Juan Sánchez, Regina Silveira, Jorge Tacla,

[62] Fundación Cisneros sponsored the publication of *A Principality of its Own: Forty Years of Latin American Art at the Americas Society*. Brodsky curated the exhibition *Carlos Cruz Diez: (In) Formed by Color* (2008). The CIAR/AS has been host to public programs organized by Pinta since the fair's first edition.

[63] Exhibitions such as *Observed: Milagros de la Torre* (1912); *Dias and Riedweg: and it Becomes Something Else* (2009), *Emancipatory Action: Paula Trope and the Meninos* (2007) belong in this category. Gabriela Rangel, Director of Visual Arts has also furthered a vein of shows that richly combine aesthetic inquiry and artistic practice with institutional history. These shows take as a point of departure earlier solo exhibitions organized at the Americas Society. Such was the case of *Marta Minujín: MINUCODEs* (2010) and *Gego: Origin and Encounter. Mastering the Space* (2012).

[64] In 1993 Director Petra Barreras resigned and Torruella Leval was named Interim Director and then Director of El Museo. In 1994 El Museo was awarded a grant from the National Arts Stabilization Fund financial stabilization. For a full list of measures towards institutionalization undertaken through the decade see Cullen, "El Museo Del Barrio 1969-2004: Institutional Timeline and Exhibition Chronology."

and many others to create works in dialogue with works in El Museo's permanent collection.[65] That year El Museo officially expanded its mission to include representing the heritage of "all Latin Americans in the United States."[66] Landmark exhibitions during that decade included *Con to' los hierros: A Retrospective of the Work of Pepón Osorio* (1991), *Antonio Martorell and Friends: La Casa de Todos Nosotros/ A House for Us All* (1992), *Re-aligning Vision: Alternative Currents in South American Drawing* (1997), *Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean* (1997). In 1999 Deborah Cullen, then El Museo's curatorial assistant launched El Museo's Bienal: *The (S) Files/ The Selected Files*, a group exhibition presenting new contemporary Latino, Caribbean and Latin American artists selected from the museum's artist files. This biennial quickly became recognized as barometer of urban contemporary tendencies in Latino and Latin American contemporary art.[67]

The 2000s have continued the institutionalizing trend. Signs of El Museo's strong attempt at being recognized as a mainstream institution included the hiring in 2002 of Julian Zugazagoitia, formerly Executive Assistant to Thomas Krens, Director of the Guggenheim Museum. MoMA's invitation to participate in the collaborative undertaking that resulted in *Latin American and Caribbean Art: MoMA at El Museo*, indicated the institution was achieving this goal. The five-volume catalog *Voces y Visiones: Highlights from the Permanent Collection of El Museo del Barrio* (2003) revealed the strides made by El Museo on its path from a grassroots to

[65] Ibid. The dialogues were categorized under three main themes that became each one the subject of one show: i.e. Reclaiming History, Recovering Popular Culture; and Reaffirming Spirituality.

[66] Ibid, 66. The mission statement read: "El Museo del Barrio's mission is to establish a forum that will preserve and project the dynamic cultural heritage of Puerto Ricans and all Latin Americans in the United States."

[67] Each edition has been co-curated by staff from El Museo and other curators of Latin American art from the U.S. and beyond. The *S Files*, recently renamed "La bienal" is nowadays a main event highlighting the talent of emerging and up-and –coming artists. Recent editions have incorporated New York's public space as outdoor galleries or performance spaces, exposing new audiences to Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean artists as well as to El Museo's work.

an established institution through its history of collecting and an institutional chronology. As a sign of an institutional "coming of age" in 2004 El Museo joined the trend of museums undertaking renovations and expansions, with a 35-million dollar capital campaign to change its façade and entrance. El Museo has been able to capitalize on the boost in visibility achieved through the capital campaign through the organization of a number of ground-breaking exhibitions that advanced research on different aspects of Latino and Latin American art including *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis* (2009), *Arte ≠ Vida* (2010), and the recent *Caribbean Crossroads of the World* (2012), co-organized with The Studio Museum Harlem and The Queens Art Museum.

The Bronx Museum's path towards stabilization and mainstream recognition was ushered by Luis Cancel in the 1980s, as he secured a building for the museum, renovated it, drafted a collection policy (1984), and organized its most ambitious curatorial project until then, *The Latin American Spirit* (1988). Recent unequivocal signs of ongoing stability and success include the unveiling in 2006 of a $19 million, 16,700-square-foot expansion, which quadrupled the exhibition space.[68] Like the unveiling of the BXMA's main renovation stage lead by Cancel, the 2006 unveiling of the new expansion was set to coincide with a highly-expected exhibition of Latin American art: *Tropicália: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture."* This traveling exhibition was a landmark of the 2000s. It focused on the late 1960s in Brazil: a moment of high, subversive and joyful creativity manifest in the visual arts, music, film and literature, which had

[68] Sewell Chan, "Bronx Museum of the Arts Is Set to Reopen," *The New York Times*, October 4, 2006, sec. E; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Arts, Briefly. http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F70F13FE3E540C778CDDA90994DE404482 (accessed October 8, 2012). This expansion was designed principally by Bernardo Fort-Brescia, a founder of the Miami architectural firm Arquitectonica. According to Chan: "The three-story midblock structure, 69 feet tall, has an irregular folded facade of fritted glass and painted aluminum panels. Inside are 10,000 square feet of gallery space for temporary exhibitions, a larger entrance lobby and classrooms. The building, at 1040 Grand Concourse, between 165th and 166th Streets in Morrissania, also has a 2,000-square-foot outdoor sculpture court."

never been presented in the United States.[69] The show was co-organized with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and the Gabinete Cultura in São Paulo. Other important exhibitions of art by Latinos and Latin Americans included the 1993 traveling show *CARA: Chicano Resistance and Affirmation*, *Rimer Cardillo: Araucaria* (1998), *Quisqueya Henríquez* (2008) *and Juan Downey: the Invisible Architect* (2012).

On a side note regarding the Bronx Museum's growth, it is fair to say that this institution has kept a stronger grassroots identity than El Museo del Barrio. The themes of its anniversary exhibitions and its public programs attest to an institution that while doing quality exhibitions, wants to continue being pertinent to significant immigrant and working poor populations of the borough. From the 1990s to the present, its anniversaries have been conceived as events that simultaneously commemorate the labors intrinsic to the museum (collecting and exhibiting artwork), celebrate the institution's ties to its surrounding community, and push the boundaries of that relationship to entice a stronger engagement with the museum and sense of ownership. The 25th anniversary show, titled *Bronx Spaces*, was devoted to four younger cultural organizations in the borough: the Bronx River Art Center and Gallery, the Longwood Arts Gallery, En Foco and the Lehman College Art Gallery, that also do important work of showcasing local artists with limited visibility, and that bring art to still culturally underserved communities.[70] The selection of artists in the show, made by each individual venue, mirrored a shared interest with the Bronx Museum of reflecting the cultural diversity of New York City and its artistic scene. The Puerto Rican-American duo Rigoberto Torres and John Ahearn, and

[69] Carlos Basualdo et al., *Tropicália: a revolution in Brazilian culture (1967-1972)* (Sáo Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2005).

[70] Vivien Raynor, "ART;Tribute to Shows Linked to the Bronx - New York Times," New York Times, May 26, 1996, http://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/26/nyregion/art-tribute-to-shows-linked-to-the-bronx.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed October 8, 2012).

Latinos and Latin Americans Catalina Parra, Esperanza Cortés, Jorge Tacla, Juan Sánchez, and Sophie Rivera were showcased alongside Lisa Kahane, Robert Blackburn, and Douglas Davis.[71]

In 1996, the Bronx Museum celebrated the tenth anniversary of its permanent collection with the three-part exhibition *Talk Back! The Community Responds to the Permanent Collection* (1996-97). Over the course of nine months, the museum showcased works from its collection and encouraged the audience to respond to them by way of texts that would be laminated by the museum staff and hung from ring binders next to the works to which they referred, in lieu of wall texts authored by the curatorial staff.[72] The aim of the show was "to challenge the authoritative voice of the museum curator by proposing a dialogic approach through the many voices of its audiences so that they could be heard."[73] The idea of community engagement was also at the heart of the 30th anniversary-series *Conversations with the Permanent Collection*, which enlisted the support of several contemporary artists to propose fresh insights into the collection and serve as catalysts for building relationships with audiences through site-specific works and collaborative projects requiring audience participation.[74] For its fortieth anniversary, now underway, the Bronx Museum has abolished its entrance fee and adopted forty Bronx public

[71] Ibid. At the heart of this selection is not only the idea that artists from different cultures are at work in New York, but that the city itself is the site of multicultural exchanges and collaborations. This is suggested by the inclusion of the American-Puerto Rican duo John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres, who in the 1980s casted many people from poor South Bronx communities into sculptures, En Foco: a Puerto Rican-founded photographic organization that promotes and exhibits the work of photographers of color; and Robert Blackburn whose very name conjures the image of a man whose huge 8,000 square feet printmaking workshop on 55 West 17 Street was the site of international collaboration and encounters for five decades.

[72] Marysol Nieves, "Mapping New Strategies: Museums, Collections, and Interpretive Practices, A Case Study," in *Collection Remixed* (Bronx, N.Y: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 2005), 8-19. The exhibition design included several interactive zones that invited dialogue, exchange and reflection, including reading and drawing tables, interpretive activities and a table for art-making. The original selection of artworks was made by Nieves, who then served as Senior Curator of the Museum. As the series continued some works were removed and others added, in selections largely based on public demand.

[73] Marysol Nieves, "Mapping New Strategies: Museums, Collections, and Interpretive Practices, A Case Study," in *Collection Remixed* (Bronx, N.Y: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 2005).

[74] Ibid.

schools, providing guidance and support for teachers and bringing students from those schools into the museum for arts programs and projects.[75]

The importance of these small exhibition venues in achieving the visibility of Latin American art in the mainstream is still under-acknowledged. Ironically, as Latin American an—to a lesser extent Latino art—are absorbed into the mainstream, small institutions have had to ponder the question of how to remain pertinent in their collecting and showcasing of art by Latin Americans and Latinos.[76] Increasingly they find themselves with still limited resources but competing with other museums for acquisitions and for the opportunity to expose audiences to artists who were once in the periphery and are now taking center-stage. In a sense, the fields of Latin American and Latino art are becoming gentrified. El Museo has answered that prerogative by strengthening its focus on New York in its collecting as well as in its exhibitions.[77] The Bronx Museum has chosen to strengthen thematic trends and fostering interactivity.[78]

Acknowledging the role of these small institutions and alternative spaces within the recent history of Latin American and Latino art requires a shift in historiographic focus. An expansive view of history that instead of concentrating in an easily identifiable explosion of mainstream interest happening roughly between 1987 and 1993, looks at a broader phenomenon of circulation of artwork and information that engaged institutions with different resources,

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[75] "Bronx Museum to Be Free to Visitors," *ArtsBeat,* March 27, 2012, http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/27/bronx-museum-to-be-free-to-visitors/ (accessed October 8, 2012).

[76] Deborah Sontag, "Beyond the Barrio, With Growing Pains," *The New York Times*, October 11, 2009, sec. Arts / Art & Design, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/11/arts/design/11sont.html (accessed October 8, 2012); Olivia Georgia, "Foreword and Acknowledgments," in *Collection Remixed* (Bronx, New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 2005), 4–5. This is a question pondered by both The Bronx Museum and El Museo del Barrio in the texts here cited. The Bronx Museum's pondering of this question is not limited only to Latino and Latin American art, but also to other artists within their collecting and exhibiting scope from under-represented communities, such as Asian-Americans and African-Americans.

[77] Sontag, "Beyond the Barrio, With Growing Pains."

[78] Georgia, "Foreword and Acknowledgments."

audiences, and degrees of commitment to Latin American and Latino art. This is what this dissertation has intended. In this light, interest in the art of Latinos and Latin Americans seems continuous—even if a phenomenon of varying dimensions and degrees through the decades.

The focus institutions in this dissertation are only four among a larger field whose individual histories need to be rescued, in order to have their contributions acknowledged in art history. This is a dusty labor of love, that requires delving into institutional files for piecing together histories that are often unevenly documented. Histories of archives partially or completely lost abound in these spaces, which emerged as alternatives to an exclusivist art circuit where non-Euro-American artists were largely absent. Energies and resources for minimizing marginality went into showcasing, and not always into the recording what was showcased. Spaces that continue operating and have become institutionalized, such as El Museo and the Bronx Museum, are little by little undertaking the sometimes-daunting task of re-piecing their histories from incomplete archives.[79] The venues that have ceased operations have less chances of entering the realm of what is deemed as historically significant. However, the relative proximity of these histories, the fact that many of its actors and agents can still be interviewed, and the increasing accessibility of press archives on the Internet make their compilation and interpretation an art historical imperative.

[79] The Bronx Museum is currently working on a fortieth anniversary exhibition. Since 2010 they have had an archivist who is in charge of organizing the museum's institutional archives and tracing its history.

APPENDIX 1.
THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS EXHIBITION HISTORY 1971-2008[1]

1971
May 12- June 12
Paintings from The Metropolitan, organized in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art
An exhibition of 28 works from the collection of the Met, including works by Milton Avery, Romare Bearden, Gustave Courbet, Copley, Degas, Paul Monet, Vincent Van Gogh, and others

1972
Games, Juegos!, organized in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art and its Summer Training Program
An exhibition of artworks and objects in the Met's collection that are games or refer to games from ancient cultures to the present.

1974
March 9-?, *Paris: Places and People*, organized in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Exhibition of 43 artworks drawn from works drawn from the Robert Lehman Collection recently donated to the Met.
Artists included Albert André, Frédéric Bazille, Jean Louis Forain, Jean Fouquet, Ingres, Pierre Matisse, Umberto Modigliani, Jean François Raffaelli, Toulouse-Lautrec, Kees Van Dongen, Vuillard, and others.

1975
?-February 21, ***The Year of the Woman***
Alice Baber, Linda Benglis, Nancy Grossman, Alice Neel, Miriam Schapiro, Sylvia Sleigh, and others.

1976
Feb. 26-Mar. 31, ***June Blum***

Sept. 9- Oct. 5, 1976, ***University Artists/Teachers '76***

1977
May 9-June 30, 1977, ***American Art since 1945: from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art*,** Traveling exhibit from The Museum of Modern Art held at BxMA

[1] I have reconstructed this incomplete exhibition history from information compiled from the catalogs in The Museum of Modern Art Library, from information extracted from the archives of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and from articles or notes published in *The New York Times* on exhibitions at the Bronx Museum. This chronology covers from 1971 to 1976 and complements the exhibition history compiled by the Bronx Museum, which starts in March 1977 and goes until 2008. The gaps in exhibition schedule and the incomplete rosters of artists are due to the absence of archival records providing the necessary data to fill those blanks. I sincerely thank the Bronx Museum for allowing me access to and authorization to publish in the subsequent pages, for the first time, the exhibition history compiled by the institution.

THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS
1040 GRAND CONCOURSE BRONX NY 10456 T 718.681.6000 F 718.681.6181
BRONXMUSEUM
WWW.BRONXMUSEUM.ORG

Exhibition(s):	Date:
First New York International Drawing Biennial	Mar. 24 1977- May 12, 1977
Art in Process: Five Artists at Work	Jul. 13, 1977- Aug. 12, 1977
Images of Horror and Fantasy	Nov. 15, 1977- Dec. 8, 1977
The History of the Chinese in America	Aug. 2, 1977- ?
Personal Visions	Mar. 22, 1978- Apr. 30, 1978
Street Art	Nov. 20, 1978- Dec. 29. 1978
Bridge Between Islands: Retrospective Works by Six Puerto Rican Artists in New York	*Jan. 6, 1979- Feb. 18, 1979*
3 Sculptors: Chase-Riboud, Edwards, Hunt	May 11, 1979- Jun. 29. 1979
Devastation/Resurrection: The South Bronx	Nov. 8, 1979- Jan. 13, 1980
Marking Black	Jan. 24, 1980- Mar. 9, 1980
Afro-American Art in the 20th Century: Three Episodes	Mar. 19, 1980- May 30, 1980
Science Fiction: Imaginary Voyage	Jun. 26, 1980- Aug. 29, 1980
Dart Westphal	Jul. 1, 1980- Jul. 31, 1980
Maureen Gaffney	Aug. 1, 1980- Aug. 31, 1980
Young Painters: 1980	Oct. 7, 1980- Dec. 12, 1980
Peter Jerry	Dec. 2, 1980- Jan. 13, 1981
A Celebration for Children: Six Nations	Jan. 5, 1981- Apr. 5, 1981
Steve Bamberg	Mar. 3, 1981- Apr. 21, 1981
Satish Joshi	Apr. 23, 1981- Jun. 21, 1981
Jacques Hnizdovsky	Jun. 11, 1981- Jul. 1, 1981
Peter Melillo	Sep. 8, 1981- Oct. 7, 1981

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Video Classics	Sep. 8, 1981- Oct. 4, 1981
Camille Billops	Oct. 29, 1981- Nov. 15, 1981
Krishna Reddy	Nov. 10, 1981- Feb. 28, 1982
Victor Amador	Dec. 3, 1981- Dec. 28, 1982
Made in New York	Mar. 25, 1982- Apr. 19, 1982
Marjorie Abramson	Mar. 31, 1982- Apr. 18, 1982
In Celebration of the Bronx	May 16, 1982- May 17, 1982
Aim 2	May 24, 1982- Jun. 13, 1982
Canadian Contemporary Printmakers	Jun. 24, 1982- Aug. 29, 1982
Photo Start	Sep. 14, 1982- Dec. 5, 1982
Toby Buonagurio	May 7, 1983- Jun. 7, 1983
Ceremonies and Spirits: Art of the Pacific Islands, Africa, and the Americas from the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art	May 7, 1983- Jul. 14, 1983
Shared Space	May 7, 1983- Jul. 28, 1983
Aim 3	Jun. 2, 1983- Jul. 20, 1983
Harriet Witkins- "Sidewalks of New York	Jul. 28, 1983- Sep. 15, 1983
Moholy-Nagy Fotoplastiks: The Bauhaus Years	Jul. 30, 1983- Sep. 25, 1983
Works by Benigna Chilla	Sep. 26, 1983- Nov. 3, 1983
Spanish Art Tomorrow	Oct. 6, 1983- Jan. 5, 1984
Pablo Romero	*Nov. 10, 1983- Dec. 28, 1983*
Sculptural Statement	Dec. 14, 1983- Feb. 2, 1984
Marina Cappelleto *Words <= => Pictures*	Jan. 4, 1984- Feb. 13, 1984 Jan. 17, 1984- Mar. 22, 1984
"JEFF"	Feb. 16, 1984- Mar. 19, 1984
Helene Brandt	Mar. 22, 1984- Apr. 14 1984

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AIM 4	Apr. 3, 1984- Apr. 24, 1984
Edgar Buonagurio	May 5, 1984- Jun. 22, 1984
The Work of Our Hands- Photographs of a Resurgent Bronx by Sandra Baker	May 5, 1984- Jul. 19, 1984
George Rickey: Sculpture Installation	Jun. 6, 1984- Aug. 30, 1984
Native American Painting: Selections from the Museum of the American Indian	Aug. 8, 1984- Oct. 4, 1984
Arctic Vision-Art of the Canadian Inuit	*Oct. 31, 1984- Nov. 29, 1984*
Mohammed Melehi- Recent Paintings	Dec. 8, 1984- Feb. 10, 1985
Tony Velez	Dec. 12, 1984- Jan. 24, 1985
Jan D'Esopo- "Puerta Del Caribe"	Feb. 2, 1985- Mar. 20, 1985
The Artist Celebrates New York: Selected Works from the Metropolitan Museum of Art	Feb. 2, 1985- Mar. 24. 1985
Life Casts from 1979 to the Present	Apr. 8 , 1985- May 23, 1985
Emerging Expression: The Artist and the Computer	*Apr. 13, 1985- Sep. 22, 1985*
Vivian E. Browne	Jun. 6, 1985- Jul. 18. 1985
AIM 4 Carl Rosmarin	*Jul. 30, 1985- Sep. 5. 1985*
Anxious Interiors	*Aug. 21. 1985- Oct. 27. 1985*
José Morales	Sep. 12, 1985- Oct. 27, 1985
Lydia Rubio, Islands: A Still Life Series Work: An Installation of Drawing, Painting, Photography and Poetry—Candace Hill-Montgomery	
Geometric Abstractions: Selections from a Decade, 1975-1985	Oct. 5, 1985- Dec. 29, 1985
Robert Barsamian	Oct. 31, 1985- Nov. 29, 1985
Linda Bastian	Nov. 9, 1985- Dec. 10, 1985

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Between the Wars: The Bronx Experience, A Portrait of the Jewish Bronx	Nov. 9, 1985- Apr. 20, 1986
Winifred Potenza	Dec. 19, 1985- Jan. 23, 1986
Afro-American Art, Hidden Heritage: 1800-1950	Jan. 16, 1986- Apr. 9, 1986
Katherine Snedeker	Jan. 30, 1986- Mar. 12, 1986
Latin American Women Artists- 50th Anniversary Celebration	Feb. 6, 1986- Apr. 20, 1986
American Abstract Artists- 50th Anniversary Celebration 1936-198	
Rhoda Sherbell- Variations on a Theme: Collaged Sculptures	Mar. 22, 1986- Apr. 24, 1986
Building Orchard Beach: A 50th Anniversary Celebration	May 2, 1986- Jul. 3, 1986
Building a New Borough: Architecture and Planning in the Bronx, 1890-1940	May 2, 1986- Nov. 23, 1986
Curator's Choice II	May 31, 1986- Aug. 31, 1986
AIM 6	Jun. 12, 1986- Jul. 31, 1986
Mervin Honig	Jun. 15, 1986- Sep. 1, 1986
Nancy Wells- Transformations	Sep. 8, 1986- Oct, 23, 1986
A Decade of En Foco	Sept. 13, 1986- Nov. 13, 1986
Disarming Images: Art for Nuclear Disarmament	Sep. 13, 1986- Nov. 23, 1986
Marcos Dimas	Nov. 1, 1986- Dec. 7, 1986
Invisible Cities by Raquel Rabinovich	Dec. 13, 1986- Feb. 5, 1987
Romare Bearden: Origins and Progressions	Dec. 13, 1986- Mar. 1, 1987

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MONIR: Graphic Works, 1975-1986	Dec. 13, 1986- May 24, 1987
New Sculptures by Alex Markhoff	Feb. 12, 1987- Mar. 29, 1987
Modern Primitives of Spain	Mar. 14, 1987- Apr. 19, 1987
To Objectify the Subjective: Contemporary Symbolist Sensibilities	Mar. 14, 1897- May 17, 1987
Marc Brasz	Apr. 9, 1987- May 24, 1987
Curator's Choice III	Jun. 4, 1987- Jul. 7, 1987
AIM 7	Jun. 4, 1987- Jul. 7, 1987
Mohammed Omer Kalil	Jun. 6, 1987- Jul. 12, 1987
Margo Machida, OTHER/SELEVES	Sep. 17, 1987- Nov. 22, 1987
The Second Emerging Expression Biennial: The Artist & The Computer	Sep. 17, 1987- Jan. 24, 1988
Beginnings: Selections for the Permanent Collection	Sep. 17, 1987- May 29, 1988
Daniel Hauben, CITY LIFE	Dec. 3, 1987- Jan. 31, 1988
Judy Blum	Feb. 4, 1988- Mar. 20, 1988
Focus on Westchester	Feb. 11, 1988- Mar. 1, 1988
Master Watercolors & Drawings from the Norton Gallery	Feb. 11, 1988- Mar. 27, 1988
Work: 1984-1987 by Eileen Spikol	Mar. 28, 1988- May 26, 1988
Return to the Figure: Three Studies. Philip Guston, Jean Helion, Irene Rice Pereira	Apr. 7, 1988- Aug. 28, 1988
ITALY: One Hundred Years of Photography	May 19, 1988- Aug. 21. 1988
AIM 8	Jun. 9, 1988- Jul. 31, 1988
Rainbow of Culture: Photographs by Charles Biasiny-Rivera	Jun. 9, 1988- Aug. 28, 1988
The Latin American Spirit: Art and the Artists in the United States, 1920- 1970	Oct. 1, 1988- Jan. 29, 1989

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Recent Sculpture by Tyrone Mitchell	Feb. 21, 1989- Apr. 13, 1989
Traditions and the Transformations: Contemporary Afro-American Sculpture	Feb. 21, 1989- May 27, 1989
Collages by Al Loving	Apr. 20, 1989- Jun. 8, 1989
AIM 9	Jun. 8, 1989- Jul. 30, 1989
Mierle Laderman Ikeles- Recycle Works	Jun. 8, 1989- Aug. 31, 1989
FRANTA- Paintings and Works on Paper, 1986-1989	Jun. 8, 1989- Sep. 10, 1989
Curator's Choice IV- Hot spots	
Red Grooms: The Graphic Work 1957-1985	
Latin Masters	
Recent Works by Emily Cheng	Oct. 3, 1989- Nov. 28, 1989
Isabel Bishop	Oct. 3, 1989- Jan. 28, 1990
Ideas and Images from Argentina	
Richard Mock—Urban Arms	Dec. 12, 1989- Jan. 28, 1990
Liora Mondlak	Feb. 10, 1990- Apr. 1, 1990
Images of Silence: Photography from the Latin American and the Caribbean in the 80's	Feb. 12, 1990- Apr. 29, 1990
Introspectives: Contemporary Art by American and Brazilians of African Decent	Feb. 12, 1990- May 28, 1990
Dry Bones & Burnt Offerings: Recent Photography by John Pinderhuges	Apr. 10, 1990- May 28, 1990
Salvatore Gulla: The Mourning Series	Jun. 9, 1990- Jul. 16, 1990
A Decade in the Marketplace	Jun 12, 1990- Sep. 3, 1990
AIM 13	
Carol Sun: Seven Paintings	Jul. 19, 1990- Sep. 3, 1990
Precession of the Simulacra: An	Sep. 27, 1990- Nov. 27, 1990

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Interactive, Site Specific Video installation by Sara Hornbacher	
The Graphics Revolution in Mexico: Printmaking by El Taller de Grafica Popular	Sep. 27, 1990- Jan. 27, 1991
Visions of Home	
Mo Bahc—Speak American	Dec. 6, 1990- Jan 27, 1991
Emma Amos: The Falling Series	Mar. 21, 1991- Jun. 2, 1991
The Third Dimension and Beyond	Mar. 21, 1991- Jun, 23, 1991
The Nearest Edge of The World: Art and Cuba Now	Mar. 21, 1991- Aug. 4, 1991
Discolonization	Jun. 11, 1991- Aug. 4, 1991
Aim 11	Jul. 2, 1991- Aug. 4, 1991
Contrasts:40 Years of Change and Continuity in Puerto Rico, Photographs by Jack Delano	Oct. 22, 1991 – Jan. 5, 1992
Bernard Olshan. Paintings- The Studio and Beyond	Oct. 22, 1991- Jan. 12, 1992
Las Casitas: An Urban Cultural Alternative	
Liliana Porter Fragments of the Journey	Feb. 20, 1992 - May 10, 1992
Zarina, House With Four Walls: Sculptures and Etchings	
The North American Trophy Room, Recent Works by Francisco Alvarado-Juarez	Jun. 2, 1992 – Aug. 2, 1992
Aim 12	
Contemporary Painting and Calligraphy from Japan	

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Recent Paintings by Candida Alvarez	Oct. 22, 1992- Jan. 10, 1993
The School of the South: El Taller Torres-Garcia and its Legacy	
Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965 – 1985	Mar. 5, 1993 - May 2, 1993
Student Exhibition	Jun. 3, 1993 – Sept. 12, 1993
Ying/Yang/Good/Bad/Black/White/Us/Them	
AIM 13	
Another Perspective: Selections from the Permanent Collection	
Dreams and Designs	*Oct. 1, 1993 – Jan. 23, 1994*
Paintings and Sketches	
Recent Paintings	
A New Deal For Federal Art: Murals from the Federal Work Programs	
Beyond the Borders: Art By Recent Immigrants	Feb. 18, 1994 – Jun. 12, 1994
Student Exhibition	Jul. 15, 1994 – Sept. 11, 1994
Aim 14	
Building The Collection: Recent Acquisitions and Selected Works From The Permanent Collection	
Recent Work: Xu Bing	
Cartographines: 14 Artist From Latin America	Oct. 6, 1994 – Jan. 15, 1995
Student Exhibition	Jul. 13, 1995 – Sept. 10, 1995
David Padilla Cabrera Y Linda Matalon	
Traces: The Body in Contemporary Photography	
Aim 15	Jul. 13, 1995 – Sept. 10, 1995

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Photography: A Tool For Persona Empowerment and Social Change	Feb. 17, 1995 – Jun. 11, 1995
The Path to Memory Division Of Labor: "Women's Work" in Contemporary Art	
Under The Hunter's Moon	
Prisoners	Oct. 13, 1995 – Jan. 14, 1996
"Dear Robert I'll See You At The Crossroads"	
Material Moa	
Women of Hope: African American And Latinas Who Made a Difference	Mar. 8, 1996 – Jun. 23, 1996
Amidst The Silence	
Bronx Spaces	
AIM Benefit Exhibition	*Nov. 8, 1997 – Dec. 7, 1996*
The Bronx Museum of The Arts Annual Student Exhibition	*Nov. 8, 1997 – Feb. 16, 1997*
Sculptural Works	
AIM 16	
Linking Lives: Youth's Perspectives On Those Living With HIV And AIDS	Oct. 16, 1997 – Mar. 15, 1997
The Picnic	
Transforming the crown: African, Asian, And Caribbean Artist in Britain, 1966-1996	
1898: DIWA Arts	
Araucaria	Apr. 16, 1998 – Jun. 21, 1998
Double Happiness	
Histories (Re)membered (PC)	Jul. 9, 1998 - Sept. 11, 1998
Student Exhibition	Jul. 15, 1998 – Sept. 27, 1998
1898: Rican/Struction, Multi-layered Impressions	
Aim 16	

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Amnesia *CON(TEXT) Words, Text, And Meaning In The Permanent Collection*	? Apr. 7, 1999 – Sept. 5, 1999
Urban Mythologies: The Bronx Represented Since The 1950's	
Aim 19	Jul. 16, 1999 – Sept. 12, 1999
Aim 20	Jul. 13, 2000 – Oct. 15, 2000
Context: Mexico's Taller De Grafica Popular And It's Legacy (PC)	*Oct. 11, 2000 – Mar. 4, 2001*
The Ruins, The Utopia	
Leonardo Drew	
Collaborative Art Projects: The RICE Banquet	Apr. 11, 2001 – Jul. 1, 2001
(un)Shop: An Installation	
Recent Acquisitions	Apr. 11, 2001- Sep. 9 2001
Aztlán Today: The Chicano Postnation	
Game Show: Installations and Sculptures	
Aim 21	Jul. 12, 2001- Oct. 14, 2001
One Planet Under A Groove: Hip Hop And Contemporary Art	Jan. 1,2002 - May 26, 2002
Manicurated (PC)	Mar. 6, 2002 - May 25, 2002
Aim 22	Jul. 03, 2002 – Oct. 20, 2002
The Studio Portrait (CP/PC)	
Mnenomic Architecture Rhythms And Rituals That Feed My Spirit (PC)	Nov. 27, 2002 – Mar. 2, 2003
The Gift: Generous Offerings, Threatening Hospitality	
Urbanity Humanity (PC)	Apr. 3, 2003 – Jun. 15, 2003

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Commodification Of Buddhism

The Dream Of The Audience	
Aim 23	Jul. 17, 2003 – Sept. 28, 2003, 2005
Grace (PC)	
Urashima (PC)	Oct. 30, 2003 – Mar. 24, 2004
Valeska Soares: Follies	
AIM 24	Apr. 15, 2004 – Jun. 20, 2004
Portraits and Places: Recent Acquisitions to the Permanent Collection	
Becoming-Father/Becoming Infant	Jul. 24, 2004- Oct. 3, 2004
Subway Series: The New York Yankees and the American Dream	Jul. 24, 2004- Dec. 31, 2004
Provocations: Selections for the Permanent Collection	
Music/Video	Oct. 20, 2004 – Dec. 31, 2004
Collection Remixed: *Corporeal Intelligence* *How to Read* *Selves and Others* *Threads and Vines* *When Living was Labor*	Feb. 3, 2005 – Jun. 5, 2005
Javier Téllez: S-T-E-R-E-O-V-I-E-W, Conversations with the Permanent Collection	
Romare Bearden: New York Scenes	
AIM 25	Jun. 30, 2005- Oct. 2, 2005
Irreducible Contemporary Short Form Video	Oct. 26, 2005 – Feb. 26, 2006
AIM 26	Mar. 23 – Jul. 2, 2006

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Tropicália: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture	Oct. 7, 2005 – Jan. 28, 2006
Here and Elsewhere Artist in the Marketplace 27th Annual Exhibition	Apr. 1, 2007 – Aug 19, 2007
Quisqueya Henríquez The World Outside A Survey Exhibition 1991-2007	Sept. 16, 2007 – January 27, 2008
Making It Together: Women's Collaborative Art and Community	March 2 – August 4, 2008
Teen Council Presents: Jamel Shabazz	
Highlights from the Permanent Collection: Women Artists	
How Soon Is Now?: AIM 28	June 1 – August 18, 2008

APPENDIX 2.
CAYMAN GALLERY/ MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY HISPANIC ART EXHIBITION HISTORY[1]

Exhibitions with unknown dates
Colon Morales
Claudio Juarez: Works on Paper
Sita Gómez: Recent Paintings
Rolando Bardaji: Empire State gamblers, realist paintings
June 18-July 14, unknown year, ***"Algodón." Works on Handmade Paper by Nirma Zárate***

1974
April 10-20, **Jorge Soto·**, institution with new administration, but still operating under the name "Society of Friends of Puerto Rico.

1975
n.d., ***The Spirit of Independence***
Artists: Benny Andrew, Roger Caban, Papo Colo, Marcos Dimas, Rafael Ferrer, Antonio Frasconi, Domingo García, Ernesto García, José R. Gastambide, Leonel Góngora, Antonio Martorell, Carlos Osorio, David Ramos, Carlos Raquel Rivera.

1976
n.d., ***Eloy Blanco·***

January, ***Desde Puerto Rico Vengo!*** (sic). Solo exhibition of artist Domingo García.

April 2nd- May 1st, ***Evelyn López de Guzmán***

April 30- May 7. ***Solidarity with Chilean Democracy. A Memorial to Orlando Letelier***
Exhibition and benefit for the Chile Committee for Human Rights in memory of O.L. organized by the US ad hoc Committee of the Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende. Works by leading U.S. and Latin American artists.

September, ***Colo***

1977
n.d., ***Niles Cruz***

n.d., ***Latin American Primitives***

[1] This exhibition history has been reconstructed mostly from the catalogs in The Museum of Modern Art Library, and from catalogs and artist files at the institutional archives of Cayman Gallery and The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art at Hostos Community College. Besides the archives at Hostos Community College, MoMA has the most comprehensive collection of catalogs published by Cayman and MoCHA. The exhibitions marked with an asterisk have no remaining catalogs or exhibition files, but were referenced in artist curriculum vitas—some of them published by Cayman/MoCHA.

Artists: Manuel Hernández, Pedro Villarini, Rosa Navarro de González, Carlos Navedo, Lorenzo Pacheco, Radamés Santos, Ramón del Toro, Paul Vergeli

n.d. ***Black Caribbean Show·***

May 14- June 11, ***Lithographs, Woodcuts and Relief Casts by Antonio Frasconi***

1978

n.d., ***Art Guerra. "Amor y la muerte." Large Paintings***

n.d., ***Lidia Okumura***

n.d., ***Carlos Osorio: Pinturas y Esculturas·***

n.d., ***Trends: Group Installation***
Artists: Emma Alvarez Pineiro, Renan D. Arango, Rolando Bardaji, Mario Bencastro, Martin Blaszko, Rebecca Castrillo, James Lallemand, Washington Ledesma, Peter Macke, Jorge Madrinan, Josefina Monter, Susana Moreno, Vernita Nemec, Lydia Okumura, Maria Teresa Otegui, Bill Rabinovich, Arturo Rivera, Diana Rivera, Fanny Sanin, Jorge Soto, Awilda Sterling, Walter Terrazas, Ned Truss, Nitza Tufiño, Marius Sznajderman

n.d. ***Magnet- Geometry: An exhibition of Geometric Works by Five Latin American Artists***
Artists: Mario Bencastro, Lydia Okumura, Fanny Sanin, Walter Terrazas, Bismarck Victoria

Jan 13-Feb. 14, ***Jose Alfredo Mendoza Arreguin***

March 10-April 1, ***Joel Carreiro***

Juan Melé, Paintings. Guest curator: Jacqueline Barnitz

April 7-29, ***Jose Luis Posada Prints and Drawings***

June 8-July 1st, ***Elba Damast***

September 6-30, ***Juan Bujan: Paintings***

Luis Cruz Azaceta: Paintings

November 21- December 9, ***Freddy Rodriguez Installation***

1979

n.d. *7* ***Artists at Cayman Gallery***

Artists: Doris Acosta, Renan Darío Arango, Raul Conti, Elba Herrero Brodsky, Armando Lodoño, Gladys Triana, Angela Valerio

n.d. ***Marcos Dimas***

n.d. ***Walter Terrazas***

n.d. ***New Trends, Latin American Printmakers***
Artists: Rodolfo Abularach, Myrna Baez, Susy Baduin Suarez, Elba Damast, Jorge Dumas, Marcos Irizarry, Antonio Frasconi, Claudio Juarez, Juan Gomez Quiroz, Leonel Gongora, Armando Londoño, Victor Mira, José Luis Ortiz, Michael Ponce de Leon, Liliana Porter, Marius Sznajderman, Sergio Gonzalez Tornero

n.d., ***Permanent exhibit of Santos: Puerto Rican Folk Art***

February 16- March 10, ***Rosata Quinceañera, Debutanta Glorificata. César E. Trasobares***

February 16- March 10, ***Maria Lino "Enclosures/ Incidents* Objects/Sculptures***

April, ***Rolando Peña: The Black Prince***

April 5-21, ***Mario Toral Works on Paper at Cayman***

Delia del Carril

April 25- May 12, ***Antonio Amaral: Multiptychs* (sic)*, Recent Paintings***

Pedro Luján. Sculpture

June 5-23, ***E. Alvarez Piñeiro***

December 7-23, ***Domingo Olivera Torres (Tor). "Cosmic Dreams" Paintings and Drawings***

1980
n.d. ***Latin American Artists- 80***

n.d. ***Trends III***

January 4-26, ***Latin American Photographers***
Artists: Sonia Dorrego, Leslie Locketz, Nestor Latronico, Malmgren Restrepo, Marcelo Montecino,

March 27- April 19, ***J. Roberto Barreto 1966-1979: The Machine of the House Books***

April 24- May 24, ***First Latin American Graphic Arts Biennial***
Artists: Rafa and Ramon Benito, Emma Alvarez Pieniro and Paula Ocampo, Rudy Ayoroa, Sain Clair Cemin, Sergio Gonzalez Tornero, Armando Londono, Omar Rayo and Helio Salcedo, Hugo Consuegra and Ricardo Prieto, Manuel Ugarte, Mario Bencastro, Rodolfo Abularach, Jose Luis Ortiz, M. Ponce de Leon, Laura Marquez and Lotte Shulz, Claudio Juarez, Rebeca Castrillo, Carlos Sueños, Felix Berroa and Bismark Victoria, Antonio Frasconi and Naul Ojeda, Rafael Bogarin and Juan Carlos Requesens
November 25- December 24, ***Naul Ojeda: Woodcuts and Linocuts***

Frank Gimpaya

1981
n.d., ***Joel Carreiro***

February, ***Mario Pikus: Pictures of an Eviction***

February 5-28, ***Memorias del Silencio: Vilma Maldonado Reyes***

March 5-28, ***Marius Sznajderman: prints 1971-1981***

April 2-25, ***Rolando Peña: Oil. Installation and Graphics***

April 30-June 6, ***Hugo Consuegra: Oils and Drawings***

July 8-31, ***Trends 4: The Summer Show***
Artists: Rosalo Briseño, Henry Bermudez, Bendel Hydes, Konstantin Bokov, Richard Kykstra, Alvaro Garcia, Masafumi Hase, John Lavent, Ana León, Gilberto Lopez Espina, Despo Magoni, Victor Paniagua, Duilio Pierri, Diego Quintero, J.C. Rodriguez Godrona, Rosa Sanin, Iwel Wihmuller, Alizia Zadan

September 16- October 17, ***María Vélez***

Female Nude. Recent Paintings by Ana León

November 24- December 24, ***Inverna Lockpez: Recent Works***

Brooklyn & Spanish Harlem. Photographs by David de Silva

1982
n.d., ***Freddy Rodríguez***

February 4-7, ***Mario Kon: Installation***

April, ***Second Latin American Graphic Arts Biennial***
Artists: Omar Rayo, Antonio Frasconi, Daniel Serra Badue and Hugo Consuegra, Liliana Porter and Raul Conti, Rodolfo Abularach, Claudio Jarez, Juan Gomez Quiroz and Juan

Downey, Ada Varcarcel, Michel Ponce de León, Naul Ojeda, Julio Tauceda, Armando Londoño and Helio Salcedo, Roberto Barreto, Lidia Okmura and Saint Claire Cemin, José Luis Ortiz.

June 3- July 3, ***DeRomero: Drawings and Paintings on Paper***

September 9- October 2, ***Angel Suárez: Recent Works***

December 2-24, ***Taller 78: Puerto Rican Painters' Collective***
Artists: James G. Shine, Pablo López Pérez, Ivan Orti Díaz, Pedro Agustín Pérez, Feliz Velázquez

1983
February 3-26, ***Angel Rodríguez Díaz***

Luis Stand

Angel Rodríguez Díaz/ Biografía del observador/ The Beholder's Biography

Primera Luz: En Foco
Artists: Cambo, Fernández, Guzmán, Meyners

March 3-26, ***Maritza Dávila***

March 6-23, ***Félix González: Photographs***

April 7-30, ***Chile, Chile. 30 artists***
Paulina Aguilar, Claudio Bertoni, CADA, Juan Castillo, Gonzálo Díaz, Eugenio Dittborn, Juan Downey, Arturo Duclos, Ismael Frigerio, Oscar Gacitúa, Leo González, Paula Hernández, Alfredo Jaar, Benjamin Lira, Catalina Parra, Ximena Prieto, Francisca Sutil, Jorge Tacla, Julia Toro, José Yz

May 5-28, ***Contemporary Images: Thirteen South Texas Artists***
Artists: Bruno Andrade, Eric Avery, Francisco Fajardo, Roy Fridge, Glenn Maupin, Jesus Bautista Moroles, Madeline O'Connor, Nancy O'Connor, Danny Michael O'Dowdy, Greg Reuter, Barbara Riley, Michael Tracy, William Wilhelmi

October 6-29, ***Contemporary Puerto Rican Drawing***
Guest curator: James G. Shine
Artists: Raúl J. Agostini Chamorro, José Carlos Burgos, Carlos Collazo, Fernando Colón, Cecilio Colón Guzman, Margarita Fernández Zavala, Susana Herrero, Pablo López, Oscar Mestey Villamil, Ruben Miranda, Maria Antonia Ordoñez, Joaquín Reyes, Walter Torres, Rafael Trelles, Juan Ramón Velázquez

June 2-25, ***Efrain de Jesus***

September 8-30, **Guatemala: A Testimonial**

November 3-30, ***Women Artists from Puerto Rico***
Artists: Myrna Báez, Sylvia Blanco, Analida Burgos, Rebecca Castrillo, Lorraine de Castro, Gloria Duncan, Susana Espinosa, Margarita Fernández Zavala, Consuelo Gotay, Rosita Haeussler, Toni Bambleton, Susana Herrero, Maryann MacKinnon, María de Mater O'Neill, Maribel Muñoz, María Antonia Ordoñez, Bestsy Padín, Marta Pérez, Ana Delia Rivera, Nora Rodríguez, María Dolores Rodríguez, Noemí Ruiz, Zilia Sánchez, María Somoza, Isabel Vázquez, Miriam Zambarelli

October 6-20, ***Acecho: Nestor Otero***

December 8-30, ***John Kimmich***

1984
n.d., ***The Graphic Work of Isabel Vazquez***

February 2-25, ***The Rhythms and Patterns of Marcos Irizarry***

Recent Paintings by Boris Landa

Nicaragua: Images of a New Nation, Photo exhibition by Jamey Stillings

April, 5-9, ***Third Latin American Graphic Arts Biennial***
Artists: Emma Alvarez Pineiro, Perez Celis, Osvaldo Gomariz, Liliana Porter, Susy Baudoin Suarez, Hugo Rojas Lara, Gaston Ugalde Castro, Joselhy Carvalho, Carlos Martins, Julio Plaza, Regina Siveira, Eugenio Dittborn, Guillermo Fommer Holota, Juan Gomez-Quiroz, Leonel Gongora, Armando Londono, Fanny Sanin, Juan Boza, Ricardo Prieto Pimentel, Ricardo Viera, Dinis Figueroa, Charo Oquet, Freddy Rodriguez, Victor Cevallos Amaru Chiza, Vita Giorgi, xavier Hernandez Rivera, Francisco Munoz, Jose Luis Ortiz, Michael Ponce de Leon, Laura Marquez, Claudio Juarez, Jose Manco, Myrna Baez, Tony Bechara, Fernando Colon, Martiza Davila, Marcos Irizarry, Carlos Ortiz Sueños, Isavbel Vazquez, Manuel Lledos, Victor Mira, Julio Ruiz, Antonio perez meleroJorge Dumas, Antonio Frasconi, Rimer Cardillo, Marcos Margall, Jonic Milos, Rolando Pena, Elba Damast, Marius SznajdermanRodolfo Abularach.

September 6-October 13**, *Nuevos Caminos: Pintoras Mexicanas***
Artists: Alice Rahon, Fanny Rabel, Lilia Carrillo, Olga Dondé, Leticia Ocharán, Susana Campos, Teresa Cito, Herlinda Sánchez Laurel, Irma Palacios, Susana Sierra, Elena Villaseñor, Nunik Sauret, Ofelia marquez Huitzil, Anamario Pinto, Manuela Generali, Gilda Castillo, Dulce Maria Nunez, Monica Mayer, Consuelo Gonzalez Salzar, Isabel Vazquez, Paloma Diaz Abreu

1985
n.d. ***Ten Years at Cayman Gallery***

n.d., ***Caribbean Art: African Currents***
Exhibition co-organized by Goddard-Riverside Center, New York, and MoCHA
Artists: José Alicea, Diógenes Ballester, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Juan Boza, Arturo Lindsay, Ana Mendieta, Freddy Rodriguez, Manuel Pardo, Juan Sánchez, Héctor Méndez Caratini

April 11- May 4, ***Art Objects of MoCHA***
Artists: Hugo Bastidas, Marta Chilindrón, Frazier Dyyon, Anna Homler, Johnny Irizarry, Lillian Mulero

April 4- May 4, ***Julio Alpuy***

September 19- October 20, 1985, ***Posada/ Linares: The Living Calaveras***

Orisha, santos : an artistic interpretation of the seven African powers : an installation of sculptures by Jorge Luis Rodriguez, altars by Charles Abramson

November 7- December 8, ***Colombian Artists from New York: A Selection of Paintings and Photographs***
Artists: Yvonne Estrada, Luis Stand, Francisco Vidal, Gustavo Rojas, Armando Londoño, Yolanda Mesa, María Teresa Rizzi, Angel Reyes, Diego Quintero, Jorge Posada, Alvaro Peñarette, Fernando Montoya, Ligia Córdova, Germán Barón, Renán Darío Arango, Luis Fernando Jaramillo, Ruby Mera, Edgar Bernal, José Manuel Ricaurte, José Javier Castaño, Gilbert Vásquez-Duarte, Rafael Balcázar, Rolando Díaz

December 12- January 19, 1986, ***Andres Serrano, The Unknown Christ***

Ismael Frigerio: The Lurking Place

New Marriage: Paintings by the Modern Chilean Surrealist Mauricio Lara

Gypsy Alcala: Rites, Symbols Color

1986
n.d. ***Puerto Rican Printmakers***

January 23- March 2, ***Yolanda Mesa: Chronicle of a Beach Family***

Edgar Franceschi: If You Hear Me Calling, it's Only My Heart

May 7- April 13, ***Luis Cruz Azaceta: Tough Ride Around the City***

May 29- July 6, ***From the Nile to the Mapocho. Jorge Tacla***

July 10- August 10, ***Art and Reality: Contemporary Art from Nicaragua***

September 25- December 21, ***The Latin American Graphics Art Biennial*****,** aka *The Fourth Latin American Graphics Art Biennial*
Artists: Antonio Martorell, Liliana Porter, Eugenio Dittborn, Ricardo Benaim, Nurck Savret, Ramón Carulla,

September 12- December 18, ***Contemporary Printmakers from Latin America***
Exhibition organized by MoCHA and held at Borough of Manhattan Community College
Artists: Francisco Alvarado Juarez, Roberto Barreto, Juan Boza, Tony Capellan, Ramon Carulla, Paul del Rio, Luis Díaz, Isabel Easton, Guillermo Frommer, Xavier Hernandez Rivera, Marcos Margall, Maria Alexandra Poleo, Walter Porras,, Guido Remache, Domingo Rodriguez Semerena, Hugo Rojas Lara, Jose Rosabal, Hector Saunier, Yara Tupynamba

1987
n.d. ***Mary Stuart***

January 8- February 8, ***Raúl Acero: New Sculpture***

Connections Project /Conexus : a collaborative exhibition between 32 women artists from Brazil & the United States : a radiating circle of 150 women artists from the two regions : a collaborative bookwork : a letter-writing project : an information-gathering project : an exploration of the relations between art & cultures : a composite artwork
Organized jointly by Josely Carvalho and Sabra Moore
Artists: Roberta Allen, Jerry Allyn and The Waitresses, Mara Alvarez, Emma Amos, Jacki Apple, Ida Applebroog, Tomi Arai, Ines de Araujo, Sumiko Arimori, Vera Chavez Barcellos, Anna Barros, Lenna Bergstein, Judy Blum, Louise Bourgeois, Alice Brill, Kathie Brown, Vivian Browne, Maria Celia Brunello Bombano, Ely Bueno, Frances Bruscke, Vera Café, Marina Cappelletto, Maria Lucia Cameiro, Josely Carvalho, Ana Castillo, Emilie Chamie, Nancy Chunn, Eva Cockroft, Regina Coeli, Celia Colli, Viera & Hortensia Colorado, Susan Crowe, Joyce Cutler-Shaw, Ligia D'Andrea, Diana Domingues, Mary Beth Edelson, Gisela Eichbaum, Kathleen Fay, Liga de Francheschi, Iole de Freitas, Patricia Furlong, Jane Galvao, Marta Gamond, Sharon Gilbert, Doraci Girrolat de Correa, Wania Gonçalves Neves, Grace Graupe-Pillard, Kathy Grove, Adane Guimarães, Marina Gutiérrez, Vida Hackman, Linda Herrit, Patricia Horvat, Alexis Hunter, Michiko Itatani, Elizabeth Jobim, Bette Kalache, Kazuko, Maurie Kerrigan, Louise Karamer, Nina Kuo, Sonia Laboriau, Karin Lambrecht, Marilyn Lanfear, Ellen Lanyon, Laurabeatriz, Angela Leite, Beatriz Leite, Ora Lerman, Anna Lieneman, Imgard Longman, Margot Lovejoy, Joan Lyons, Loris Machado, Maria Lida Magliani, Collen McKay & Susan Sherman, Ada Medina, Pat Mercado, Kathleen Metz, Simone Michelin, Denise Milan, Judith Miller, Marilyn Minter, Marina Moews, Liora Mondiak, Sabra Moore, Maria Moreira, Elizabeth Nascimento, Louis Neaderland, Lucia Neves, Janice Novet, Miriam Obino, Lydia Okumura, Solange Oliveira, Deborah Orsoff, Anesia Pacheco e Chaves, Christina Maria Pape, Lygia Pape, Paula Pape, Christina Parisi, Glenna Park, Catalina Parra, Howardena Pindell, Barbara Pollack, Liliana Porter, Lucia Porto, Lucia Py, Jaune Quick-to-see Smith, Raquel Rabinovich, Silvia Ragusin, Aviva

Rahmani, Nicolette Reim, Tete Riccetti, Faith Ringgold, Erika Rothenberg, Maria Rothstein, Beye Saar, Vera Salamanca, Judite dos Santos, Valerie Savili & Nancy Spero, Carolee Schneemann, Heloise Schneiders da Silva, Maria do Camo Secco, Karen Shaw, Jessie Shefrin, Susan Sherman & Collen McKay, Lily Simon, Sylvia Sleigh, Mimi Smith, May Stevens, Caroline Stone, Michelle Stuart, Nancy Sullivan, Sarah Swenson, Josie Talamantez, Sophia Tassinari, Charleen Touchette, Katie van Sherpenberg, Eliane Velozo de Souza, Cecilia Vicuña, Rose Viggiano, Sonia Von Brusky, Mary Warshaw, Luise Weiss, Faith Wilding, Pamela Wye, Jeanete Zeido, Mirtes Zwierzynski.

January 8- March 22, ***The Mining Town of Morococha: Photographs by Sebastián Rodríguez and Fran Antmann***

January 28-30, ***Latin American Women Artists Series 3. A Festival of Films and Discussion by Women Filmmakers***
Filmmakers: Rebeca Chávez, María Novaro, Susana Velarde Muñoz, Lourdes Portillo, Ana Carolina, Mari Carmen de Lara

March 26- May 3, ***Omar Rayo: Modular Transformations***

Bismark Victoria

Estuardo Maldonado

Leonardo Scirica

May 8- June 21, ***Tradition/ Innovation in Latin American Art: Selected Works from the Collections of Paul A. Bourke… [et al]***

R.M. Cohen: Painted Constructions

July 2-30, ***Trends: Summer Show***
Artists: Alejandro Berlin, Jorge Botero, Marcos Byrd, Federico Chico, Lisa Collado, Alejandro Dron, Ana Flores, Erick Guttelewitz, Elba Herrero, Louis Laurita, Andrés Lichtenstern, Mario Di Lucci, Cesar Mandresa, Reyes Meléndez, Raúl Pardo, Derek Riest, Gloria Rodriguez, Carlos Ruiz, Nieves Saah, Francisco Silva, Juan Ugalde, José Luis Vargas, Oscar Yacila

September 18- November 12, ***Esther Vainstein. Paracas: Sculptures and Drawings***

Elena Presser: Bach's Goldberg Variations

November 24, 1987- January 17, ***Abstract Visions***
Artists: Bruno Andrade, Domingo Barreres, Mario Bencomo, Percy Cardona, Wilfredo Chiesa, Rafael Collazo, Hugo Consuegra, Elba Damast, Judite Dos Santos, Anna Bella Geiger, Ana Mercedes Hoyos, Benito Huerta, Efraín de Jesús, Ramiro Llona, Julio

Mateo, Luis Monje, Alberto Montano, César Paternosto, Pérez Celis, Vicente Rojo, Francisca Sutil, Bismarck Victoria

1988

January 21- February 28, ***Macarrulla: Goat Song Series***

Julio de Diego: The War Series, or los desastres del alma

Signs of Transition: 80s Art from Cuba

Guest Curator: Coco Fusco

Artists: Gustavo Acosta, José Bedia, María Magdalena Campos, Consuelo Castañeda, Humberto Castro, Arturo Cuenca, Juan Francisco Elso, Moisés Finalé, José Franco, Carlos Alberto García, Flravio Garciandía, Israel León, Marta María Pérez, Gustavo Pérez, Zaida del Río, Ricardo Rodríguez Brey, Leandro Soto, Ruben Torres Llorca

February 5-28, ***10 Latino American Artists***

March 17- May 8, ***Rooted Visions: Mexican Art Today***

Artists: Alejandro Arango, Mónica Castillo, Julio Galán, Rocío Maldonado, Helio Montiel, Dulce María Nuñez, Adolfo Patiño, Adolfo Riestra, Eloy Tarcisio, Germán Venegas, Miguel Ventura, Nahum B. Zenil

May 5- June 30, ***Involvement: The Graphic Art of Antonio Frasconi***

Traveling exhibition organized by the Wight Gallery

May 23- June 21, ***Juan Boza: Monumental Symbols. Multi-media Expressions***

Exhibition held at Hostos Art Gallery, Hostos Community College, and organized by the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art Satellite Exhibitions Program

September 30- October 23, ***From the Zoo to a Carnival: Strolling with Solari***

November 1st-27, ***José Luis Ortiz: Installation "Kingdom"***

November 17- December 29, ***Nick Quijano y Arnaldo Roche Pay Homage to Campeche***

November 29- December 29, ***Ricardo Estanislao Zulueta: Basement Therapy***

1989

April 13- May 28, ***María Brito-Avellana***

Exhibition organized by the InterAmerican Art Gallery, Miami-Dade Community College and traveling to MoCHA

June 12-July 30, ***Imaginary Presence: Guatemalan Art of the 80's***

Artists: Moises Barrios, Erwin Guillermo, Isabel Ruiz, Pablo Sweezy

June 22- July 30, ***Luis González Palma: self confession/ auto confesión***

July 15- August 10, ***Current Arrivals: A Selected Group Exhibition***
Artists: Raúl Acero, Diógenes Ballester, Samy Benmayor, María Angélica Borquez, Dina Bursztyn, Sylvia Benítez-Stewart, Elena Climent, Geroge Crespo, Jaime Fournier, Miriam Hernández, Fernando Joffroy, Carmen Lazo, Luis Monje, Martin Hahar, Ricardo Ramírez

September 26 to December 14, ***Earth: Latin America's Visions***
Exhibition traveled to Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas
Artists: Alirio Palacios, Ana Mendieta, Arnaldo Roche Rabell, Beatriz Savino, Josely Carvalho, José Antonio Abreu, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Reinaldo Figuereido, Rimer Cardillo

September 15- November 6, ***Contemporaries: Juxtaposing Perceptions***
Artists: Francisco Alvarado-Juarez, Ernesto Briel, Elba Damast, Ralph DeRomero, Edgar Franceschi, Maria Elena González, Simon Gouverneur, Marina Gutierrez, María Lino, Pedro Luján, Nestor Otero, Juan Sánchez

November 9, 1989 to January 6, 1990, ***Sorí: Between Seer and Seen***

1990
n.d., ***Art for Puerto Rican Equality·***

January 11- March 3, ***Gladys Triana: Movement and Fragmentation***

March 8- April 16, ***Elba Damast: Installation***

May 12- August 19, ***The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s***
Exhibition co-organized with The Studio Museum in Harlem and The New Museum for Contemporary Art
Artists: Max Aguilera- Hellweg, John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres, Carlos Alfonzo, Emma Amos, Ida Applebroog, Tomie Arai, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Miriam Beerman, Louis Bernal, Dara Birnbaum, Maria Brito-Avellana, Fred Brown, Beverly Buchanan, Josely Carvalho, Albert Chong, Ken Chu, Y. David Chung, Robert Colescott, Houston Conwill, John Coplans, Emilio Cruz, Judite Dos Santos, Melvin Edwards, Epoxy Art Group, Eric Fischl, Ismael Frigerio, Leon Golub, Gran Fury, Group Material, Guerrilla Girls, Hans Haacke, David Hammons, Maren Hassinger, Edgar Heap-of-Birds, Jenny Holzer, Alfredo Jaar, Martha Jackson-Jarvis, G. Peter Jemison, Luis Jiménez, Leandro Katz, Mary Kelly, Komar and Melamid, Barbara Kruger, Pok-chi Lau, Louis Lwler, Joseph Lewis III, George Longfish, Yolanda M. Lóopez, James Luna, Margo Machida, Ana Mendieta, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Nestor Millán, Yong Soon Min, Tyrone Mitchell, Tom Nakashima, Bruce Nauman, Catalina Parra, Cesar Paternosto, Howardena Pindell, Adrian Piper, Liliana Porter, Richard Prince, Martin Puryear, Nick Quijano, Faith Ringgold, Arnaldo Roche, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Martha Rosler, Alison Saar, Betye Saar, Ben Sakoguchi, Juan Sánchez, Raymond Saunders, Andrés Serrano, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, Coreen Simpson, Lorna Simpson, Jaune Quick-to-see

Smith, Nancy Spero, Haim Steinbach, Kaylynn Sullivan, Jorge Tacla, Rigoberto Torres, Cecilia Vicuña, Christian Walker, Kay Walkingstick, Richard Ray Whitman, Pat Ward Williams, Krzysztof Wodiczko, David Wojnarowicz, Martin Wong. Performance Artists: Kathy Acker, Ana Castillo, Y. David Chung, Dancenoise, Jimmy Durham, Ethyl Eichelberger, Guillermo Góomez-Peña, Ishmael Houston-Jones, John Kelly, Dan Kowng, Lydia Lunch and Emilio Cubeiro, Robbie McCauley with Jeannie Hutchings, Linda Montano, Rafael Montañez Ortiz, Reno, Alva Rogers and Lisa Jones, Roger Shimomura, Michael Smith, Merian Soto and Pepón Osorio, Kaylynn Sullivan Two Trees, Carmelina Tropicana, David Zambrano. Video Artists: Joan Braderman, Shu Lea Cheang, Jaime Davidovich, Sachiko Hamada and Scott Sinkler, Vanalyne Green, John Greyson, Reginald Hudlin, Philip Mallory Jones, Yolanda M. Lopez, Chip Lord, Branda Miller, Sherry Millner, Howardena Pindell, Daniel Reeves, Testing the Limits Collective, Sarah Tuft, Edin Vélez and Ethel Vélez, Bruce and Norman Yonemoto.

n.d., ***Installations: Current Directions·***
Artists: Jaime Davidovich, Leandro Katz, Catalina Parra, Bastienne Schmidt, Gabriel Orozco.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Interviewees

Luis Cancel
Holly Block
Julia P. Herzberg
Mary-Anne Martin
Nilda Peraza
Gabriel Pérez Barreiro
Liliana Porter
Ana Sokoloff
Carla Stellweg
Edward J. Sullivan
Susana Torruella Leval

Archival Collections

The Americas Society Archive
The Bronx Historical Society Archive
Cayman/MoCHA Archives, Hostos Community College
The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives
El Museo del Barrio Archives
International Center of the Art of the Americas, Digital Documents Archive
The New York Times online archives

Books

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